NAVIGATING THE CURRENTS:

A STUDY OF SAMOAN PARENTS ENGAGEMENT IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN

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PhD thesis submitted in fulfillement of a PhD degree at the University of Canterbury

APRIL 2021

Acknowledgements

Lord, my frame was not hidden from you when you knitted me in the secret place. You scheduled each day of my life before I began to breath. I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful and my soul knows it very well. How precious to me are your thoughts, and the knowledge that you constantly think of me - is too much for me to attain. You changed me through this journey. You gave me the most honorable supervisors who patiently, methodically and cautiously guided me; the best of friendships I could have ever asked for; and a good family who love me unconditionally. I praise you for you have made a lowly woman like me, to a better version of me! I honor you Lord - Thank you!

To my supervisors Professor Steven Ratuva and Professor Janinka Greenwood – no words of thank you are enough to convey a greatful heart to your support and encouragement through this journey. I couldn't have done it without you. My constant prayer is; May God's love, mercy and grace keep you protected always. Thank you!

Critical to the completion of this thesis was the mental, financial and psychological support of my two mentors who stuck by me through thin and thick. Karlyn Tekulu & Ashalyna Noa - Thank you for encouraging me to keep going regardless of my many doubts. My life would have been meaningless without you. Thank you for believing in me when I didn't. To my MBC family; The Collective, I acknowledge your moral, mental and psychological support especially Princess Ulalima Wragg – you are such a crack up Girl! Anyway, thank you Collective!

I acknowledge my beautiful friend Luaiva Fa'aū Richards and her family Dax, Luke, Tafailagi & Baby La'auli Mark for your social, mental and financial support throughout my study. You are more than a friend to me Luaiva. I love you more – Thank you! To my faithful moral and spiritual supporters, Aunt Faatasala Faanunumi & Uncle Si'a La'auli Akelese Si'a, le uso ia Fuiava Fa'aū ma le aiga atoa. Faafetai tele lava mo tatalo, faamalosi'au ma le alolofa ia ma'ua ma Patrick & fanau. Faatutumu e le Atua mea sa toesea ona o lo outou agalelei. Faafetai tele lava!

I acknowledge my late brother in-law Fata Alefa Tualevao Vavae & my dear Sister Valasi Maselina Siliato-Tualevao, my nieces Teresa Leatafasia Wilson & Jessie Bloomfield & their families; my dear nephews Motuloa, Wairaki, Ben & their families. Lest we forget, life for me began at 24 Antrim Cres, Otara … lol! Thank you for loving me unconditionally. May the love of Christ cover you all wherever you are. I love you with all my heart!

I acknowledge my Samoan academic mother Eti Laufiso. I hope to see you in heaven one day Eti.
I also aknowledge my Samoan family in Christ – Tuulua & Lupesiliva, Amelia & the late Solofuti Alatua, faapea Taufao & Leota. Thank you! God bless you & your families!

To my beautiful Cousin Dr. Michelle Schaaf & hubby Dr. Marty Schaaf & family – Thank you for your ongoing support through this journey. I appreciate everything you have done for me. Chelle I still have the photo you sent me when we were zooming into the early hours of the morning ... lol!

I acknowledge the moral & spiritual support of my extended families, Rev. Logo Ofe & Sunema & fanau, Rev. Iakopo Faafuata & Rosa ma le fanau, Laulu & Mele ma le fanau, nai ou tuagane peleing ma latou fanau, uso peleina ma latou fanau, faapea ou aiga uma lava. Malo le tapua'i, malo tatalo!

I also acknowledge my so-called twin sister - my beautiful Cuz Jennifer Laulala & her family; my niece Shekainah-Glory & nephew Jr. Laulala. Love you more!

I acknowledge the moral and mental support of my dear friend Popo Loua & family! Thank you for your support Popo. God bless you & family!

Last but not least, Thank you UC Pacific Development Team (PDT) for your support in every way. GB!

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Glossary

afakasi	half-caste
aiga	home, family
alii ma faipule o le nuu	village council
alofa	love, compassion
alofa faamatua	parental love
alofa	love, compassion
amata	begins, starts
ava	respect
faaaloalo	reverence
faafetai	thank you
faalavelave	unexpected happenings
faamolemole	please
faasamoa	samoan way of life
faasinomaga	identity
faatonu	advice
faavalevalea	stupid, fool
fafaga	feed
fafo	outside
fale	house, residence
fuata	season
fue, sasa	smacked or hit
gagana	language
itumalo	district
lou	plugging stick
malu	shelter, name for samoan female's tattoo
meansina	cultural treasure
moto	not yet ready, not mature
motu	island
motu-sa	sacred island
nana	conceal, hide
nu'u	village
soofau	sinnet-blending
tagata	people
talofa lava	hello, welcome
tauleaga	ta'uleaga
tautalitit	cheeky
tufuga	builder
tulou	excuse
va	space
vaai ifo	look within self
vaai mamao	looking outside of self
fanau	children
faavalevalea	foolish

Abstract

Despite the existence of a large volume of studies indicating the significance of the roles parents and parenting contribute to enhancing student success, little is known about the roles Samoan parents play in their children's academic achievement in the practical sense. This is because, minority and migrant parents' contributions were viewed by the West from a deficit perspective. Western perceptions undermine the potential of parents from disadvantaged communities especially those of migrant backgrounds. This qualitative research explores Samoan parents' engagement in furthering their children's education, alongside the researcher's experience as a Samoan parent raising New Zealand-born children according to *faasamoa* (the Samoan way); while navigating the complexities of a PhD as a mature student. The results indicate that, it is within the *aiga*, home, where the Samoan parents provide social, mental and psychological support for their children to further their education. In contrast to traditional Samoan parenting where *nana le alofa*, (conceal the love) a preferred style of parenting, these parents have openly demonstrated love, warmth, care and mutual respect with their children. Through this doctoral journey, the researcher and the participants have made constant and conscious efforts to manage their cultural and religious responsibilities in order to be better parents, and to be active participants in advancing their children's education. Based on the autoethnographic approach and Samoan worldview, the thesis is both a literal and metaphorical representations of my journey as a Samoan mother, a teacher and researcher as I traverse the manifold currents of the treacherous sea of academia. Using the Moana cosmological lenses, the thesis revolves around three imaginary islands that I have constructed and "visited," each with its own uniqueness and challenges, which represent the common diaspora experience of Pacific parents moving from their own home islands to Aotearoa New Zealand.

SECTION ONE

A Charting of the Ocean and Islands

The currents referred to in the title are manifold. They include the various currents that Samoan parents need to navigate to bring up their children in Aotearoa New Zealand and to support them in their Aotearoa New Zealand schooling. They also include the complexities of shaping and living a Samoan identity away from Samoa, particularly trying to work out how one's own childhood experiences in and various other received accounts of Samoan culture fit together and to what extent they can be said to represent a genuine Samoan way of life. In addition, I bring my own story to the inquiry with its own stormy currents. And, finally, the process of conducting this inquiry as a doctoral project in a mainstream university that would like to encourage Pasifika research is one that takes place in turbulent waters.

I present this thesis in five sections. The middle three each involve the use of metaphorical visits to islands. The islands are imaginary and symbolic: each contains a particular portion of my research. Surrounding each island is the ocean of my doctoral journey. In the first section I explain my research quest and my conceptualisation of the islands, the ocean and my methodology, my means of navigation. In the final section I turn again to the ocean at the same time as I acknowledge its unsettled and unsettling currents. I seek to draw together what I have discovered in the three islands and from the journey as a whole.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Talofa lava, I am Faaosofia Daly, born and raised in Samoa before I migrated to New Zealand in my mid-twenties. In this chapter, I introduce my research project, which includes my personal journey as a Samoan mother and researcher, my research metaphor and reflections of my Samoan cultural worldview as well as an outline of my thesis.

The topic of investigation

This thesis is multi-layered. I set out to explore how Christchurch Samoan parents support their children in furthering their education. I interviewed nine participants. In examining their accounts, I found it important to explore what is held within *faasamoa*, the cultural values that explain a Samoan way of life, concerning parenting and education in its broader sense. As I was born in Samoa, *faasamoa* impacted on my attitudes of how I should raise my New Zealand-born children. In reflecting on my positionality as a Samoan parent moving between two worlds, Samoa and New Zealand, I found I was searching for a genuine way to tell my story without trying to make it conform to the potentially stereotypic legacy that is often prioritised in *faasamoa* epistemology. At first, I felt overwhelmed by a range of apparent dissonances and even contradictions. Later, I began to appreciate that the tensions that emerged could well be an important dimension of my exploration. Therefore, rather than seeking to arbitrarily resolve or reduce the tensions I present them as layers within this thesis. An additional layer of exploration is that of my own journey as a doctoral researcher, one that tries to navigate between the expectations of Samoan culture and of western scholarship. As I will explain later in this chapter, I have turned to a metaphor of voyaging to and between islands to present these layers.

To sum up the topic, this thesis examines ways in which Samoan parents engage with their children to further their education. It considers the information gained from participants, my own journey as a Samoan parent and the traditions of *faasamoa*. I finally decided to present my investigation along three associated but still rather separate pathways: a grounded phenomenological examination of how Christchurch Samoan parents understand and experience their role as parents in furthering their children's education, a conceptual exploration of the characteristics of *faasamoa*; and an auto-ethnographic inquiry into my own experiences and evolving understandings of parenting.

At the same time, as I progressed in this study, I realised that I am also exploring my own journey as a mature student, searching for a meaningful pathway to navigate through the complexities of western scholarship and my own Indigenous traditions.

My journey in this research study was a long, and my understandings shifted and changed over time, as I will discuss more extensively throughout the thesis. When I began journey, the University was only beginning to reach out to its Pasifika community, and at a time when there were still few studies of Pasifika issues by Pasifika researchers. By the time I am finishing, there have been many significant contributions by other Pasifika researchers as well as a growing body of indigenous research from around the world. I wish to acknowledge the work of those Pasifika and other indigenous scholars who have begun to open up academic understandings of Pasifika issues and Pasifika approaches, and are creating academic environments' that were not there when I began this study. In reviewing emergent Pasifika research over the last two decades, Sanga and Reynolds (2020) highlight both regional diversity and common threads. They highlight the impotence of the vast ocean that shapes the lived experiences of Pacific peoples and that carries the history of migratory routes that witness the interconnections between island groups. The ocean is both reality and metaphoric reminder of separation, connection and ongoing change and movement. In my study I also draw on the metaphor of ocean: it my case it speaks of the need to explore the complexity of Pasifika understandings.

The value of grounding of research concepts in local practice has been emphasised by various researchers including Nabobo-Bana (2013), Lingam et al (2017) and Tunufa'i (2016): basket weaving, the use of flower in making garlands are among the conceptual metaphors used to construct concepts that shape research, and allow its further development. Panapa (2014) offers the octopus, a symbol of the values that make an indigenous research framework. Sanga (2004) stresses the importance of Pasifika research being able to capture realities as they unfold. The use of local metaphor, in my case, ocean and islands, was important to me in finding a way to integrate what initially seemed disparate and conflicting components of my study, and also allowed me to tack the unfolding of my own understanding.

Context of the study

E amata i le aiga (It starts within the home)

It is often argued that academic success for Samoan students begins within the *aiga*, home, not at school or with the teachers. While all other educational services, schools, teachers and others are significant to children's learning and development, they are secondary to the social, cultural and emotional support children are to receive within the *aiga*. *Literature* about Samoans and *faasamoa* indicate the *aiga* as central to all things Samoan (Peteru & Percival, 2010; Lui, 2003). A Samoan worldview upholds the notion that a child's conduct reflects the aura of his or her *aiga*. This perspective is often emphasised by a common Samoan saying as stated above (*E amata i le aiga)*. However, for various reasons, many minority and migrant parents, including Samoan parents, perceive the teachers and schools as the point of difference to their children's academic achievements. Therefore, when children are not doing well at school, it is easy to blame the teachers, the school or the education system. I am one of those parents who believed that it was the teachers and school's responsibility to help my child achieve academically. Little did I realise how much my conduct as a parent in our home was negatively influencing our children's safety and wellbeing, and in turn affecting their learning as well. The next two Samoan idioms provide some insights into the importance of safety and protection as well as advice in terms of family and parenting.

A malu i fale e malu foi i fafo (Safety in the home ensures protection out of home).

A malu i fale e malu foi i fafo conveys the importance of the home as the starting point to securing and protecting the wellbeing and interests of Samoan children. The word *fale* means house, family or home. *Malu* means protection or shelter (Australian Museum, 2018). In reference to this study, the saying literally means: the protective factors that keep children safe within the home are the same ones that give them security and protection outside the home. If children are not safe at home, then their safety is already compromised elsewhere.

O le fuata ma lona lou (Every harvest requires its own harvesting pole)

O le fuata ma lona lou is a Samoan idiom and word of advice. In regard to breadfruit harvesting, the advice is that each new season requires a new pole instead of an old one. Since the breadfruit is a seasonal vegetable, harvesting poles are often left outside in all weathers and often become worn out and by the time the next season comes their condition will not be as dependable as new ones. Metaphorically, the saying means: A new tool is required to deal with new problems. In other words, old methods to execute a new plan may not be as effective as having a new execution plan. From my experiences as a parent, trying to apply the old strategies I was raised

with to the upbringing of my New Zealand-born children was stressful, ineffective and caused many challenges in our home. This, I learned the hard way.

Styles of parenting

Although parenting is perhaps one of the most fun and rewarding activities for many families, it is also one of the most challenging for some families. Promoters of child psychology insist that a multitude of parenting/family factors contribute to enhance or hinder child development (Bornstein, 2013; Gershoff, Lee & Durrant, 2017; Sturge-Apple et al. 2017). Besides many other factors, the style of parenting has been identified to have a significant effect on the wellbeing of the child (Rosli, 2014; Schreiber, 2011; Iusitini, Taylor & Paterson, 2011; Khurram & Fayyaz, 2016; Hay, 2001; Baumrind, 1956; 1972; 2021).

Aims and objective of study

This thesis aims to explore and promote awareness about the significance of the *aiga* as the primary institution to promote student success for Samoan students in New Zealand. It acknowledges that the *aiga* is a human grouping and consequently that it is not useful or possible to seek generalisable values and attitudes that characterise the *aiga*. It also aims to offer an insight into my PhD journey as a mature Samoan-born student, navigating within the oceans of academia in New Zealand.

My research objectives are to:

- explore Samoan parents' experiences and beliefs that motivate their support of and engagement in their children's lives and education,
- examine parenting styles and types of support that enhance student success,
- critically assess church and cultural (*faasamoa*) obligations that enhance or hinder students in pursuing further education,
- confront and interrogate my own experiences of growing up and parenting,
- share my personal experiences as a mature Samoan born PhD student, navigating within the complex oceans of academia.

Personal background of the study

The focus of this study is shaped by personal experiences as well as academic intentions. Here, I want to briefly outline two elements of my personal experiences: that of being a student and that of being a mother.

Being a doctoral student

I was working as a teacher within the Bridging Programme of the University of Canterbury when I decided to test if I had the ability to take on a doctoral study. I had seen and witnessed the various phases of doctoral student life over the years during my earlier studies, and it wasn't an encouraging sight especially for me. Somehow, I was encouraged to test the waters of further studies through the Macmillan Brown Centre for Pasifika Studies at the university where a strand of courses at honours level were also offered at postgraduate level to allow students to develop a Pasifika approach to knowledge and awareness of research interest in areas of health, social science and political studies. With my limited knowledge of other colleges, choosing Pacific Studies was perhaps the only option I had if I were to pursue a doctoral degree. So, I did.

My reasons to do so, was that, Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies was the only department I felt I belonged on campus. It was this tiny part of the large institution that gave students like myself a strong sense of being a part of the wider institution. This was made easy by having a Department director who was Pacific, a sight that was unusual in a tertiary institution in the South Island in the late 90s. He was also the only Pacific staff in the whole institution. This director and his family made the time to welcome new Pacific students on campus to his home, for lunch whenever he could so students could connect and support each other. This was how I came to know and meet other Samoan and Pacific students. In my second year of postgrad studies, this director had left the center. Soon after, a new director took over. Pacific students had little or no connections with each other anymore. At the time, there were no existing support services for Pacific students on campus. The Pacific Studies centre lost its welcoming and friendly character and students became isolated including those who were studying within the department.

When leadership within the department changed, honors degree was offered, added to the exiting Masters and PhD degres. The newer change attracted a reasonable number of Pacific as well as non-Pacific students. Somehow, a large number of students experienced multiple issues with the inconsistency in regards to grading and other minor issues within the department. Some students lodged complaints directly within the relevant college, but students' complaints were not being dealt with on a timely manner. Students either moved to other colleges, or moved to other tertiary institutions.

Although, I knew things were not going well within the centre, I personally felt it was still the only place on campus I felt I knew better than the others. And, regardless of the challenges and the warnings from other students, I went ahead and enrolled for a PhD. I too, experienced similar issues, but what I learnt was another story and I am not prepared to discuss in this paper. Anyway, after many students' complaints that has gone unanswered for a few years, a few postgraduate students including myself decided to approach the university with our grievances. This process too was very stressful, and it was time consuming because students had to make time to meet outside of their work and study time to organise how we were going to share our personal stories with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) at the time. After he heard us out, he advised to put our statements in writing. It was such a strong sense of relief that someone was keen to hear listen to us.

Since then, I have already enrolled in a doctoral study under two supervisors, of whom none had any knowledge of Samoa or of faasamoa. This was problematic from the beginning because both had limited understanding of what a typical Samoan family or Samoan parenting may look like. And very shortly after we began, my supervisor, who was the head of the center, resigned her role. For several years following, the University appointed a number of acting directors, and each of them, in turn, became the lead supervisor for my colleagues and me. All of us floundered somewhat in our sense of direction and found our progress slow. It was not until the sixth year of my study, an experienced senior Pasifika academic was appointed as Head of the Centre and became my lead supervisor. By then, several of those who had begun the doctoral journey had dropped out. I, too, had given up for extended periods. I offer this very simplified history of the Centre not as a complaint but rather as an explanation of the vulnerability and lack of guidance available for Pasifika doctoral students like myself.

One of the major changes to the University was the establishment of the Pacific Development Team. This increased a number of Pacific staff within the university, mainly in administrative and student support roles. However, they formed a strong force in liaising with the community, encouraging Pasifika students across all disciplines, and developing strategies for increasing the University's awareness of and response to Pasifika issues and needs. This team also held annual research seminars and brought in Pasifika scholars from other universities to give keynote addresses. This team provided a lot of social support and encouragement but we all felt the absence of academic leadership. We read and heard talk about Pasifika methodology but did not have a repository of practice to help us know how to use it as a living process to investigate our world and deepen our knowledge.

The experience of trying to draw on western scholarly traditions and Pasifika ways of thinking and interacting was, therefore, confusing and sometimes precarious. I talk more about this in later parts of this thesis.

Being a mother

> *O le tama poto e fiafia ai tamã; ao le tama valea e faanoanoa ai Tina* (Fa'ataoto 10 vs 1).
>
> *A wise child brings joy to the father; a foolish child brings grief to his mother* (Proverbs 10 vs 1).

My journey to this thesis derived from experiences of being a vulnerable, hopeless and helpless Samoan mother, who always believed education was key to student success, but also believed that the only way to success was through pain, hardships, tears and hard work. It was the same way my family raised me growing up. However, when our children first began school, all of a sudden we found ourselves under so much pressure when we were constantly told that our children were struggling at school. Furthermore, the school required us to fill in forms to apply for teacher-aides for our two children. Since that suggestion came from the school, it put our family under lots of unnecessary stress. As parents, we were made to feel that there was something wrong with either our children, or us, the parents. That was the beginning of the nightmares in our home. I was very upset and got so angry. I was so angry, because I felt the teachers' words against our children's learning situation was absolute. I took the teachers words literally and personally so that my integrity as a Samoan mother was challenged. I became very

harsh and heavy-handed with our children. I felt so ashamed of myself. The situation in our home became very intense and stressful. My husband and I were constantly fighting. I accused my husband of spoiling our children and being the reason why they were not good at school.

Furthermore, homework times, including reading and math times at home, became torture time. I intimidated our children. I became a very angry person. When I was out of home, I appeared to be very nice and happy to everyone. The moment I stepped into our home anger overwhelmed me. I became very angry, very cold not only towards our children but also towards my husband. I loved our children very much, but I also believed my actions and conduct towards them were justified. I was playing the role of a good and a responsible Samoan mother. I did not know the difference between discipline and physical or mental abuse. I was raised the same way and I did not know what a gentle, loving and caring parent looked like.

I became so abusive to the state where my husband was very concerned about our children's wellbeing with the way I had instilled fear in them. My parents-in-law felt exactly the same. I hit and punished our children physically. I threatened and called them names. I instilled so much fear in our children I was even scared of myself. After those homework sessions, there was a strong sense of guilt and brokenness as a mother. I was confused and I got angry at the same time. I wanted to change but I did not know how. Somehow, I felt if I were to change the way I parented, it would make me a very weak Samoan parent. As I went through this experience, I reached the point where I was very scared of myself. I knew my situation was very serious and I knew if nothing was done I was capable of seriously hurting our children. I also knew deep down in my heart that, if I were to seriously hurt any of my children, I had no other choice but to take my own life. Those thoughts tormented me. Our marriage too was not good and we were on the brink of divorce. Yet I told my husband that, if we were to separate, he had to take our children. I knew our children were not safe under my care. I was a broken mother. I was so consumed with the ideal of student success; I did not see any other way to channel that to my children but through control, harsh words and physical discipline.

Social rationale for the study

What constitutes success for a Samoan student is an issue that needs to be explored further in order to respond to a range of challenges facing the *aiga*, families/home, in New Zealand. As an island-born, I experienced first-hand the brutality and harsh reality of traditional Samoan parenting. Somehow, that style of parenting was acceptable within *faasamoa,* empowered by

traditional sayings such as *nana le alofa* (conceal the love) and/or biblical scriptures like *Spare the rod and spoil the child* (Proverbs 13: 24) to name a few. Those parenting ideals were often enforced by a common belief of *there's no gain without pain*. These sayings imply that unless one experiences pain and suffering, success is unattainable. As a child, I condemned and chided such practices. As a parent, I held those beliefs in high esteem, with an understanding that it was the only passage to instil Samoan values in my New Zealand-born children and help them to be successful in education and in life. This was a practice I later regretted. I have come to realise that those perceptions and principles of traditional parenting I was raised to believe in, were somehow flawed, misleading, and contrary to raising children to be successful and to become good citizen in the 21st century.

Through my personal struggles and what I had put my family through, I transformed myself into a different person, still a Samoan mother, but a much better Samoan mother. I also learned, from my transformation, that the academic success of Samoan children in New Zealand begins within the *aiga*, not at school or with the teachers. This does not excuse the schools, teachers or the education system from fulfilling their responsibilities in our children's student life. However, from personal experiences, all other support, personal or professional, outside of the aiga are of secondary nature. The aiga is central to all things Samoans (Lui, 2003; Peteru and Percival, 2010). This understanding is reiterated in the common saying: *E amata i le aiga* (Everything begins at home) (Samoa Times, 2012).

Brief review of significant literature

Over the years, parental involvement (Lara & Saracostti, 2019; Pena, 2000; Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski & Apostoleris, 1997; Oswald, Zaidi, Cheatham & Brody, 2018) as well as the style of parenting (Gleason & narvaez, 2019; Sharif, Ahmad & Sarwar, 2019; Hirata & Kamakura, 2018; Perez-Gramaje, Garcia, Reyes, Serra & Garcia, 2020; Sahithya, Manohari & Vijaya, 2019; Yang & Zhao, 2020) have been identified to have had tremendous effects on children's quality of life and learning. This often comes under the category of good parenting (Ashdown & Faherty, 2020; Smyth & Newland, 2019; Ishizuka, 2019; Pynn & Holt, 2017; Vincent, 2017). Good parenting is perhaps one of the most prevailing health issues in regards to family wellbeing in the 21st century (Stewart-Brown, 2018; Singh, 2017; Rose & McAuley, 2019; Garcia, Serra, Garcia, Martinez & Cruise, 2019; Biddulph, 2018; Vincent, 2017), and for many families, not all parenting practices lead to student success (Epstein, 2019; Darlow, Norvilitis

& Schuetze, 2017; Kokkinos & Vlavianou, 2019; Kosterelioglu, 2018; Warren, Locklear & Watson, 2018; Holly, Fenley, Kritikos, Merson, Abidin & Langer, 2019).

The institution of the home is the most indispensable establishment to have ever existed in society in regards to child rearing. In the home, parents are the most important people in a child's life. For many parents, their roles have been identified as their children's carers (Alstott, 2005; Sinclair & Grimshaw, 1997; Robson, Brogaard-Clausen & Hargreaves, 2019; Bradshaw, Keung, Rees & Goswami, 2011), providers (Clark, 1988; Smith, Kennedy, Wooten, Gust & Pickering, 2006; Bernal, 2015; Heinrich, 2014; Manning & Lichter, 1996; Townsend, Jordan, Stephenson & Tsey, 2016), protectors (Dale, 2004; Hardy & Darlington, 2008; Darlington, Healy & Feeney, 2010, 2011), well-being nurturers (Sobralske, 2006; Haley & Harrington, 2004; Smrekar & Cohen-Vogal, 2001; Bush, Chapman, Drummond & Fagaloa, 2009), but they are also their child's first teachers (Alexander, 1996; Lombard, 1994; Price, 2017). The early years of the child's life are critical to his or her holistic development and parents are solely responsible to set the foundation for lifelong learning and behaviour (Baxter, Gray & Hayes, 2012; Pratt, 2011; Sanders & Morawska, 2014).

Parenting and good parenting is essential in establishing positive relationships within the home between parents and their children. Defining the term *parenting and good parenting* according to Eve, Byrne and Gagliardi (2014) was a "… complex task wrought with ambiguities" (p. 114). As a result, they decided to explore the professional opinions of groups directry working on the various area of parenting. Good parenting not only support children's mental and psychological development (Amato, 2005; Smith, Brown, Feldgaier & Lee, 2016; Ginsburg, 2007; Armstrong, Birnie-Lefcovitch & Ungar, 2005; Gleason & Narvaez, 2019), it also becomes protective factors (Steinberg, 2004; DeVore & Ginsburg, 2005; Smith, 2010) when making complex decisions. For some children home life can be a source of inspiration and of personal growth in stimulating learning. However, for many children, home is not a safe place to be in, or a space that stimulate learning.

The use of metaphor

Lackoff and Johnson (2008) explain how metaphors, unconsciously as well as consciously, shape the way we think. The use of conceptual metaphors is not uncommon in qualitative research. According to Kelly (2011), Thomson (2013), Zhao (2009), Jones (2013) and Watson (2015), a metaphor is a powerful conceptual tool that not only helps to make conceptual links

for readers, but is also a way of thinking about what the argument and data mean which shapes the methods and methodology of the study. For example, Kelly used the image of an archaeological dig to conceptualise the many steps and layers she was to explore, and unpack while conducting her study. The archaeological digging metaphor helped her think about what she was doing, and what she needed to do at each stage of telling her story, as well as how the parts all come together. In seeking an Indigenous expression for a case study, Riwai-Couch (2014) developed the concept of *puna kōrero*, a pool of dialogues and stories, as a metaphor that is culturally evocative and conveys the situated and experiential nature of a case. Luafutu-Simpson (2006) on the other hand uses the construct of the *fale*, meeting house, as a structural metaphor to position the relationships of people, traditions and values in a range of developmental entreprises including education.

My Metaphor of islands and the Ocean

I frame my study in terms of a journey through a metaphoric ocean, sometimes peaceful and sometimes turbulaent, and visits to metaphoric islands.

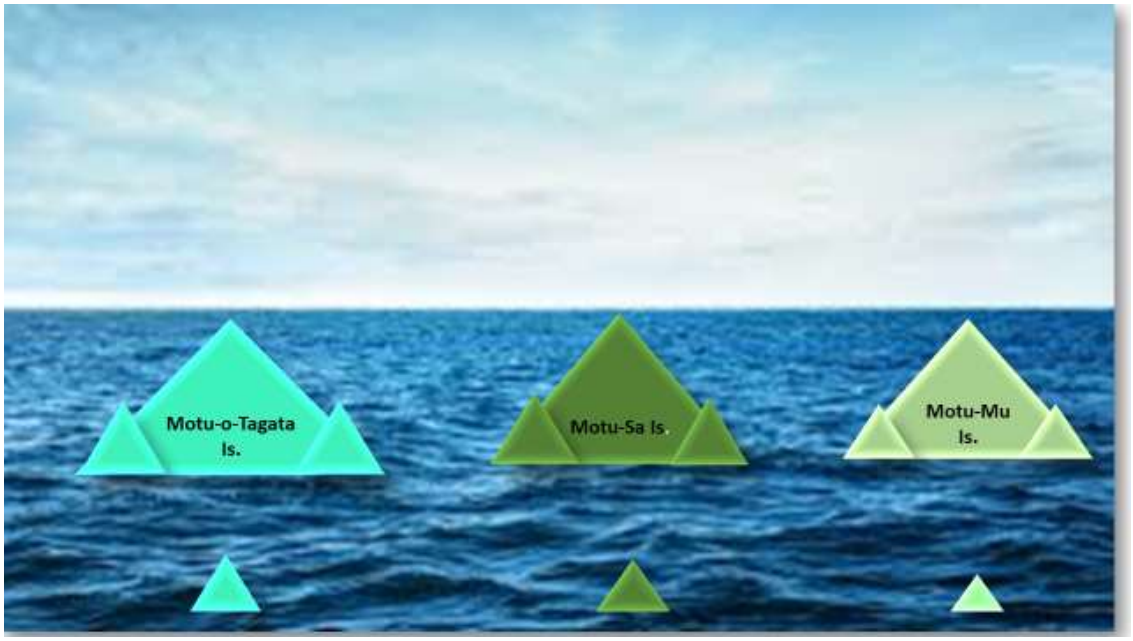


Figure 1 *Islands & Oceans*

Since I am from the Pacific islands, it is easy for me to see my research in term of islands within the ocean. I envisage the three main islands and a small islet off-shore from each of the main islands. These are imaginary islands. The three main islands are the three separate parts of my study, and the ocean is seen as means to navigate within the three main islands using the small off-shore islets as reflective points.

The first island is Motu-o-Tagata Island or Island of people. Motu-o-Tagata Island is solidly inhabited and has an academic library and it is here that the field work for my research took place. The library has been developed by a western university and was gifted to the island and its people as a means to enhance their development and progress in western terms. This island is where the participants who have children already studying at higher education either at university of polytechnic were selected to share their stories of their experiences, aspirations, and personal beliefs about how they engage in their children's lives to furthering their education, as well as their concerns for Samoans in Aotearoa New Zealand. When I set out on my research journey I had thought that the whole my investigation might take place on this island, with perhaps a glance across the sea to the neighbouring sacred island. The ocean, however, carried me further.

Then there is Motu-Sa Island or Sacred Island. Motu-Sa Island is a sacred land, set aside for the preservation of traditions, belief system and customs of the community. In this island, I explore Samoan values and culture, particularly in terms of what is expected of the community in terms of parenting and education success. The sacred name of the island comes from the way its traditions are revered. Other researchers may be able to investigate the relationship between such sacredness and truth. I have only been able to sail around it to examine its contours and to explore its shoreline.

The third main island is Motu-Mu Island. Motu-Mu Island is a volcanic one which represents my personal journey as a Samoan mother and student. This is where I share my personal story of what my upbringing and my education journey was like growing up in rural Samoa and the hardships of family life. I also share my personal story of the struggle I experienced in my efforts to raise our New Zealand-born children the Samoan way. As a volcanic island it has many earthquakes and these make it had to find a stable footing. It took many, many re-writes of my personal story before I was able to face the painful episodes without running away from

or seeking to make them look more attractive. And I acknowledge that, as a volcanic island, it is still constantly in the process of growth and change.

Near to each main island is a tiny off-shore islet. As I navigate through the ocean and the main islands, I can rest and look back reflectively at what I found in each main island.

As I navigate between the main islands, I keep an open mind because, although these islands are disconnected from each other by ocean, it is the flowing ocean that connects them. The ocean represents the environment, emotional and intellectual, in which I navigate my doctoral research journey. It has winds and currents that come from my Samoan roots and continuing identity. It has other winds and currents that come from the demands of western scholarship. Oceans are huge bodies of waters that have an unpredictable nature. Although there may be some good days weatherwise, where sailing is smooth, there may also be some bad days where adverse currents, storms and natural disasters can impact on the journey. I report some of the storms and I try to identify currents. However, in a turbulent ocean it often takes all one's energy to control the boat. Perhaps it is easier for onlookers to name all the currents. As a mature Samoan woman navigating stormy doctoral waters I could often only keep my sail turned to hold the wind and pray I would not capsize. I offer my account of the journey and what I found as an account of lived experience that brings a human and culturally situated dimension to what other scholars, from outside my culture, may more confidently name as aspects of postcolonial tensions, Indigenous perspectives or blurred traditions and identities.

This three-island metaphor provides the broad conceptual framework for my research journey, cultural reflection and academic analysis in this thesis.

Outline of Sections and Chapters

Section One: A charting of the ocean and islands

This section consists of two chapters.

In this first chapter, I have outlined the scope of my investigation and introduced a metaphor of island, ocean and exploratory navigation. I have also explained both the academic and personal rationale for my study.

Chapter Two describes the methodological approach. It identifies the academic paradigms I have engaged with and explains how I understand them in terms that make sense to me as a

Samoan woman. It details the research questions and methods I used at the various stages of the journey.

Section Two: Motu-o-Tagata Island: Island of people

This section, which consists of three chapters, reports the first major stage of my study: the field work I undertook in interviewing Samoan parents.

Chapter Three reports the literature I reviewed in preparation for my study. I represent this as a visit to the island's academic library that has been provided by a sponsoring western university. At this stage of my study I drew on the literature I found in the academic library with some confidence, planning to summarise key studies and identify the gap I could fill through my discussions with Samoan parents.

Chapter Four describes my participants, the people of the island. I came to them with the following research question: *How do Samoan parents in Christchurch New Zealand engage in furthering their children's education?* Within that overarching question I also had some sub-questions: *What has motivated parents to do what they do? How are their parenting practices similar/different from their upbringing experiences? How has faasamoa influenced how they parent in New Zealand? What support networks are available to support parents?*

Chapter Five presents a thematic analysis of what the participants shared. I had used a *talanoa* or talking method (Vaioleti, 2006) that deviates from the norm of the interviewing process as it deals specifically with the Samoan/Polynesian protocols of collaborative discussion or collaborative storying. I therefore tried to avoid imposing an external theorisation of the experiences and perceptions they shared and rather gathered together the themes that emerged from the talanoa.

The first resting place, the small islet off *Motu-o-Tagata,* allows me to look back at the island, at what I found there and at my journey so far.

Section Three: Motu-Sa Island: Sacred Island

This consists of one chapter.

Chapter Six presents an explanation of *faasamoa*, the historical and cultural background to Samoa values, traditions and ways of thinking about education. When I set out on my research journey, I saw this as a lofty pinnacle of wisdom and as a possible counterpoint to the western - sponsored academic library. I wanted to use *faasamoa* as a basis for theoretical analysis of my

fieldwork with the participating parents. However when I came to the island I saw there were craggy valleys as well as lofty peaks, and I thought it would be more useful to describe what I saw rather than to try to reduce its complexities to a simple yardstick. Moreover much of the island was veiled in thick mist that I could not penetrate.

The second resting place, the small islet off *Motu-Sa,* allows me to look back at both the beauty and some of the problematic complexities of the island. It also draws my gaze forward to the next island and its shifting, often uneasy, alignment with *Motu-Sa.*

Section Four: Motu-Mu Island: Volcanic Island

This consists of one chapter.

Chapter Seven presents my auto-ethnography. This was an island that erupted as I progressed in my research journey. I had initially thought that my own story might be a short statement about positionality. However, I soon found that I was on unstable ground and I really had to fight for my academic survival when I explored my own story.

The third resting place, the small islet off *Motu-Mu,* allows me to regain my feet after exploring that shaky island and to begin to consider what I have found in my journey to the three islands.

Section Five: The Ocean

This consists of one chapter.

Chapter Eight contains reflection about my doctoral journey and about what I have to offer at the end of it. It examines the turbulences that come through being a Samoan doctoral student in a university with no Samoan senior academics to act as role models and mentors and with the pressure to succeed in order to provide a role model for those beginning their academic journey. It acknowledges the partiality and situatedness of my discoveries. It suggests how those discoveries might be useful.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter explains my methodological approach. First, I discuss the theoretical frameworks I draw on and the way I use the metaphor of ocean and islands that I outlined in the previous chapter. Then I outline the actual processes I followed in conducting the components of my study.

As explained in the introductory chapter, this research study is multi-layered. I explore how Samoan parents support their children in furthering their education. In doing so, I found it important to explore what the traditions of *faasamoa* say about parenting and education, in its broader sense. Then I found it important to confront and unpack my own experiences of being brought up and educated and how I translated that into my own experiences of the upbringing of my children. As I worked through the above components of this study, I became acutely aware of the challenges that I, as a Samoan born and raised being the first in my family to have entered higher education, struggled through academic life particularly navigating through a PhD research project and thesis. Therefore, I have needed to develop a qualitative methodological approach that allows me to integrate those strands of inquiry that acknowledges the journey as well as the discoveries. The research approach is one that evolved throughout the study and can be seen as a *bricolage* that draws of conventions of *auto-ethnography* to develop my personal narrative, exploration of traditions and their *epistemological* expressions to examine *faasamoa*, *grounded research* in the form of *a talanoa* to explore the participating parents' attitudes and experiences, together with a personal reflection of the process and its implications. This bricolage has given rise to the metaphor of islands and surrounding ocean that I have described in the previous chapter.

A qualitative approach with a phenomenological focus

The overall approach is a qualitative one. A qualitative approach seeks to understand and describe what is happening in a particular situation that are not amenable to counting or measuring (Hammarberg et al., 2016; Anderson, 2010). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) described the qualitative research approach to be "multimethod in focus, interpretive and naturalistic in

approach." A naturalistic approach influences how researcher and researched interact. For qualitative researchers, this means they are to conduct their studies within their subjects' natural settings attempting to make sense of or interpret a phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them including individuals' own accounts of their attitudes, motivations and behaviours.

Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) declared that the nature of qualitative methodologies provides more than just an avenue to discovery. They also serve to gain insight into participants' constructions of their own reality and to tease out the nature of the world as seen and perceived from their standpoint. Holloway (1997) suggested that qualitative research is a form of social inquiry which focuses on how people interpret and make sense of their own world. It is a method of inquiry that explores understandings of how individuals make sense of their social life as they interact and engage within their communities in their own cultural ways.

In qualitative studies, Blumer (1969) suggested, researchers must attempt to suspend or set aside their own perspectives and taken-for-granted views of the world, and view things as though they were happening for the first time (cited by Bruyn, 1966). This suggests that, if people are to be studied qualitatively, it is important for the researchers to know their subjects personally and experience what they experience in their daily struggles within society (Taylor et al, 2015).

Within this qualitative framework, my approach leans towards phenomenology. Phenomenology is less concerned with objective description of situations than with the lived experience of participants (Smith et al., 2014; van Manen, 2014). My own narrative is openly concerned with my own experience and my own understanding of the experience. It does not seek verification from outside sources. I report the world I grew up in, the behaviour of others as I experienced and understood it, my own actions and my evolving understandings in ways that appear honest and meaningful to me at this time (Moon & Blackman, 2014). Moon and Blackman reject the idea that objective truths exist and are waiting to be discovered; rather, truth or meaning arises in and out of how humans engage with the realities of their world. I highlight the subjectivity of experience and of personal meaning-construction. In reporting the interviews I held with the parents who participated in my study, I seek to capture the way they understand and experience their situation and the way they make sense of it. This aligns with Heidegger's philosophy which seeks to explicate the lived experiences of study participants (Horrigan-Kelly et al. 2016) and Smith, Flowers and Larkin's (2009) explanations of

phenomenology as concern with the lived experiences of people and with how people themselves make sense of their own experiences. I present their voices, therefore, without a predetermined theoretical analysis. However, I acknowledge that I as a researcher am interpreting what I hear from the participants. I have sought to listen carefully and to build an environment where my participants can feel free to say what they think. However, my interpretations cannot be totally eliminated from my reporting of their experiences. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) and van Manen (2014) acknowledge the inevitability of intersubjectivity and the overlapping nature of recording other's experiences and reflecting on them.

In explaining *faasamoa,* I do draw on both oral and written traditions of Samoan culture and beliefs. However, I am a child of that culture; I grew up within it, and see it through the eyes of my experience of it. I do not try to separate out my understandings of *faasamoa* from how it might be interpreted objectively – if such objectivity is at all possible. Smith (2005) emphasised that tradition is a meaningful way by a community or individuals to make sense of their world. In the sections that follow, I will outline my understandings of bricolage, grounded research and talanoa, epistemology and auto-ethnography. I also introduce my metaphor of ocean and islands

Bricolage – Creating the collage

> *Bricolage attempts to present research findings in a way that challenges its audience to see its subject matter in an unexpected, irregular or offbeat way. A range of metaphors can be used to describe the process of producing the bricolage including weaving (Wibberley, 2017, p. 1).*

As I understand it, bricolage in research is the process of bringing together a range of elements to create a richer understanding of a phenomenon. Each element has some meaning on its own but when put together with the others in the bricolage a more comprehensive meaning results.

A friend of mine told me a very interesting story about visiting one of her father's rural villages in the island. On arrival, she noted a lack of development in the community and that people struggled to get by in their daily lives. She wanted to set up a small project in her village but did not know how. She decided to invite the local women for tea and to chat. During the chat she raised the issue of creating something with what they had to boost the morale in the community and give them something they could contribute and support their families and their

village. After their informal discussion, it was agreed that they were going to do fabric printing with one rule agreed upon: no new material was to be purchased but they were to bring whatever they had at home. Once it was set up, the women brought their old shirts, *lavalava*, and even their husbands' old shirts, old clothing of all sorts to be printed. Once it was done, there was a huge sense of excitement when the women realised the potential they had in creating something from what they already had, but wondered why they had not thought of it before. The project was very successful. The women's husbands were keen to show off their old clothing they had not used anymore. But once they were altered through the prints and new colours they all looked great. When hearing my friend's story, I could not help but think of how relevant the story was in understanding the concept of bricolage. So, what is bricolage and why is this concept relevant in how I negotiate the turbulence of research, culture and self as a mature Samoan student through the boundaries of academia?

The quote by Wibberley (2017) and my friend's story both indicate the potential and ability of the bricolage approach to combine and transform available materials and objects to create something new and unexpected. According to theorists who explain the concept, bricolage is a style or method of using available tools to create or to put something together that surprises those who had not thought of that way before. The bricolage approach was articulated in the early 1960s by a French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss in his book *The Savage Mind* (Mambrol, 2016; Levi-Strauss, 1962). Levi-Strauss referred to a *bricoleur* as someone who "works with his hands in devious ways, puts pre-existing things together in new ways, and makes do with whatever is at hand" (Mambrol, 2016). Levi-Strauss (1962) compared the work of a bricoleur to that of an engineer in regards to their outputs. For example, an engineer who is scientific in mind deals with projects in entirety, taking into account the availability of materials, to create new tools. In social science research, the work of a bricoleur is considered "parallel to the construction of mythology narratives" (Mambrol, 2016), because its key characteristic is its ability to present the research data both existing and new ones in a "way that potentially challenges its audience to see its subject matter in an unexpected, irregular or offbeat way" (Wibberley, 2017, p. 2).

In this thesis, I bring together three apparently separate elements of my study to create a deeper understanding of the exploration I have undertaken. Drawing on my Samoan background I have re-imagined the concept of bricolage as a process of voyaging through the surrounding ocean to visit a number of islands.

My three main islands and the ocean

Since I am Samoan, the metaphor of islands and ocean came readily to me. I envisage three main islands to be the three separate parts of my study and the ocean as a means to navigating to and around the three main islands, and sometimes beyond them when carried away by currents. The islands are imaginary ones. The first island is the inhabited *Motu-o-Tagata* Island. Motu-o-Tagata has a substantial population and it also has an academic library; and it is here that I have conducted my fieldwork. The second island is *Motu-Sa*, the Sacred Island, one that has been set aside for the preservation of traditions and beliefs and here I explore what Samoan culture says about family, parenting and education. The third island is *Motu-Mu*. Motu-Mu is a type of volcanic island, one that represents my personal journey as a Samoan mother and student. Off each of these islands, there is a small off-shore islet where I can rest and look back reflectively at what I found in the main island. The ocean separates and connects these three main islands. The ocean itself is sometimes calm and sometimes turbulent. It has strong currents and it is impacted by winds. In reporting my experiences of the ocean I talk about my experiences as a doctoral student and about my emergent and sometimes shifting understandings of what I discovered in the journey.

Grounded research and talanoa

Motu-o-Tagata is the first island I visited through my fieldwork. In this island, the *talanoaga* took place with Samoan parents, as I sought to gain in depth understandings of how they engaged in furthering their children's education. This is in keeping with a phenomenological approach as described above that constitutes a kind of grounded research. A grounded approach is often used to generate grounded theory (Glaser, 2001; Charmaz, 2000), that is a theory that arises from the systematic analysis of data rather than a confirmation of a preconceived theory. When I started, I thought I might develop a grounded theory about Samoan parents' engagement in furthering their children's education. Instead of constructing a specific theory from the data gathered from the participants in the study, I decided instead, to capture the personal perspectives of each of the parents and present them as a weaving of voices and concerns. As my study progressed, I became aware of the complex uncertainties rather than finding a single focus. In addition, this research highlighted the concept of *talanoa* as a research approach. Morrison and Vaioleti (2008, p. 11) describe a talanoa approach as "a traditional Pasifika reciprocating interaction, which is driven by common interest, regard for respectfulness and are

conducted mainly face to face." The word talanoa describes the informal discussion that takes place in Indigenous Pasifika settings where participants freely express personal stories of life experiences and parenting skills. During the talanoaga[1], the language parents used expressed their inspirations, deep desires, respect and love to engage in whatever way possible, to support their children success. The talanoa approach demanded that I listen carefully, and encouragingly to my participants' stories and that I record their experiences and perceptions respectfully without seeking to overly analyse or theorise them. This is a grounded approach that aligns strongly with the western concept of phenomenology. Therefore, when I visit Motu-o-Tagata Island, I do not theorise. However, as I sail away from the island, I stop at a small offshore island, and reflect on what took place.

Epistemology and traditional lore

Initially, my research intended to focus on parents' stories of their beliefs, attitudes and understanding, and then apply the Samoan lens, *faasamoa*, to make sense of parental narratives. As my study progressed I realised that *faasamoa* was not fixed or absolute. There is an observable Samoan way of life that reflects an embedded culture, value and traditions that dictates family and village life. What is often written or constructed about the culture and traditional practices is not always a reality. Epistemology or inherent knowledge describes what is real and the way knowledge is passed down through generations.

Prior to Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) book, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, the only way acceptable and proper to doing research was perceived from the dominant lens. Under this lens, Indigenous participants are considered objects and their knowledge to be an *opinion*. It was, therefore, normal for western researchers to interpret and define Indigenous findings from a dominant discourse, resulting in negating the Indigenous narrative. Turning to *faasamoa* allows me to use a non-western lens, one that is closely related to the people, and the phenomenon that I study and one that strongly resonates with my own experiences and understandings.

Motu-Sa Island is the second island I visited. Motu-Sa Island encompasses all that is *faasamoa*, where I receive personal mentors from family members, church community, village and the school, as well as from the texts I have read. I do not seek to problematise it while I am on this

[1] Cowley-Malcolm (2013) – talanoaga is the noun and talanoa is the action word

island. However, when I stop at a small offshore island, and look back at the lofty peaks of traditional lore, I reflect a little about epistemology and the way knowledge is passed on.

Auto-ethnography

Motu-Mu Island is the third and last island I visited. In this island I turn to auto-ethnography to look at my own life. Auto-ethnography is an approach that allows someone to study and write about himself/herself analytically, about his/her lived experiences within the context of his or her own community (Adams, Jones & Ellis, 2015, cited by Qutoshi, 2015; Wall, 2006). Wall (2006, p. 1) described it as an "emerging qualitative research method" that opens the door to "highly personalized style" that draws on personal experiences to extend understanding about a social phenomenon. It is a specific research method that has been evident since the 1980s, and has become more popular in the 21st century (Muncey, 2014). Despite its growing popularity, an auto-ethnography approach is still often misunderstood and more rarely applied in research studies than similar research discourses such as autobiography and narrative (Muncey, 2014; Smith, 2005).

Wall (2008, p. 1) described the concept of auto-ethnography as "intriguing and promising" offering to give a "voice to personal experience for the purpose of extending sociological understanding" and that it allows access to individual's private worlds for rich data (Mandez, 2013). Ellis (1999) emphasised that auto-ethnography is very complex in practice (Ellis, 1999). In her conversation with a PhD candidate (Sylvia Smith), she described auto-ethnography as "difficult" (Ellis, 1999, p. 671).

Carolyn Ellis, a promoter and protagonist of auto-ethnography designed a presentation titled *Heartful Autoethnography* (Ellis, 1999). She shared a conversation she had with her PhD candidate, Sylvia Smith, who was looking for a qualitative research supervisor with a background in grounded research. In responding to Sylvia's request, Carolyn Ellis protested that she did not do grounded theory much anymore, but rather auto-ethnography. As Sylvia had not heard of such a term before asked as to what it was in which Carolyn replied:

> *Well, I start with my personal life. I pay attention to my physical feelings, thoughts, and emotions. I use what I call systematic sociological introspection and emotional recall to try to understand an experience I've lived through. Then I write my experience as a*

story. By exploring a particular life, I hope to understand a way of life … (Ellis, 1999, p. 671).

On hearing Carolyn's description of what auto-ethnography was, Sylvia apparently responded, "That doesn't sound too difficult." Perhaps Carolyn Ellis was not expecting such an immediate, simplistic response in return. On hearing this, she turned and delivered a long, comprehensive and detailed definition of the complexities of the approach and the reason why not many researchers use it:

Oh it's amazingly difficult. It's certainly not something that most people can do well. Most social scientists don't write well enough to carry it off… The self-questioning auto-ethnography demands are extremely difficult. So is confronting things about yourself that are less flattering. Believe me, honest autoethnographic exploration generates a lot of fears and self-doubts-and emotional pain. Just when you think you can't stand the pain anymore, well that's when the real work has only begun. Then there's the vulnerability of revealing yourself, not being able to take back what you've written or having any control over how readers interpret it. It's hard not to feel your life is being critiqued as well as your work. It can be humiliating. And the ethical issues: I warn, just wait until you're writing about your family members and loved ones who are part of your story (Ellis, 1999, p. 672).

According to Ellis (1999), auto-ethnography is complex in many ways because of the depth it demands from the individual in unpacking those very experiences that were superficially concealed in one's life. That was exactly what I had experienced in telling my personal story. Looking back on this process, it was emotional, self-tormenting and very challenging. It required a lot of courage, tenacity and stamina to get through difficult moments. At almost every step of my journey, unpacking my memories and my feelings about them made it somehow very hard to proceed after each part of the story. At the same time, I felt I owe it to others to know what I had been through, that such experiences are not isolated. Others too may have their own stories to tell. In doing so, I did my best to ensure I had explained the events in the best way I could. I probably cried more in the process of doing this study and telling my story than I had ever in my whole life. There were some good moments, some uplifting moments and some dark moments I would rather repress. However, this approach surely gave me the opportunity and

courage to expose myself for the sake of my beloved Samoans, in the hope of encouraging transformation in parenting practices and in giving grounded meaning to *faasamoa*.

For this study, I utilise auto-ethnography to offer another perspective into ongoing debates about *faasamoa* and education. I explore the forces that shaped the way I perceive my childhood upbringing, and how those experiences further influenced the way I interact and support my children's education as a migrant parent in Aotearoa New Zealand. I also witness personal change and transformation, social, emotional and physical that occurred along the way. Writing about my life was not only an eye-opening experience, it also offered opportunity to constantly reflect, be encouraged, be empowered, and be transformed into a better person and a better parent.

Importance of honesty – although painful

A further important consideration in my research approach is to put into action the values I hold as a Samoan woman who loves *faasamoa* but is aware of the need to be critical of my culture. I see an imperative to be honest and to have courage to speak out despite the pain of doing so. Here I draw on the words of Tupua Tamasese Efi (2014), the former Head of State of Samoa in one of his captivating speeches titled *Matters of the Heart*. As a keynote speaker for the Youth Justice Conference, Efi raised the need for those in leadership to be willing to step up, to address, honestly and justly, the issues facing young (Pacific) criminals and their families. He said:

> *Youth justice is a cry from deep within the heart. To answer that cry we need people, including myself, to be willing to speak – faults and all, and without pretensions – from deep within our hearts. This puts us in a very vulnerable position. Nobody is perfect, but equally nobody wants to expose their imperfections – especially when it has to do with matters we believe private; to be nobody's business but ours. But that business is precisely what makes us human; what defines our strengths and our weaknesses, and is exactly what we need to probe in order to heal the pain of our young offenders, to understand the context of their offending, and to keep them from reoffending. (Tupua Tamasese, 2014).*

This too is my intension in this thesis, to explore and unpack some of the sensitive issues in terms of Samoan parenting that are often raised in informal conversations but have not been raised elsewhere, even within academia. From personal experiences of involvement within

educational conversations over the years, the real issues that impact on many aiga, families, are not part of community conversations because of the tensions often provoked about speaking rights. Although many Samoan-born Samoans have been living in New Zealand most of their lives, strong views of *faasamoa* in regards to who can speak and when to speak has not changed much at all. Parent-children communication is still a one-way system. While many Samoans in New Zealand continue to hold strict control over their New Zealand born children, the Samoans in Samoa have changed the way they parent and interact with their children, compared to how children were in the 70s and the 80s. Moreover, various Samoans have different and strong opinions and perceptions of what it means to be Samoan, and being a Samoan parent, especially in New Zealand.

The research process

The research study has three inter-related core components: Samoan parents' responses to my initial research question, an examination of Samoan epistemology, *faasamoa*, and my own story. Simultaneously, I am also exploring how I as a Samoan mature student navigate the complexities of academia. Here I describe the processes I followed in each of these components.

The fieldwork

In the fieldwork, the material of the first island, nine local Christchurch Samoan parents were recruited as participants in the study. Table 1 details the participants and they are further described below. All the participants have sydonyms although they all opted for their own names to be use.

Table 1 *Participants in my interviews.*

Pseudonyms	Male or Female	Where born	Length of time in NZ	Occupation	Level of Schooling NZ/Samoa	No of children in H/Ed & all children	Religious affiliation

Ina	M	Samoa	25	labourer	High Sch/Sam	2/4	Non-traditional
Moli	F	Samoa	29	Housewife	Primary school/Sam	3/5	Non-traditional
Losa	F	NZ	N/A	Student	Higher Ed	1/4	N/A
Lesina	F	Samoa	22	Teacher-aide	High Sch/ Samoa	2/3	Both
Lui	M	Samoa	27	Labourer	High Sch/ Sam	2/4	None-traditional
Moana	F	Samoa	25	Health worker	High Ed. NZ	1/3	Traditional
June	F	Samoa	24	Labourer	High Sch Samoa	1/3	Non-traditional
Laina	F	Samoa	26	Sickness beneficiary	High Sch Am. Sam	1/5	Traditional
Taua	M	Samoa	42	Labourer	Primary	1/2	Non-traditional

Participants' profiles

Ina is male, born, raised and educated in Samoa. He attended school up to fifth form but he had never had a chance to further his education because he had to support his father in their family plantation. Ina is a father of four, and had been living in New Zealand for over twenty-five years. He's currently working as a supervisor at the parole office in one of the local prisons. Ina's family attend a non-traditional Samoan church and his spouse is New Zealand Maori.

Moli is female born and raised in Samoa. Moli had some education but only up to early primary school level. Her family circumstances forced her to give up schooling. Moli is a housewife and a mother of five. Three of Moli's children had already completed their first degree, with one

studying towards a master's degree. Her two younger children were at their senior year of high school. Moli's husband is New Zealand European; and her family attended a non-traditional Samoan church.

Losa is female, born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand. Her husband is New Zealand European whom she shared four children with. Three of Losa's children already had tertiary qualifications with her youngest son studying towards a degree in teaching. She studied full-time towards a PhD. Losa has not had any church affiliation whatsoever.

Lesina was born and raised in Samoa. She attended school in Samoa up to fifth form. Lesina's husband is Samoan and they have three children. Two of their children were already studying toward their degrees at two different universities. Her youngest child was the head-girl of her high school where Lesina worked as a teacher-aide. Lesina and her family attended a local church where Samoan and English languages were the two main languages in school.

Tui is male, born and raised in Samoa. He was educated in Samoa up to fifth form at high school. Tui shares four children with his Samoan wife. Three of their children were already attending tertiary institutions. Their youngest child was in her final year of high school. Tui worked as a labourer at a local factory.

Moana is female born and raised in Samoa. She began her early education in Samoa before her family left for New Zealand, where she completed her secondary schooling. After high school, Moana worked as a labourer in a local factory. While working during the day, she was studying at night at a local polytechnic for a diploma in accounting. Moana was currently working as a mental health. Moana and her Samoan husband have three children together. Their oldest son was already studying at university; with the two younger ones still at school.

June is female born and raised in Samoa. She attended school up to fifth form in Samoa before she left Samoa for Aotearoa New Zealand. June and her Samoan husband have four children together. Their oldest daughter was a student at one of the local tertiary institutions, whereas, the three younger ones were still at school.

Laina is female, born and raised in Samoa. She attended primary school in Samoa, then in American Samoa before she returned to Samoa where she completed her fifth form at high

school. Laina's husband is Samoan snd she shares five children with him. Their youngest son was a student at the University of Canterbury. Both Laina and her husband were on the sickness benefit and have had some serious health conditions. Laina had worked as a labourer almost all her life but during the interview, she was unable to work due to some long tern illness.

Taua is male, born and raised in Samoa. His education was only up to junior level at primary school. Taua and his Samoan wife have two children. Their oldest son was a student at the University of Canterbury. He was a labourer at a local factory.

Interviews

In qualitative studies, participant observation, face-to-face in-depth interviews and focus group discussions are the most common methods researchers apply to collect data (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). For this study, data were collected through in-depth interviews.

To conduct my interviews, I followed Kuhn's (2020) Six Step Process to conducting qualitative research interviews: 1) target interviewees, 2) having their contact details, 3) pre-schedule interviews, 4) prepare open-ended interview questions, 5) introduction and clarifications before the interview begins, and finally, 6) the digitally recording the interviews.

Open-ended questions

I used open-ended questioning in order to gain insight into the participating parents' experiences, beliefs and understandings of how they engaged and supported their children in furthering their education. Open-ended questions require the respondents to construct their own responses in their own words, compared to close-ended questions (Popping, 2015). An open-ended questioning approach is compatible with talanoa as it invites participants to share information they think is important rather than using them as sources of pre-determined data. However, at the start of my study I felt a need to make sure I collected what I then saw as relevant data so I framed an overarching question and some follow-up sub-questions

Research question and sub-questions of the fieldwork

The overarching question for my fieldwork was: *How do Christchurch Samoan parents engage in furthering their children's education?* This question intended to explore the support parents

provided in furthering their children's education. In answering the question the participants were also prompted to talk about their personal experiences of growing up as children and the level of support they remembered from their earlier years of formal schooling until they left school.

The following are further questions that arise from the overarching question:

- What do you do to encourage your children in furthering their education?
- What motivates you to do what you do?
- How did your parents/families support you in your education growing up?
- How has *faasamoa* influenced the way you parent in NZ?
- Who supports you to support your children?

How the participants were recruited

For this study, I was looking for Samoan parents whose children were studying at either university or polytechnic institutions because I wanted to understand how these parents engaged in their children's lives in furthering their education. Selection of participants was a very difficult task in this study due to the effects of the earthquakes of 2011.

In recruiting the participants for this study, I first asked the director of the Pacific Development Team to post an advertisement on the UC Pasifika link to invite interested parents to take part in the study. This was prior to the Pacific Orientation of 2011 on campus. During the orientation ceremony, I was given a five minutes slot to tell parents about my study and what they could do to help me. That was a very successful recruitment process because all the parents who were present knew they were all invited. About fifteen parents volunteered themselves, especially parents who were working during the day and were home in the late afternoon. Other parents stated that they wanted to be part of the study, but they worked long hours or had other community commitments outside of the home. Those who were interested signed the consent forms and we exchanged phone numbers with a plan I was to contact them to arrange for the actual dates and time, but suggested to have the interviews in their own home. Unfortunately, a week later, the second major earthquake in Canterbury took place and since then not one of the original participants who volunteered was available for the interviews. The earthquakes had taken a huge toll on many families and so much was going on in the community. After a time I

was advised to recruit new participants for the study. I did so, shoulder tapping those I knew through my church and my work.

Recording

Written and verbal consent was given to use the digital recorder to record each interview. A recording device was used to record each interview and I also had a pen and paper handy in case something unexpected came up. Prior to the interview, I made sure the recorder was working well. I practiced recording and stopping to ensure it was doing what it was supposed to do.

Transcribing

In transcribing the recordings, it was important that "thick" descriptions (Geertz, 1973) were all transcribed word for word. For this reason, I chose to transcribe all the interviews myself. This process was very time consuming and extremely exhausting. However, it was also very beneficial for me, in terms of getting myself familiarised to raw data once again. This helped me to engage with the data over and over again, as I listened intently while transcribing them at the same time. It gave me deep insights into the participants' lived experiences of their world. In this study, I decided to exclude the non-deliberate small utterances from the main data.

Translating

Mondada (2007) noted: "Transcription that involves translation from one language to another presents an especially complex and challenging task". Mondada's concern was primarily on situations where the translator is not a native speaker of the language used by the participants of the research. However, as a native speaker of the Samoan language, and being a former teacher in Samoa before I migrated to New Zealand, I believe I have the credentials to translate the interviews accurately as any other Samoan. Most of the interviews were in Samoan language and some were in English. As a former teacher in Samoa, as well as court interpreter for the Samoan language in New Zealand, I have mastered translating the interviews into Samoan. However, to ensure the validity of this study, I had checked with other Samoan staff members at my university to make sure that the translation was accurate and just.

Data analysis and reporting

Because I want to preserve the multi-vocal aspect of talanoa, I have resisted analysing what the participants said according to any pre-determined theoretical basis, including one that might be suggested by elements of *faasamoa* (which had been my initial plan). Instead, I have reported each participant's story separately and then, in a following chapter, looked for recurring themes.

In as much as I do reflect and interpret the participants' accounts, as well as the other sections of this study, I see this as part of my own voyaging through the turbulent oceans of research rather than as a summative interpretation of what the participants reported.

Ethical considerations

I gained ethical approval from University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee. The letter of approval is contained in Appendix A. In accordance with this approval, I provided letters of information and consent forms to participants. I assured them that their participation was voluntary and that they would be given pseudonyms.

Having to recruit Samoan parents as my research participants, I was aware of the dynamic of the participants in terms of status, gender and age. Having a very small Samoa community in Christchurch, it was not surprising that there were only two participants I had not known or met before. For the rest of the participants, I had known most of them through community meetings, through church or during the local community meetings. This knowledge of the participants did not change how I interacted with them, and how I listened intently to their own stories and their hopes and desires for their children in how they supported them. However, my ethical responsibilities also involved being mindful of the types of language to address those parents and tone of my voice as I asked questions. As a Samoan born and raised, who had been teaching in Samoa before I left the islands, I was aware of the language and manner in which I conduct myself both culturally and professionally. In appreciation of the participants' stories and the time they offered me to interview them, I am committed to tell their stories as honestly as I could. Not only that, I am also aware of my position as both insider and outsider in regards to this research. For this reason, I allowed the participants to have the interviews wherever they wanted whether at their home or at another venue they chose.

Developing an account of *faasamoa* epistemology

The context and the knowledge of *faasamoa* I apply in this study came not just from my own personal experiences of growing up in Samoa, but also came from many personal mentors and from texts produced by Samoan scholars and educators.

I began to draw my understandings together for my work in the Pasifika Centre at my university, and then further developed it for this research project. I developed an oral presentation accompanied by a slide show that I presented at several conferences including those of the New Zealand Association for Educational Research and the Pasifika Symposium at the University of Canterbury. These presentations invited discussion with other Pasifika scholars as well as with those who were not previously familiar with Samoan culture. I received both questions and critiques. These discussions enabled me to further refine my material and my explanations.

Growing up in Samoa provided me with a filter to check what I read and heard from others. Also important in the development of my understanding was a pool of commonly held knowledge within the Samoan community. Many of the foundational concepts in my account I drew from documents produced for the Ministry of Education as a guide to teachers of Pasifika children as well as from the teachings of various church pastors. These core concepts were further amplified by the writing of Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi (2018, 2009, 2003), Maiava Carmel Peteru (1997, 2010), Tagaloatele Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop (2010, 2015), and other leading Samoan scholars.

These sources combined to make a pool that I report in my account. The waters of the pool were not always settled and still, but it was the knowledge I held, even if it didn't always seem to make sense. I have reported it as I have understood it, acknowledging that my understanding is personal and limited. I also acknowledge it as an important island in my research journey.

My story

My personal narrative grew and grew. Initially, I saw it as a fairly short statement of my own positionality within the research. Then as I developed my account of *faasamoa,* which was fairly idealistic and impersonal in nature, I was increasingly confronted by tensions between my own experience and the abstract account of culture. Identifying, owning and writing about the elements of my experience that created contradictions and tensions was a vulnerable process. I

tended to write around in circles, perhaps a way to avoid parts that hurt too much. I often intended to delete the whole story. I finally decided to develop it fully and to include it, because it too was part of a complex truth about Samoan parenting. It needed to be shared. For us, as Samoans to move forward, I think we need to acknowledge the pain, as well as the goodness of getting to where we are now. And even describing where we are now is elusive changing, multifaceted, and my story, with similarities to and differences from other stories, is part of it. I offer it as another island to visit.

The ocean and its currents

A further part of my investigation asks how I, as a Samoan-born mature student and teacher within my university, navigate my way through my research to produce a doctorate thesis. My journey has been of mixed blessings and struggles. I work and teach at a tertiary institution which in some eyes, may qualify me as someone who can be expected to know things. The reality of my world is that I am just addicted to learning because I have an inquisitive mind. The more I do not know, the more I want to know and my addiction to learning set me up to set out on my current study in which I have found myself vulnerable, lonely and stressed because of my many limitations academically. As a Samoan mother who wished to have her children raised the Samoan way (which didn't work), I now struggle to navigate around the turbulences of academia. Not only that, I am the first child of my parents to have ever entered this level of education, I am also the only one among my siblings who has come this far. Furthermore, being Samoan born, my academic struggle doing a PhD is only one aspect of my journey. Having come this far in education has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage side is that, I love learning and I know I have so much to learn from others. The disadvantaged aspect of that is that I feel a responsibility to achieve academic success in order to fulfil family and community obligations and to contribute to family faalavelave.

I report aspects of my struggle, my doubts and by tentative discoveries as I rest in the small off-shore islets and particularly in the final chapter where I talk further about the turbulent seas and how I see these as contributing to the meaning of my thesis.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is that, I lack experience as a researcher. Therefore, dealing with a large size of data may have compromised the scope and depth of discussion in many levels compared to the works of more experienced scholars. Other limitations are obvious from the fact that it is a bricolage of three ways of looking at a very complex and multifaceted situation. None of the three ways claims to be generalisable or fully comprehensive. There are many other stories and perspectives to explore and record.

Therefore, this study simply offers a further window to examine the complex territory of how Samoan parents engage with the furthering education of their children. It offers a platform for further questioning, debate and investigation.

SECTION TWO

Motu-o-Tagata Island: Island of People

Motu-o-Tangata is the first metaphorical island I visited. It is the one that has a close relationship with my university. It is a populous island and it is there, I found the participants for my research. I enjoyed meeting the people, talking with them and asking them questions that addressed the questions I had posed as the subject of my research. I found the people co-operative and friendly and quite willing to talk to me. I saw them as people just like me: smiling, rather humble, wanting to make me feel comfortable by joking and willing to openly share their experiences and thinking.

Because of its relationship with my university the island has a library - a concrete building with hard covered books and lots of computers. The books I opened were very dry with lots of academic words and the chapters inside them seemed to take a long time getting to the point of saying anything. They did not seem warm and they did not have any jokes. The people who looked after the library did not make any jokes either, but they directed me to the computers and told me I could use them to access academic journals from around the world. While that made me feel like a serious academic and eager to begin my new journey in learning it also intimidated me a little. I knew that one of my first tasks was to write a literature review. I walked around the library and looked at the spines of hundreds of shelved books and typed key words into the catalogue on one of the computers. There were so many books and so many issues of each journal with so many articles in each one. I fought down my panic and opened one book, slowly read the first page and made copious notes.

I spent a lot of time in the library but I never felt really comfortable there. I knew the books were full of knowledge and I wanted to learn from them, but it felt like they did not share their knowledge generously: sometimes they seemed to make it hard to work out what the key issues were and sometimes they seemed to say so many things that it was hard to decide which ones to copy down. It was only when I talked with the other students who had come to the island, and share their library with me that the ideas in the books seemed to come alive.

This first island was not one I discovered by accident nor did I come alone. There was a group of us who came together to that island. We set out from the university with a map of where the island was and instructions about what we should do when we got there. Each of us had our own research question which we had formulated with our supervisor before we set out. We had

been given a set of expectations about what we were expected to achieve. Having the others in the group with me gave me a sense of support but it did not last long. First we heard that the supervisor who had sent us out to the island had left the university and that we each had to find new mentors to work with. Then gradually, others who set out on the journey with me left and I felt vulnerable and alone.

In this section I report what I gathered from the library, I describe the people who became my participants and I report what I learned from them. I report these sections in the form I shaped them on the island itself, ready to present to my new academic supervisor. Accordingly the material is organised in three chapters and shows my desire to be objective and to write in what I hoped was an appropriate academic style.

I then sail out to a tiny offshore islet, pause there, and reflect on my journey so far. I write about this reflection more freely because it is still something that is emerging.

I became very aware that my journey was not finished and I explain where I decided to voyage next.

CHAPTER THREE

Literature review

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on the roles minority and migrant parents play in their children's lives. It examines studies that seek to understand parents' standpoint within the powerful discourses that construct what and how parents function within society, and how they try to enhance student success leading to furthering education. The review addresses both international and local literature and is presented in five parts.

The first part reviews literature that provides a brief historical background of Pacific Islanders' emigration to Aotearoa New Zealand, and the challenges they experience in their home away from home. The next part reviews work that presents a challenge to the application of the deficit model in search for solutions to improving the academic achievements of students from what are seen as disadvantaged backgrounds. The following section reviews studies that critically analyse the parent involvement model, its implications and challenges for minority and migrant communities and their families. Next are reviewed studies that present the theories of Baumrind and Maslow in regards to issues of parenting behaviours and conduct and how they influence children's health and well-being that leads to enhanced learning. The final section reviews literature that highlights debates as whether physical discipline is (or isn't) part of *faasamoa* and how this debate plays out within the Samoan community.

A brief historical background of Pacific migration to Aotearoa New Zealand

The statistics of Immigration New Zealand (2021) show that reasons for migration from one country to another are many. The data suggests that for many Pacific islanders, it is their colonial relationship with New Zealand that encouraged them to leave their island nations. Pitt and Macpherson (1974) and Macpherson & Macpherson (2009) reported that Pacific Islanders have had different phases of migration, which began soon after the progression of colonisation, when New Zealand took over the control of the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau from Great Britain and then later had control of the western part of Samoa from Germany in 1914. Since then, New Zealand encouraged Islanders from its colonies to migrate for paid employment here.

As New Zealand's economy was booming, and as many New Zealander men and women left for war, more islanders were recruited to fill the labour shortage of the 1940s.

Meleisea and Schoeffel (1998) pointed out that a significant emigration from Samoa took place in the 1960s after Samoa became independent and the Treaty of Friendship was introduced between the two nations. Since then, the first wave of Samoan migrants in paid employment, took pride in their hard work and self-sacrificed because as employment was plenty, they sought opportunities to increase hours of work when they could. For many, working long hours enabled them to save money to make remittances home to build a family house for their parents; and to increase the status of the family within the community by contributing to various projects within the village such as school or church buildings (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1998). Again, New Zealand's booming economy encouraged an influx of Pacific Island migration to fill the labour shortage of the 1960s and 70s, under a visa free deal. The invitation was extended to neighbouring islands of Tonga and Fiji. Shankman (1976) described this era as the "pull factor", where there was a high demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labourers. Many of those labourers lost their jobs in the first global recession (Rendell & Sleeman (2008) and others were caught in the Dawn Raids era (Anae, 2020) where many of those found with no proper visas were deported home.

A number of research studies (Whitehead, 2008; Parsons et al. 2012; Department of Labour, 2009; Masgoret et al. 2009; North, 2007) reported on how the global economic down-turn of the late 70s and 80s have had tremendous negative impact on the Pacific peoples and their families over the years. Such events have further contributed to the extent of Pacific peoples' struggles which resulted in the detrimental effects on quality of family life, and especially on their children's education. While some families have been able to adjust in ways that allow their children to achieve academically against all odds including furthering education, the majority of the Pacific student population have not.

The role of the host country towards early Pacific migrants

Migration is not a new concept. It is a concept that has revolved since the human race existed. Blakemore (2019) notes human migration began since the earliest movements of humans from Africa. Since then, humans have been on the move contributing to about 3 percent of the world's population of at least "258 million people, [who] live outside their country of origin" (UNGA, 2018). Migration, according to Hombrados-Mendieta, Millan-Franco, Gomez-Jacinto,

Gonzelez-Castro, Martos-Mendez and Garcia-Cid (2019), is an inescapable phenomenon worldwide. In recognising various reasons for human migration, the United Nations has set up a Global Compact agreement, similar to that of the New York Declaration for Migration (UNGA, 2018), to ensure the safety and protection of migrants in the host country (Hombrados-Mendieta et al. 2018; Ward et al. 2018; Gonzelez-Barrera & Connor, 2019; Msengi et al. 2015; Migrant Forum in Asia, 2013). The United Nations asserts that immigration has immense opportunity and benefits for the migrants, host communities and communities of origin. Gonzalez-Barrera and Connor (2013) share a similar perspective about migrants. They claim that migrants are a strength to add on to what the host country has already, but not a burden as others claim it to be. Regardless of the significance of the Global Compact agreement for the health and wellbeing of migrants, it is a non-legal binding arrangement. It is somehow up to each nation to determine how and what care they afford for the new migrants. For this reason, studies about migration and the challenges migrants have to endure in the host country have argued that social support is necessary to minimise the effects of health and well-being issues on migrant communities.

While the notion of migration to new places or countries may include a sense of excitement and the feeling of freedom when making the move, it is often associated with many challenges. Hombrados-Mendieta et al. (2019) report that many migrants experienced stress in the process "because of the multitude of changes and various losses that migrants experience" when leaving their country of origin (p. 2). Chen et al. (2017), Giacco et al., (2018) and Hombrados-Mendieta et al. (2019) clearly indicate the importance of creating some processes for new migrants' integration into a new community, because without such a process, new migrants are more likely to experience health and wellbeing issues. Simich, Beiser, Stewart and Mwakarimba (2005) suggest a need to have social support available within the host country, to enable a smooth transition for new migrants to integrate into normal life in their new home away from home. They defined social support to include "interactions with family members, friends, peers and … professionals that communicate information, esteem, practical, or emotional help" (Simich et al. 2005). Furthermore, they insist that social support would not only play an important role during the major transition periods by enhancing coping, moderating the impact of stressors and promoting health for new migrants, it can also function as both a "safety net" and a "springboard" for migrants (Simich et al. 2005, p. 259). They contend that social support was a basic determinant of health, just like the need for food, shelter and income especially for immigrants.

As a host country which encouraged Pacific Islanders' migration to assist New Zealand in its labour force since the late-1800s, New Zealand did not provide social support that was crucial to Pacific migrants' health and wellbeing. New Zealand was not as prepared to support the island migrants, compared to Australia (Millbank, Phillips & Bohm, 2006) and Canada (Makarenko, 2010; Reitz, 2003). As a host nation that encouraged Pacific migration during its colonisation of the Island Nations, the New Zealand Government was oblivious to diverse needs of the Pacific migrants shown by the lack of appropriate support and social services to help in the integration of new migrants to cope in New Zealand life. Rather, Meleisea and Schoeffel (1998) claimed that New Zealand saw the Pacific migrants from its territories as an extension of its colonial dominance rather than migrants who were contributing to and making a difference to New Zealand society. As a result, thousands of early Islanders who migrated here over the years, have been totally dependent on their relatives for social support to find employment and accommodation and for interpretation. They then needed to learn how to live the New Zealand dream from the host families who were struggling already (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1998). Thus, the lack of necessary support placed many Pacific families under pressure as they took on extra responsibilities to accommodate extended family members within limited spaces in their homes. Vui-Talitu (2019) and Field (2013) argue that this trend has not changed, regardless of the many years of steady contributions Pacific peoples have made to New Zealand society and economy in terms of its labour force, sports, culture and politics. New Zealand's perceptions of Pacific Islanders influenced the lack of support for all Pacific migrants and regardless of many decades of Pacific settlements in the land of the long white cloud, very little has improved for the majority of Pacific families in New Zealand, including the poor performance of its student populatin in the academic arena.

The challenges to the deficit approach

As a migrant community, Pacific Islanders' struggles in their new home are real. Although their reasons for leaving their islands are many, one notable motive for migrating is to provide better opportunities for their children in terms of employment and especially in higher education that are limited to only a few in the islands. Again, this community's low level of educational background increases the state of their struggles to get by in daily life. Against all odds, some parents have been able to navigate New Zealand life, with an understanding that their hard work would benefit their children and to gain a more secure life.

Since the reforms of the 1990s, Pacific communities were identified to be significantly disadvantaged socially and economically compared to any other ethnic groups in Aotearoa New Zealand (Poland, Paterson, Perese & Stillman, 2007). These challenges have major negative effects on the Pacific communities and especially for the children. Debbie Sorensen a former CEO of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand claimed that Pacific children are the victims of many of the hardships their families expeience (Sorensen et al., 2015). This has resulted in many Pacific families experiencing poor quality of family relationships and life. Regardless of the complexity of navigating New Zealand life, some Pacific families have been able to confront those challenges and provide support conducive to their children's needs. Although this has been a similar scenario over the years, many studies out Pacific students' low academic achievement tend to focus on why the majority of the student population failed, rather than exploring why some students from similar background succeed. This has been highly problematic, because any study that aims at why something or someone fails, the focus is on all the negative aspects of something.

Various scholars (Weiner, 2006; Jackson, 2010; Irizarry, 2006; Kasprisin, 2015) have discussed the dominance of a deficit lens in educational debates and arguments about the academic success for minority and migrant students and their families. Valencia (1997, p. 3) points out that the deficit model evolved from patronising and prejudiced thinking which "blames the victims of institutional oppression for their own victimization by referring to negative stereotypes and assumptions regarding certain groups or communities." According to Valencia, such thinking has been questioned and challenged by many behavioural and social scientists due to its "unduly simplistic, lack of empirical verification, more ideological than scientific, grounded in classism and racism, and offers counterproductive educational prescriptions for school success" (1997, p. 2). Valencia further argues that this type of approach is unethical and disempowering to any disadvantaged communities who wish to improve their ways of life and living situations in a European dominant society.

Why some students from minority and migrant backgrounds succeed or fail

A multitude of studies (Clarke, 1983; Nechyba, McEwan & Older-Aquilar, 1999; Borman & Rachuba, 2001; Deschenes, Cuban & Tyack, 2001; Biddulph, Biddulph & Biddulph, 2003; Desforges with Abouchaar, 2003; Bempechat, 2006; Vaughn, 2008 & Children's Commissioner, 2013) have investigated various factors that enhance or hinder the success or

failure of students from minority and migrant communities. Although this is a significant issue in most European dominated societies, it is a complex phenomenon, because as Nechyba, McEwan and Older-Aquilar (2009) point out, "academic achievement and attainment are influenced by a multitude of factors" (p. 5). Such factors include socio-economic status, ethnicity and gender issues (Strand, 2014), English proficiency (or lack of it) (Sung, 2014), issues of social and emotional needs (Haynes, 2013; Becker & Luther, 2001), poor student-teacher relationships (Caton, 2012), the culture of poverty (Strauss, 2013), parents who do not care (Lightfoot, 2004) or lack of parent involvement (Quezada, 2011; Chavkin, 1993; Lopez, Scribner & Mahitivanichcha, 2001) to name a few.

Furthermore, Kim (2008) has pointed out that one of the most challenging aspect in the 21st century is the breakdown of the traditional family ideal, to more blended families. In Western societies, poor minority and migrant parents experience many challenges that often impact negatively on many aspects of the home environment and on the children's lives including their well-being.

Regardless of such complexity in terms of pinpointing exactly where the issue begins, Nechyba et al. (2009) note that no matter what those circumstances maybe, all factors linked to the issue of student success (or lack of it) that tend to relate to issues within the community, the school and the home. Price-Mitchell (2011), Kemal (2011), Watson, Sanders-Lawson and MacNeal (2012), and Hoover-Dempsey (1887) have variously suggested that decades of investigation into how and what constitutes student success for poor minority and migrant communities have led to the emergence of the parent involvement model. Comer and Haynes (1991), Auerbach (2004, 2006, 2007), Davis-Kean (2005), Delgado-Gaitan (1991) and Hoover-Dempsey (1997) have argued that the parent involvement model has been widely accepted and recognised as an essential practice to foster positive outcomes for all students including students from minority and migrant backgrounds as discussed next.

The parent involvement model

History of the parent involvement model

The parent involvement model is not a new concept. Historically, it's a concept that has evolved over the years, going through various stages and name changes, depending on beliefs and values of society within a specific period of time. Tekin (2011) claimed that the concept existed since the beginning of the 20th century, when American parents got themselves involved in their

children's nursery schooling, mostly in educational centres that were located in the college or in suburban towns. Most of the parents who took part in the early programme were stay-at-home mothers who served as paraprofessionals in the classroom. According to Gatwick (2007), the roles of the participating parents included assisting the teachers as well as taking care of domestic duties within the facility to help decrease budget costs and to build bonds between families and schools (cited by Tekin, 2011). These parents according to Gatwick (2007) knew what they wanted and what was good for their children. This understanding saw an increase in parents' engagement from the 1920s to the 1960s. But as far as Gatwick (2007) was concerned, those efforts were exclusive for middle-class families only.

Furthermore, Brooks-Gun, Berlin and Fugini (2000) noted that the parent involvement concept was socially constructed and implemented as a compensation program to improve the academic performance of children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds between the 1960s and 70s. The reason for this according to Bakker and Denessen (2007), was because the federal and government recognised that the culture of the school was not effectively supporting minority student success. They, therefore, changed the policies to reflect and normalise the attitudes and behaviours of the white middle-class parents as the best approach to guarantee successful schooling for all students, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, Bakker and Denessen (2007) also noted that among other activities, the *parent involvement* initiative was established to encourage minority parents' engagement in their children's education especially for children who were at risk of failing. As more research focused on the parent involvement concept as the strongest predictor of child educational outcomes, the credibility of this concept has increased. Parenting is seen to have the power to reverse the high failure rate for students from minority and migrant backgrounds.

The significance of the parenting involvement model

Many studies regarding the parenting involvement model have insisted that this specific model is a major factor in raising educational standards for all students regardless of ethnic backgrounds (Grolnick, 1997; Marr, 2008; Chavkin & William, 1987; Berger, 2008; OECD, 1997; Auerback, 2004 & 2006). O'Bryan, Braddock and Dawkins (2006) note the importance of this concept in fostering children's positive attitudes toward school. Garcia and Thornton (2014) supported this notion as they demonstrated in their study that parent involvement in their children's lives helped children to improve their academic performance, reduced absenteeism,

reduced risks of dropping out of school, and that helped to enhance children's academic achievement.

Challenges of the parent involvement model for teachers and parents

Despite such advocacy of the parent involvement model and the claims that it contributes positively to minority and migrant student success, the opinions of teachers, dominant parents and those of minority parents do not align with each other. Furthermore, studies by Smrekar and Cohen-Vogel (2001), Finders and Lewis (2002), Conchas (2001), Lawson (2003), Jackson and Remillard (2005), Anderson and Minke (2007), Robinson and Harris (2014) all argue that to schools, teachers and educators, parents' absence from the school facilities or at their children's school activities have been interpreted as they do not care or are uninterested in their child's education. However, Anderson and Minke (2007), and Anderson (1998) argue that some parents are very involved in their children's education if they know that their engagement is meaningful and authentic.

Another challenge minority and migrant parents experience under the parent involvement model is that teachers and institutions have different expectations of what and how parents should be involved or demonstrate their involvement in their children's education (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Finders & Lewis, 1994; Tyack, 2009). Different expectations as to how or what parents should be involved with in their children's lives have created tensions between teachers and parents. According to Dauber and Epstein (1992), teachers blamed parents for lack of involvement in their children's education; whereas parents refute teachers' claims in terms of their involvement. As far as parents were concerned, if teachers wanted them to support their children then they should at least tell them as to how they could help their children at home (Dauber & Epstein, 1992).

Furthermore, Koutrouba, Antonopoulou, Tsitsas and Zenakou (2009) also found there are tensions between teachers and parents in their home-school partnership relationship study. The study explored teachers' perceptions of Greek parents' involvement in their children's schooling. While all parents have high expectations on their children to do well, they were not as involved as the teachers would have wanted them to. Teachers suggested that, parents' participation could improve teacher-parent collaboration, beneficial for the school, the families and the pupils. Koutrouba et al. (2009) noted teachers' disappointment that their aspirations for parent involvement within matters of the school that could benefit children, was not shared by

the parents. According to the teachers, the level of Greek parents' involvement was very poor and infrequent.

Diana Baumrind and Abraham Maslow's theories

The theories of Diana Baumrind (1966) and Abraham Maslow (1943) have provided some invaluable insights as to types of parenting and various support conducive to children's learning and wellbeing. Diana Baumrind's theory of parenting styles distinguishes good parenting from not so good parenting. The differences in such parenting provides a clear picture of why the style of parenting is significant to children's success or lack of success in education and in life. On the other hand, Abraham Maslow's theory concerning the hierarchy of needs provides some context into understanding the importance of meeting all basic human needs in order progress and to navigate successfully into higher levels of needs that leads to positive wellbeing and making good decisions in life.

Baumrind's parenting styles - Their consequences on students' behaviour

Although parenting is one of the most rewarding undertakings for many parents, it is also one of the most demanding and challenging roles as far as humanity is concerned. The reason for this, according to Cherry (2019) is because there are "So many decisions to make, so many opinions to contend with, so many options for how to handle things … [and] then dealing with the consequences our parenting choices can have on our kids". One of the most highlighted aspects of parenting that divides good parenting from other types of parenting, is the parenting styles typology identified by Baumrind (1966).

As a developmental psychologist, Baumrind conducted a series of studies in the 1960s, which investigated parents' styles of parenting, based on the demands they placed on their children, and how they responded to their children's needs. During those series of studies, Baumrind (1966) identified three levels of parenting, *authoritarian, authoritative* and *permissive*. The fourth one, *neglectful,* was later added from the work of two other researchers.

Authoritarian parenting

Baumrind (1966) describes the authoritarian style of parenting as an absolute standard where children are required to obey and follow the rules of their parents no matter what. The parents are the law and therefore children have no say in decision making, or in choosing things for

themselves. The parents give orders and the children are to follow thorough and execute them accordingly. The children are to know their place, restricting autonomy, with little or no room to make mistakes. Punitive and forceful measures including physical or verbal threats are applied when the child's actions or beliefs conflict with those of the parents. Authoritarian parents are domineering and dictatorial.

Studies such as Milbrand (2019) noted that authoritarian style of parenting has major negative connotations on children's wellbeing, self-esteem and confidence and trust issues. Decision-making is not encouraged under this parenting approach and therefore, children raised under the authoritarian rule develop a *follower* mentality and readily conform without thinking for themselves. Parents and children of authoritarian parenting do not have close relationships but are constantly fearful of their parents and often isolate themselves from the company of their parents.

Authoritative parenting

Authoritative parenting style, according to Baumrind (1966) is the total opposite of authoritarian style. This method of parenting sees parents and their children working alongside each other as a team, with parents providing support, guidance and comfort for the children. These parents are willing to support their children when they make mistakes rather than punishing them. They expect their children to be assertive, socially responsible, self-regulated and cooperative. They do not force their children or apply physical discipline to monitor their children's conduct, but set clear instructions and expectations for them. Authoritative parents are not critical of their children when they make mistakes, but allow those opportunities to teach new skills so the child can avoid making the same mistakes. These parents include children in family decision-making, and are willing to hear them out. Parents and children of authoritative parenting have a close and positive relationship.

Smetana (2017) noted that among the four styles of parenting, authoritative parenting style has been widely characterised worldwide as most beneficial for children's and adolescents' wellbeing and learning. Authoritative parenting style describes the roles of the parents to be highly responsive to their children's needs, sets reasonable limits and demand mature behaviour. Walfish (2010) describes this specific style of parenting as the optimal goal in the role of parenting. These parents demonstrate warmth, love and nurturing in their daily

interactions, setting boundaries and limits, as well as providing opportunities for their children to learn how to become responsible, confident, happy and resilient adults.

Permissive parenting

Permissive parenting is the third style of parenting according to Baumrind (1966). In this method of parenting parents are highly responsive to their children's needs and demands, but have low expectations of their children's conduct and behaviour. Permissive parenting sets very few limits for their children but exclude any rules that may jeopardise their relationship with their children. This parenting style is non-traditional, lenient, and often parents would just give in to the child's demands and wants. Permissive parenting avoids confrontations with their children and rarely apply any form of discipline because they often perceive their status as their children's friends, rather than that of the parents.

According to Milbrand (2019), the permissive child is more likely to become either a child who feels entitled, or a child who is incredibly anxious. Parents display frequent expression of warmth and affection and present themselves as a resource for the child to use as he or she wishes (Baumrind, 1966). Furthermore, parents do not enforce rules but allow their children to regulate their own activities as much as possible, and do not encourage the children to obey externally defined standards. Although this parenting styles remains responsive to children's needs and demands, it somehow fails to set proper disciplinary limits and boundaries (Lee, Daniels & Kissinger, 2006).

Neglectful or uninvolved

The fourth style of parenting is uninvolved (Baumrind, 1971) or neglectful (Maccoby & Martin, 1983, cited by Dewar, 2018; Gafoor & Kurukkan, 2014). Baumrind (1971) defines uninvolved or neglectful parenting as a:

> *"… style of raising children where the parent is negligent towards the child's emotional and developmental needs. The uninvolved parent is preoccupied with their own desires and is unavailable to provide any guidance or nurturing to the child. A child raised by an uninvolved parent is often self-conscious, antisocial, immature, depressed and lonely*. (Ahmed, 2020, p. 745).

This style of parenting views parents to be unresponsive to their children's needs and have abodoned their parental responsibilities, which in turn have tremendous negative effects on the child's health and general wellbeing.

Parents are uninvolved or being neglectful for many reasons. This style of parenting is linked to a range of negative child outcomes (Cherry, 2019; Parentingforbrain, 2021; Baumrind, 2071; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Gafoor & Kurukkan, 2014). For example, parents' busy lifestyles have contributed to their hands-off approach, or work obligations, depression, struggling with substance abuse reflect their parental behaviour (Cherry, 2019). More than often, neglectful parenting fail to set boundaries or standards for their children, and are indifferent to their children's needs and lives (Parentforbrain, 2021). Furthermore, parents with such behaviour tend to suffer from mental illness, depression, physical, mental and emotional abuse, or were likely to be neglected children themselves. These parents find themselves repeating the same patterns they were raised under (Chery, 2019). Neglectful children on the other hand are more compulsive, have no control over their emotions, encounter more delinquency and addiction problems, experience mental issues and struggle with suicidal behaviour as adolescents (Parentingforbrain, 2021). Uninvolved or neglectful parenting suggests to contribute to children's poor performance in every aspect of life socially, emotionally and academically.

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs – How relevant is this theory today?

One of the most popular theories in understanding the source of people's success in life and in their careers is through motivation. Scholars and practitioners across the world regard motivation as the most important feature that influence success for individuals and organisations (Fallatah & Said, 2018). The father of the motivation theory is Abraham Maslow, who argues that motivation is best understood in terms of a hierarchy of needs.

Abraham Maslow was an American psychologist of Jewish background, born, raised and educated in Brooklyn New York (Horne, 2021. His research career led him to work in various universities and eventually became a fellow at the Laughlin Institute in California, where he lived until his death. According to Maslow, the hierarchy of needs is a theory of human motivation, which suggests that all humans have a series of needs that are hierarchically organised and must be met before they can turn their attention to others.

Over the years, studies have applied Maslow's (1943) theory to determine the level of human motivation and satisfaction relevant to their health and well-being. The hierarchy of needs, is arranged in a five tier hierarchical order of importance, which includes physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualisation. Physiological needs is the basis of the model, which includes the need for oxygen, food, shelter, water and rest among others. These needs are presumed to ignite the process of satisfaction (Kenrick et al., 2010, cited by Fallatah & Said, 2018) before moving on to the next level. Next is safety or security especially in terms of job stability. If work is stable, employees seek to fulfill their duties to the best of their abilities (Fallatah & Said, 2018). The third one is meeting social needs. Support, encouragements, love, belongingness are paramount for employees at work. At this level of needs, there is great emphasis on emotional and social support. Next is the esteem needs. Esteem needs specifies a need to appreciate and respect one's rights, achievements, and autonomy. As far as Maslow (1954a) is concerned, employee motivation increases when their esteem needs are met. This can be through rewards, praise or the recognition of their good work. Rewards can boost the employeers' self-confidence, morale, feeling of worth and personal achievement (Fallatah & Said, 2018). The final level of the hierarchy of needs is self actualisation. Self-actualisation is about the need for individuals to reach their full potential after all the other levels of needs are satisfactory met. Maslow regards self-actualisation as the the highest stage of any employee's performance. Studies by Benson and Dundis (2003), Gawel (1996), Taormina and Gao (2013), Lester (2013) to name a few have all explored the applications of this model to the challenges of understanding and motivating employees in a fast-growing health care industry as well as big businesses.

Furthermore, Horne (2021) suggests that Maslow's theory is also relevant to those in paid employment because it says a lot about how human nature influences people's behaviour within the workplace. Wright (2018) too, suggests that Maslow's model of hierarchy of needs is relevant as a business model compared to any other model he had heard of while studying a business degree. Wright describes how he loves the Maslow's framework for its simplicity, and finds it incredibly versatile and that he could relate to it on a personal level in so many different ways. Regardless of how significant the work of Maslow to many professionals in areas of health, education and life in general, the model has also met many criticisms (Fallatah & Said, 2018).

However, in viewing Maslow's model from a Samaon lens, the actual framimng of the hierarchy of needs captured my attention when I first came across the model. Like Wright (2018), I was captivated by how the frame of the model itself provides a more meaningful way that conceptualises and puts into perspective, my understanding of the level of needs required to enable children from disadvantaged backgrounds to reach their full potential.

Physical discipline on children – is it (or is not) part of *faasamoa*?

To understand the extent of the physical discipline phenomena one has to become familiar with its historical existence and how it evolves through time and space.

Physical discipline and its impacts on children

Elgar, Donnelly, Michaelson, Gariepy, Riehm, Walsh and Pckett (2018), Gershoff, Lee and Durrant (2017), Smith (2006), Gershon (2007) and Holinger (2014) define physical or corporal discipline or punishment as the use of physical force by an adult to control or to right the child's misbehaviour. Such a punishment intends to cause pain, but not physical injury to the child. Proponents and critics of the physical discipline phenomenon continue to argue, as they try to justify the significance or destructive nature of this phenomenon on the child's health and wellbeing. For example, supporters of the physical discipline ideal believe physical discipline is benign and beneficial to the long-term health of the child. The opponents, however, argue that exposing children at their young age to such an approach can be linked to aggressive behaviours, mental health issues, academic problems and problems related to cognitive deficit (Elgar et al. 2018). Furthermore, a meta-analysis of 75 studies worldwide found that children who were exposed during their childhood to spanking were linked to a high number of those experiencing various forms of aggression, antisocial behaviour and poor mental health in their adulthood (Elgar et al. 2018).

According to Pollock (2021), physical discipline was a common practice in New Zealand, although it wasn't a typical child socialisation method in Maori culture. It was not until the mid-19th century when British settlements were established that this parenting practice was normalise and became a part of New Zealand society. A Criminal Code Act of 1893 gave parents the right to use physical punishment to correct children's behaviour. This law ended when section 59 of the Crimes Act 1961 came into effect, which allowed parents to use

reasonable force to correct a child's behaviour. However, in child abuse cases, it was up to the juries to decide what reasonable force was, or was not.

In the 1970s, other forms of discipline came to exist including time out, reason with the child, or praising good behaviour. Yet smacking continued to be the most common form of discipline nationwide (Pollock, 2021). Troubled by the increased cases of child abuse, child injuries, including concerns for children's rights had led to the current law change, which criminalises those who apply any form of physical punishment on children.

Child and family psychologists, educators, sociologist, health professionals and researchers over the years have argued that physical punishment does more harm to children than good (Smith, 2006; Baumrind et al. 2002; Grogan-Kaylor, 2004; Kerr et al. 2004; Urlich, 1989; Hassall, Hook & Ludbrook, 2008; Gershoff et al. 2017; Cowley-Malcolm et al. 2009). Regardless of how significant such findings are to the health and wellbeing of children, many minority and migrant communities believe that physical discipline is part of their culture.

Samoan perspectives on physical or corporal discipline

According to Kelly (2011) New Zealand was the first European speaking country to ban the use of physical discipline in the world. When physical discipline was banned in 2007 (Kelly, 2011) there was an outcry especially from Pacific island communities who opposed the move. This was because many Samoan- born Samoans believe physical discipline is a huge part of their culture. Their main concern about the ban was that they felt they were forced to give up the only tool (physical discipline) they had that helped them in fulfilling their parental duties to their children, their families, to Samoa and to God (Pereira, 2010; Ngan Woo, 1985; Hunt-Ioane, 2005; Pereira, 2010; Cowley-Malcolm et al. 2009; Schoeffel et al. 1996). Furthermore, there was no government support provided to help parents to adjust and transition from the use of physical discipline mode to creating a physical discipline free home.

Many debates and arguments have evolved since then. However, as far as Kelly (2011) was concerned, there is no single solution to the dilemma. The issue continues to revolve in other aspects of family life, as parents and their children have conflicting views over the issue of physical discipline. For example, a 1996 study which interviewed a large number of Pacific Island families, interviewing both parents and their children separately, noted that there were conflicting issues in terms of parent control over their children (Schoeffel et al. 1996). The parents felt their children had it easy here compared to their tough upbringing at home.

However, parents felt they were strengthened by the condition of their upbringing and they endured it. They somehow believe their children had it easy in New Zealand.

History of physical discipline in Samoa

The history of physical discipline in Samoa is a foreign aspect introduced during the arrival of the Christian missionaries. There are no recordings as to how the physical discipline phenomenon came to exist within the Samoan culture. Many Samoan academics and professionals discard the notion that such a practice existed in the Samoan culture prior to the arrival of the Christian missionaries. This point was raised by Rev. Nove Vailaau. According to Rev. Vailaau, some of the so-called scriptures the missionaries used to justify physical punishment of children was not from the bible but from the writings of Samuel Butler in the 17th century who apparently coined the phrase *Spare the rod and spoil the child,* not the bible. He also explained the rod in Samuel Butler's saying is not the same rod as in the scripture. Rev. Vailaau describes the context of the rod as the shepherd's tool. From a biblical understanding, the rod from the bible provides protection, comfort and gently guides the flock. The rod was not to strike the children.

Furthermore, from a European perspective, Cote (1997) noted that the existence of physical discipline was when formal education was introduced during the time of George Turner. Cote noted from Turner's writings how Turner and other missionaries who were in Samoa at the time disliked the Samoan customs so much that Turner planned to eradicate what he believed was the evil culture of Samoa. Turner knew that the only way to do was to introduce formal education and began the transformation of Samoan by educating young children. His intentions were to get rid of every aspect of the culture which he felt Satan was in control.

Summary

This chapter provides only a small window into understanding the complex stance of minority and migrant communities trying to have a better life in New Zealand. For example, this chapter indicates that the roles parents play in their children's live is significant to their children's success and in furthering their education. However, it also provides an understanding, that minority and migrant parents do provide support in ways they see relevant to their children's health and wellbeing. Furthermore, the lack of any social support for the migrants increases their level of vulnerability, and often the victims of such cases are often the children. However,

Baumrind and Maslow's theories provides a clear perspective into understanding how parenting can make a difference and the level of support humans require to function successfully in a complex world.

CHAPTER FOUR

Participants' Profiles & Stories

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings derived from in-depth individual interviews with nine local Samoan parents in Christchurch, New Zealand. The purpose of the study is to explore the nature of Samoan parents' involvement in how they support their children successfully through school and into tertiary studies against the odds. It seeks to establish a better understanding as to how,

and what parents do that helps their children transition successfully from school to tertiary level of study. These participants' perspectives are significant to inform and to "introduce and highlight the voices, challenges, and strengths of a historically silenced group" (Borrero, Yeh, Tito & Luavasa, 2010, p. 50). The main question this study addresses is: *How do Samoan parents support their children through school and into tertiary studies successfully?* This chapter is presented in two parts. Part One presents a brief account of parents' profiles and Part Two provides a more detailed background information of how these ordinary parents are able to provide support conducive to their children's learning in their academic journey.

In this chapter, I provide the participants' profile as well as their personal stories that depict their desire for their children to reach their potential in life and in education. The strong perception that comes across is that these parents have achieved well compared to their own upbringing. They did not doubt the potential their children already had to achieve their own goals in life. However, sharing these parents' stories provides a broad understanding into the contexts of these parents' lives in terms of their early upbringing, the challenges they experienced and their desire to maintain positive relationships with their children. Next, I provide the profiles for each participant.

Part One: The participants' profiles

Nine parents (participants) took part in the study; three were males and the rest were females. Their ages varied from early-forties to over sixty. Each participant had a child or children already attending the local tertiary institutions in Christchurch, mainly the University of Canterbury and the Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, currently known as ARA. The participants' children were all born in New Zealand. None of the participants live with any extended families.

Out of nine participants, eight were born and raised in Samoa and attended formal schooling in the Islands before they immigrated to New Zealand. Two out of eight attended schooling up to lower primary school level. Five went on to high school but had no one had any other qualifications. Only one participant who was adopted by her extended family who left Samoa for New Zealand in her early teenage years managed to complete her secondary schooling successfully, and went on to complete a diploma in accounting at the local polytechnic. The only New Zealand-born participant was a first-generation New Zealand-born, whose parents

left Samoa in the late-50s for employment opportunities. During the time of the interview, she was studying towards her doctorate degree.

All Samoan born participants were born in rural areas of Samoa except two who came from around the Apia town area. The rest came from rural Samoa. While only two of the participants attended secondary schools in town, the rest attended their local rural schools, from primary to high school. Prior to leaving Samoa, all participants were church goers in the Island. In New Zealand, only two continue to affiliate with traditional denominational churches. The rest attend non-Samoan speaking churches. The New Zealand-born participant does not attend church nor have any interest in any religious faith. All Samoan-born participants have not only lived in New Zealand for over twenty years, all have also lived more of their lives in New Zealand than in their country of birth.

All the participants identified themselves to be raised in a two-parent home in their childhood lives, except for two, who were raised by single mothers. All of the participants in the study are in a two-parent home. Out of nine participants, six identified their spouses to be Samoans. Of the other three, two are married to New Zealand Europeans and one is married to a Maori. In regards to communication and interactions with the children, six participants use both Samoan and English to communicate in their daily conversations. Two indicated English as the dominant language in their home. Only one insisted that Samoan language was the dominant language in her home. In terms of employment, all have full time employment except two, one claimed to be a stay-at-home mother, and another who is on the sickness benefit. The majority of the parents did not indicate to have any major challenges with spouses within their homes. Three, however, indicated the lack of team work in the home and that they were not on the same level of understanding with their spouses about how to support their children in their academic journey. Next, I present a brief background for each of the participants, their upbringing, schooling, background and parenting experiences in Christchurch New Zealand. Each participant is represented with a pseudonym.

Part Two: participants' stories

Ina

Ina was born, raised, and received all his education in urban Samoa. He attended a church college up to fifth form before he left school to help his father out in their family plantation. Ina is in his early forties and is a father of four. Ina is a Board of Trustee Member of the high school

his children attend and is employed within the Probation Unit as a supervisor. Three of Ina's children already attend tertiary institutions. The eldest daughter is in her third year as a nursing student at the Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT). She was awarded a Lincoln University scholarship in her final year of high school. While her scholarship still stands, the amount of travelling involved from home to Lincoln University was an issue for her. She decided to study nursing instead. Ina's two younger daughters are both students at the University of Canterbury (UC). His only son is currently in his final year of high school.

Through Ina's involvement with the school's Board of Trustees, he has some insight into the issues that affect minority students within the school. As a father, he talks about how imperative the parent-child relationship is within any Samoan home. He believes that the interactions between the parents and their children in the home is essential for children not to drop out of school. Ina works on building himself to be a better father and parent for his children. He chooses to read and he loves reading books about families, and through our talanoaga, he shared proverbs which indicated how significant home life and home environment were to him and his family.

Ina and his family live in a suburb of Christchurch which many may refer to as a lower socioeconomic area. All of Ina's children had attended their local schools, including the high school. According to Ina, his children were reluctant to attend their local high school, because they claimed it had a (bad) reputation. Regardless of his children's reluctance to attend this particular high school, as a parent he felt it was convenient for them as it was within walking distance from their home. Ina knew how his children felt towards the school, so he decided to challenge his children's views of the school. He did this, by encouraging them to focus on their own potential to succeed, rather than the reputation of the school. He convinced his children that it was their own commitment and the efforts they put into their school work that would determine their learning outcomes; not the school. From those conversations, all of Ina's children attended the local high school reluctantly. Ina states that he had a lot of respect for his children for doing this, and that he values their input into any issue they debate or discuss at home.

In regards to *faasamoa*, Ina also talked about the significance of faasinomaga, especially about belonging and identity, for Samoan children in New Zealand. He believed the home is the only place where Samoan children learn about their faasinomaga through their parents. For Samoan children, knowing their faasinomaga is knowing about where they came from, where they are

at, and where they are heading. To Ina, when Samoan children know about their faasinomaga, it empowers them to make good decisions. However, if children do not know their faasinomaga, then they actually did not know much at all.

In regards to parenting, Ina emphasised that he was not like many other Samoan parents who forced or make unnecessary demands on their children. As a parent he talks with them, listens to their ideas and opinions, and even debates the issues with them. This skill according to Ina, was one that he learnt from his own parents at an early age. He fondly talks about how wise his parents were in how they planned their family life, and how as children, they were treated well and respectfully by their parents. He also talks about how his parents disciplined him and his siblings when they were young. He states that his parents never used force or physical punishment on them, but words. According to Ina, those words were instructions he would never forget.

Among many topics he raised are his concerns about the school teachers' attitudes towards Samoan students. As far as Ina is concerned, the schools continue to ignore parents' aspirations for their children's future. Instead of the school helping students to find what works best for them and pursue students' personal goals, the school keeps allocating minority students to sporting subjects and to other non-academic activities within the school. This to Ina is evidence the school does not care.

One other issue Ina raised about the school was an issue in relation to his youngest son. Ina talks proudly about his sixteen-year-old son who had been to overseas countries such as Japan and Fiji. Ina's son has had more overseas trips to Brazil and to England scheduled later on in the year. The trips were for only a few New Zealand secondary students to travel the world and to share personal experiences of natural disasters and other social issues with other students of the same age all over the world. The trips were paid for by the Ministry of Education in a form of scholarship available to all New Zealand students, but students had to apply for the scholarships themselves. Ina's son's applied for the scholarships himself and out of thousands of New Zealand students who applied only a few applicants were successful. Ina's son was one of those students. To Ina that was a success in itself, but a success which the school did not seem to appreciate. From Ina's account of his conversations with his son's teachers and the principal, he asked specifically for extra schoolwork for his son to take with him so he could study while he was away. He understood what his son's situation would be like if he was away from school for a while. His request was however ignored by the school. When it came time for his son to

leave, nothing was prepared for the son to take away with him by any of his teachers. However, on his son's return, the school expressed concerns about how behind he was with his academic work. While arrangements were made for his son to catch up with his academic work, Ina felt really upset and felt the school totally ignored his request and failed to provide appropriate support for his son. He was also upset with the school because he witnessed how stressful the whole situation had been on his son, and how he was treated as if he had done something wrong.

For Ina's son, the whole issue made him dislike the school. As a father, Ina had to support his son. He encouraged his son to write to the Ministry of Education to express his concerns about how he was treated at school over his overseas trips. Ina said that he tried to express his concerns to the principal about the whole matter, but did not let him (principal) know how angry he really felt.

In regards to his son's overseas trips, Ina felt they were opportunities of a life time and those experiences are unique in empowering student's efforts in determining their own educational goals. He believes the school failed to recognise how significant those rare opportunities are, especially for minority students and their families. He also believes the school should have been more supportive and understanding of students' needs, since those opportunities are promoted and paid for by the Ministry of Education. The most disappointing part according to Ina was that, he believes if the student was not Pacific, the school would have responded differently. But because he is, the school does not care. This specific issue has left Ina's son so upset that he asked his father if he could change school. According to Ina, he and his son have made a deal about changing schools, depending on his term results.

Another topic Ina raises is the lack of Samoan parent participation in school parent meetings. Ina is concerned about this because these meetings discuss issues that are critical to how the teachers and school support Samoan students at school. If parents do not have any input or know what goes on at school, the decisions made by teachers and school can have a major negative impact on how the school and teachers support Samoan students effectively. Ina believes it is vital for parents to attend parent meetings because the parents know their situation better than anyone else. Therefore, attending parent meetings and sharing ideas with other parents could possibly provide some fresh ideas for the school and teachers to support students to the best of their ability.

Ina also raises the issue of the lack of support, trust, and patience Samoan parents have with their children to complete their high school qualifications. Often when parents struggle financially, they tend to encourage their high school children to take on part time work at places such as the petrol station or at their local supermarkets while they study. As these students increase their hours of work, they slowly abandon their school work for the few dollars they earn as a part-time employee. This often leads to many Samoan students leaving school without completing high school, and without proper qualifications to enter tertiary studies.

Ina is also concerned about the lack of parent presence within the home for many Samoan families. While he considers home life and home environment critical to Samoan children's stable upbringing, the realities for many Samoan families involve working long hours or having multiple jobs. This equates to less time at home. As a result, if these children have questions to ask parents while the parents are working two jobs late into the evening, the children are at a disadvantage in gaining access to their parent's valuable knowledge. To Ina, the absence of parents from the home denies their own children access to the parent's cultural capital. This is what Ina considers a huge issue for many Samoan families in New Zealand.

Ina fully supports the study because the issue of parent involvement in their children's education is very important to him and his family. As a Samoan parent, Ina speaks with confidence about what he views as obstacles that disconnect Samoan parents from their children and school. Those disconnections often become major barriers to how Samoan families function effectively in New Zealand. From his own personal experiences as a supervisor within prison, he has seen many Samoans who come through the prison system who have no educational background. As a result, their decision-making abilities are limited and the consequences of their actions bring them to have a prison-based life.

Ina also understands the complexity of becoming a parent for many Samoans in New Zealand. However, Ina believes that there is wealth of experiences and knowledge Samoan parents have, and if parents are able to discuss and share those ideas, the Samoan parents can learn a lot from each other. Ina compares the sharing of knowledge between parents as 'O le tele o sulu e maua ai figota' (The more torches we have, the more shellfish we collect) that enables parents to unpack the potential they already have known as 'O le ie-ponapona a le Tui Atua' (The knotted-fabric of the Tui Atua).

Moli

Moli is female and in her late-fifties. She is married and has five children with her New Zealand European husband. Moli was born and raised in Samoa. She described her education as limited, and she only had primary level schooling before she left to help her mother out at home. She describes schooling as something she liked. However, with the demands of physical work at home she describes her situation as not having much upstairs (pointing to her head). Moli used to take on part-time work when she was a young mother but at the moment she is a stay home mum. Moli has a lot of resentment towards her early life. At a young age, their father left Moli, her siblings, and their mother. Those were difficult times for her.

Moli talks briefly about her relationship with her mother. She describes how she used to get lots of severe beatings from her. The school she went to was no better. She had lots of beatings at school too. When Moli was asked about her relationship with her mother, she declined to discuss the issue about her mother. In her opinion, the past was too painful and she believes what happened when she was little was in the past and the idea of talking about it now meant she was dwelling in the past.

In New Zealand, Moli wants to be a good mother. From her past experiences, she states she cannot afford to be emotional because she does not want to be a failure to her children. As a mother, she works hard to ensure her children have better life experiences compared to her own. She believes whatever happened to her was unfortunate, but she would never hurt her own children. Moli refuses to carry through the cycle of violence she experienced as a child, because she believes it will not work here for her children. She loves and adores her children and she would guard and protect them in any way she can. She describes her children as her life and as a mother she wants to be strong for them.

While Moli does not apply any of the disciplinary strategies she experienced when she was young on her children, she says she does talk tough to them. She believes, their education is very important to them. She tells her children if they don't take their school work seriously, they were really messing up with their own future. And for Moli, her goal is to help them succeed in whatever they do.

Moli finds being a Samoan parent in New Zealand very tough. For her, she says that sometimes she cries. She believes New Zealand born Samoan children moan and complain a lot about

everything; whereas children who were born and raised in Samoa, managed better with much less.

As a Samoan born parent, Moli does not like some aspects of *faasamoa* such as the idea of sending money overseas to better the life of Samoans in Samoa. To Moli, her priority in New Zealand is to care and to provide the best educational opportunities for her children. She believes there are so many struggling families here because parents have not gotten their priorities right. She personally believes when Samoan parents send money to families in Samoa, it is the Samoan children in New Zealand who suffer. Moli used to send some money every now and then for her mother while she was alive. However, she says she had to explain her situation to her mother that she was in a mixed marriage where she could not send much money. Moli's personal view on this matter is that the Samoan families in the Islands are having it easy compared to Samoans in New Zealand. This is because the Samoans in New Zealand have to work hard for every dollar they earn here.

Four of Moli's children are already at different stages of their tertiary journey. Three have already graduated and two have continued with postgraduate studies. One of Moli's daughters won the New Zealand Cricket scholarship award of 2011. This daughter is studying towards an architecture degree at CPIT. Her youngest daughter is in her final year of high school. Although Moli's children have done well academically, she does not believe that having a qualification makes her children successful. To Moli, she will consider her children successful if they had learnt something from doing their degrees, and are able to apply what they learnt to real life.

Moli describes her financial situation as not having much money. However, Moli and her husband have allowed their children to borrow money to pay for their tertiary accommodation. The money their children borrow is considered an interest free loan in which they are to pay back once they start working. Moli and her husband have a list of how much each of their children owes them. This list according to Moli is currently displayed on their pantry door. That is another reason why their children need to focus on their education, so they can get good jobs and be able to pay back what they owe.

Moli has high expectations of her children's behaviour and attitudes towards others. This is something that she talks about proudly. Moli had a big smile on her face as she talked about how her friends and others who know her children comment about how well-mannered and well

behaved their children are. This appears to be Moli's highlight of being a mother. She also talks about how she trusts and has a lot of confidence in her children.

In regards to how Moli supports her children's education, she says that since her children were young and just started their schooling, it was her responsibility to do all the housework. She wanted to make sure that when her children got home, they were able to have something to eat and then rest until four thirty or five in the evening. Afterwards, they all had to do their homework. That has been their family routine since the children were very young. She also talks about how she used to read to them when they were just little. She pointed out a photograph of one of the daughters who won some region and national school competition. She did not know or even remember what the competition was about, however, she stated that it was a big thing because she had to go up the north island for the finals. Nonetheless, she was very proud of this daughter's achievement.

As a Samoan parent, Moli allows her children to go out or have drinks if they want to. She wants her children to have a balanced life. Moli trusts her children and she would not force her children to do anything out of concern in case they would become rebellious. However, she says her children know their family rules. She says that her children are not restricted to do whatever they want, as long as they know and understand the consequences of their actions.

Although some of Moli's children have graduated and/or are studying in tertiary institutions, Moli says she had never been to any of those institutions. She describes what and how she supports her children mainly from the privacy of her own home. She believes her support as a parent is within the home. She always wants to make sure she was at home all the time before her children were home after school, even when she was working. While there were many challenges Moli experienced why she believed she did not have a good education, she believes her children have no excuse not to have a good one. As a migrant mother who did not have good education, Moli knows she does not speak good English. For this, she says she allows her children and husband to correct her if she says the wrong thing. She truly appreciates that.

Losa

Losa is a New Zealand-born Samoan. She is a first-generation New Zealand-born. Her parents migrated here in the late 1940s where her father, a qualified structural engineer, worked as a carpenter while in Wellington due to what was known then as 'Colour Bar'. However, once the opportunity was available in Christchurch, Losa's parents made the move here since. Her father

had a job working at the wharf. Losa's family was one of the few earlier Samoan migrants to settle in Canterbury and her family was one of the founding members of the Samoan Catholic church in Christchurch.

Losa is married to a New Zealand European and they have four children. Two of the children have already graduated from tertiary studies and the other two are current students, one at CPIT and one at UC. Losa herself has been studying at tertiary level, and she is a final year student studying towards her PhD. Losa has extensive experiences working with students, and is a mentor and a community leader within Christchurch as well as in national and international organizations.

As a Samoan mother, Losa does not like some aspects of *faasamoa.* She believes the *faasamoa* in the 1960s is not the same *faasamoa* practiced by many Samoans in New Zealand today. According to Losa, when she was young, her parents wanted her and her siblings to just grow up as kids. She also recalls as a young child how she thought her parents were very tough on them. However, from her experiences through supporting and mentoring Pacific students at university, she has heard many students' stories of the issues they struggle with within their homes. These issues impact on students' studies. Compared to her upbringing, she realises that the recent Samoan migrant parents are much tougher and harsher on their New Zealand born children than her own parents. She describes the migrant parents as too demanding of their children's time to attend social and church activities. Demands that would require these children to forsake their studies out of respect for their parents to help out financially.

Losa talks about an instance where a young Samoan student was doing really well at university. Her parents did not want her to study and demanded that she find a job. Regardless of her love to further her education stance, that student had to discontinue her university studies out of respect for her parent. Losa believes respect is an aspect of *faasamoa,* but this was not the same *faasamoa* she grew up with. She believes that many aspects of *faasamoa* have changed to accommodate changing times because what was strictly *faasamoa* back then is not strictly *faasamoa* now. For her, the old *faasamoa* has undergone an evolution, but not in a good way.

Losa also raises the issue of lack of interest the parents show towards their children's life goals. She believes children benefits if their parents show interest in what they do. By showing interest in what their children are interested in, also shows that they are supportive of them.

In regards to parent support for their tertiary children, Losa does not believe university or any tertiary institution is a place for Samoan parents. To Losa, parents provide support for children within their home. Besides that, for many Samoan students this is perhaps the only time in these students' life they could escape the controlling nature of their parents. However, she believes that when Samoan students are at university, they should know their responsibilities as students. If they don't perform they fail. That is the bottom line.

Lesina

Lesina was born, raised, and educated in Samoa before she migrated to New Zealand for work. She left school at fifth form (Year 11). Lesina has been studying counselling at CPIT and is yet to complete her qualification. Lesina is in her mid-forties and is a married mother of three. Two of her children are already at university. One is studying at the University of Otago and the other one at the University of Canterbury. Lesina's youngest daughter is the Head Girl of the high school she attends. It is the same school Lesina is employed at, as a parent helper and as a support person for Pacific parents at the school.

As a parent, Lesina loves her involvement at school. She believes she is making connections as a parent with students, especially the students who often experience tough situations at home. These students, according to Lesina, do not feel their parents understand the issues they experience at school and issues specifically to young people. For Lesina, it is very important for her to make connections with these students and to make students feel good about themselves. She talks to students and shows them that she is interested in what they are interested in. She encourages them to attend their classes, helps out with their homework, and tries her best to provide support to help students stay in school as long as they can.

Lesina also raises issues about the approaches of parenting many Samoan parents use or apply in New Zealand. She feels the Samoan parents are too harsh and very demanding of their children's time after school. She says that parents expect and demand their children to do all of the house chores, babysit their younger siblings or become caregivers to their elders. Yet those young people are not permitted to voice any opinions. She feels this type of parenting makes students too scared to share issues or matters that are important to them with their parents. From her own experiences working at the school, she found out that students were sharing the issues they experience at home and elsewhere with their friends. As a mother, Lesina expresses how grateful she feels about her roles in getting involved with the school that way, because she says

if she had not, her own children would have left school way before they complete their schooling. She believes her involvement has benefited her own children. Furthermore, her own children had said the same.

Lesina states that she does not force her children like other Samoan parents. For her it is important that she trusts her children. She says she talks with them and discusses issues that interest them. As a parent support person at school, Lesina feels for many Samoan students who do not have the same level of relationship with their parents as she does with her children. For Lesina, she believes she is able to do that with her own children because she had studied counselling at CPIT. She has not completed her studies due to sickness. According to Lesina, as a Samoan parent in New Zealand, it is important to her that she listens to her children and work together to deal with issues that affect them. It is also important that her children trust her and are able to come to her when they have problems. Lesina also realises that she may not be able to provide the answers to all her children's problems (if they had any) but she still wants to know what goes on in her children's lives so she could refer them on.

For Lesina, parting with her oldest son when he was about to leave to study at Otago University was very difficult for her. She said that she cried. She really missed him. However, her son convinced her not to cry, but he was going to remember everything she taught him since he was young. For this she commented that 'I must be doing something right'.

Tui

Tui was born, raised and had all his education in Samoa before he left to work in New Zealand. He finished school at fifth form and describes his education as marginal. Tui is married with four children. Tui is in his early sixties and he is employed as a labourer at a local company. Tui describes the type of job he does as very tough and demanding physically that he gets too tired to do anything else by the time he arrives home. It is the type of job that he believes suitable only for people from Samoa who do not have good education; but not for New Zealand born Samoans. Tui does not wish any of his children to be employed at the type of work he does. He believes his limited education has restricted him of any chance ever to get a less stressful but a well-paid job for the rest of his life.

Tui believes New Zealand offers so many educational opportunities that New Zealand born Samoans should take advantage of. These types of opportunities were scarce in the Islands when he was young. He wished he had these opportunities offered in Samoa in his days because he

believes he would have done well at school. He believes growing up in Samoa was hard, and yet New Zealand born Samoans are not taking their education here seriously.

Tui describes his upbringing growing up in Samoa with his siblings as difficult. Their parents did not have the money to pay for their school fees and school uniforms. Yet, their parents tried their best to collect coconuts to raise money to support them. Their parents encouraged them to do their homework at night. This was because they all had chores to complete after school and all the chores were to be done before night fall. They did not have electricity either therefore; their homework time was limited to an hour long per night. That was as long as their kerosene lamp could last.

Tui's parents valued education. His father encouraged all of them constantly, reminding them to 'Sharpen their pencil'. However, Tui made fun of his father and told him that he would rather sharpen his sword to work on the plantation. According to Tui, that really upset his father at the time because their father wanted them to succeed. Their circumstances changed when their father passed away suddenly. Their mother stepped up the level of pressure on them to focus on their school work. Tui describes their mother as the backbone of their education. She was very strict with them. She wanted them to succeed.

Tui has a lot of expectations on his children to help out at home after school. He thinks that he gets too tired at work and when he gets home, he expects his children to tidy up the house and do the washing or cook tea. He believes that kids in Samoa would have done better than his children. Tui says he sometimes gets really angry and stressed when he gets home and he had to tell his children to do what he believes they should use their common sense without being told. This creates some issues between Tui and his children.

For Tui, his situation and the work he is currently doing, is the type of life he wants to challenge his children about. He always tries to explain to his children how tough life was in the islands compared to the wealth of material stuff they have in New Zealand. He wants to inspire them with how his parents brought them up with very little money. Anyway, Tui feels that his children do not share the same aspirations as he does because they tell him that he talks too much and that they are sick of hearing the same old story.

According to Tui, he and his wife have been actively involved in their children's education from preschool to high school level. However, once they enter tertiary level, he does not know how to support his children. He would love to do whatever he could, if he knew how. He tries to

challenge his children to look at their mother who had been through that same road and she graduated with her degree. To Tui, if their mother could do it, so should their children. He believes, the only way he could support his children, is to pray for them and continue to commit them to God. That is the only way he knows how.

Moana

Currently, Moana works as a health worker within a local Pacific Health provider in Christchurch. She has a tertiary qualification from CPIT. Moana is in her mid-forties, married to a Samoan born, and has three children. She attended primary school in her rural village in Samoa before she was accepted to a college in town. While attending college, her aunt and uncle who were working at the school provided her with accommodation and paid for her school fees on behalf of her mother. This is only a small piece of her story which really started when she was very young.

Moana says at age eight, their father suddenly left them and their mother for another relationship. That was the beginning of many struggles their mother experienced. She witnessed her mother's struggles and being the eldest, she felt for her mother. Although she would have preferred to stay home and help her out, her mother encouraged her in her schoolwork. According to Moana, it was not food they lacked. They had everything they needed to survive at home. The main problem they had was the lack of money to pay for their school fees and uniform.

According to Moana, when she finished her intermediate year, she was accepted at a college in town where the fees and uniform were more expensive than at primary school. Their mother did not have the means to pay for them. Fortunately for her, she was able to live with her aunt and uncle who were working at this specific school at the time who paid for her fees and uniform. That was a great help for her mother. So the money her mother raised from selling coconuts, shell fish and water cress was to pay for her younger siblings' fees and uniform.

Moana missed her mother when she was away for school. However, she looked forward to the weekend because that was the only time she was allowed to go home. Once she was at home, she did her best to do as much work as she could so her mother could have a break. From Moana's talanoa, the more she witnessed the hard work her mother had to do at home, the more determined she was to do well at school. That was when she decided that she was going to do all that she could to excel and do well at school

At the beginning of her fifth form year at school, her aunt and uncle were called to work in Christchurch as church ministers. Her aunt and uncle adopted her and that was the beginning of her schooling journey here. In New Zealand, she completed Year 11 and passed two School C subjects. One of the subjects was maths. She decided to leave school after Year 11 because she wanted to support her mother and her siblings in the Islands. She then found a job as a machinist in a factory. She also decided to attend night classes at Christchurch Polytechnic studying accounting and typing. From those early experiences, Moana describes how great those opportunities are that Pacific people do not take advantage of. Within a year of studying, she completed study. She was also offered a job to work at Income Support. She was able to support her mother and her siblings in Samoa. Moana talks proudly of her achievements of being able to finally bring all her siblings to work and live in New Zealand permanently. Her mother also came and she now lives with her younger siblings in Australia. Moana does not have any more close family members living in Samoa. Now she feels, she is focusing on her immediate family now. Moana wants to provide for her children, all the opportunities in education, the ones she never had as she grew up in Samoa.

Through her work, she receives many emails. Some of the emails she received were regarding the scholarships for Pacific students for Year 9. She applied for a scholarship for her daughter and was awarded one. At the time her son was already in Year 9 at high school. However, she saw his lack of attention at school. She said she felt her son was going to school only because that was what kids his age did. She did not see any sense of willingness to attend school. She described her son as someone who had no educational goals whatsoever. Then she saw that there were also scholarships offered for Year 10 students. She applied and also got the scholarship for her son. According to Moana, that was when she realised that she needed to have a heart to heart talk with her children. She explained to them the reasons for the scholarships and that they needed to work hard and commit themselves to their school work. It was the first time she noticed her son not only starting to enjoy school, but for the first time in his life he started to challenge himself by taking on sports which was something he had never done before. She also describes the progress her daughter was making at her school as very humbling.

Moana's experience from work again has given her an insight into young people's issues in life. For her, she feels that it is important that she spends a lot of time with her children not only as a family, but also on a one-on-one basis. She describes having committed every Saturday of her

time to spending quality time with her children. She takes her children to a park depending on the weather, where they would play and then talk for hours about what goes on in their lives especially her two teenagers. Moana describes the issues of suicide as one of the major issues with Pacific children today. For her it is important that she and her husband make time for their children so they know they can trust them as parents. She believes she deals with issues differently compared to many Samoan parents in New Zealand. Moana does not push her children but she sits down and talks with them. She wants to hear her children's opinions and ideas about any issues they experience regardless of how big or small they may be. She gave her word that she would not get angry. However, she wants to know the truth. Moana describes her son's achievement as that he passed all his level 1, 2 and 3 NCEA exams, and he is now a first-year student at the University of Canterbury majoring in Health Science. Moana's daughter also attends a private school and she also received a scholarship. She is in year 10 and Moana describes her as doing really well.

Moana believes that the main problem for many Samoan families in New Zealand is the parents. Moana believes the Samoan parents are the cause of the problems for many young people. She talks about many Samoan children at their church that have had the potential to go on to tertiary studies, but never had the chances because their parents emphasised work over study. As these children increase hours of work, their school work begins to suffer. To Moana, students could have done both successfully if parents encouraged children to keep up with their studies at home.

She also describes the attitudes common to many Samoan parents of having total unnecessary control over their children. Moana does not like the word control, but she seems to know from her own experiences working with Pacific communities in Christchurch that parents often think they know what is best for their children. While that was what parents in the Islands practice, this philosophy does not work with our New Zealand born children according to Moana. She believes parents should be supportive of their children through listening to them, talking with them and spending more quality time together as a family. Moana is also concerned about the lack of knowledge Samoan parents have in regards to what goes on in their children's lives. If parents do not gain their children's trust, their children are going to trust their friends more than their own parents. For Moana, her relationship with her children is very important. She wants her children to trust and have confidence in her and her husband as parents.

In regards to supporting Samoan families at church, Moana does not think there is much going on at church to support families regarding their children's education. By saying that, she also does not believe the idea of supporting children's education is a responsibility of the church. However, she states that their church acknowledges students who successfully complete their degrees as well as students who win educational awards by announcing students' names publicly at church. Moana believes, having to recognise students' achievement publicly would encourage other parents to encourage their children to do well in school.

One of the issues Moana raises is that, the parents need to respect their children and that parents need to understand the needs of their own children. She talks about some parents who tend to force their children to become doctors or lawyers. The problem she sees is that, parents do not provide necessary support but expect too much of their child. According to Moana, if parents truly want their children to be doctors or lawyers, they should provide necessary support that allows the child to reach that goal. And that parents should understand that, pushing their child to be trained as a doctor from year 9 is not realistic. If that is what parents want for their child, then they need to support the child as soon a she or he starts school from an early age.

June

June is a mother of four in her late forties. She was born and raised in Samoa like all her siblings. She was the first of her family to leave Samoa to immigrate to New Zealand. June finished school at fifth form but stated that she was not good at school at all. All her younger siblings were good at school. Her father worked as a police officer in town which was why her family moved to town where all her siblings attended town schools. June knew how difficult it was for their parents to raise a family with a single income. However, her parents coped well. When she came to New Zealand, she worked and sent money to help out her family in Samoa financially.

June describes her father as being very supportive of them in their school work at home. She describes how her father used to bring maths and spelling worksheets for them to learn at home. At the end of the week, her father would call each of them and he would go through the worksheets to make sure they learnt their maths as well as their spelling words. June believes it was her father's commitment to supporting them while they were young that all her younger siblings have done well in their education except for her. She believes she was never good at school, and that was why she left school after fifth form.

June describes how she and her husband support their children through early childhood up to high school where they never failed to attend all the parent-teacher meetings. They continue to carry this on while their children were very young. However, for their eldest child, once she entered higher education, they, as parents, had no idea how to support her. For June, the only way she feels she is supporting her, is just by asking her how her study was going in which she would often she respond that she was okay. While June believes her and her husband had nothing to offer their daughter once she went to CPIT to study, she believes they provide other types of support such as paying for their daughter's driver's licence as well as buying her a car so she can have some independence.

From June's talk she believes the only knowledge she has, was what her father did while they were young. She can help out with simple school work but not much. According to June she learns to support her children through talks and workshops held at church. There were certain skills they learnt such as being positive and encouraging their children rather than forcing them or demanding them to do things. To June, supporting her children is about allowing them time to do things they love to do. All she can do is to be there and to make sure they are ok.

One other issue June raised was the lack of financial support that their daughter experienced when she was accepted at university. They found out through her that she was not entitled to a student allowance to pay for her petrol or to buy for personal necessities because they (parents) were both working. This made it difficult for their daughter to study full time and to study at university. Their daughter then decided to study at CPIT. This would allow her to study full-time and work fulltime at the same time. June was also concerned about this idea, because she can see how working full-time was hindering her daughter's ability to fully focus on her studies. On the other hand, her and her husband cannot do anything about it, because their daughter needs to survive as a young adult. They do have three other younger children to support. So they allow her to study and work. At the same time, her daughter needs to work because she cannot afford to pay for her transportation and other things she needs. As parents they are not in a position financially to provide for their daughter.

June describes how much she has changed as a mother compared to what she used to be. She talked about how she was very demanding on her children to help out at home, as well as putting pressure on them to perform at school. June said she wanted her children to be competitive like many Samoan children. However, she notices that they were not happy and they were not doing any work unless they were told to. She tries to inspire her children by explaining how tough it

is to do the type of work she is doing, and she does not wish any of them to end up working or doing that type of work. June believes that New Zealand born Samoan children should do better than their parents because they grow up here and they speak English; a major obstacle for many Samoan adults. Through parent discussions at her church, she has slowly change how she approaches her own parenting ways.

As a Samoan parent, June talks about how she and her husband support their children through early childhood up to high school. However, it changed when their daughter enters high education. They do not know how to support her. June believes she used to be a pushy parent but she has learnt to support their children the best way they could, and then leave the rest to God. She cannot see a point of pushing their children in their education, if God has a different plan for them and their lives.

Laina

Laina was born and raised in Samoa. She was schooled both in Samoa and in American Samoa. Laina was raised by her grandmother and she describes her early life as very good. In her early teenage years, her grandmother passed away. She was taken back to live with her biological mother. Laina finished school at fifth form. Laina came to New Zealand under the Samoan quota scheme. She lived with her aunt and her family in Auckland when she first arrived here. She describes those times living with her aunt's family as very difficult time for her. She is a mother of five and her youngest child is studying at university. Laina used to work in a factory but due to her medical condition, she is currently receiving a sickness benefit.

As Laina talked about her life and how she supports her children, she described her life living with her aunt's family in Auckland as the most challenging time of her life. She described her experience living with them as that of a slave. As a twenty-year-old, she was not allowed to go out. She was not allowed to receive any phone call at home. She was not allowed to talk to any of her extended family anywhere in Auckland. She could only go to work, but was not allowed to make any friends at work or anywhere. Besides all the restrictions she had, her aunt's husband behaved inappropriately towards her when her aunt was not around. Laina stated she did not know what to do about the situation, knowing her aunt was scared of her husband. Laina became very stressed as she talked about this. She said that she did not tell her aunt because she did not want to make her situation worse than what it was. To Laina, her aunt was good but it was just her husband that she could not stand.

Laina said that she was desperate to get out of the situation, but there was not much she could do. She had a lot of chores at home, plus she was responsible to take care of her aunt's children. She said she spent more time raising her little cousins than their own parents. After putting up with her aunt's husband behaviour for over three years, she finally met her current husband. They got married and that was her ticket to finally leave her aunt's home. According to Laina, those earlier experiences in New Zealand, makes her very protective of her own children. Although she does not control them or push them, she has high expectations of her children's education.

As a mother, she wants to make sure her children are happy and are well protected from issues she experienced herself. From our first conversation on the phone with Laina, she expressed how concerned she was about her son's university studies. She was so worried that her son might drop out of university just like her older daughter who gave up university in her second year of study. From Laina's words, she was heartbroken when that happened and it had some impact on her. She talked about her son's study as her only hope now. She wants her son to fulfil her son to gain a university degree. Laina feels that although her husband had never said anything to her, she has a strong intuition that her husband blames her for the lack of success their children have shown over the years. She describes the words from the bible in a context of 'a wise son is delight to the father, but the foolish son is a disappointment to the mother'. Laina feels burdened by the thought of her children being unable to gain university degrees. She emphasised how important her son's studies is to her. She wants to prove to her husband, through her son gaining a university degree, that she is a good mother.

Another issue Laina raised in our talanoaga was the type of life style she used to live when she first moved to live in Christchurch. She said that soon after she arrived from Auckland, she made friends with other Samoan ladies at church who used to play housie. While she had never been to any of those gambling games before she came to New Zealand, she soon attended those gambling activities often. She was always away at night and by the time she got home, her children were already in bed. It was until her aunt found out about her weekly outings that she advised her to give it up. Her aunt encouraged her to stay home and spend time with her children while they were young. Laina is grateful for her aunt and she said she wished she knew better. Laina expressed how relaxed she felt that she did not have to go to housie anymore.

Another issue Laina talked about was the support she received from her uncle and aunt in Christchurch when they first moved down from Auckland. She describes how loving and caring

they were. Both her aunt and uncle have never been married and do not have children of their own. Yet the uncle and aunt had demonstrated how much they care by looking after them since they arrived. They also stayed in her aunt's home while they saved up enough money to buy their own house. For Laina, although their aunt and uncle had no children, they were very supportive of their children's education. Her aunt especially keeps encouraging their children to get what she referred to a 'pepa malo' (degree). Her uncle on the other hand always spent time with her children. He was very encouraging to her and her husband by constantly reminding them to support their children's education. Laina feels she owes it to her aunt and uncle, and that by having at least a university degree would be the only way, her family could at least thank them for their ongoing support over the years.

Laina also raises an issue with her husband about the demands her husband puts on their children while they study. This was an issue that really bothered her, but she could not argue with or say anything to her husband. According to Laina, her husband expects their children to get involved in church stuff such as the youth group, Sunday school and even white Sunday practices. Such demands according to Laina put a lot of pressure on their children and therefore, their children have had issues completing their assessments at university.

Furthermore, Laina was very upset when she talked about how she felt towards her son, when he was forced to learn a scripture in Samoan language, for White Sunday. She knew her son did not speak Samoan confidently. In the final performance day, her son could not even pronounce the words at church. She described how upset she felt for her son. On the other hand, her son felt humiliated in front of the whole congregation. Nevertheless, Laina knows her son has no choice over the matter, because Samoan language is emphasised at church by their church ministry. For this, she felt like she failed as a mother to support her son so he could speak Samoan like other children at church. Laina felt helpless to support her son on the matter. She could only comfort him but as a mother she did not know what to say to him in that situation. She said that all her children speak Samoan except her youngest son. That hurts Laina a lot because she really loves her son. She is a bit disappointed with the church making such demands on New Zealand born children.

All of Laina's children had attended their local schools although they were not particularly happy about doing so. Laina said that their children said to them that they wanted to go to Girls High or Boys High, or any other schools besides their local high school. According to Laina, their children told them that it was not a good school. To Laina, it was convenient for their

children to go there since they did not need to catch the bus to get to school. Laina also believes that all schools in New Zealand are the same. She believes that all teachers at high schools have all got degrees and qualifications to teach. She told her children there was nothing wrong with the school but they needed to listen and obey the teachers. If they did, they would do well at school.

Laina states that she really wants to support her son's studies but she does not know how. She sometimes does not like his son hanging out with other Samoan boys at university. Laina really wants her son to focus on his studies but she feels his friends are also getting in the way. She sometimes felt her son was not totally truthful with them when he told them that he needed to stay at university longer to study. There were also times that she wished she could tell what assignments look like so she could convince her son to just stay home and do his assignments and not to go out with his friends.

Taua

Taua is in his late sixties. He was born, raised, and schooled in Samoa before he migrated to New Zealand to work. Taua is a father of two. His eldest son is a university student and his youngest daughter is in her final year of high school. Taua used to work at a local factory before he retired. He is now a stay-at-home dad. According to Taua, his schooling ended at form two (Year 6). When he left school he mainly worked with his older brother in their family plantation. That what his occupation until he left Samoa for New Zealand. He was encouraged to come here so he could support his family financially.

In our talanoaga, Taua raised many issues about his life in Samoan. Taua said that his life in Samoa was no different than the lives of many Samoan children in the late 1940s. Since their village was close to town, he went to a town school. In those days, they never took lunch for school. They never had breakfast either. Yet they were very happy. He describes life growing up in Samoa as tough for their parents because they had no money to pay for fees and uniform. They had food, but no money; which meant only some of them (siblings) could attend school. Before he completed form two, he knew he was not good at school. So he left school to help his older brother in their family plantation. He worked in their plantation until he had the opportunity to come to New Zealand because he was the only one who was single.

Although Taua did not have a good education in Samoa, he believes his children do not have any excuse not to have a good education here in New Zealand. To him, his children's education is very important to him.

Taua believes that the Samoans who had good education in Samoa are the ones who are also doing well here in New Zealand. The ones who did not listen and obey their teachers in Samoa are the ones who are struggling here in New Zealand. From his experiences with teachers growing up in Samoa, he remembers how cruel and harsh Samoan teachers were in how they disciplined children at school. However, he believes the teachers were only trying to do their best because they wanted students to succeed. However, he describes the disciplinary issue in New Zealand as a huge problem for many schools. Yet there is nothing teachers could do about it. Taua truly believes when a Samoan child focuses on his/her study, listens, obeys and respects the teacher, that child is more likely to do well in his/her study.

In regards to how Taua supports his children's education, he says that he makes sure they had lunch, breakfast, and money for bus fare. He makes sure his children get to school on time each day. When his children were much younger, he tried to be home before school finished. To him, those were the things he considered very important as a Samoan parent. For him, that was the only way he could support his children.

Taua talks about the difficulty of supporting children as they get older especially in their teenage years and when they enter tertiary studies. He believes this is the most difficult time to get through to children. From his point of view, he finds being a parent of older children very tough. For example, his children do not ask for support anymore because they think they know it all. Not only that, they have an attitude where they think they could do whatever they want and go wherever they want without their parents' permission. According to Taua, children should respect their parents' rules if they live under their parents' roof. Unless they find their own place, if they live with their parents, they are still the responsibility of their parents. This is a concern from Taua. To him, it does not matter if children know a lot, they still cannot function well without the financial support their parents provide. He believes for this reason; Samoan children need to show some respect for their parents.

Taua also raises the issue of tough parenting; where Samoan parents in New Zealand try to raise Samoan children as though they are still living in Samoa. Not only that, the parents here tend to put a lot of pressure on children to do as parents demand. To Taua, Samoan parents when he

was growing up raised children with military style discipline. Children jumped when there was an order. Taua believes life in New Zealand is very different from the life many older Samoans experienced growing up. Therefore, New Zealand born Samoan children do not understand that life. He believes it is important to give children time to grow as well as that parents are also going to make mistakes.

In regards to Taua's son at university, Taua is very concerned about how long it has taken his son to complete his degree. This is very concerning for the father as he expressed his concerns about his son's student loan and bank overdrafts he may have accumulated over the years he has studied. Taua is also concerned about many other social activities his son is involved in within the university. Samoan Student Association) which to him has hindered his son's ability to focus on completing his degree. While Taua expresses these concerns, he still feels there is nothing he could do. All he could do is just constantly asking him when he was going to finish his degree. However, Taua states that he loves his son, and all he could do, is to be there for him.

As a Samoan parent in New Zealand, Taua wants to be a good father. He has done the best he knows how to support his children's education. As a Samoan parent in New Zealand, he had never received any help or support from anyone besides his wife. Taua believes it is tough for Samoan parents to be good parents in New Zealand. There are so many distractions here compared to Samoa. He believes Samoan children in New Zealand do not share the same aspirations as their Samoan born parents. This is something that parents and their children need to work on, so they can find some common ground to improve the parent-child relationship within the home.

Summary

In summary**,** these parents' stories through their unique experiences have provided deeper insights into each parent's circumstances, in determining the nature of support significant to their children's education and success. Each participant has made constant efforts to change how they communicate with their children, and their constant need to be better parents. These stories will be analysed further through the main themes, to provide answers for the research question. The main themes are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

The main themes

Introduction

Five key themes emerged from the participants' stories, which will be explained further in the chapter. The key themes are arranged around the context of parenting, education success and *faasamoa*. These five key themes are; parents' upbringing experiences influence parenting, student success begins at home, parents' perceptions of *faasamoa* and student success, parents' perceptions of schools' and teachers' support, and, the challenges of parenting in New Zealand'. This chapter is presented in five parts, which are the five key themes.

Parents' upbringing experiences influence their approach to parenting

All parents shared their personal narratives reflecting on the highs and lows of their own upbringing and how their parents managed their families, including the sacrifices to put them into school. As they shared their stories, there was a deep sense of personal satisfaction in the way many of them spoke about how their parents had raised them with the intention for them to do well in schools. There was also a strong sense of pride in the way they managed to support their own children, to be able to enter into higher education, something that the majority of Samoan families in New Zealand have not been able to accomplish. Out of eight Samoan born participants, only one described his upbringing as very good as he recalled:

> *O au na ou ola ae i se aiga e maua uma a mea … na ou ola mai lava i le tv ma mea uma faapena. Oute nofo i le tv, oute matamata i le tv toeitiiti a ta le fia o ou matamata tv.*
>
> *(I grew up in a family who had everything … Since my young age, I grew up around the tv and other similar devices. Watching tv was my passion and often stayed up late watching tv all night long).*

To Ina, having a television in his home was a luxury of the time, as almost no televisions existed in the 70s for many families. Ina credited his parents in how they planned and organised their family life because his father came to work in New Zealand in the 50s. His father was able to send money to their mother, who was looking after their family and caring for him and his siblings in Samoa. That enabled their mother to take care of their family and put them to school.

Ina also acknowledges the care and love his parents demonstrated towards him and his siblings in terms of discipline as he claimed:

> *I lou olaga mai Samoa, na ala ona sasa ta ita o le aoga. Ao lo matou aiga latou isi o matou tama ma si o matou tina, o upu a. E sasa a matou e le isi a vaega matutua, ao lo matou tama ma lo matou tina, e le oo se sasa ia matou, ao tala a. (Ina)*
>
> *(Since growing up in Samoa, I got smacked at school. But within our family with our father and mother, it was words (oral instructions). Some older family members hit us, but our father and mother had never hit us, but disciplined us through instructions).*

Each parent had a unique story of how their parents managed to provide opportunities for them to attend school even when they had no education background themselves. This knowledge of Ina's own parents and what they did for him and his siblings has definitely reflected in his own life. Out of all the participants, only Ina was involved with the Board of Trustees (BOT) at his children's secondary school. His desire to be on the BOT was his willingness to be able to support his children's education by having access to relevant information that would equip himself to respond to his children's needs if required. He felt it is his responsibility as a father, to ensure he sought relevant information, so he could support his children the best he could. He stated that his own parents role-modelled that for him even when they had no education background whatsoever as he claimed:

> *Ia ita a ia ma lota tuputupu ae, e moi a foi e lei lelei ni aoga a nai matua, ae taumafai lava i le malosi e iai, e taumafai ai, po o se a se mea e mafai, e fesoasoani ai foi pe iai ni mataupu foi nei e faatalanoaina ai mataupu a tamaiti. Ia ua ta sau foi la ita ia i Samoa ua fai si ata fanau, oute mulimuli a po o a fono e fai oute alu a iai, ona tate fia iloa … po o a tulaga e maua ai se fesoasoani a le aiga mo le tamaitiiti. Pe le o maua foi ia ta ita se tali, ae la e vaai mai le tamaitiiti i le naunau atu.*
>
> *(As a child growing up, none of my parents had any background education, but they did their very best, to do whatever they could, to obtain any information that were helpful to us. Since I came here from Samoa and having a family of my own, I continue to do the same, attending all meetings because I'm curious to know as to how I could support my children. Even if I did not have the answer, at least my children could see I am keen to do my best).*

Ina's words provide strong evidence that he was a committed parent. Rather than leaving the matter for his son and the school to sort out, he recognised the state of mind his son was in and so decided to his children to find out some of the relevant information about certain matters at school, he wanted to be a part of his children's lives too. He cared about his children's education and that he wanted to be of help, having learned from his parents that by having relevant information available to his children that they were going to make good choices about their own education.

The participants' upbringing experiences were significant in the way they approach parenting in New Zealand. Out of eight Samoan-born parents, only one parent had not mentioned being hit or physically disciplined at home or at school growing up. However, her family had a different struggle when their father walked out of their family when she was just eight. Moana spoke of the struggles her mother went through to ensure they were able to attend school, a luxury not many Samoan children at the time were privilege to. For Moana witnessing her mother's struggles to find money to pay for their schooling really hurt her. According to Moana, her mother's struggle was not for food because they had food. Her struggles were to raise money to pay for them to attend school as she claimed:

> *I saw mum was struggling being with us. I was struggling and I got to the point where I thought, oh no, I'd like to stay home and help out mum to collect the coconuts, to sell the coconuts, sell the water-cress because it's what we had … to help mum just to survive. We got a lot of food and stuff like that but money to send us to school … did not help (Moana).*

Even as a young child, Moana's position as the oldest child of her mother made her even more determined to do well at school. She also made use of any opportunity she had at home, to help her mother out. Her hard work had paid off when she was accepted to a secondary school in town, a rare opportunity for many students from rural village schools as Moana indicated:

> *When I was 13, I managed to get an education in a college in Apia. So I was fortunate to have my aunt to help to pay for my fees. Every weekend, I go to my mum because our family was in a rural area … every time I go back there, I saw my mum struggle. I saw my brothers' struggle … for me, that gave me something to work for. That was my goal to be able to get a good job … My mum was poor. That was something that was in my*

heart and my head all the time. … I was going to get there … it doesn't matter how but I know I've got to get there one day.

Moana's unpleasant upbringing experiences had encouraged her to be self-driven in her education and setting her goals about getting a good job one day. Witnessing her mother going through the challenges of raising children on her own, and still wanted them to also have education, was something Moana could not comprehend. Her mother's commitment and the sacrifices she made for her and her younger siblings made her more determined to be her best. Ina on the other hand spoke well of his parents. According to him, none of his parents applied physical punishment to discipline them. He claimed he was hit by older extended family members as well at school but had never being physically hit by either his mother or father. He claimed he was raised in a very stable home and that his mother and father provided them not only a safe but a stable home. He claimed:

I lou olaga mai Samoa, e le oo se sasa ia matou … Na ala ona sasa ta ita o le aoga. E sasa a matou e le isi vaega matutua. Ao le matou aiga latou isi ou tama ma si ou tina, o upu a. O le tala a. E faatonu, faatonu, faatonu, faatonu. Ae ia ita a ia, ta te faafetai aua o upu e tapu'e ai, ma upu e le galo. (Ina)

(Throughout my life growing up in Samoa, our parents did not hit us … I only got hit because of school. But at our home with our mother and father, they used words. Only words. Faatonu, faatonu, faatonu, faatonu! I personally am grateful because those very words have guided and instructed me are not easy to forget).

Ina's positive childhood experiences of his home life had encouraged him in his own parenting role. He reflected on how good his parents were in terms of how they did not hit them but applied verbal instructions to guide and lead them. According to Ina, those very words have provided him guidance and instructions were not easy to forget.

Six of the Samoan born participants had indicated being physically hit or punished in their younger years growing up. As most has spoken generally about receiving physical punishment both at home and at school, Moli spoke particularly about her difficult life growing up as a very young child. Moli, spoke of how she had to leave school in her early years of primary school because her mother could not afford to pay for her schooling. She spoke of the difficult life her mother had to suffer on her own, when their father who was supposed to work in New Zealand to support them in their schooling did not do so. According to Moli, she had to suffer because

her mother was put in a situation where she was not able to cope. She had to leave school so she could support her mother. Moli claimed:

> *I never forgot my childhood life at school. I got hidings at school and at home. Oh it was bad. The beatings and everything. My father was here having married and have his own way here with somebody else. I could not care less about him. It was a hard life for me over there. I had to help out collecting the coconuts as that's the only main thing for us over there.*

Moli's earlier childhood experiences under her mother's care sometimes affected her emotionally. Yet, Moli did not hold any grudges against her mother but only towards her father. She somehow believed that her mother had reasons to do what she had to do. In reflection on her own childhood experiences, Moli insisted that she had not looked back at those negative experiences because she wanted to make her children's lives better than hers as she spoke of how she sometimes felt when she remembered those difficult times:

> *I get emotional sometimes because of the hidings I had. But my mother was a single parent and she brought us all up. I think that was the reason why my mum did that … I never look back at those beatings because I know I can make it better for my children here … if you carry on that cycle, it's not gonna work. I don't dwell on it (Moli).*

Moli agreed that it was good to talk about those painful past experiences but believed, those negative experiences belonged in the past. Her intentions now were to raise her children to be successful:

> *It is good to talk about it, but I don't want to dwell on something like that, because if I do, then I suffer and then I might be a failure to my children.*

Moli's negative upbringing experiences affected the way she viewed her parents especially her father. Although it was not her father who inflicted physical pain on her, the pain of being neglected by their father seemed deeper than the physical pain she suffered under her mother's care. She was however determined to behave differently to her own children.

Student success begins at home

When parents were asked as to how or what type of support they provide that was conducive to their children's academic journey through school and into tertiary studies, all were unison in

their responses. They all believe that it was in their home that student success for their children began. They all pointed out the complexities of raising Samoan children in New Zealand, but identified their home as the only place where they had a two-way conversation with their children as Ina pointed out:

> *Mau te talanoa … matou te talanoa i mataupu e fiafia ai, ae o le latou foi input oute matua respect a, aua o le latou foi lea share mai (Ina).*
>
> *(… we talk … we talk about issues they are interested in, and as a parent, I respect their input, as that is their share into our family discussion).*

Children's well-being was nurtured, comforted and encouraged. While they all claimed the role of the aiga in channelling their children's success, some parents were very creative in how they managed necessary support for their children in their home. For example, Ina, Moana and Tui applied non-traditional Samoa ways to support their children. Ina indicated that, for him to provide support for his children, he decided to read books about parenting. He was able to cite a couple of sayings which strongly indicated the significance of the aiga in terms of providing support that motivated and encouraged his children in their academic journey as he claimed:

> *Home is a library of learning and a legacy of love (and that) … There's no success in life can compensate the failure within the home'*

He went on:

> *A faapea la e lelei ona tapu'e atu ii le olaga o tamaiti, e le gata ina ola i le alofa, ae faatasi ai foi ma isi tulaga uma … i totonu o aiga.*
>
> *… if children's lives are well established/founded within the home, not only they will learn, they will also learn to love, and being considerate of their situations within the home.*

Ina insisted that, the quality of the home holds the key to his children's success in their education and in life. He was adamant that there is nowhere else that holds the key to student success besides the aiga as he claims:

O lau talanoa i lau fanau … e amata atu lava i le aiga … e amata ii … e leai se isi mea … e moi tatou te o i lotu, e iai foi e tatou te vaai i le latou foi tulaga faaeaina, ae tusa pe o a le tele o na avanoa tatou te vaai ai, ae a le lelei lava le foundation, e le lelei a.

(I say to my children … it begins here in the home … it begins here (home)… nowhere else. While there are many successful people in church who are successful, but if the foundation (aiga) is not good, then it won't work.

As far as Ina is concerned, the aiga is the foundation of student success. Somehow, if that foundation is not well founded, then student success is not possible. Tui, on the other hand, has found it difficult to encourage his children because he thought his children did not want to listen to his stories of what it was like growing up in Samoa. Tui was keen to find ways where he could communicate and encourage his children in their studies. He felt the knowledge he had as a Samoan parent was not enough to respond to his children's growing and complex needs. Tui managed to pay to attend some parenting workshops as he claimed:

To me, I've been attending some parenting workshops … called … parenting with confidence by Mary and Ian Grant. From there it's amazing how they covered all age groups from very young children and it's amazing how valid all the issues … they talked about to parents … The difference is whether parents are keen to apply those skills learnt from these workshops.

Having limited education growing up in Samoa did not limit Tui's willingness to seek professional help for himself, in order to respond to his children's growing needs appropriately. Tui's recognised the need for him and was able to attend a parenting workshop which he found useful and relevant to his parental needs. Moana, on the other hand, also recognised the need to have ongoing chats with her children especially issues that arise at work, relevant to her teenage children. She initiated weekend outings with her children, in order for them to get a heads-up on social or cultural issues that affect most young people she had encountered at work. According to Moana, those times were very special because as a working parent, it was not easy to make time during the week for their children and them as parents to spend quality time together.

Positive parent-child relationship

The first issues parents raised when asked about the roles they play in supporting their children's success through school and into tertiary studies were about the significance of the aiga, home, and the importance of the roles matua, parents, play within the aiga that contribute to their children's success. While all Samoan parents experienced physical discipline growing up in Samoa, all claimed they do not use force as expressed by Ina, Moli, and Lesina insisted they do not apply force to motivate their children. They recall:

Oute le fosia lau fanau (I don't force my children) (Ina)

I don't force them to do their homework (Moli)

O au i lau fanau, oute le fosiina latou foi lele, mai lava o laiti (Lesina)

(With my children, I never force them even from their young age).

All parents insist that it is in the home where Samoan children's journey to success begins. They also recognised the complexity of New Zealand life in regards to raising good children. The general understanding all the participants have is that raising Samoan children outside of Samoa is "E faigata" (It's complicated) or "E le faigofie" (It's not easy). Moli talks about how she deals with the challenges of parenting as she explains:

Sometimes I cry because it's hard. Sometimes I say harsh words to them. I say to them this is your future – not mine … Ao le mea a lena e fai isi au fanau (That's what I keep telling my children). It's your future, if you wreck it, it's your fault. But we are here to encourage you and support you in every way. We are not that financially rich or anything, but we try our best with what we have here.

None of them was looking elsewhere for their children to do well in their education but insisted that it was within the aiga that student success begins, as Ina and Tua agreed:

O la'u tala, e amata ii (aiga) … e leai a se isi mea (Ina).

(I say, it starts right here (home) … nowhere else).

Ia te au a ia, o le tulaga muamua a, o totonu o aiga … aua i lo'u talitonuga, a faaletonu a totonu o tatou aiga, oute iloa, o le tele foi lena o le faaletonu o tamaiti (Tua).

(To me, the first thing is the state of our home … because I believe, if the state of the home is not good, our children will be mostly affected).

While Ina pointed to the significance of the home in relation to student success, Tua spoke about the state of the home for children's own safety. Not only that, there was a strong understanding among all parents that it was their responsibility to provide a safe home for their children.
All the participants believed that student success begins at home. As far as they are concerned, there is no other place significant to Samoan children's success in education and in life as the aiga. All the participants recognised the institution of the aiga to make or have such special impact on their children's lives. To parents, the aiga became a special place where parents and their children talanoa (two-way conversation), talie (laugh together), *fai le lotu* (worship together) and getting to know one another better, and develop deep relationships and respect for each other. Ina expressed this view of how he defined his relationship with his children in their home...

Mau te talanoa. Matou te talanoa i mataupu e fiafia ai. Ae o le latou foi input oute matua respect a, aua o le latou foi lea share mai.

(We talk. We talk about issues that interest them. I absolutely respect whatever input they make in our discussion, as that is their contribution to our family).

All the participants insisted that within the aiga' parents were committed to establish strong relationships with their children. Samoan born parents especially recognised the challenges and the failures of the traditional parenting methods they were raised with. The majority of these parents became very creative in establishing a two-way communication with their children unlike how they were raised themselves. Most indicated a change in their own parenting as indicated in the next anecdotes.

O au ia i lau fanau, oute le fosiina latou foi lele a … mai lava o laiti, leaga foi o au na fai lau pepa i le social work. I know how to deal with youths. Tusa la, ia au a ia i lau fanau, oute fai iai, o le tou lumanai. Alu e fai. Afai e te stuck, sau e share mai ae. Aua le fefe e talanoa mai (Lesina).

(With my children, I don't force them … even from their young age, because I studied a paper at the social work course. I know how to deal with youths. So to me, with my

children, I tell them, it is your future. Go do it. If you get stuck, share it with me. Don't be scared to share with me).

For Lesina, her own personal experiences of other young people who were friends with her sons, made her understood about the issues why many of them did not feel at home in their own homes. As a teacher-aide at her children's high school, Lesina has witnessed many parents who forced their children to take on degrees their children were not interested in because parents and their children did not understand each other. As she noted …

E pei o le tele o nai o tatou matua Samoa e faapea ia latou fanau, 'alu e fomai, alu e loia, alu e a …' … ae la e leo iai i le tamaititi … So, what's the point? Ia au a ia, oute fai i lau fanau, 'Alu e taumafai. Se e leai se mea e faigata pe a e taumafai. You have to try. Oute fai iai, vaai e le mafai ona alu atu e fosi oe. O oe e ona le dream lea e te alu e chase, o oe foi la e te alu e fai. Pau a lata mea e fai iai, 'faamalosi, ma e manatu i lou lumanai, o lea ua tatou ola i nei atunuu e eseese … aua o iinei, a leai se fasipepa ma le tupe e struggle.

(Like many of our Samoan parents who tell their children 'go do medicine, go do law, or do whatever …' … while their child isn't interested in that … So, what's the point? To me, I tell my children, 'Go try. Nothing is impossible if you aren't trying. You have to try. I tell them, I can't force you. It's your dream you are chasing after, you have to do it yourself. My role is to encourage them to think about their future, especially in this foreign country we live in … in here, without a piece of paper and money, we struggle.

Instead of applying physical and/or verbal form of methods to discipline their children, they adopted skills including the following activities as a family to build strong relationships in the aiga. The following skills were the ones that helped build positive relationship with their children at home. Some of those skills included "trusting relationships", "teaching and learning from each other", "respect for children", "spending time together as a family", and "nofo i lalo e fai le lotu" (sit down and do the evening lotu), "respecting children's contribution", "sharing stories and jokes" and "praying together".

Trusting relationships

Trust emerged as an integral element in terms of building stable relationship in the home between parents and their children. Healthy relationships were premised on trust. However, the

lack of trust in the home may lead to tensions that create disharmony in the home as Lesina witnessed at her work. As a teacher aide in a local high school, Lesina observed serious tensions between parents and their children which stretched far beyond the home to the school. As a Samoan born and raised mother, it concerned her because if trust between parents and their children was not practised and promoted at home, children were more likely to adopt other people's values instead of their parents'. Lesina pointed this out:

> *Ia o le mea lea ua iai, pei ua laititi le trust o tamaiti i matua, ae ua tele le trust o friends. Parents have to be strong. Parents need to trust their children. Ua le pei tatou fanau o aso ia o tatou sa tatou maua le usitai. O iinei i lenei atunuu, ua ese uiga ma le siosiomaga o fanau (Lesina).*
>
> *(What is happening is that, children trust their friends more than they trust their parents. Parents have to be strong. Parents need to trust their children. Our children are different from the way we were raised to be obedient. This country too is different and children are experiencing different issues).*

Moli too expressed a similar concern about the issue of trust. Having suffered physical beatings and hard physical work growing up in the Islands as a young child, Moli believed the lack of trust parents have in their children creates obstacles for both parents and children to learn and to grow from their experiences. She alleged:

> *Lots of Pacific parents do not trust their children. But we have to trust our children. That is the thing with our Samoan parents or a lot of Pacific parents, they don't trust their children. As a parent, you have to be able to trust them. Children should be allowed to make mistakes. And they are going to make mistakes, but let them learn from it... we have to trust our children (Moli).*

Trusting relationships between parents and children contribute to positive lives for their parents. For Tuli, trusting her children means a lot more for her as a Samoan parent as she professed:

> *If you trust lau fagau, e maua ... e filemu i lou loto (Tuli).*
>
> *(If you trust your children, your heart always finds peace).*

Teaching and learning from each other

Another important aspect of maintaining positive relationships within the aiga were life lessons parents and their children learned from each other. As a Samoan born father, Ina was well engaged in his children's lives especially at home. He was the only participant who served as a parent representative on the Board of Trustees (BOT) at his children's school. Ina's involvement on the BOT taught him a lot about what was important for his children. For him, it was important that his children learned their faasinomaga because he believed it would benefit them as he insisted.

> *... o lata tala foi i lata fanau, o lou iloa o lou faasinomaga, ma lou malamalama i lou faasinomaga, a ala ai ona mausali le ola taumafai o le tagata. Ae a faapea e te le malamalama, ona gata mai lea o lou iloa... Ae a lelei ona tapu'e atu ii le olaga o le tagata, e le gata ina ola i le alofa, ae faapea foi ma isi tulaga uma... (Ina).*

> *(... I've said to my children, knowing and understanding your faasinomaga (identity), generates stability in any person's life ... If you do not know your faasinomaga, then your knowledge is rationed... But if the home provides opportunities for positive learning, then living and loving can be accomplished beyond measures).*

Traditional parenting methods assumes that the role of the parents is to be teaching and that of the children to be the learners. As a Samoan born mother with very limited education, Moli knows she needs help from her children. Moli appreciates those learning opportunities as she claims:

> *I learn a lot from my children... you know when they say something ... then I ask them to say it again ... I know my English is not very good but I learn a lot ... (Moli).*

For Moli, this seems to be a very positive experience and she seems appreciative of how her children make time to help her to learn.

As a working parent, Ina proudly claimed that his family were always up and ready to work as well as going out to work and church. As he stated, such attitude supports wellbeing, stability and success in life and in education. This is fundamental as Tua claims:

> *Ia ... te au a ia, o le tulaga muamua a ...o totonu o aiga. Tasi lena matafaioi a tatou matua (Tua).*

...o lau tala, e amata ii (home). E leai se isi mea. E moi tatou te o i lotu, e iai foi e tatou te vaai i le latou foi tulaga faaeaina, ae tusa pe o le a le tele o na avanoa tatou te vaai iai, ae a le lelei lava i (home), e le lelei a.

(...from my perspective, it starts here (home). Nowhere else. Of course, we go to church and we witness other people's success, but no matter how many of those opportunities we observed, but if this (home) is not in order, nothing works).

As a father, Ina's own upbringing experiences and how his parents raised him and his siblings in a good home in Samoa, were highlighted in his involvement not only as an active parent at home, but also as the only parent who is a parent representative on the Board of Trustees at his children's high school. Ina continued to re-emphasise the significance of the aiga to his children whenever he could as he claimed:

O lau talanoa i lau fanau ... e amata atu lava i le aiga. E pei o le upu sa ou faitua ai i le isi tusi e faapea. There is no success in life can compensate the failure within the home. E pei a la o lata tala, e amata atu ii. E leai se isi mea. E moi a tatou te o i lotu, e iai foi e tatou te vaai i le latou foi tulaga faaeaina, ae tusa pe o le a le tele o na avanoa ... tatou te vaai iai, ae a le lelei lava le foundation, e le lelei a (Ina).

(I tell my children ... that it starts within the aiga. Like the quote I read in a book, 'There is no success in life, can compensate the failure within the home'. Like I said before, it starts right here (home). Nowhere else. Even though we go to church and we witness others' success and so forth ... all those opportunities, if the foundation is not right, it won't be good).

From Lesina's personal experiences working as a teacher-aide at her children's high school, she noted ongoing issues between the school, the parents and the students. She noted that children are very scared of their parents. To avoid getting into trouble with their parents, children had to recruit their friends to make up something so they did not get into trouble with their parents. At times when the school made contact with the parents, the children tended to establish their own plan to avoid getting into trouble especially with their parents. The lack of trust between parents and their children is a concerning issue for Lesina:

Ia o le mea lea ua iai, pe i ua laititi le trust a tamaiti i matua, ae ua tele le trust o friends. Parents have to be strong. Parents need to trust their children. Ua le pei tatou fanau o

aso ia o tatou sa tatou maua le usitai. O iinei i lenei atunuu, ua ese uiga ma le siosiomaga o fanau (Lesina).

What is happening here, is that children trust their friends more than their parents. Parents have to be strong. Parents need to trust their children. Our children are not like us in our days because we were obedient then. In this country, ua le pei tatou fanau o aso ia o tatou sa tatou usitai.

Lesina considered this was one of the issues children continue to experience at school, because she noted that this is an issue which the majority of Samoan children struggle with both at school and at home.

According to Moli, home is not only a place where children learn from their parents, home is also a place and space where parents listen and learn from their children.

From a Samoan perspective, mothers are solely responsible for children's wellbeing in the home and this is reflected in Tua's story. As a father, since his children were young, he was solely responsible for waking them up in the morning to make sure they were not late to school.

Moli on the other hand made a deliberate choice to take on herself to do all the domestic chores at home, so her children could focus on their school work when they come home from school. She did not want to bother her children with any of those duties so they could have some rest before tackling their homework. As far as Moli was concerned, if she were to do all those chores, then her children would have more time to rest and to focus on their homework. She claimed that wanted her children to:

… come home from school, eat, rest, let their mind rest. I don't force them to do their homework straight away. I let them have a bit of a game or something or just rest their minds. And then at about four thirty or five, that is the time for homework (Moli).

For Moli, as a mother, the completion of those domestic duties when her children were at school demonstrated how much she loves and respects her children by providing such service that is often regarded in *faasamoa* in New Zealand as the children's responsibilities.

Strong relationships in the *aiga*

Working as a teacher aide at her children's school, Lesina experienced first-hand some of the challenges many young Samoan people experienced in their own homes, which also affected children's lives at school. She stated that she loved her sons very much but her only daughter is like her best friend. Lesina's two sons were already enrolled as students; one at Otago University and one at University of the Canterbury. Her youngest child was a daughter who was in Year 13. She was elected head girl of her school. As a mother, Lesina considered her role as a teacher aide to be a significant one in how she supported her children. She shared one particular incident where her daughter experienced a tough time in her leadership role. Her daughter asked her mother for advice as she couldn't make up her mind as to what she needed to do. Lesina responded by letting her daughter know that she has to think with her heart and not her mind in whatever decision she made.

> *You do what you think is right... Listen, you can't please everyone ... But they saw something in you that you presented i le aoga (at school) (why they chose her) ... What does your heart tell you? Then do that! (Lesina).*

Instead of Lesina telling her daughter what she felt and thought about the whole situation, she managed to let her know that, she had to be nutral and do that right thing rather than reacting under pressure. As a mother, Lesina was also aware of the different ways Samoan parents raised their children. This was obvious with some Samoan boys, who were friends with her sons. She noted that when those boys came over to their house, they often spent a few days in their home and only left if their parents demanded them to be home. From what she heard, some did not want to go back home. This was different from how her sons feel about their home. She said that her sons made it clear to her that, they would rather come home than going to someone else's place as she described her sons:

> *A o e out, e koe o mai a i le fale… Fai mai 'it's not the same pe a le o mai i le fale'. Fai mai oh it's good to be home'. It's probably aua la lau ke iloa e leai a se isi alofa e tusa ma le alofa o matua (Lesina).*
>
> *(When they went out, they always came home ... They always said, 'oh it's not the same if we are not back at home'. It's probably because they know there is no other love compared to that of their own parents).*

On the other hand, Lesina also noted that when her sons' friends came to their house, they never wanted to leave. Some of the boys seemed to feel scared of their parents and they would rather stay at their friends' places than going back to their own homes. Because of those young people's experiences of what life in their home looked like, Lesina did her best to establish strong relationships with her children. Although she felt for other young people caught in similar issues in their homes, understanding what other young people went through with their own parents in their own home, motivated her in her relationship with her three children.

Ina on the other hand described the aiga as the foundation for stability for a Samoan child's life. He contended that:

> *E amata ii. E leai se isi mea. E moi a tatou te o i le lotu, e iai foi e tatou te vaai i le latou foi tulaga faaeaina, ae tusa pe o le a le tele o na avanoa tatou te vaai ai, ae a le lelei lava i le foundation, e le lelei a (Ina, p. 6).*
>
> *(It starts from here (home). Nowhere else. Oh course, we go to church, and we've seen and observed very successful people. Regardless of all those opportunities, if the foundation (home) is not right, nothing goes right).*

Taua understood the struggle and the effort children commit to school or to sport that made them tired when they got home. For him, because he understood that, when his children were home from school or from sports he allowed them to do whatever they wanted without unnecessary demands for them to complete house work or chores. To Taua, he allowed his children to do whatever they wanted to do if he knew they were tired.

> *Ia te a'u a ia, pei ua ta malamalama foi i tamaiti, e sili atu le pologa o latou mafaufau i le aoga i mataupu, ma tulaga faapena i mea i totonu o le aoga. Ia te au la ia, a o mai. la lau fanau i le fale mai ni taaloga foi ma isi mea faapena, e free foi lele. E tuu iai le saolotoga pe a ...ta ... iloa, ga feagai ma aoga ma taaloga i lena aso (Taua).*
>
> *(To me, as I got to understand my kids' situation more, I came to realise that they do go through difficulties at school. So to me when my children came home from sports or from school, I let them do what they wanted. I gave them free time if I knew they had a difficult day).*

O aiga Samoa i Niu Sila (Samoan families in New Zealand)

In their search to protect and assist their children to live content and well-disciplined lives, Samoan parents integrate various activities to build their relationships with their children in their home. While parents adopt other social activities as a family, Ina's family included the evening devotion as a family activity for their whole aiga. This was something that Ina grew up with in Samoa, and he continues to hold evening devotion in his home with his family. As he stated:

> *O le matou aiga e faapena ... E fai le matou lotu. E taumafai a i taimi e Maua uma ai tamaiti e fai le matou lotu (p. 3).*
>
> *(Our family is like that.... We do our evening devotion. We try to do this once all our children were home).*

Furthermore, Ina noted that at home, they spent time together sharing jokes, talking about serious matters or to discuss any issues that his children were interested in.

Home is the library of learning and legacy of love

As many Samoan parents experience many problems including the lack of quality time for children and parents to learn together, some parents make the most of every opportunity to teach their children life lessons as in the case of Lesina and her 2-year-old son.

According to Lesina, there was a shop nearby their home where they used to go shopping. However, one day when they got home from shopping, she noticed her son was chewing something. When she asked him what he was eating, he put his hand in his pockets and took out a chewing gum. As she noticed what her son had just done, she cried and took him back to the shop to pay for the items that he took and apologised the shop owner. Even though the shop owner insisted not to worry about it as he was just a child, Lesina wanted her son to learn that it was not okay to steal. Lesina's son now attends university and he often jokingly reminds his mother of that incident. When Lesina's son was leaving for his studies, Lesina stated that she cried because she missed her son. In return, Lesina said her son tried to comfort her by saying:

> *Mum, I will go, but I will keep in my heart everything you taught me. I will remember everything you taught me (Lesina)*

As Laina shared this story, she was overwhelmed with emotion that we ended up both crying and then we laughed at the same time.

Parents' perceptions of faasamoa and student success

One of the topics all the participants identified during their talanoaga as having impact on Samoan student success, is *faasamoa*. However, the perception of the only New Zealand born participant indicates that *faasamoa* has evolved over the years. In terms of providing a clear definition of what they think faasamoa was the participants described it through various aspects of its cultural, family and church obligations on Samoans. In saying that, the participants have differing views of various aspects of *faasamoa* that may either enhance or hinder student success. According to Losa, the current *faasamoa* is different from the *faasamoa* within which her Samoan-born parents had raised her and her siblings back in the 50s and 60s. Not only it has taken a major shift, she said, but the majority of the parents are too strict with their children and that the family dynamic has also changed as she claims:

> *The funny thing is … we were brought up within the faasamoa. And what I see the way we were brought up back in the 1960s is totally different from the way they are now. I would say, they are stricter now (parents) than what they were back then. Maybe it's what's going on in society where I think the parents' priorities have changed. Because I think back in the 50s and 60s, we had more of a family orientated thing, and so the expectations by our parents especially by my parents, was to grow up as wee kids … but I noted that faasamoa has changed (Losa).*

As far as Losa could recall, her parents were not as strict with them compared to how the majority of Samoan parents raise their children today. She believes her parents expected them to be kids but children today do not have that freedom. This was the concern of the majority of the parents, in terms of cultural, family and church obligations on the family, and subsequently on student success.

Respect for parents as part of faasamoa

Losa holds very strong views against some aspects of faasamoa, because of what she had witnessed with many students she had in the past. As a tutor for Pacific students at university, she was very concerned with students who were capable of doing well in their studies, but withdrew because of the pressure from their parents to find work so they could contribute to the

family. As a New Zealand born parent, she perceives the role of the parents to be the providers and supporters of their children's education success. That was not what she witnessed. According to Losa, parents place huge expectations on their children to contribute to family's finances and often students do not have a say on such matters as she protests:

> *Some aspects of faasamoa can be a hinderance I find … For example, the expectations of the parents on the kids are too much. They put too much pressure. For example, I had a student about a couple of years ago, who was doing very well and what happened was, her parents demanded that she worked part time. So, she let her studies go. And when I spoke to her, the pressure on her to get the money and because of her respect for her parents which is a great part of faasamoa, she gave up her studies to work. That annoyed the hell out of me (Losa).*

To Losa, this student had to give up her chance to get her university qualification because she did not want to disrespect her parents. As far as she is concerned, respect towards parents is a strong aspect of faasamoa. Like Losa, Moana also shares the same concerns she has had as she witnessed a certain trend that was going on in her church as she declares:

> *I think the huge problem lea e iai nei i aulotu, o matua … I don't know what it is because parents don't seem to get it (Moana).*

> *I think the huge problem there is in churches, is parents … I don't know what it is because parents don't seem to get it*

Moana shared her frustrations towards many Samoan parents, because she felt that parents should have known, or learned by now that is it their responsibility to encourage their children in their studies. That was far from the reality of many families she encountered in church. According to Moana, many students from their church had the potential to do well and to go further in their studies, but often parents make poor decisions by demanding their children to find part time work while they are still in school, as she claims:

> *From Year 12 … ona iai loa lea o lota expectations faapea laa o i le iunivesite … aua la e lelei i le aoga. Ia ae amata loa le Year 12, even Year 11 sometimes, ia ae ua o ia McDonalds ma le KFC, aua foi they can get part time jobs. But once they see the money … that is where e amata loa na o atu ai a (Moana).*

(From Year 12 … there were strong prospects for these students to enter university. But once they are in Year 12, or even Year 11 sometimes, they've already worked at McDonalds and KFC, because they can get part-time work there. But once they see the money … that is when they begin to disengage from their school work).

According to Moana, many Samoan parents within the church do not seem to understand how significant their roles as parents are, in terms of supporting their children's success through school and into tertiary studies. As a health worker, she recognises the potential those students have because she works closely with young people in church. Unfortunately, many parents are not supportive and are short-sighted encouraging their children to find employment especially in their senior years of school. Furthermore, once children get hooked into those part time work, they are more likely to let go of their school work to work full time employment as she claims:

Ia o le isi mea … I'm sure ana iai le support a matua, e mafai a na galulue tamaiti ma fai a latou aoga. Ao la ua suamalie a i matua foi na e le alu atu o le tamaitiiti ma le tupe … Ia na o le alu atu a, ia faapea loa lea o le talanoa, "Ia ova; ova e tele mai ai nisi tupe". Ia o le tele a la o hours e faigaluega ai, o le tele foi lena o le tupe la a aumai. Ia sosoo ai loa ma le faapea, ia o le a foi le mea e te oe alu ai i na aoga, ae le nofo loa e faigaluega? E faapea, ia e tutusa a tupe pe a alu i le iunivesite. Of course, it's the same money, but not the same amount with the hours of labour (Moana).

(Furthermore, I'm sure if parents were more supportive at home, their children could still be studying and working. Unfortunately, for some parents, once they see the extra money coming in, they are more likely to encourage their children to work long hours or to ask for more overtime work in order to bring home more money. As children increase their hours of work, so will the money they receive. The next thing parents would challenge their children, why would you like to go back to school instead of working? The money you earn now is the same money you earn if you went to university". Of course, it's the same money, but not the same amount with the hours of labour involved).

As Moana protests, she somehow feels frustrated with how short-sighted many Samoan Samoan parents have become. She believes it is the parents' fault that children are not progressing further in their education.

On the other hand, some parents tend to have unnecessary expectations on their children, only because they do not want other Samoan children to be better than their own. This can be discouraging for some children especially if their parents tend to force their own agendas on the children as Tina insists:

> *O tatou o matua Samoa, we have high expectations i tatou fanau … o le olaga foi o tatou faasamoa, tatou te le manana'o e to'ilalo a tatou fanau aemaise lava tulaga o mea tau aoaoga. I think it is something good … tatou te manana'o e faaeaea a tatou fanau … but sometimes … (parents') expectations is so high, a ua le tutusa ai ma le level la e iai le fanau. That is another reason e faigata ai a tatou fanau i isi taimi. O isi matua e manana'o ia latou fanau e leoleo, fomai … loia … ae le o tutusa le manao o matua ma le iloa la e i mafaufau o tamaiti. Ia na tupu ai lea o le isi tulaga lea e pei e rebel mai o le tamaitiiti (June).*

> *(Being Samoan parents, we have high expectations on our children. … We also don't want our children to lose to other kids especially in education. I think it is something good … because we want our children to be their best. … But sometimes, (parents') expectations is so high, that doesn't line up with children in terms of their education ability. That is another reason why some children become a problem. Some parents want their children to be coppers, doctors, lawyers … but that isn't what their kids want. That is when children become rebellious.*

Monetary contributions to family, *faalavelave*

Monetary contributions to family, *faalavelave,* is another aspect of faasamoa the participants raised. Making such contributions to family can put pressure on Samoa families if they had no means to be able to contribute. From Moli's perspective, this is one aspect of the culture she does not like as she objects:

> *For example – asking for money when they know you live in a different country, you've got children and a family here (Moli).*

June believes money is perhaps one of the stagnant point for many Samoan families who want to support their children's education as she claims:

O le isi mea lea oute iloa e faigata ai i matua le lagolagoina o aoga a fanau, o le mea tau tupe. Aua, when it comes to money, o le mea lena e matua'i tutaia ai lava le tele o aiga (June).

(That is another challenge for parents in terms of supporting their children's education, it's the finances side. This is because, when it comes to money, it is a point of stagnant for many families).

And, Moli states:

Your first and your foremost priority is your children. That is the thing I don't like about our culture. Sometimes, it's good to give something but not every time. My priority here in New Zealand, is my children. They have to be fed, be educated and looking after their health.

In regards to *faasamoa* and children's wellbeing, Moli detests the way she witnessed how Samoan children were only appreciated or acknowledge once a year during the White Sunday service. Moli does not see faasamoa as a culture that protects or care much about children's wellbeing. She is very critical of *faasamoa* as she insists:

Our culture is very wrong because the children get the leftovers from everything. This has been passed on from generations to generations. That is how they did it. The children always come last … Then one day in a year for a Samoan child, that is the White Sunday … then make a huge fuss over children on that day … it is wrong … our culture. That is how I remember how things were like in Samoa. Children were the last priority of the parents.

Moli on the other has pointed out the issue of Samoans asking for money from their families in New Zealand as one aspect of *faasamoa* she does not approve of, as she objects:

I always feel sad about (our) … people because you see, some families they don't encourage their children to further their education. All they worry about is the money to send over there to better the life of the people in the Islands. What about their children here?

Alofa (love) is strong aspect of faasamoa

As the oldest in her family, June describes her family growing up with only her father who was working to provide for their family. Money was limited but they managed with what they had. Yet, she knew her parents could barely survive with just one income. For her, leaving Samoa and her family behind was a deliberate decision because she really loved and cared for her parents who were doing their best to care for so many of them as she tells her story:

> *O le a fai atu lau tala e uiga i le mea na ala ai ona ou alu ese mai ma Samoa. Na ou vaai i le vaivai o le matou aiga sa iai, na o lou tama e faigaluega e support-ina le matou aiga atoa. So i lena taimi na ou sau ai iinei, na ou manatua a lou alofa i le matou aiga. So, e lafo tupe foi na e fesoasoani aua na o au na ou alu ese mai, ao la e aooga uma isi ou uso ma ou tuagane. So that was a big fesoasoani i lou tama, tusa o le faaaliga atu o lota alofa ma le fesoasoani e taui ai le alofa o ota matua ia ta ita, e pei ona latou faia mai ia ta ita ao ita laititi. O le alofa le mea oute manao i lau fanau ia faamuamua (June).*
>
> *(This is my story as to why I left Samoa in the first place. I witnessed how my father struggled on his own to take care of our whole extended family. So when I was here (in New Zealand), I always remember how much I love my parents and about my family. So, I always send money over to help out because I was the only one who left home while all my sisters and brothers were in school. So that was a big help to repay my parents love and care for me since I was young. Alofa is one aspect of faasamoa I want my children to prioritise).*

Positive aspects of *faasamoa (faasinomaga*)

However, all the participants have different views of various aspects of faasamoa as discussed in this part of the chapter. One aspect of faasamoa one participant considers to be very significant to him and to his children is faasinomaga (identity and belonging). As far as he is concerned, children's lack of knowledge of their faasinomaga is problematic as he claims:

> *O lota ita iloa ma o lata tala foi i lata fanau, o lou iloa o lou faasinomaga, ma lou malamalama i lou faasinomaga, e ala ai ona mausali le ola taumafai o le tagata. I lo'u talitonuga … afai ae lelei le faasinomaga o tamaiti mai i le amataga i totonu o aiga, e iai foi le tulaga fiafia o tamaiti, e Ola ae, e Ola taumafai (Ina).*

(As far as I know and I often share with my children, that it is through knowing of one's faasinomaga, and having a good understanding of that faasinomaga, offers stability to one's life. If children are grounded on the knowledge of their faasinomaga, not only they will enjoy living, but will always try their best no matter what).

Parents' perceptions of schools and teachers' support

Participants' general perception of schools and teachers is that, they are the support systems of their children. Schools and teachers play a significant role in children's education success. The general perceptions of their roles in terms of supporting student success make them a significant part of the education system. In terms of educational choices students noted from their young age that there is a difference of standards within various schools. Laina talked about how her children insisted that they did not want to attend their local secondary school when they completed intermediate. They were adamant they did not want to go to their local high school as Laina recalled:

O le isi mea i lau fanau sa aooga uma lava i Mana-nui (high school). Ae lei fia mananao e o i Mana-nui. E fia mananao lava e o i fea ma o i fea. Na oo loa lau fanau i le high school ae fai mai ia maua e le fia o i Moana-nui High School leaga e down tele le aoga lena … mum and dad. Ou fai atu, Leai! E tutusa uma lava aoga iinei (mean in New Zealand). Aisea e fia o ai fua i isi aoga? E tutusa uma lava faiaoga ua iai le atamai faapitoa e aoao ai. Ae a'e toaga ma e tinou, e faamanuiaina au taumafaiga. O oe a ia. Aua le alu soona alu e aoga mea na aoao mai.

(All our children attended Moana-nui (our local high school). But they did not want to go there. … They asked us that they didn't want to go to Moana-nui high, because they said the school was down Mum and Dad. But I said to them, No! All schools are the same. Why would you want to attend another school? All teachers are professionally trained. It is you. If you persevere in your schoolwork, you will succeed. Don't just go to school but learn what you are taught at school).

From what Laina has explained about her children, it appears that her children's choice of school was the only decision she had not agreed with in terms of her children's requests. Laina did not support her children's request to be sent to another school on the other side of town. To her the convenience of their home to the school made it a perfect school regards of her children's negative attitudes towards the school:

O le uiga na ala ai na ma mananao i le aoga lea (their local school), ona e latalata mai. Po o a faaletonu a o le vaitaimi na, o la e faigaluega uma maua. Ae pe e te fia sau i le fale, ia na ona tuua a o le aoga savali mai. E leai se popole i fiu e faatali le alu atu o le taavale e piki mai ma toe alu ai le aoga. E tele le aoga, tele le sefe, sefe ai le penisini, toe sefe tupe (Laina).

(The reasons why we both wanted our children to attend our local high school, because of its convenience. Whatever happens while we're both working … if anything happens, they wouldn't have to wait for us. They can just walk home. They shouldn't be wasting time waiting to be picked up or dropped off to school at all. Attending the local schools saves time, petrol and money).

Like Moli, Ina also had a similar experience with his children who asked their dad if they could attend other schools outside of their zone. Their children did not like the type of school their local high was like. As the only participant in the study who was actively engaged with the school as a Board of Trustee parent representative, Ina's experiences of the school and how they support students was something he found it hard to understand. Ina has been observing over the years the school's supportive nature for minority students mostly Maori and Pacific. The issues then impacted on his son and on his family when his son won a travelling scholarship from the Ministry of Education. The scholarships was offered to only a few students nationally to embark on a travelling experience to other countries of the world with other young people, as Ina notes:

O lou atalii sa alu i Fiti. E lei leva na sau mai Iapani. Na tuu e alu i Brazil, ae o le aoga na faaletonu ai. Ua faaletonu le aoga.

(My son was in Fiji. It was not that long ago when he returned from Japan. He was supposed to leave for Brazil, but the school had an issue. It was the school why he couldn't go).

According to Ina, once his son was awarded one of those scholarships he personally spoke to the school, informing and inquiring as to what form of support his son needed when he was away on his trips. However, every time his son left there were no words from the school or from his teachers. By Year 11, the school cautioned his son that he was behind with his studies. This upset Ina very much when he spoke with the principal:

Na … ma talanoa ma le puleaoga … ae lei faailoa iai lou ita lea oute ita ai … aua ua fai mai nei i le pisi o lou atalii. Ae na ou iloa a, o avanoa nei faaauro oute le iloa pe toe maua se isi taimi faapenei. Na ou fai lea iai, e iai mea e mafai ona fai. E iai mea e tatau ona prepare e le faiaoga ni mea e ave e fai ai ana study … o lea oute malamalama i mea faapena. Oute iloa ana o se isi tamaititi, vane foi a, ana faapea o se isi tamaitiiti foi lea, oute lagona a, o mea uma a e tapenapena ae lei alu lena tamaitiiti. Ae fai mai ia te au e pisi.

(I had a chat with the principal … but I didn't show him how angry I really felt … because their excuse was that my son was too busy. But I knew, these are golden opportunities they may never come again in life. I told him there could have been some extra studies my son could have taken away on his trips … and I understood those types of arrangements … But I felt, if it was a different student, you know a different student, I believe everything would have been prepared ahead of his or her trips. Their excuse was that they were busy).

In his disappointments, Ina urged his son to write to the Ministry of Education (MOE) himself to express the issue he was experiencing with the school as it was the MOE who offered those very scholarships.

Apart from Ina, Moli too had some issues with her children's former schools. Although Moli had no background education, she and her husband have committed to putting their children to the best schools. Unfortunately, putting children in the best school does not exempt them from school bullying. According to Moli, her daughters were bullied at school and regardless of their requests with the school to sort out the issue, the school ignored their requests. Moli claimed:

It was an English girl and some of them were Maori girls. I went there and blow up the principal and I would not let anyone touch my children. So they all went to Cathedral.

As Moli was talking about the incident the conversation was diverted when she spotted her children's photos on her fireplace as she started to point out all her children and their achievements and their schooling as she continued:

That one there (pointing to the photograph on the wall) was the head girl of the Cathedral College. That older one, she won a lot of scholarships and she won some major challenge for all the South Island Students. She went to Auckland for something

huge which was quite good. They do well my children. Jess (pseudonym) won the scholarship for science … O le isi ma tama la e i le CPIT. Sa na maua le sikolasipi a le New Zealand cricket last year, e fai la lana course i le CPIT. E aoga la ia i le polytech o lana tausaga lua lenei … leaga e leai se course faapena e offer i le iunivesite. O le mafuaaga lena ua aoga ai i le polytech.

As Moli spoke, there was a strong sense of achievement in her eyes and her voice indicated that she also did well because her children were achieving well. Moli however states that, her children often ask her if she was proud of their achievements. In which case Moli tells them that it was not their achievements she was proud of, but how they would apply their achievements in their own lives.

Challenges of parenting in Aotearoa New Zealand

One of the challenges one participant raised in regards to raising a family and be able to support children successfully through and into tertiary education was that many migrants from the Islands do not bring any savings from the Islands when they come. Often when they arrive in Aotearoa, they are more likely to live with extended families who are struggle financially. While the new family await to move to their own apartment, all they learn was a life of struggle since they arrive from the Islands.

Summary

As the participants share their stories, three interrelated elements emerge: family, faasamoa and parenting. These parents' narratives and experiences reflect the nature of the support these parents believed their children needed to see them enter into higher education. This displayed their courage, and the compassion for their children, their self determination to ensure their children had the stamina to get there. The choices of support they each provided demonstrated that they care and that they knew their children would get there successfully against the odds.

Resting place: a small islet off the shore of Motu-o-Tagata

Stopping at this small islet lets me look back at Motu-o-Tagata.

The voyage so far has been stormy. The Centre for Pacific Studies where I am based has lost three successive directors and my lead supervisor has also changed twice. A formal review of the Centre has taken place and there are on-going discussions in the university about its future and about how the University can acknowledge and serve the Pasifika community in Christchurch. In addition, there has been a series of earthquakes, some major ones that destroyed parts of the city and of the university and thousands of others that have shaken us physically and emotionally. After the biggest of the earthquakes most of the original group of participants I selected have left the city and I had to start my process of recruitment again. The small group of us who started doctoral research together are all struggling because of the lack of strong Pasifika leadership and academic mentoring. We also feel a sense of obligation to our families and community and also to ourselves: we are determined to carry on.

As I pause at this islet I reflect about the stories I have heard and I appreciate the generous way the participants have shared their experiences and their thoughts with me. I also appreciate the richness of the family love that is expressed in the stories and the struggles that have been reported. When I think about the literature I read and reviewed about deficits, I feel convinced that for these parents at least there is no deficit in caring in their homes and no deficit in their eagerness to keep learning about how to better support their children's education.

I think about what several of them said about it being harder to bring up children in Aotearoa New Zealand than in Samoa, especially in terms of maintaining the values of faasamoa. I also think about what Losa said about faasamoa having evolved into something different in New Zealand. I realise I will have to look more closely at faasamoa and what it involves in terms of parenting. I resolve that will be the next stage of my journey.

The participants all talked about difference between Samoa and New Zealand. Some talked about how much harder it was in New Zealand – in various ways. But some also talked about the hardship of their own lives in Samoa and it seemed they were able to offer better opportunities to their children in New Zealand. So I think perhaps there have been gains as well as losses. I am becoming aware that these parents, and I, are not only Indigenous people of the Pacific but also immigrants into a country. I have already begun to think about the need to examine the impact of colonisations on Samoan people and culture, but I realise I also need to

think about immigration. As I rest on this islet I acknowledge that I have not yet looked into these issues and I wonder if I can explore them without getting lost in their complexities.

When I was in the library on Motu-o-Tagata I took notes from a few other books that I did not include in my review of the literature because they had seemed to sit outside my selected themes. One of these was a book by Spivak, an Indian scholar who writes about post-colonialism. Although I found her book quite hard to read, and sometimes confusing, I was really struck by some of the passages. In one section, she talked about the *centre* and the *margins* and about how the centre pulled some people in from the margins in order to increase its own power (Spivak, 1996). She also said it was important to learn how to shuttle between the margins and the centre and to narrate the account of that shuttling. By the centre she meant the big megacities of western society where power over resources and ideas is held and the people at the margins were those who lived in developing countries, isolated rural contexts or belonged to minority cultures. And I think I can see how the parents in my study were doing some of that shuttling. Several of them now held positions, such as health workers, teachers, members of governing committees, where they could see how Aotearoa New Zealand culture worked and they were working through the relationship between those power places and their Indigenous values. But when I think about centre and margins I can see that some of the parents in my study were flipping the relationship around: that Samoa and Samoan values are at the centre and that the things that are different in New Zealand are at the margins: that the true centre is faasamoa and that it is being threatened and perhaps lost at the margins of New Zealand schooling.

It is now becoming even more important to examine faasamoa. I pull my vaa back into the water, lift my sail to catch the wind and set out on my next journey.

SECTION THREE

Motu-Sa Island: Sacred Island

Motu-Sa Island rises over the horizon as I sail my vaa towards it. I am eager to reach it because of my hopes that it will allow me to explore the depth of faasamoa that my participants have talked about and that I myself see as a cornerstone for understanding the way Samoa parents engage with the education of their children.

As I draw near I see the lofty heights of the island tower up towards the sky. The island is wrapped in veils of mist that accentuate its power and its sacred nature. I can see only the peaks of the mountain tops and the base of the island. I see the waves breaking on the northern reef and the sparkle of sand that shows a beach where I can bring my vaa to shore. Despite its shroud of mystery, it exudes a sense of home. The wind is bringing the sharp scent of sun-baked leaves and the fragrance of flowers. These are the smells of my childhood. My excitement and my hope are growing.

Over the next stretch of time I explore the parts of the island I can reach. I can walk around the foreshore and climb a little way up the first soft hillsides but then the dense mist stops me going further. I would need an expert guide to take me into that mist but I do not have one. Instead I explore the places I can reach, glancing up sometimes to see the clear mountain peaks that reach so far upwards that they seem to connect the earth to the sky.

The chapter that follows records my exploration of the edges of the island and of the artefacts I found there. It is written as I understood the experience at the time I left the island.

CHAPTER SIX

Samoa and Faasamoa

For Samoans, knowledge is power, and the most powerful knowledge is historical knowledge: treasured and guarded in people's heads, in notebooks locked in boxes and matai's briefcase or with their precious mats under mattresses. The valuable history of families, lands, genealogies, villages and events long ago are family property as important as ie toga (fine mats) but ie toga can be distributed. Historical knowledge is only shared to trusted people within the family, or made public in the event of serious disputes over lands or titles (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1987).

Introduction

Faasamoa or the Samoan culture is much more complex than meets the eye and will continue to become more complex in a changing world. Someone once said, 'One can take the child out of Samoa, but will not be able to take Samoa out of the child.' This saying resonates with the stronghold faasamoa can have on a Samoan's life, especially if he/she was born and raised in the islands, before emigrating out of Samoa. As a young migrant woman to Aotearoa New Zealand in the mid-80s, I was fearful of going to a movie, a dance or a party. Our grandparents considered such entertainments as politically motivated to distract and to entice the young and naïve generations of Samoans to undermine and relinquish their cultural duties and obligations to their *aiga* (families), *nu'u* (village) and to Samoa as a nation.

This chapter provides some background into Samoa's first contacts with Europeans since the nineteenth century, conceptualises *faasamoa* and explores the complexity of the Samoan culture in its various contexts and its obligations on Samoans whether one is born in Samoa or outside of Samoa. The chapter is presented in three parts. The first part provides some background knowledge of Samoa and what it means to be Samoan. The second part provides a brief historical background of Samoa and the challenges Samoan leaders experienced under the two colonial administrations (those by Germany and New Zealand) that left a bitter taste that imprinted deep within our forefathers' minds and hearts. The third conceptualises faasamoa in various contexts of the Samoan culture to provide some understanding into the stronghold faasamoa has on Samoan people's lives especially those born and raised in Samoa before they emigrate out of Samoa. For Samoans, regardless of where one is born and raised, they are

Samoans because it's in their bones as Suaalii-Sauni (2011) reiterates in a conversation between a young *afakasi* Samoan and her maternal aunt. Raised outside of Samoa, Marina who was asked to perform the *ava* ceremony as a taupou, questioned her own ability to perform the *ava* ceremony, in which her aunt responded, "It's in your bones!" According to Suaalii-Sauni, what the aunt really meant was, "Why do you fret? You are Samoan. Just do it!"

Samoa and what it means to be Samoan

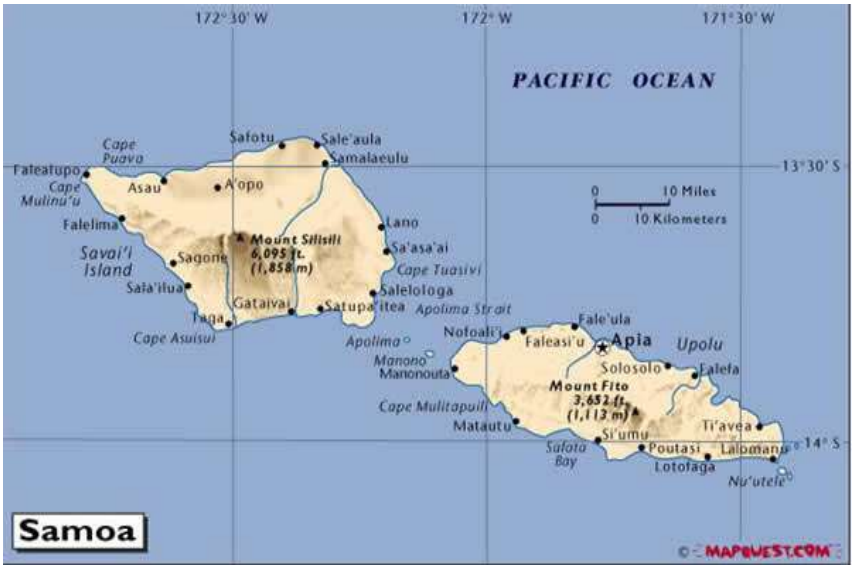
Samoa and Samoans

The origination of Samoa and how the name Samoa come to be has numerous versions. However, there is a common understanding among Samoans that any particular legend can be told in different versions, depending on the village stories, poems, songs and genealogies. When the Europeans arrived, the first stories about the origin of Samoa was recorded by Thomas Powell in the 1840s. The stories included the eastern Samoa islands currently known as American Samoa. Those stories were later translated in English by Rev. George Pratt, and were published in 1892. Another European historian Thor Heyerdahl proposed the theory that the people of Samoa originated from South America (Heyerdahl, 1952). A Maori scholar Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck) in his presentation to a Samoan audience pointed out that Samoans being Polynesians originated from Asia. Samoans somehow disputed his theory and argued that Samoans came from Samoa (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1987). While there are many versions of how Samoa came to exist, Samoans disputed all such theories. As far as Samoans are concerned, Samoans did not come from anywhere else. Samoans are from Samoa.

The islands of Samoa are located within the Polynesian region. Samoa is located between longitudes 171* and 176* west and latitudes 13* and 15* south. Samoa (aka Western Samoa) consists of two main islands, Upolu and Savaii; and several small islands Apolima, Manono, Fanuatapu, Namua, Nu'utele, Nu'ulua, and Nu'usafee (Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1987). Samoa is tropical all year through which encourages abundant plant growth. Savaii is the largest island of Samoa, but Upolu Island is where the capital city Apia is located. Samoa remains largely rural and many villages are organised and are under the jurisdiction of its '*alii ma faipule',* the chiefly families of the *nu'u* or village. Its cultural practices are founded on part of religious beliefs introduced through the arrival of Christianity, prior to European colonisation. Christian religions changed the face of Samoa since then. The Chmristian religious practices and beliefs

govern and influence the ways Samoans behave, act and interact with each other. The figure below shows a map of Samoa.

Figure 2 *A map of Samoa*



Picture adapted from online (Google, n.d).

'O Samoa o le atunu'u ua taoto a'o se i'a e iviivia' (Samoa is a structured nation, like a fish with bones). This saying indicates the complexity of social structures and protocols in Samoa. Like a fish it has many bones. For Samoans, fish is significant in our diet. Typical Samoans prefer to have the whole fish instead of the fillets. Eating the whole fish involves good knowledge and understanding of the task of separating flesh from the bones. One has to be very careful to ensure to know how to pick out bones to avoid accidents of choking on them. Such a task demands knowledge and understanding and wisdom to know the *who, why, when and where* of *how* to behave and the conduct to perform any roles. A Samoan needs to know his or her role and responsibilities in every occasion so to avoid conflicts and misunderstanding within families, communities and within Samoa. Each Samoan has a designated part to play in every occasion whether in Samoa or out of Samoa, in the village, school, church or in any *faalavelave*, known as one's *faasinomaga.* That is the basis of faasamoa. By knowing one's *faasinomaga* avoids any unnecessary misunderstanding and conflicts within faasamoa.

Samoa has a hierarchical political system, known as the *matai*, chiefly, system. The *matai* system is more prominent in rural villages. The village council made up of the *matai* within each village is responsible for the wellbeing and welfare of their village membership. The roles

and responsibilities of all Samoans from the highest chiefs all the way down to very young children have all been designated as resonates in the common saying, 'O Samoa o le atunuu tofi' (Samoa is a designated nation). It means, all Samoans from the head of Samoa, the chiefs, pastors, women, and young people to small children have all had their roles and duties for Samoa and within faasamoa allocated. For example, in any function whether it be social, religious, or political whether in Samoa or out of Samoa, every *matai* should know exactly which title, which district and village is designated to speak, where one sits and who to be served, first, second and so forth and why. Lack of knowledge on when, who and how one performs the task of service in any *faalavelave*, can be problematic and often a cause of conflicts within families, church or the village.

Faavae i le Atua **Samoa (Samoa founded on God)**

Samoa's Christian heritage is reflected in its motto 'Faavae i le Atua Samoa', Samoa founded on God. This Christian heritage has influenced how Samoans perceive the roles and the status of the church ministers within faasamoa. Church ministers are regarded as the visible representations of God himself; and therefore, they are given the utmost respect within the aiga, nuu and all of Samoa. As visible representations of God, they are seen as peacemakers, village counsellors and the only ones who have authority to understand and to teach the word of God. Samoa consider those who become church ministers to have formal theoretical training and approved qualifications to become one. Church ministers are cared for and provided for in the village with housing, food and material wealth whenever an aiga holds *faalavelave*, which are cultural demands or obligations. Under the village rule, the minister's family are also under the protection of the congregation membership and the village at large.

European Contacts and Colonialism

Early European contacts

The first European to sight Samoa in 1722 was Jacob Roggeveen, a Dutch explorer. Nearly half a century later, Louis-Antonine de Bougainville a Frenchman and his crew set foot in Samoa. He referred to the islands as 'Navigator Islands' when he observed how the locals were able to navigate in tiny canoes on a mass ocean. The locals however referred to non-Samoans of white skin as *palagi*, sky-bursters, believing heaven exploded sending off the white beings to their world.

By the year 1830, the missionaries from the London Missionary Society led by John Williams arrived in Samoa. On his arrival, he noted the absence of religious or ceremonial places as he encountered in other Pacific Islands such as the Cook Islands and Tahiti (Palenapa, 1993). The absence of such ceremonial or ritual spaces in Samoa created a perception of Samoa as a godless people. However, according to Palenapa (1993), prior to European Missionaries' arrival, Samoa had an established religion described as polytheistic in nature. It means Samoa had various deities including, "*Atua, Aitu* and *Tupua"* (p. 2). *Tagaloa* was known as the supreme Atua, responsible for the creation of the universe, earth and humanity. Aitu on the other hand were of human origins, who often take on the forms of natural objects including animals and/or humans. However, Tupua was a deified spirit of deceased persons of high rank. Tupua is often acknowledge during the *ava* ceremony when the *matai* drinks, he or she acknowledges the gods in prayers.

Conflicts among various allies of Samoa's leaders was taking place when John Williams arrived. Not long after, one of Malietoa's allies Tamafaigā was assassinated and Malietoa was leading an alliance to avenge his death. Since John William was in Sapapalii, he made contact with Malietoa earlier, where he shared the gospel with him. That changed the course of the conflict. Malietoa accepted Williams and the message he preached and then offered protection to eight native missionaries he left in Samoa. According to some, Malietoa's decision to embrace Christianity was to some degree influenced by the material wealth of the missionaries and a desire to learn more about the world of missionaries (Palenapa, 1993). The word about the European God spread rapidly throughout Samoa. The locals found teachings about the European God more interesting than their own.

According to Techara (2006), the arrival of the Europeans "resulted in the almost complete destruction of the traditional Samoan religion to the extent that today almost 99.7% of Samoans consider themselves as Christians" (p.363). But as far as Cote (1997) was concerned, it was missionaries who played a key role initiating radical changes to the Samoan culture, leading to the colonization of Samoa. Cote notes that in some of George Turner's documentations, he clearly indicated the hatred he and other missionaries had of the Samoan culture, labelling it as "evil" (p. 221). Turner considered it his prerogative to eradicate the evil and to teach the "heathen natives" to live by what he believed to be the morally superior principles of Euro-Christian culture" (p. 221). Turner believed that Samoans and the culture of Samoa was under the dominion of Satan, and that, Satan was preventing Samoans from embracing Christianity.

His intension was to fight Satan by building Christian 'character' among the young by introducing Western-style education in Samoa. He was determined to undo every aspect of the traditional customs and culture by all means.

The mass migration of Europeans to Samoa in the early to mid-19th century also contributed to the shift of lifestyle for the islanders. As more and more Europeans entered Samoa, Apia became the focal point for trading locally and within the Pacific. Apia was then officially known as the capital city of Samoa. This also saw the developments of foreign businesses in the islands like the German company which exported copra, coffee and cocoa. Since those activities required mass land for production, many Samoan families lost their land and many families were displaced and disposed of to make way for large plantations. While Samoa had customary laws in terms of land ownership, the Europeans introduced Western common law as it was deemed superior to the customary law. The new law affected many aspects of the customs and traditional practices for many Samoans (Techcard, 2006). An increase in such activities also brought many changes and challenges for the locals.

Colonial history of Samoa

Samoa has a unique and complicated colonial history. According to Pringle (1989), Samoa's colonial history under Germany was both "… interesting and complicated… [with a] heritage of particular value and one which is of great significant to the South Pacific region having been subjected to the most tenacious international rivalry in the Pacific and the only German colony to have existed in Polynesia" (p. 2). Prior to European contacts, all the islands of Samoa were known as Samoa Islands. The population of Samoans share the same language and have family connections within all the islands. However, the competing interests of the metropolitan powers of the United States, Germany and Great Britain resulted in the partition of the Samoa Islands between Germany and the United States. By 1889, a conference held in Germany resulted in the partition of Samoa, with Germany having to withdraw its interests in other Pacific Islands including Tonga, which came under the protection of Great Britain. The Samoa Islands was divided into the east and west; the eastern part became American Samoa and the western part became German Samoa.

Samoan under Germany from 1898 - 1914

The Germans made their mark in the Pacific as active traders in the mid-nineteenth century. By 1857, the Hamburg firm of J.C. Godeffroy & Sohn was set up as a trading base in Samoa. Ten

years later the copra plantations were established, followed by cotton. Coconut and cotton plantations required large acres of land and more than 1200 labourers were brought in from outside of Samoa. Germany brought labourers from the New Hebrides and Gilbert Islands, known to Samoans as 'Tama Uli' (Black Boys) (Meleisea, 1980). By 1880, the firm was reorganised under the name: *German Trade and Plantation Society for the South Sea Island*, (Steinmetz, 1957). By 1887 – 88 an attempt by Eugen Brandeis, a former Bavarian cavalry officer and DHPG employee to take control of the islands failed. In the year 1889, a conference was held in Berlin attended by Britain and the United States, and the powers came to an agreement to part Samoa to east and west, with Germany to have control of the west, whereas the United States the east. The west became German Samoa, while the east became American Samoa. Germany had to give up its interest in other Pacific Island Nations (Tonga & Solomon Islands), and those island nations came under British protection.

From 1898, Germany took control of German Samoa until 1914. During the German colonial administration, an anti-colonial movement known as the 'Mau a Pule' (opinion of Pule) began to emerge. Mau a Pule was established in retaliation to the plans Dr. Solf, a German administrator, to alter Samoa's political orders and exclude Samoans from major decision-making that affected the Samoans.

Samoa was German's most prized possession in Polynesia, which consisted of Savaii, Upolu, Apolima and Manono (Steinmetz, 2007). Under German control, Germany raised its flag at Mulinu'u Peninsula in Apia on the 1st of March 1900. Germany had intended to preserve Samoa as a living ethnographic museum, assuming protection of Samoa's traditional culture from the depredations of capitalist modernity. That was in theory only. It was noted somehow that whenever part of the Samoan culture or customs came to be in conflict to European mores, colonial attacks was imminent. However, it was also noted that the German administration tried to preserve some aspects of the Samoan customs by encouraging Indigenous methods of living such as using natural or traditional ways of living and building, which were more sustainable than Western methods. Furthermore, Dr. Wilhelm Solf, the German administrator in Samoa was known for his opposition to intermarriages between Samoans and papalagi (whites) and Chinese, which led to a total ban on mixed marriages. Dr. Solf's ban on mix-marriages was not motivated by race or disdain of the whites or the Chinese, but he was a man so attached to his concept of Samoa and the Samoan culture that he intended to prevent Samoans from what he called racial corruption which he believed was going on in Tahiti and elsewhere in the Pacific

(Steinmetz, 1957). Plantation owners in Samoa asked Dr. Solf's government to alienate native-owned land and to force the Samoans to work for wages. Solf's government responded by allowing the immigration of Chinese labourers to work in the plantations. Samoans were given the choice to work for wages if they wanted to, or to work in their own plantations.

The sour relationship between Samoa and the German administration prompted the settlers to call for an increase in security in the islands. Yet, the German administration refused to use force or any form of aggressive military force against the Samoans. There were no colonial troops or German police force in Samoa, and flogging was never considered appropriate to control Samoans. Amongst the Samoan highest chiefs, a movement was established against German rule. The movement was to develop an independent copra-marketing company that would bypass the European middleman, and generate the resources that would permit Samoans to become autonomous. As a result, the government was disbanded and replaced. The rebels identified were placed under probation; and others was deported. Such punishments were less severe in comparison to Southwest Africa. The German administration also introduced subtle changes such as translating and codifying Samoan customary law. This included the ban on traditional institutions like the Tupu, king. However, the Germans did not show any interest in civilizational exchange with the Samoans (Steinmetz, 1957).

Samoa under Aotearoa New Zealand's Jurisdiction from 1914 - 1962

Samoa came under New Zealand's jurisdiction in 1914 and New Zealand continued to have control over Samoa until 1962 when Samoa gained independence.

As the first ever Pacific Island Nation to have gained its independence from its colonial master, Samoa prided itself as being able to gain such an achievement against all odds. As tiny as it was on the world map, the courage, unity and the resilience demonstrated during the Mau Movement era, speak volumes to the Samoan heart. This historical event has since given birth to what many refer to as the Samoan pride, the pride that motivates Samoans "pride of self, of family and of race" (McKay, 1957, p. 36).

***Faasamoa* – What is *faasamoa*?**

> *FaaSamoa is likened to an immortal tree with roots that grow deep into the ancient world. FaaSamoa is watered by the rains, warmed by the sun, and shaped by the winds*

from the four corners of today's world. Its substance is changing, its philosophy has expanded and its practices have been enriched (Ngan-Woo, 1985, p. 11).

Faasamoa is complex both in theory and in practice. In reference to the above quote, Ngan Woo recognises faasamoa to have had such profound impacts and influence on Samoan people's lives, and it continues to do so regardless of where they emigrate and settle. The social structure of Samoan society is maintained and actively practiced through a "… unwritten but universally understood cultural conventions" (Ngan Woo, 1985, p. 9). Conventions such as the exchange of "... *ava* (respect), of *faaaloalo* (reverence), and *alofa* (love, compassion and concern) (p. 9). *Ava, faaaloalo* and *alofa* are some of the bases of spiritual and cultural living, because they are considered qualities acceptable to God and therefore necessary in practices of *faasamoa* (Ngan Woo, 1985). These qualities uphold the Samoan motto: '*Faavae i le Atua Samoa'* (Samoa is founded on God). The relationship between Samoa and God "… manifests itself in the language and culture and all that is Samoan" (Ngan Woo, 1985, p. 9).

Faasamoa is the "...total makeup of the Samoan culture, which comprises visible and invisible characteristics, and in turn form the basis of principles, values and beliefs that influence and control the behaviour and attitudes of Samoans" (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2000, p. 15). Faasamoa not only connects Samoans to the culture, it influences the behaviour, the conduct and how one acts. *Faasamoa* is "ethnically empowering, therapeutic, practical, significant, effective, and experiential as a living system" (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2000, p.

*Faasamo*a is 'the world of Samoans' according to Ngan Woo (1985). This means, all aspects of a Samoan's life from birth, revolves around family relationships of the past, now and the future; the ceremonial rituals, and connections with the environment. Mulitalo-Lauta (2000) describes *faasamoa* and being Samoan as concepts that "... cannot be separated" because it is what Samoans do: they do things in that manner because they are Samoans.

The heart of *faasamoa* is the *aiga*, family, and every *aiga* belongs to the *nu'u*, village. The mian sectors within a nuu may include the *pulega a alii ma faipule*, the chiefs of the village, malosi of le nuu, strength of the village, komiti, village women's group, and a wide village membership including elderly parents within the village. While all Samoans expect to conduct themselves in virtues relevant to *faasamoa*, each nuu, village, has its own supplementary rules and protocols that for various groups to follow. Some of such protocols in most villages, for example, may

include the ban on young females from wearing shorts within the village; or a ban on young men from growing long hair. The village council set up rules and regulations to protect and enhance the wellbeing and welfare of every *aiga*.

Within *faasamoa*, members of the *aiga* or the village are expected to behave in manners and conduct that align with village protocols. For example, a *matai* should know his responsibilities, his position within the village meetings as well as his responsibilities towards his/her own *aiga.* It is the duty of all the Samoan parents to raise their children in a proper Samoan way, so the child will grow up knowing how to *'teu le va',* or maintain good relationships. Right from a very young age, children are expected to behave in ways that reflect what is taught in the home. If the child disobeyed orders from an adult in the village, the adult had the right to hit the child then report the matter to the parents. More often than not, the child will also get another hiding from the parents. When a child misbehaves, s/he brings shame to the family. The general understanding Samoans have is that parents are responsible to teach the child acceptable manners and behaviour. '*O le tama a le manu e fafaga i fuga/fua o laau, ao le tama a le tagata e fafaga i upu'* is a familiar saying in Samoan, which is often applied if a child's behaviour is considered '*tautalaititi*', that is cheeky tending twards insulting, and behaves in a way that insults adults or elders. The familiar saying in Samoan is to prepare Samoan children from very young age to take on critical roles within their homes and within the village when they reach adulthood. The Samoan parents are expected to show tough love in how they discipline children. It is crucial that Samoan children take into heart these rules and roles because they will guide them in their lives.

Members of an *aiga,* family, inherit an identity from birth and this *aiga* can be an extended one, with each member expected to be loyal to the *aiga* (Ngan Woo, 1985). Whether a Samoan lives in an urban environment, in or out of Samoa, they are identified strongly not only with their *aiga* but their village of origin as well (Ngan Woo, 1985). Samoan culture and family have been identified as one of the most significant resources for students as well as the institutions (Mills and Gale, 2002). Faasamoa is the umbilical cord that connects Samoans to their culture (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2000). Furthermore, Mulitalo-Lauta describes *faasamoa* as ethnically empowering, therapeutic, practical, significant, effective, and experiential as a living system.

Samoan culture and Samoan family are complex topics for discussions so to define these terms will provoke more questions for non-Samoans than answers. So, what is Samoan culture, and who cares about it anyway? According to Penn (2010) Samoans not only brought their culture

when they first migrated to Aotearoa, they also relied upon it as a lived experience to guide their children to achieve success in their new home. If that was so, this has not yet come to fruition, because, the majority of Samoans in Aotearoa New Zealand are far from being successful in school. However, from some of the Samoan students' responses in other studies such Singh (1991), Carmichael (2008) and Afereti (2006) (to name a few) culture and family obligations are often blamed for Samoan students' failure in their academic journey. This does not surprise Mills and Gale (2002). They believe it was common practice for schools to pass the blame game back to the parents, for the academic failure of many children from working class backgrounds, ethnic minorities and other marginalised groups, because children from such backgrounds are already perceived as culturally disadvantaged or deprived. However, Wegner (1998, cited by Penn, 2010) on the other hand disagrees. He argues that Samoan culture and family are the most positive resources available to tertiary institutions, because they enable students to complete their studies more successfully than if they do not have families. Therefore, communities, Wegner argues, who practice such approach should be acknowledged and encouraged.

O le aiga: the Samoan family

An *aiga* describes a group of people both in terms of nuclear and extended families in the Samoan culture. Every *aiga* is significant to a village setting because it is the *aiga* that make the nuu, village, and therefore, the nuu exists because of the *aiga*. This saying means that the heart or the centre-piece of the village is the *aiga.* The village exists because of the *aiga* and a stable *aiga* means a stable village. Without the *aiga*, the nuu will not be functioning as it currently is. Every *aiga* has a *matai* titled person who is responsible for the allocation of customary land and all family recourses for each working member of the family.

The *aiga* is the most important aspect of the Samoan culture. It is described as the "foundations which have been a fertile environment for the establishment of the Samoan unit of society, of great durability, which is the family clan, or *aiga*" (McKay, 1957, p. 36).

The *matai* is also the custodian of family measina or treasures, such as protection of land, titles, family history and all decision-making within the extended family. The *matai* is not the owner of his family and extended families. The *matai* is the representative of his families within the village council who are the decision makers within every village. The *aiga* comprises of a *matai*, a chiefly titleholder whether married or unmarried, and the immediate and extended families. Every *aiga* has a *matai* and every member of the *aiga*, is under the leadership of the *matai*. The

matai is the representation of the *aiga* in the village meeting. The *matai* is the head of the *aiga*, and the family's representation within the village council, but one does not have the full authority to control family assets. All the extended family memberships have the same authority over family assets.

Every Samoan belongs to an *aiga*. An *aiga's* welfare comes before the rights and wellbeing of the individual and therefore, the *aiga* is responsible for its members. The aiga provides shelter and safety for every member in any situation, and are willing to embrace every member whether they are good or in trouble (Silipa, 2008). Every aiga belongs to a village.

Villages consists of several *aiga*, and most aiga within a village share the same ancestors. According to Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi (2015), 'The *aiga* is regarded as the centre of a Samoan person's identity or *faasinomaga*. The *aiga* also defines and informs a Samoan understanding of the rights and responsibilities of family members. The *aiga* is the foundation of both personal and collective resilience." Members of an *aiga* inherit an identity from birth and this *aiga* can be either extended on, with each member expected to be loyal to the *aiga* (Ngan Woo, 1985). Ngan Woo (1985) describes Samoans to have strong links not only with their *aiga*, but their village of origin whether they live in urban or rural Samoa, in or outside of Samoa.

Aiga malosi, strong families, and Aiga vaivai, weak families

An *aiga* with many members is seen as an *aiga malosi,* a powerful family). Families with large memberships are more influential in village polity than the *aiga* with low membership. Manpower is required in many aspects of traditional Samoan faalavelave, occasions, before technology was introduced. Whereas, an *aiga* with only a few members is known as an *aiga vaivai,* a weak family. It meant a few tasks were allocated to each family member. An *aiga* with a few members was known as *aiga to'agaoga* or *aiga vaivai,* a weak family or afamily with limited members. An *aiga* vaivai meant more tasks are allocated to a few members.

With the absence of electricity in rural villages like ours, daily chores were organised according to hours of daytime. Allocated chores for each family member were to be completed before sunset. The idea was to get things done before it got dark. Getting work done during daytime was crucial for every family member. Completing all daily chores before nightfall was a sign of good team work at home and meant we would avoid getting into trouble at home, as we would do if our specific chores were not completed on time. All families were highly organised

so things were done before sunset and everyone could attend the evening lotu, devotion. It was a time when we all had to sit down together as a family, had lotu and then conversed together while we had our meal.

Families with many members were always admired in Samoan life. This was because all work that needed to be done were done by hand. So the idea of large families was desired and valued compared to families with fewer members.

The Samoan parents

Children are their parents' most prized treasures. Once the mother gives birth to the child, extended families of both parents are also involved in the full-time care of the baby for months until the mother is strong enough to return to her normal duties. Children from their very young age are cared for by the grandparents. This family structure works well for Samoan families, so the parents can both attend to other roles and responsibilities and duties in serving the family.

Raising children, the Samoan way requires specific standard of child rearing skills. This according to Ngan Woo (1985), requires Samoan to *faasamoa na fai fanau,* raise children the Samoan way. Samoan culture has a high expecations on Samoan children to be obedient and well disciplined. It is unacceptable for parents to spoil their children. The general perception is that, if children are raised under strict discipline whether it be verbal or physical or both, can condition them to be good and obedient children. The perception is that by instructing and reminding children of their responsibilities from their young age, will help them to become responsible adults to their families and to Samoa. When children are not disciplined, the perception is that parents are *fai tama leaga,* bad child-raisers, or *fai tama faavalevalea,* foolish in their parenting. In that, if parents do not *faasamoa ona fai fanau* (raise their children the Samoan way) means, they are *fai tama faavalevalea* (foolish in their parenting). When children's bad behavior is not punished, the perception is that the parents do not care about their children's wellbeing. The general view is that parents who discipline their children do genuinely love their children, whereas those who fail to discipline theirs do not care.

Furthermore, parents are to set boundaries for the children as to what types of activities they should and should not be involved in; where they go; whom they go with; who their friends are and who they should not be friends with. Children are to ask their parents' permission to go anywhere, not matter how old they are. Samoan children are frowned upon if they talk back to

their parents or leave their parents' home to go flatting while they are still single and have not had the permission of their parents to leave.

Parents' use of force on their children are justified and children are not to talk back or retaliate their parents' discipline whether be it physical, verbal or threats. Samoan parenting does not often have any limits as what physical discipline is from physical violence. Sometimes, physical discipline can go overboard and can cause physical injury to the child. This approach is justified by various biblical teachings such as '*O le tamā alofa e sasa ma faatonu lona atali'i'*: A loving father does not spare the rod in how he instructs his son). Samoans refer to those who are able to *nana le alofa,* conceal their love, and provide necessary guidance that helps to build the child's character and conduct as responsible parents. This is the path to becoming a good Samoan. If a Samoan child is of good character, his/her *aiga*, nuu, village, and itumalo, district, will be tauleleia, good labele). On the other hand, if a Samoan child misbehaves, his/her matua, parents, *aiga* and nuu will be tauleaga, bad labeled.

Samoan children

In theory, Samoan children are their parents' most treasured possessions. *'O au o matua fanau*': Children are the centre of their parents' affection, is a Samoan saying that defines children as their parents' most important possessions in any family. From birth children are recognised as the scared connection between the parents' extended families through the faailoa-ga-tama ritual where the child is shown. Children's existence is a sign of a living *aiga* (Ngan Woo, 1985). They have the responsibility to pass on the family measina, their treasures such as family titles, land and history, to the next generation. From a biblical perspective, children are considered as gifts from God. They are to be treasured, instructed and guided to obey and respect their parents.

'Unquestionable obedience' and 'do as you are told, not as I do' rules were the norms in child-rearing practices in faasamoa. Many Samoan children are raised under the authoritarian regime of traditional Samoan parenting. Commanding tone of voice, harsh language, stern face, physical discipline are the norms of daily life for many children. Strict discipline on children has been emphasised in communal settings; the home, the church and especially in school. Such culture is often intensified as children become older as they take on more responsibilities and expected to perform more complex tasks in the home, church, village or at school. Parents take great pride in their children's character or conduct if they perform tasks well in social or public occasions.

Children learn proper behavior and conduct from their young age. As the grandparents take them to other places, they learn basic respectful language such as saying *faamolemole*, please, if they want something, or *faafetai*, thank you, if they are given something. The younger members of society observed and imitate the adults while they perform varied tasks. Through observations, they would slowly learn skills to perform certain tasks. And as they got better the adults would let them manage those tasks independently. Learning traditional tasks also involves putting into practice values and principles of attitudes acceptable in order for Samoans to get to know themselves better, to protect themselves and to find meanings for themselves (His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi, 2008).

Samoan children are the heart of any Samoan *aiga*. They are considered the best resource a family could have. In faasamoa, an *aiga* without children is regarded as a poor family because children play a significant role in terms of the survival of the *aiga* in generations to come. Faasamoa acknowledges this significance of having children through typical cultural rituals when the first child is born whether it be male or female. These rituals involve exchange of traditional gifts between the child's parents' families. The ritual process acknowledges the stronger bond now exists through the child between the parents' families. More importantly, having a child provides a deep sense of the child's parents' tautua, service, not only to their extended *aiga* but to the village and the church they serve. Samoan children have a responsibility to carry through the next generations their family measina or treasures. Through this service, children need to have an understanding and discernment to know as to which child that was to be the keeper and holder of those family measina. They are to understand family, village, titles and land and family connections to other villages and to Samoa.

"Samoans have considerable fondness and affection for their children, but they are also very strict on them" (Ngan Woo, 1985). From their young age, children are expected to learn their place within the *aiga*, including their faasinomaga, their designated identity. Every single child has his or her own faasinomaga whether one is first born or last born. By knowing one's faasinomaga, means one does not violate the *va*, the space, of others. Knowing one's place within the *aiga*, avoids many conflicts between siblings, extended families and within the village.

Children are the pride of every Samoan *aiga*. They are expected to be good, supportive, helpful, loving and obedient to their parents, elders and all the adults. A good child is alert, and intelligent and shows deference, politeness and obedience to elders and respect for Samoan

customs, for aganuu faasamoa, as well as for Christian principles and practices. Every child born into the *aiga* has their roots in two extended families; one of the mother and one of the father. A Samoan child inherits a special place and identity in his/her family from birth. His/Her place and identity, *faasinomaga*, extends not only within his/her immediate family, but also on his/her mother and father's families (Ngan Woo, 1985). Children at their young age (0-4) are protected and indulged by parents, grandparents, and older siblings. From their very young age, children are expected to take on active roles in the family economy. They are to help out their older siblings in minor chores around the house, or by doing small tasks such as being sent off to buy the grandparents' tobacco or cigarettes or whatever the elders need from the shop. This will save the older kids to do other chores around the house or accompany the adults in the plantation work. As children get older, they are expected to comply with their parents and elders' orders and to attend to more complex tasks.

Children are to respect their elders and comply with their instructions. They are to learn the basic principles of faasamoa such as gagana faaaloalo, respectful language, and amio faaaloalo, respectful manners. For example, children need to apply appropriate manners when they walk too close to someone who is sitting down. In this situation, the child needs to say '*Tulou*'. The child needs to learn different contexts in which these words are applied. Words, such *faafetai*, thank you, and *faamolemole,* please. Children are encouraged to learn these basic principles of faasamoa from their young age, as these principles are emphasised as they get older.

Not only children have to learn the basic principles of faasamoa earlier in life, children are also encouraged to take on small tasks within the home such as picking up rubbish or doing very light domestic chores. As they get older, the intensity of those chores increases, depending whether one is male or female. For young boys, their tasks include most of the outdoor tasks, such as collecting coconuts or climbing coconut trees. Their tasks become more demanding and requires them to help with the adults in the kitchen doing the umu, the Samoan open oven, or doing the umu themselves. Young boys get to practice most of the complex tasks within their home while they were still at school. As they increase their skill to serve, tautua, they would learn skills to fish through observing the aumaga, the untitled men who serve the village chiefs.

The girls on the other hand are responsible for domestic roles, such as tidying the house, washing clothes or cleaning the dishes. The females too increase the intensity of their responsibilities as they get older. Like the boys, their tasks become more complex as they pick

up the domestic responsibilities such as doing washing, cleaning, ironing as well as keeping the house clean both inside and outside.

Biblical scriptures provide guidelines and principles for Samoan parents in terms of child rearing. Scriptures such as "whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them" (Proverbs 13:24), or "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him" (Proverbs 22: 15).

For young children to young adults, with no age limit as long as they are single and have no children of their own, they are regarded and treated as children. They are not allowed to go where they want to without the permission of their parents or adults in their family. This rule may be loosened for males but it is strictly enforced for females. Samoan families expect their children to live at home and learn to help out in all family activities and local happenings within the village. The perception is that children are moto, not yet ripe, and, therefore, they are incapable of making decisions for themselves or anyone else. From childhood to young adult life, as long as the children are unmarried and have no child of their own, they are regarded as children. Therefore, they are constantly watched over as to where they go or whatever they do.

In *faasamoa*, there was a strong understanding that when children are young, they are *moto*, not mature. That means that their brains have not fully developed to take on complex and demanding tasks. Therefore, children were to be constantly trained, taught and reminded of the proper behaviour and attitudes acceptable to interact with others. For many parents, it was normal practice to apply discipline to discourage children's negative behaviour.

However, as children get older, the intensity of their tasks increased and more demanding. As they become matua, mature, children are capable of using common sense and make decisions to deal with complex tasks. Their chores increase in intensity and more complex tasks were expected of them. It was normal part of Samoan life to administer discipline whenever and wherever possible to ensure children would learn to be more responsible and self-sufficient as they head into adulthood life.

Parents desire for their children to be good Samoans. Family measina, treasures, such as family history, lands, titles, family genealogy and family connections, are very crucial aspects of family life to Samoans. Yet, not all siblings are privileged to gain knowledge of this information. Families always keep a watchful eye on the characters of the young ones for future family leadership decisions. As Samoan life is not easy, adults always keep a close eye on children's

conduct such as their work ethics and whether they display certain characteristics that will ensure growth and development of the family in the future, in relations to the village and to Samoa. These characters include patience, love and perseverance that encourage and promote family and village unity. Families are keen to test children if they were good listeners, humble and have respect for all adults and others. Therefore, it was necessary for children to endure on-going discipline from their young age, to help them become good and responsible adults. Whatever tasks children are to be allocated with, children learn different skills of responsibility, display endurance and perseverance to service to their parents, extended families, church, village and especially for Samoa.

There were many forms of discipline the parents apply to correct or straightened children's behaviour when they do wrong. However, the two most common ones use to discipline children were *sasa* or *fue*, physical punishment, and *otegia*, verbal discipline. Between the two disciplinary styles, the majority of Samoan children prefer the sasa or fue compared to the otegia one. Fue or sasa might be too harsh, depending on the behaviour, but that form of punishment is seen as taking less time. And the sooner the punishment is administered, children get on with normal life almost immediately, as if nothing happened. Verbal punishment on the other hand is often considered more traumatic, unforgiving, and overbearing. Verbal discipline could go on for hours and even days. This is because, the disciplinarian would constantly nag at the child.

Discipline is a huge part of Samoan children's lives. Parents believe that it took the whole village to raise a child. Parents cannot be everywhere to monitor their children's conduct, but trust other adults within the village or people in authority to look out for all children, and apply discipline as necessary. Parents expect their children to be disciplined at school, church and within the village if they do wrong or behaved inappropriately. Parents believe that the adults act out of the best interest of the child. When adults discipline children, it shows that they truly care and love them. This is an acceptable practice of because when children misbehave, it is the reputation of their family and their parents deemed tarnish, not theirs.

Every *aiga* has a specific *matai* title that belongs to the village. Each title belongs to the *aiga* potopoto, extended family. The bestowment of a *matai* title is planned and agreed upon by the *aiga* potopoto and often favoured someone who lives locally, serving the family, the church and the village. That is also their service to Samoa as a nation.

The village and village protocols

> *The authority of the Alii and Faipule has played a major and vital role in maintaining and preserving peace, harmony and stability within village societies for very many years so that the country has been able to enjoy peace and stability nationwide' (Sapolu CJ, 2003).*

Compared to all nations of the world, Samoa has the lowest number of police officers per capita due to its *matai* system and the significant of the roles *Alii and Faipule*, Village Councils, play within each village. Village stability has been the backbone of the government which has been in power for over thirty years (Leung Wai, 2003).

The state does not necessarily interfere with village protocols. The *alii* and *faipule'* council are the main decision makers within each village. They are the ones to set up village protocols, determine and dictate fines to those who do not follow or respect village protocols. It is the council's responsibility to dictate and decide what form of punishments is necessary for various forms of misdemeanours or unacceptable behaviours that disturb village protocols. All village protocols are to maintain harmony and to keep the peace within the village. The villages, however, are to support the state, and what the state decides is important for Samoa at large. *Alii* and *faipule* of the villages have the right to restrict the rights of individuals to establish new religions or to restrict the freedom of speech about a certain issue within the village.

The church

Church plays a huge part in almost all Samoan people's lives. In most villages, there are only a limited number of religious groups allowed to set up a church within a certain village. For some villages protocols are put in place to restrict the establishments of new religions. Some villages can allow their village members to attend other religious groups in nearby villages but forbid any form of new religions to be established within the village. There were many cases in the past in various villages where a number of *matais* were banished from their own village for different religious reasons (Kaiono, 2017; Sanerivi, 2017; Tautua-Fanene, 2018).

Church minister

Church ministers are referred to by Samoans as the faa-feagaiga, which means to be like-covenant. Feagaiga, covenant, was a specific name Samoan males used to refer to their sister/s

as their feagaiga. In honouring the sister-brother's feagaiga, the brothers become their sisters' protectors. The brothers are to care for and to provide for whatever their sisters required of them. The brothers are to demonstrate their honour of their sister through their tautua, service. Such a relationship was perhaps one of the most highly recognised relationships within faasamoa. The sister on the other hand will demonstrate her honour of her brother/s by keeping herself pure from any form of relationships with the opposite sex. She is to protect her honour for her brother's and her family's sake.

The role of a church minister is one of the most prominent careers as far as faasamoa is concerned. Church ministers are seen as the representatives of God himself, and therefore, they are highly respected in any village community. Such an understanding within faasamoa makes them highly recognised and deserving the respect of the whole community. As representatives of God, they are often prioritised in village faalavelave, occasions, and are often the recipients of a large portion of monetary, food and material wealth from village families. Their position within the village makes not only them significant in any village community, their wives and children and members of his family automatically also come under the protection of the village community.

Summary of childhood as training for being a good Samoan

Discipline is a critical start to any child's life to becoming a good Samoan. Samoan parents play a pivotal role in teaching their children manners and characters acceptable in faasamoa. From a very young age, the children are taught to respect their older siblings, their parents, grandparents and anyone outside of the home older than themselves. This also includes appropriate language and manners they must apply to relate to elderly people within the home or within the village. Through observations and daily practices, the children slowly learn to take on minor responsibilities within the home, such as picking up rubbish inside and outside the house, feeding the chickens or collecting pebbles for the house. All these chores are often performed under the watchful eye of their grandparents or extended family members. And as the children get older, the intensity of these responsibilities also increases.

It is necessary for the Samoan parents to be firm but fair in nurturing children. Spoiling children is unacceptable in faasamoa. If children display poor conduct within the village or in the home, the parents are to apply any form of discipline accordingly. However, if for any reason the child's parents overlook the child's bad behaviour, such parents are regarded as irresponsible.

In such case, the parents have acted irresponsibly and their behaviour is viewed as harming the child. On the other hand, good parents nurture the child and provide disciplines necessary to guide the child. Responsible parents should '*nana le alofa',* conceal their love, and provide necessary guidance that helps to build the child's strong respectful character, manner and behaviour according to the *faasamoa*. This is the path to becoming a 'good Samoan'. If a Samoan child is of good character, his/her *aiga, nuu,* village, and itumalo, district, will be tauleleia, good labelled. On the other hand, if a child misbehaves, his/her *matua, nuu* and *itumalo* will be *tauleaga,* bad labelled.

Children are also expected to know their place in relation to others within the home, outside the home applying appropriate language to address their elders. They are to learn respect within the home, *aga-i-fale,* their boundaries within the land, *aga-i-fanua,* and their relations within faasamoa, aga-nuu. Children are to use their manners at all times, such as *faamolemole,* please, when they wante something, *faafetai,* thank you, when someone gives or offers something; and *tulou,* excuse-me, when they walk over or in front of the elders or visitors. All parents and adults re-enforce these practices of *faaaloalo,* respect right from children's young age. Good manners are desired within the home and village settings from all Samoan children and are more emphasised as they get older.

In *faasamoa*, there was a strong understanding that when children were young, they were *moto,* not mature. That means their brain has not fully developed to take on complex and demanding tasks. Children are to be constantly trained, taught and reminded of the proper behaviour and attitudes acceptable to interact with their elders, people in authority, their siblings and their peers. For many parents, it is normal practice to apply discipline to discourage children's negative or unpleasant behaviour that is considered unacceptable in faasamoa.

However, as children got older in age, their tasks became more intense and demanding depending on their gender whether they are males or females. For young boys, their tasks include climbing trees especially coconut trees, breadfruit trees and more complex tasks such as helping out with making the umu, or Samoan earth oven, or in many cases doing the umu themselves. Young boys get to practice most of the complex tasks within their homes while they are still at school. As they increase their skills to serve, tautua, they would learn skills to fish through the aumaga, untitled men who serve the village chiefs also known as the 'strength of the village.

The females on the other hand responsibilities also increase in areas such tidying the house, doing the washing, ironing and more complex domestic chores. That is why it is crucial that children go through strict discipline to ensure that when they reach teenage years they show more mature and responsible behaviour and characters to serve not only their homes, the extended families but the village and especially the church. The skills all Samoan children learn along the way are intended to help to equip them as they reach adulthood. They also teach Samoan children to become more responsible and to be self-sufficient as adults when they become leaders or parents themselves.

Notions of faasamoa and biblical teachings provide Samoan parents guidance in terms of child rearing. Examples include biblical sayings such as "*Aoao le tama e tusa ma ona ala, a matua e le toe tea ese ai*": Teach the boy the proper ways, as he gets older, he would not leave those ways, or "Spare the rod and spoil the child" to name a few. Those and similar biblical teachings offer guidance and help for Samoan parents in how they raise their children, because there were no family guidance or parenting support institutions available to parents in Samoa. The introduction of pastor school and then formal education was also the introduction of physical discipline in almost every aspect of Samoan life. However, those biblical teachings are recognised as having great relevance to faasamoa and therefore, are very helpful to Samoans in how they raise children from their very young age.

Parents desire for their children to be good Samoans and be able to have a heart that cared and honour the treasures of their family. This is because, family *measina*, treasures, such as family history, lands, titles, family genealogy and family connections are very crucial aspects family life and of faasamoa. Not all siblings are privileged to gain knowledge of this information. Elders always withhold such information and only shared with the ones whom they recognise and trust would keep the information to themselves and only share it to the right person and continue to pass on to the next generations. Children have to endure Samoan life to be able to have a deep understanding of the significance of family measina and of the Samoa culture.

As traditional Samoan life was not easy, adults always kept a close eye on children's conduct such as their work ethics and whether they displayed certain characteristics that would ensure growth and development of the family in the future, in relations to the village and to Samoa. These characters included patience, love and perseverance that encouraged and promoted family and village unity. Families are keen to test children if they are good listeners, humble and have respect for all adults and others. Therefore, it is necessary for children to endure on-

going discipline from their young age, to help them grow as good and responsible adults, who learn along the way to take responsibilities, display endurance and perseverance to service their parents, extended families, church, village and especially Samoa.

Samoans value what is known as *vaai mamao*, looking outside of self, more than *vaai ifo*, looking within self. The perception of vaai mamao is that Samoans are more concerned about how others view them, rather than dealing with the real issues that was going on in the family. Instead of dealing with issues in ways that provide solutions to the family and those involved, there is always a constant ideal level of keeping things hidden from the outside perception to keep everything as neat and as nicely covered so outsiders will have a better view of the family than what is really going on in the home and within the *aiga*.

Summary of *aiga,* family

The aiga is inclusive of a *matai*, chief or titled-man or woman, whom the *aiga potopoto*, extended *aiga* has chosen to be their *matai*. Once given the family title, s/he becomes the custodian of the *aiga's* properties (Meleisea, 1992). S/he has the authority to allocate land and other family properties equally to all his family members to ensure his or her extended family has a place for a home and land for plantation purposes to enable them to demonstrate their tautua, service or support.

Members of an *aiga* inherit an identity from birth and this *aiga* can be an extended one, and every member is expected to be loyal to the *aiga* (Ngan Woo, 1985). Whether a Samoan lives in an urban environment, in or out of Samoa, they are identified strongly not only with their aiga but their village of origin as well (Ngan Woo, 1985). The Samoan culture is considered to be one of cultures that has not changed much since colonisation. Faasamoa is the umbilical cord that connects Samoans to their culture (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2000). Mulitalo-Lauta describes faasamoa as ethnically empowering, therapeutic, practical, significant, effective, and experiential as a living system.

Samoan culture and Samoan family are complex topics for discussions so to define these terms will provoke more questions for non-Samoans than answers. So, what is Samoan culture, and who cares about it anyway? According to Penn (2010) the Samoans not only brought their culture when they first migrated to Aotearoa, they also relied upon it as a lived experience to guide their children to achieve success in their new home.

To Mulitalo-Lauta (2000) faasamoa is the total makeup of the Samoan culture that comprises both visible and invisible characteristics and in turn forms the basis of principles, values and beliefs that influence and control the behavior and attitudes of Samoans.

However, Mulitalo-Lauta learned from the process of the interviews that despite the inherent complexities embodied in faasamoa, one could actually use faasamoa structurally and mechanically to analyse the theoretical behaviour of Samoans and the various underlying rationales for their behaviour and attitudes of Samoans.

According to Mulitalo-Lauta (2000) "faasamoa is the total make-up of the Samoan culture, which comprises visible and invisible characteristics and in turn forms the basis of principles, values and beliefs that influence and control the behaviour and attitudes of Samoans" (p. 15).

Faasamoa expects each member of the family or of the village to behave in a manner that aligns with village protocols. For example, a *matai* should know his responsibilities within his family and within the village. The same goes with the adults, young people, women and children within a home.

Schooling in Samoa

Formal schooling is not the most enjoyable part of life for many children especially in rural villages of Samoa. Teachers have such authority over children and the perception of teachers is that they hold the key to children's success. Corporal punishments, humiliation and force is applied to facilitate children's learning. Disobeying teacher's orders is unheard of. All children have to do whatever teachers instruct. Failing to do so is seen as violating orders. The outcome can be severe and may include expulsion from school. If children are hit or get a beating at school, they would do their best to hide any injury from their parents or older family members. This is because, if their parents or adult family members find out, the possibility of having another hiding at home for the same offence is imminent.

For the majority of children, the more likely offences would be minor issues such as not speaking up loudly, saying the wrong answer, or in some cases children do not have to do anything wrong at all. Teachers believe they have the right and the authority to do whatever they so desire. Within *faasamoa*, besides the church minister, teachers are highly regarded as having the knowledge and special skills parents do not have. Parents or family members believe teachers discipline children for their own good. Therefore, they never question the authority of

the teachers and believe that by aligning their practices to what teachers do, is good for the child. No parents challenge teachers' authority. This is normal student life not only in primary level, but also in secondary school.

Summary of the basic values of Faasamoa

Faasamoa is a complex culture. This is because *faasamoa* "comprises of both visible and invisible characteristics which forms the basis of principles, values and beliefs that influence and control the behaviour and attitudes of Samoans" (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2000). It means *faasamoa* consists of multiple layers of expectations and responsibilities to be learnt, practiced and followed through whether Samoans live in Samoa or out of Samoa.

There are three basic values of faasamoa to be emphasised above all others. They are *alofa faamatua*, parental love, *faaaloalo*, respect and *tautua,* service. The concept of *alofa faamatua* is a deep supernatural love Samoan parents show in the home, especially when the family experience difficult circumstances. *Alofa faamatua* is the love beyond the natural love. It is much deeper, and cannot be fully explained in words. This is the love many Samoan parents have for their children.

Faaaloalo, respect, is referred to as both value and protocol of *faasamoa* which "influence the manner in which Samoans behave towards one another" (Mulitalo-Lauta, 2000, p. 21). *Faaaloalo* is the foundation of good relationships (Lui, 2003). Respect for each other within the home, is a powerful foundation for good relationships between parents and their children.

Tautua, service, is a powerful concept within *faasamoa*. *Tautua* is the service that parents and their children offer one another. *Tautua* is a symbol of humility for one to become a servant, to serve and to care for one another.

Resting place: a small islet off the shore of Motu-Sa Island

I look back at what I discovered on Motu-Sa and I am a little worried. I did indeed find a lot of material on the foreshore but it does not fully match what my heart and my experience tell me as fa*asamoa.*

I think the practices, beliefs and values that I reported are accurate, but they are not the whole. I think about my relationships with other Samoan students in the Pasifika Centre and about my relationships in the wider community. There is a lot of laughter in our relationships: shared laughter is a way of showing our shared humanity and of being humble and relaxed with each other. There is a lot of love and concern for each other and a real pleasure in giving. That was not information I collected in my exploration of the island.

In exploring the island, I relied a lot on what I found in books, although I did add comments from my own experience. In reflection, I think about the difference between writing something and living something. My fellow students and I share a lot of time in the Pasifika Centre and we talk a lot about our studies. Somehow, however, we don't criticise each other's ideas; we mainly encourage each other to keep going. And we encourage each other to be brave in tackling the knowledge in books. So perhaps that is why what I found in books dominated my report of what I found on the island. It is only when I look back at the island from an outside position that I realise there are gaps in my report.

There are, however, a lot of truths in the report. One is the respect for authority that I also learned as a Samoan child. I realise one of my tasks as a doctoral student is to critique what I read, but I find that hard. In my culture teachers are knowledge holders and the best path to knowledge is to follow their teaching implicitly. Books are like distanced teachers. I have been taught to accept the sureness and authority of their knowledge. It is only in looking back, from a distance, that I can acknowledge that there are limits to the knowledge that they hold.

Another truth that I believe was captured in my report is the matter of strong discipline. I know about that from my own experience as well as from my readings and I plan to explore that and other personal experiences in my next voyage. Knowing about that toughness I am a bit puzzled about the ways the parents I interviewed in the previous island might really view such discipline. From what they shared it seemed that most of those parents had a very nurturing and supportive relationship with their children and that they were prepared to listen to them rather than punish them. They seemed proud of their children's ability to make good independent

decisions. And several spoke strongly against the influence the Church had on other Samoan families' lives. At the same time they asserted the importance of bringing up their children within the values of faasamoa. I wonder if they were being selective about which aspects of faasamoa they wanted to preserve. I wonder if they themselves had developed new understandings of faasamoa that came from being immigrants into a different country. I begin to see faasamoa as much less set than what had been suggested by the books I had read.

I look back at Motu-Sa with a lot of questions. One is about the way my ancestors adopted belief in the Christian God. It seems the missionaries came before the formal colonisers, and so it seems it was not force that led to their acceptance of the teachings. What led them to accept? As I will discuss later a Christian belief is important to me, so I see their acceptance as a good thing, but I am still puzzled about the circumstances in which the change happened. And I am puzzled about how the Church became something of an oppression, as I see it, in Samoan lives.

Another question I have is about what life was like before the missionaries came and how pre-missionary beliefs understood the place of Samoa and its people in the universe. I could see the high peaks of Motu-Sa and they lead me to think that these questions are important and that what I found on the shoreline is not all there is to learn. The dense mists, however, stopped me climbing higher. I needed a guide who knew the island well to guide me and I did not have one.

My visit to the island took place during turbulent times in the area of Pacific Studies at my university. A department had evolved in an institute that had been funded by endowment by Macmillan Brown, a renowned scholar with a keen interest in the anthropology of the Pacific. The institute was initially designed to house both Māori and Pacific Studies. As the people of Ngai Tahu led the university to become more aware of and responsive to Māori needs and expectations a marae was built as the focus of Māori presence in the university. There was contestation then about whether the focus of the Macmillan Brown Centre should shift more to Pacific Studies. The university developed a Pacific Community Consultation Plan and a University Review recommended that the Centre should be developed to include at least four academic staff reflecting the spread of cultures within the Pacific and a Director with proven Pacific credibility. At the time of my exploration of Motu-Sa discussions in the community and university were on-going. Acting Directors came and went again. No body of additional academic staff was developed. I gained two new supervisors who were both supportive of my study but neither was Samoan or had close knowledge of Samoa. I needed to try and navigate

faasamoa on my own. Then my new lead supervisor did not have his temporary contract renewed. The ocean of the doctoral journey felt very choppy!

There are many pressures on mature doctoral students. Many of us have families to look after and need to have at least a part-time job to earn money. Some of us develop health problems. Gradually those in the cohort that had started their doctorates with me dropped out because of the accumulated pressures. I too became ill and was hospitalised. I did not drop out but I stopped working on my research. It felt too difficult. I let my vaa drift in the ocean.

My confidence in returning to my research came back in short snatches. In one of those snatches I began to work at positioning myself within the study. I initially thought this would be a short and easy task, filling just a few pages. But turned out to be far from easy.

As I prepare to leave my resting place outside Motu-Sa I turn my sail in the direction of the volcanoes of Motu-Mu.

SECTION FOUR

Motu-Mu Island: Volcanic Island

When I first planned to sail to Motu-Mu I expected to find a small and rather flat island where I could describe my positionality in the study. We had been taught how to do that in a Masters course: it would need just a few paragraphs to say the ways in which I was an insider to the study.

But as I approach I see the island is full of rough cliffs and petrified lava and in the centre, there is smoke billowing and fire shooting out from several large volcanic cones. I am frightened by so much explosion and I want to sail away.

It takes me a long time to draw near enough to the island to examine it. Each time I explore a little there is a shaking of the ground and I head to my vaa and I sail away. Sometimes for months on end. During those months I do nothing in my research: I am trapped between my need to explore the island and my unhappiness with what I might find there. I repeatedly return and try and explore a little more and as I explore the volcanic ground shakes and explodes around me.

The following chapter records my discoveries on the island.

CHAPTER SEVEN

My story

Introduction

In this chapter, I share my personal narratives, highlighting the multiple factors that influenced and shaped my decisions as a Samoan parent who was determined to raise our New Zealand-born children, the Samoan way. Those parenting methods and style had caused major conflicts within our home and have had negative consequences on our children's learning and wellbeing.

I present this chapter in four parts. Firstly, I share my family background and my upbringing and experiences of family, village, church and school life that revolved around a culture of violence, fear and loneliness. Secondly, I talk about my brief experience as a visitor to Aotearoa New Zealand. Next, I share my personal experiences as a new migrant to New Zealand which began as a factory worker in South Auckland, living with my sister's family when I began my study, and learning about a different way to parent from my brother-in-law, the late Fata Ben Tualevao. Finally, I share my experiences as a Samoan parent trying to raise our New Zealand-born children the Samoan way, the challenges I encountered as a proud Samoan parent, and my turning point which led me to home schooling our children.

Family background and upbringing experiences: My home life, church life, village life and school life

Who am I?

My parents were Siliato Levasa from Lotopu'e Aleipata and Faatuiese Mataumu Tuatagaloa of Poutasi and Tafatafa in Falealili. I am the seventh child of my mother and the eighth on my father's side. My name is Faaosofia Daly, born and raised in Samoa before I migrated to Aotearoa New Zealand in my mid-twenties. Today, I am a wife, a mother and an educator. In my lifetime, I have been a caregiver to my grandmother, a primary school teacher, a factory worker, and a support worker for people with disabilities and for those who suffered with mental illness. Since 2004, I have been teaching at the University of Canterbury. My early education began in Samoa, attending all rural schools. In 1977, I was accepted at the Teachers' College in Apia. In 1979, I completed a two-year diploma in primary teaching before

embarking on a teaching career in our local village school. I taught in Samoa for nearly nine years before migrating to Aotearoa New Zealand.

Under the quota scheme, I left Samoa in 1988 and found a job at a carpet factory in South Auckland. After working for two years, I applied for a teacher's retraining programme for overseas teachers at the Auckland College of Education, where I completed a diploma in primary teaching in 1991. In the same year, I met my husband Patrick. While expecting our first child, we moved to my husband's birthplace of Dunedin for his work. Our first child, Richard, was born in Dunedin a few months after we moved there. In 1993 I attended Dunedin College of Education, studying for a certificate in teaching people with disabilities. In 1994 I gave birth to our second child, our daughter TJ. In 1995 I enrolled as a first-year student at Otago University studying for a Bachelor's in Education. By the end of 1996 my husband's work was relocated to Christchurch. Our family left Dunedin and started a new life all over again in Christchurch. I completed my first degree in 1997 and continued my studies to obtain a Master's degree in education in 1999. In 2007, I completed two postgraduate certificates; one in tertiary teaching at the University of Canterbury, and the other in health science at Otago University. I have been teaching within the Bridging Programme at the University of Canterbury since 2004, and this is my story.

My family backgrounds

I was born and raised in Tafatafa, a small rural village located on the south-east of Upolu, the main island of Western Samoa. Tafatafa is a beautiful place with its ever-green scenery facing the beautiful blue sea. Tafatafa is one of the original villages of Falealili, situated along the original border of Atua and Tuamasaga, which is how its name was coined. Tafatafa was a very rich and well-resourced village. Its land and sea provided unlimited resources that maintained and sustained our village community. There were three main families that made up our village, all originated from the same ancestors. Through these ancestral connections our village has maintained strong bonds between the families that remain to this day.

My father

My father was born and raised in the village of Lotopue in Aleipata. He had one brother and two sisters. His parents did not have any money. However, since his family was the first to accept the Catholic Church in his village, the church supported and paid for his education. He

was the only member of his extended family who had a formal education. My dad attended Marist Brothers School in town. Once he completed his schooling, he became a teacher at the same school. Our father was a staunch Catholic, and he expected all his children to be baptised and to be raised Catholics. His own personal and professional experiences of church and education gave him a strong view that church life was strongly linked to educational success and success in life.

Having a formal educational background gave our father many opportunities for employment with private companies and other small businesses during the New Zealand colonial administration. From my recollection of his written memoirs, he was employed as an interpreter for the American Marines while they were based in Western Samoa. All his memoirs were written in English; something that surprised me when I was in the fifth form. This gave me some idea of how well respected he was, not only in his family and his community, but also in my mother's extended families and her community. His knowledge, acquired from his formal education and his deep understanding and passion for fa'asamoa, made him invaluable to those who knew him. Our father used to hold Sunday evening meetings in our village meeting house teaching young men the Samoan culture and the roles of orators, chiefs and the aumaga (untitled men who serve the village chiefs). Many young and old men from nearby villages also came to listen and to learn from him. His ability to read and translate overseas news into the Samoan language also made him very popular. He was the eyes and ears of our rural community, informing them of what was going on during the colonial occupation. In 1964, just before my fourth birthday, that all came to an end. My father passed away suddenly at age 51, leaving behind seven children under the age of thirteen, plus one on the way.

My mother

My mother was born and raised in the village of Tafatafa in Falealili. She had one brother and two sisters. She was the second oldest of her siblings. Her father was born in the village of Poutasi in Falealili. However, he was adopted into the family of his paternal European grandfather, Benjamin Allen, whose family settled in Tafatafa. My maternal grandmother, on the other hand, was from Tafatafa. Her family was one of the original descendants of the village of Tatafata.

As far as our mother was concerned, her parents had everything when they were young. Her father was in charge of all his Palagi grandfather's businesses, like the cattle farm, the taro and coconut plantations, the cobra sheds and the family stores. Interestingly, our mother also stated that their father had paid for members of his extended family's education. Many of her father's relatives left Samoa at a young age to pursue either professional or personal careers. Yet my mother and her siblings had a very limited education, despite having had the means to obtain it.

My mother attended a girls' church school in town which mostly concentrated on teaching young native girls domestic responsibilities. Her other two siblings had no education background except her youngest sister who became an early childhood teacher in American Samoa. I learned later from my grandmother that my grandfather was not very good at looking after the wealth he inherited. According to my grandmother, whoever wanted a cow or a horse, granddad would give it to them. The only thing my grandfather could not give away was land. Fortunately, it was under both his and his aunt's names in the will. Therefore, he did not have sole authority to give away family land.

As a parent of eight children, life was difficult for our mother. She was only 37 years old when our father passed away. She was inspired by our father's Palagi education background, but when he died she had no means to send all her children to school. She was lonely. Yet she never shared her feelings about anything like this with us. We witnessed her struggles which influenced her decision-making at times. Some of those decisions have had major negative impacts on our lives, to say the least.

My siblings and their education background

Altogether I have eight siblings; three brothers and five sisters. My half-sister who was the oldest child of my father was raised by her mother. My father and our half-sister's mother were so in love. Religious politics interfered with their relationship because they belonged to different religions and were denied the right to be married. Regardless of not being raised by her biological father, my half-sister had the best upbringing of all of us. Her stepdad loved her as his own.

My eldest brother and my eldest sister Lesina were attending school when our father was alive. Due to his untimely death, our mother could not afford to send them to school anymore. Instead, she sent my brother to live with her extended family in town, so he could continue with his

schooling. He did well at school and was accepted in the only boys' state school in town. When he completed secondary school, he was accepted into the local police force where he worked for many years. My sister Lesina, on the other hand, was not so lucky.

Though Lesina was a better academic student than our older brother was, our mother could not afford to send her to the school where she was accepted for having exhibited excellence in academia and in sports. She helped manage the home and family. Our mother was constantly occupied with church, the village and the local women's committee activities. As a result, our sister became more authoritarian in how she managed us. She also began to dictate how and what we had to do from dawn to dusk. She exercised unconditional authority over all of us, administering physical, mental, emotional and psychological discipline. She was nasty, controlling and violent. We hated her.

Our second senior sister, Amelia, had never attended school in her entire life. She was more familiar with domestic chores and did not want to go to school at all. My second senior brother, Felaga'i, attended school but only managed to reach Primer 3 (Year 3). He was absolutely petrified of the beatings at school administered by the teachers. One day when he was supposed to be at school he ran away from home. When he was returned home, our mother decided to let him work in our plantation to make better use of his time. My fifth sibling, my third senior sister, did well at school and, after the national exams, she was accepted into a church college in town. In her second year of high school she was expelled from school when she could not return the school library books she had borrowed. That was the end of her schooling. My sixth sibling, my third senior brother, reached Form 4 (Year 10) at secondary school. He could not cope with the beatings and cruelty of the teachers. One day on his way to school, he decided to run away. When he was brought back home, he told our mother that he could not cope with the school culture and that was the end of his schooling. My youngest sister was able to complete Fifth Form at our local district high school. In the following year, our mother enrolled her at a church girls' school in town. She became a machinist.

My grandmother

My maternal grandmother's name was Lesina. She was the boss of our family. She was authoritarian in how she operated and controlled our family. Although we took care of her, she told us what to do, and how things were to be done. She was highly regarded as one of the village elders and leaders and was mostly feared and respected by all. Her opinions in our

family, village and church politics mattered. I loved my grandma, despite her strict ways with me. She was hardworking and thorough in everything she did. I loved to be in her presence listening and watching whatever she did. She was eloquent, beautiful and possessed such ineffable wisdom.

I was living with my grandmother when I began primary school. I attended the closest school which was five villages away and about a two hour walk in one direction. The difficulty I encountered as a child was not the long walk but having to cross the river when it was high tide. I had a few near misses from drowning. One of those near misses was when I had to cross the river at high tide carrying my little sister on my back. It is by God's grace that I am here today. As my duty to my grandmother, I had morning responsibilities which included fetching fresh water for my grandmother from the nearby village and completing all the minor chores inside and around the house before I began my long walk to school. This was my normal life once I began primary school.

My grandmother was hardworking and whatever she did, she did it in such a way that people took notice of her. Her normal day began at dawn, pulling weeds and picking up rubbish on her lawn until she could not see anything in the dark. Then she would retire for the day. As a young child I remember how meticulous she was in keeping her lawn green and clean regardless of its large size. Yet she never used a knife or any sharp tools in how she maintained her lawn. She did everything by hand. In her late 60s, without any warning, my grandmother suffered a stroke. It weakened the left side of her body. I did not understand the magnitude of our grandmother's hard work until my siblings and I were in our teenage years. Modern tools like machetes were more available then. It would take us hours and hours to cut our grandmother's lawn, yet we could not keep up as our Nana did with just her bare hands. Regardless of our Nana's stroke, it did not impair her speech. She still issued orders on how and when things were to be done. As grandchildren we listened and obeyed her. We were in fear of her and loved her at the same time.

My grandmother's stroke restricted her from performing many of her talents such as dancing and weaving. However, she had one specific talent which I had admired since I had first known her. My grandmother was very knowledgeable in fagogo, legend, telling. As a young child I spent many hours listening and learning from my grandmother. At night-time before we went to bed we had fagogo treats. Having fagogo nights was extra special after a hard day's work.

Within our neighbourhood, we had another fagogo teller who was a good friend of my grandmother. Both were very experienced fagogo tellers. It became a ritual in our small community that moonless nights were our fagogo nights. All the children within our neighbourhood would come to our house to listen to the fagogo. As we listened intently, we were required to respond 'Au-ē': Oh dear! It indicated to the fagogo teller that, as listeners, we were still with her and were not falling asleep. A lack of verbal responses from the listeners determined it was time to end the fagogo night until the next time. As listeners, we needed to remember what fagogo it was and what part of the fagogo we stopped at so it would be continued on from where we left. My grandmother and her friend would take turns telling their fagogo. For me, it did not matter how many times I heard the same fagogo. It was always exciting because no one could tell it better than those two.

As my grandmother got older, I became her constant companion. These were some of the most memorable times of my life. I was privileged to hear many stories about the history of our family and our village. As my Nana got older, the weaker she became physically, the more dependent she was on me. Being the strongest of all of my sisters I became the sole carer for my grandmother at night-time. My older sisters cared for her during the day and overnight only when I was away from home. Towards her final days, I often stayed awake all night, especially if she was experiencing the excruciating pain of old age. As a new teacher at that time, I discovered how hard it was to juggle all my teaching duties with family responsibilities, including my grandmother's care. Whenever she was in pain and sleep deprived, I would often stay up as long as I could to massage her body and legs, hoping I could somehow ease her pain. I remember many times when, perhaps the pain had subsided a little, she would gently whisper loving endearments to me such as 'Ia e maguia': May you be blessed. Those special words were some of the many highlights of my relationship with my grandmother. When she eventually passed away, I remember how everyone mourned her passing. Yet, deep in my heart, I was quietly content knowing that my grandmother was finally resting in peace and I had not failed in my duty to her. My grandmother's legacy has given me confidence in who I am today. The wealth of wisdom she taught me has-helped me ~~to~~ face many challenges in my life away from home. She did not just teach me the value of life, she blessed me beyond anything I could imagine. In the end, I knew my grandmother was content with my care. I loved her well and was well loved in return~~.~~ This was the essence of my belonging.

Our father's wish

Raising a family singlehandedly, without support, must have been very hard for our mother. She had a very difficult time trying to protect our brothers from being picked on by older boys in our village. She was also doing her best to protect us, her daughters, from sexual offenders and night creepers on a daily basis. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why she decided one night to send me and my two older siblings away to our father's family.

No one saw it coming but one night at midnight, she woke my two older siblings and me, and ordered us to get dressed and we just did as we were told. We did not know what was going on, but we noted that she looked very stressed. She was in a rush and she told us that we had to be at a certain place, which was over fifteen miles away from our home, before dawn broke. Cars did not exist in that part of Samoa, nor were there proper roads. The only means of transport was on horseback or on foot. We did not have horses. We had to walk in the middle of the night. How we made it to our destination while it was still very dark remains a mystery. Three of us were under eight, but we made it just in time to catch a lift on the back of a large truck which took us to our father's family.

As little children, we were totally unaware of our mother's intentions until the following morning. She was nowhere to be found. She had gone, leaving us with our father's family. I remember how much we cried and felt heartbroken that she had forgotten to take us with her. I wondered how on earth she could forget about us. I remember how we cried ourselves to sleep, and over the next few days kept looking out for her. Days turned into weeks and weeks turned into months. Our uncle and aunt tried their best to comfort us, but we were inconsolable. Our mother did not even say goodbye. She was gone. To make matters worse, a week after we had been left behind at our father's family, our uncle and aunt decided to separate the three of us. My brother and I were to live with our uncle and his family, and my sister had to live with our aunt. Our mother only came to visit us briefly twice a year. We cried and felt such deep sadness every time she left us behind, just as we did the first time. Maybe that was why she chose to make only a few visitations a year.

Our living arrangements with our aunt and uncle was good because they both loved us unconditionally. However, some of our uncles' children did not share the same view as their dad. A couple of them abused us when they had the chance. They were much older than us. Anyway, after being away from home for more than two years, our mother finally had a change

of heart. When she came to see us she decided to take us home. We were so excited we tried to stay awake all night in case she changed her mind.

From that experience I harboured some deep bitterness towards my mother and had so many unanswered questions. However, when our mother came to visit me and my younger sister in Auckland years later, I summoned the courage to ask her why she had sent us away and not my older siblings. To which she responded that our father, on his death bed, made her ~~to~~ promise that she would send the three of us to live with his family. To our father, the Catholic Church had given him a good education and he felt that his children needed a good education to survive in life. I understood her obligations in honouring our father's wishes. However, I personally felt it was wrong for the dead to make decisions for the living. Whilst our mother's decisions seemed questionable at the time, I now recognise that she made them with our best interests at heart. Unfortunately, that decision had caused three of us further pain beyond the isolation and negligence we had experienced with our father's family. That pain continues to hurt each of us in different ways, but we could not raise such issues in any family conversation. This was something that our mother only learned about before she returned to Samoa. She apologised profusely and it was perhaps one of the painful memories she had to take with her to her grave.

Returning from our father's home

Life back home with my mother and our older siblings was challenging but was far better than the life we had experienced at our father's home. It was, however, the beginning of a different type of challenge where we all experienced violence, verbal abuse and name-calling. In our own home we had no voice. We were all silenced by the violence our senior sister administered on her younger siblings. Since our mother was so occupied with community activities, such as church, the village and the women's committee, our senior sister began to take almost all of the responsibilities of managing six younger siblings. Our sister ruled us with an iron fist. She was brutal; she was violent and showed no mercy whatsoever in how she hit or beat any of us, regardless of our age. Even with any minor mistakes we made incidentally or accidently, she responded with violence without asking us or allowing us to explain ourselves. She would use whatever objects were nearby as weapons on us.

As we got older, the level of violence at home increased, and so did the intensity of the work we were expected to do each day straight after school. Work such as collecting coconuts, husking them and carrying them home became our daily responsibility. Our senior sister

seemed to grow meaner each day. She became so vicious in how she controlled us, especially our two brothers who were younger than her. Then one day she was about to hit them when they suddenly turned on her and threatened to kill her if she were ever to touch them again. According to our brothers, if our mother disciplined us it was okay by them but the thought of our own sister bullying us felt very wrong. We all knew the difficult issues we were facing at home, but she was making our situation unbearable for everyone. After our brothers threatened her, she left them alone, but focused on tormenting me and my other sisters. While we all have some terrible memories of various beatings we each suffered, I can still remember one such beating quite vividly nearly fifty years later.

It was in the middle of the night when my tormentor, my oldest sister, woke me up to check on our chickens that were being attacked by somebody or something outside the house. All I could hear was her yelling out my name. I had two older siblings, yet she called my name. Even just hearing the sound of her voice terrified me. The moment I heard my name, I literally jumped out of bed. I was still half-asleep. As she screamed, I just stood there by the foundations holding onto a front post of our open fale house. Her voice got louder and angrier, but I understood nothing of what she said. In a split moment, I felt a powerful force striking me across the face and knocking me three feet down onto the ground. As my head hit the ground first, I was knocked out. I did not cry. I felt no pain. I was relieved; I thought I was dead. You can imagine my disappointment when I regained consciousness and she was still punching and kicking me around. The extent of my physical injuries were realised in the morning. I had no one to confide in. The pain was deep. None of my older siblings uttered a word the day after the incident. Perhaps they knew if it was not me, it could have been one of them. Since that incident, regardless of the severe beatings I experienced over the years, I realised I could not cry. I hated her.

The day our brothers refused to be instructed by our senior sister, was also the beginning of their rebellious and destructive lifestyle. They did not just refuse to listen to her, they also refused to obey our mother's instructions. They smoked and drank and refused to perform their required duties as the brothers in our family. They did what pleased them. They were hardly home. They never came home to cook or to serve, but they came home expecting to be served. Worst of all, when they came home drunk in the middle of the night, our mother would wake me up to serve them food. Oh, how I hated them for that, but I couldn't argue with my mother in my brothers' presence. They were much older than I was. One night after I had to serve my

drunken brothers' food, I got so angry that I felt I had to confront my mother about how unacceptable it was for a sister to serve two older brothers. I told my mother that she treated me as if I were my brothers' wife. Well, my mother began to cry and wailed as if I had said something so hurtful that she sobbed and sobbed for hours. My third senior sister scolded me and told me to apologise to our mother, reminding me what the Bible said about making parents cry. She warned me that our mother's tears were my curses. I remember going to bed feeling confused and defeated. To this day, my two senior brothers continue to drink and smoke as heavily as they did from those times.

After we lost our father our mother's inability to deal with so many of us had major negative consequences in terms of the issues we experienced at home. One other issue we struggled with was when our mother allowed our senior sister to beat us as she wished. Furthermore, I also felt that the lack of any fatherly input in our home also impacted negatively on how our lives had turned out. We had a home where violence, the use of force, name-calling and verbal insults were our constant companion from a young age. Besides, our mother had never shown us love or that she cared. It seemed that our existence was to serve everybody else unconditionally without receiving any love back or any input into anything whatsoever. Moreover, our mother never hugged us, never comforted us or gave us any assurance about anything. That was harsh.

Church culture

In our village, there were two religions, the Mormon Church and the Methodist Church. My family belonged to the Methodist Church, where most of our time and resources were spent. Church played a significant part in my family life. Church attendance was compulsory. The church dress code was highly regulated and white was the only colour allowed to be worn at all church services. Church contributions were also regulated and were often compulsory if demanded from the head of the church in town. Each family's monetary contributions were read out in front of the congregation. For my family, my mother made church contributions our family priority.

The culture of the church was very demanding, not only for people's time but also regarding monetary and material wealth. Often the church demanded more than what families could afford. The church put a lot of pressure on many families in the congregation to contribute what families did not even have. There was one incident in our village where an elderly father committed suicide when his children were not able to provide enough money to make up his

church contribution. I experienced first-hand the struggles many families went through when they could not afford to meet compulsory contributions set up by the church. Those issues were not viewed as an issue with the church but were seen as issues with the families. As far as I could remember, the contributions members made to the church were never reciprocated. In our own struggles, the Methodist Church of Samoa never made any effort to check on the well-being of its members. Church culture was very burdensome to many families, and it made it hard for families to become stable financially and socially.

There was so much expectation on children to be on their best behaviour during long services. If children were caught talking or being playful during the service, an elderly lady would walk over and either pull the child's ears or pinch the child's inner thighs. I suffered that most of the time, and the bruises would remain for weeks or even months. If I was punished in church, I would get another hiding at home. My family assumed that a public hiding was a reflection of their lack of discipline, so the hidings at home were more severe to serve as a warning for any misbehaviour elsewhere.

Church minister

As in many villages, our church minister was the most important person in our community. Whatever he demanded to be done for his family or for the church, our elders would make sure that was done. The church minister also had full authority to discipline the children and youths within the parameters of the church. His word and what he said was what all parents would follow without question. His word was more influential than God's word to everyone.

Sunday school

Most of the hidings I experienced as a child at church were within the Sunday school. As children we all had to stand up straight, sit up properly, speak up when we were asked to speak, and to pay attention when the Sunday school teachers spoke. Learning and memorising scriptures was a huge part of Sunday school. Children were expected to stand up straight when they recited their verses without any mistakes. Failure to do so meant a strapping in front of all the children and most times in the presence of their parents.

White Sunday

White Sunday is a special day, specifically for Samoan children, and is celebrated annually on the second Sunday of October. White Sunday is perhaps the only day in the Samoan year where children are the first in the family to eat before the rest of the family. It was perhaps the one time of the year children would eat the best foods prepared by their parents. The other 364 days of the year, they would only have the adults' leftovers. For many church ministers, it was the time where days and nights were committed to practising plays and biblical dramas for the Sunday show. The worst hiding I ever received during one of those white Sunday practices was when I lied about my older siblings' whereabouts. My mother sent me to church first and told me what I had to tell the minister about why my older siblings were late to practice. Somehow, the minister knew where they were, so I got a good beating because I lied to him. Since then, my nick name was Tala-pelo: Liar.

Life in the church youth group

Being part of the youth group was perhaps one of the best memories of church I had, especially having a good biblical background. Being able to read the Bible and learning about many biblical stories helped me to enjoy life as a youth member. This was because there were not many young people who liked to read the Bible. Somehow some of us learned very quickly that if we knew what the stories were about, we could make our arguments and be able to take part actively in the youth group debates. The youth group was the only group that, as young children, we were able to participate in without the adults' control. This was also the only space where children were given the opportunity to disagree with their parents or other adults, under the watchful eyes of our church minister. These were often considered fun times and it also helped children in our church to develop strong friendships growing up together. I considered these opportunities as a window of freedom and they inspired me to read the Bible more diligently. The Bible was also the only book we had at home, which we all had to share with six siblings and our mother.

Life in primary school

School life was not for the faint hearted. One had to be strong mentally and physically to be able to complete primary school successfully, regardless of the many circumstances that could prevent chidren from doing well. The first school I attended was Logologo Primary School, which was five villages away from my village. It was one of the three state schools in my whole

district, and the closest one to my village. Parents had the choice to send their children to the closest school. Since there were no cars, all children from my village had to make their journey to school on foot.

Teachers would administer corporal punishment anytime, anywhere, and with whatever they had at hand. It was the only form of discipline teachers knew. Since my early school life, I had witnessed children who were severely beaten for petty things like giving the wrong answer or not knowing the answer when teachers asked. Children were tormented, and many had dropped out of school because of their fear of school life. I never understood why parents did not question or challenge the authority of the teachers and the school when their children were severely hurt. Anyway, that was the norm in those school days. The culture of the school had no connections with the culture of the home. Many students found school life difficult, harsh and unbearable. Our parents, however, had total trust in the teachers to teach and to discipline their children. Whenever things went wrong at school, it was always the child's fault. Families trusted the school and the teachers. Their understanding was that teachers knew what was good for the child and always acted in the best interest of the child. That was not often the case.

Formal schooling was not compulsory in the late 60s and early 70s when I started school. Many parents, for various reasons, did not want their children to go to school. Unschooled children our age became such a menace for us, especially after school. They would wait for us after school, organising fights between schooled and unschooled boys and girls. Most of those arranged fights included me and my senior brother. The issue of road bullying intensified as my brother and I were both in the senior class at primary school. While most of the children from our village could not fight and allowed themselves to be bullied, my senior brother and I chose to fight. The fights were organised by older kids. We knew if we refused to fight the bullies would still beat us. But if we fought and won, we would still get beaten up after the fights. Our family were not aware of the fights we were involved in.

Homework was a major part of school. Homework also required a lot of time to study. The problem was that homework was not considered a responsibility of my family. According to my family, homework was a personal responsibility of the child him or herself. No child in my family was allowed to do homework during chore times. I had to wait until all the family chores and duties were completed and everyone was in bed before I attended to my homework. It was a major challenge for me having to face the teachers the following day if homework was not completed or was not completed to a satisfactory manner. Student life was not an easy life when

the culture of the home and the school were totally disconnected from each other. It caused so much suffering for many children who were truly interested in school.

In senior school, I was in the same class as my senior brother. I was moved up one year from Standard 4 (Year 4) to Form 2 (Year 6). I was still living in my grandmother's home. More rules were enforced in senior school as our teacher was under pressure for the national exam at the end of the year. One of those rules was lateness. For me, living with my grandmother and having to do my chores in the morning before I left for school, meant I was late almost every day. My senior brother was living with our mother and all my siblings inland by the main road, but I was living at my grandmother's home by the coastline. No matter how much I tried to be at school on time, I was always late. The punishment for lateness was five lashes and would double for each lateness during the week. By Friday, I had accumulated twenty five lashes which I was to receive right there and then. By the twelfth lash, I was in such pain I could hardly stay up on my feet. The whole room was in silence. It was the first ever time any student would have received so many lashes at once. I began to bawl my eyes out, but without a sound. As my senior brother witnessed my punishment, he suddenly stood up and politely asked our teacher if he could take the rest of the lashes for his sister. For some reason, the teacher agreed to this and my brother had to take the rest of the lashes for me. To this day, I still feel emotional whenever I think of that act of bravery and kindness from my senior brother.

Life in high school

After primary school, I was accepted into a church school in town. However, my mother and my family could not afford to send me to any school in town which would require compulsory fees and a strict uniform code. Instead, I was sent to our local district high school which was about fifteen to sixteen miles walk one way. There was no other means of transport but on foot. I felt more comfortable attending our local high school because my older cousin, who was attending the same school, was in her final year and was familiar with the school. We were both staying with our grandmother.

However, the life at high school was also very challenging. Corporal punishment was more severe, and the principal was the scariest person I had ever met in my whole life. Not only were the students fearful of him, all the teachers were absolutely scared of him. At some point, I was asked with another student in my second year to tidy up the principal's office. While we were there one of the female teachers entered the principal's office. Without any warning the

principal picked up a large hard-covered dictionary and threw it with such force at the teacher's face as she was entering the office. Oh, the level of fear in my heart increased, and I had never experienced such a sight before. It was normal for teachers to do that to students but I had no idea that teachers too were prone to such treatment by their superiors. It made me very scared even to think about becoming a teacher.

One day our teacher was absent from school and the principal had to take our class. Within five minutes of his arrival, he was punching and kicking a couple of students. When the students were knocked on the floor and could not get up, the principal began to kick them until their noses and mouths began to bleed. To this day, I cannot remember what the students did that offended him so much. Those boys never came back to school again.

In high school, there were so many rules about so many things. Inspections were normal for all girls from bras to outerwear. Not one girl was exempt from such inspections, in front of all female teachers and all female students. Students were not allowed to have friends in school or out of school. Having boyfriends and girlfriends was totally forbidden and was unheard of. One incident I still remember to this day was when a teacher found a love letter written by one of the senior students to someone she was interested in. I can imagine the humiliation the student must have gone through, being accompanied by the teacher going into every class of the whole school, reading the letter she wrote word for word.

As students, we all had our day of public humiliation and physical attacks whenever teachers so desired. No student was immune. From the beginning of high school, I had hidings like all the children at the school. However, my worst day came in my final year and my final day of high school. It was a working bee day. All the students were involved in cutting and cleaning the whole school yard. Most of the male teachers, including the new principal, were drinking alcohol. The new principal called me to sit beside him and to keep the flies off their alcoholic drinks. I did not have anything to fan off the flies but my hands. As they got drunk, he began to make fun of me in front of all the teachers and students. Whenever a fly landed on their glasses, he would slap me across the face. Then they all laughed. As I tried to do my best, each time a fly landed on any of their beer glasses, he would slap me full swing across the face. This made it hard for me to keep the flies off their drinks, as each time he slapped me. I do not know how long he tormented me for, but I somehow survived that attack. The following year, I attended the Teachers' College in town and trained to be a teachr myself.

Teachers' college life

I just turned seventeen when I was a first-year student at Teachers' College in town, Apia. It was also the first time in my whole life I had set foot in town and seen what Apia looked like. In the first few weeks of attending Teachers' College in Malifa, I witnessed an assault taking place during a full college assembly. It was when one of the lecturers assaulted a senior male student on stage. This caused a major uproar on the whole campus, and many students began a rebellion against the lecturer involved. They destroyed the college buildings and hurt some of the lecturers on campus. After that public student protest in 1978, the college reduced the years of training student teachers from three to two years only. Most of the students involved were suspended, and many were banned for life from a teaching career.

In my second year, I got in trouble and was expelled from the college when I was caught drinking and smoking in town. When my uncle, who I was boarding with, found out he gave me a good hiding at his home. My mother and my older siblings sent for me, and on my arrival home they all gave me a good beating. My uncle then took me back to the college, apologised to the head of the college on my behalf and I was then allowed to complete my teacher training. In 1979, I completed my diploma of teaching before I began to work as a teacher in our village school. Although I did not initially like teaching at all, as I was hoping to be a car mechanic or a builder, I have come to love teaching.

As a teacher, I was able to support my family with the very little money I earned from teaching. In the first few years of my teaching career, I was paid twenty-five tala a fortnight. I also sometimes worked with my older brothers on our taro and coconut plantations. My life at the time seemed to be going nowhere, especially when my grandmother passed on and I had nothing to look forward to. I was still under the control of my senior sister, who continued to dictate what and how to run my life. By the end of 1987, I managed to persuade my mother to let me go away for a short holiday to New Zealand by promising I would be back the following year before school started. She somehow agreed before my senior sister found out. My sister was very angry with me and my mother for allowing me to leave, but I was looking forward to the new experience.

Life as a visitor to Aotearoa New Zealand

A visitor in Aotearoa New Zealand

A distant uncle from our village, but living in New Zealand with his family, sponsored me when I first came to New Zealand as a visitor. He came to Samoa to attend a funeral of his twelve-year-old adopted daughter, who was brutally murdered and raped by another twelve-year old boy from another village. Instead of living with my close family members in Auckland, he insisted that I had to live with him and his family. Otherwise, I might overstay my visit and may cause them issues with the New Zealand immigration. So, I agreed.

My first impression of Aotearoa life

Since I had no money and had not brought many clothes from Samoa, I had to work with other Samoan families picking fruit. That was the only income I was able to make during this time until one day I applied successfully for a job within one of the biggest fruit factories in the city. I was so excited and was looking forward to the work. On my third day at the job, one of the managers came and asked me to leave. I then found out that I needed a work permit to work in New Zealand, something I was not aware of. Through the grapevine, I was informed that one of the Samoan ladies in my uncle's church reported me to the New Zealand immigration. That was the end of my first factory job. In the same evening a good friend of mine came over and told me that her senior brother wanted to speak with me. When I arrived, her brother asked me two questions. The first was "Do you want to live in New Zealand permanently?" and the second, "When can you leave for Samoa to get your papers done?" Two days later, I was on my way to Auckland with a piece of paper which had one line which read "she needs a work permit for the Samoan quota," and the address of the man to give the note to. After I met the man I was asked to see in Auckland, he told me to come back in a few hours, so he could get everything I needed to take before my flight to Samoa that same night.

Preparation to leave Samoa for good

My short visit to Aotearoa New Zealand gave me some understanding of what life was like. I also understood that it was going to be difficult to leave my family behind permanently, regardless of all the hardships I had endured over the years. I knew what life was like in Samoa with brothers who were not taking their obligations to our family and our mother seriously. I knew how much my whole family depended on me. It was a very emotional time for me. I

almost felt irresponsible knowing I was the only one in my whole family who was working and supporting our whole family. The thought of leaving for good was almost unbearable. My mother knew that too, but she kept on encouraging me to do well in New Zealand and to always remember our family. On the 25th of May 1988, I finally left Samoa for good.

Life in South Auckland – a factory job and the beginning of my tertiary study in Aotearoa New Zealand

Working at a carpet factory in South Auckland

I began working at a carpet factory when I first arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand. In the factory, there were various departments and after a few months in the first department, employees were to move on to other different parts of the factory. For the two years I was employed there, I worked in the same area where I started. Within three months of starting work there I became the trainer for all newcomers. Everyone seemed to move on, but I was so good at wool winding that my machine became one of the model machines in the factory. I did not understand what was going on, but they noticed that my machine was constantly working well and had not had any problems since I started. They would ask me many questions and wondered if I did any magic to make my machine work better and faster than the other machines. However, working with machines day in and day out was getting my spirits down, as I had never worked with machines before but only with people. Then I read in a paper about retraining for migrants who were teachers in their country of origin. So, I applied and was accepted and that was the end of my career working in a factory.

The beginning of my tertiary journey in Aotearoa New Zealand

I began my study at Auckland College of Education (ACE). But leaving a factory job to study fulltime was a huge responsibility as an adult student. I realised that flatting was too expensive, and that I was not able to pay board while studying. I then made a deliberate decision to move in to live with my half-sister and her family in South Auckland. That was perhaps one of the highlights of my life in New Zealand. Compared to a difficult life in Samoa, I found myself treated like I was someone important. My brother-in-law, the late Fata Ben Tualevao, had a very different understanding about the practices of faasamoa than the faasamoa I was raised under. He was kind, gentle, loving, and someone who was very optimistic about life and people in general. He somehow saw goodness in everyone. He treated my sister as if she was the only

woman in the whole world. He also treated his children, my nephews and nieces, with so much unconditional love and care. This was a totally different life and different notion of faasamoa compared to the faasamoa I was used to. This experience took me a very long time to take in and to understand from my brother-in-law's perspective. Staying with my sister's family has been the biggest highlight of my life in New Zealand, and the one that has left some lasting effects on my life not only as a Samoan, but as a parent.

Living with my sister and her family in South Auckland

My brother-in-law, who was a teacher in Samoa for many years before migrating to New Zealand taught me well when I lived with them. He was wise, patient, kind, gentle and open minded and had a positive attitude towards life, and most importantly, he adored educational success. I observed how he interacted with his children in various situations. Unlike how I was brought up, he was very gentle and calm in any situation. His parental wisdom was something I felt I had missed out on, since I had never known what it would be like to be raised in the presence of a father.

Fata, my brother-in-law, demonstrated alofa, love, through how he communicated with his children. He did not use physical discipline or say harsh words, or even raise his voice to his children if they did something wrong. He would, however, ask any of his children whom he felt needed to learn something to sit opposite him. He would do his best to demonstrate in either actions or words, and especially the tone of his voice, how and why things were to be this way or that way. I witnessed him teaching my nephews various tasks over the years, especially making an umu, a Samoan oven to cook food. He would take time to repeatedly demonstrate to his children how things were done and how they were done well. As a father, my brother-in-law never failed to acknowledge everyone's efforts and the contributions everyone made to any family faalavelave, big or small. Since I have known my brother-in-law, I knew how he would never put any pressure of faasamoa on his children whatsoever. He worked all his life and was able to provide for his family until his age prevented him.

One of the highlights for me as a born and raised Samoan now living with my sister and her family in Auckland was that I was not forced to attend church like I did in the islands. It gave me a different perspective about life, about church and about what was important in life. My nephews and nieces too were not forced to attend church. There were times when we knew there was something important on at church, as far as my brother-in-law was concerned. Then

we would all go to church. I loved church and church had always been a big part of my life. However, having the freedom to choose to go or not to go was a totally new thing to me and something I enjoyed for the first time in my life. In Samoa, everything was forced upon me and I had never had either a choice or a voice.

What I had witnessed in this brother-in-law of mine was a totally new learning experience for me. I saw the significance of having a father, and I know how blessed my nephews and nieces were to have a father that truly loved and cared for them. That was also the first time I had experienced what it was like to have a father figure in the home. It raised some questions about my own life as to what life would be like if we had a father. For me, that was perhaps one of the highlights of my life in New Zealand. The times I spent in my sister's home with her husband, my nieces and nephews and their partners gave me such joy. It also motivated me in what I do. My brother-in-law gave me such assurance that I was going to do well in life. To this day, I have truly appreciated the times he was able to sit down with me having a heart to heart conversation and assuring me that I was going to be all right.

Parenting in Aotearoa New Zealand

Becoming a parent in Aotearoa New Zealand

I love being a parent now, but my style and attitude as a parent did not start very well. With all the qualifications and new knowledge that I learned through my tertiary studies in Aotearoa, none offered me the slightest understanding or skill to be a good Samoan parent in New Zealand. My earlier experience with my sister's family and the wisdom my brother-in-law demonstrated in how he treated and cared for his children did not bring me comfort when I became a parent. The only way I knew how to parent was the way I was raised in Samoa. Instead of loving and protecting my children, I somehow lashed out at them as if they had done something wrong, even when they were very young. My husband, who was Māori and European, and his parents were very concerned about the way I parented. They knew how fearful our children were of me when I was around them. The older they became, the more they did not want to have anything to do with me. They would rather be with their grandparents than with their parents. But that also made me very angry. As far as I was concerned, my children's grandparents were not helping to raise our children to be strong but were raising them to be weak and dependent.

My husband was always very protective of our children and tried his best to calm me down when I got angry with our children. He knew that I was harsh, and the level of fear I had imposed on our children at a young age was unacceptable. I did not care. I continued to demand absolute obedience from them. My parenting style negatively affected the atmosphere within our home, my relationship with our children, and worst of all, it affected our children's learning. They were not happy at home. They wanted to live with their grandparents in Dunedin. Whenever we visited the grandparents for a weekend, our children would cry all the way to Christchurch. They were heartbroken every time we came back home.

To be the best Samoan parent

As a mother, I did whatever I could to be the best mother for my children. I applied discipline wherever I felt it was necessary. When they made mistakes, or did not respond whenever I called them, I reacted as if they had done something terribly wrong. I physically hit our children. I called them names and I verbally abused them. I felt that my own harsh upbringing helped build me into who I was then. In my mind, I felt New Zealand life was far too easy, and what my children were going through under my care was no match to the harsh Samoan life I grew up in. I somehow felt that if I could survive my typical Samoan upbringing unbroken, so should my children. Little did I know, my behaviour and how I treated our children was an accurate reflection of my own brokenness; that I had not dealt with the pain and hurt of my own upbringing. I did not see that I was continuing the process of negatively impacting my own children's lives just like others did mine.

I wanted to change, but I did not know how. One morning when I was awakened by a loud breaking noise coming from the kitchen. I rushed out to see what was going on. I saw my son standing there in the middle of the kitchen with fear in his eyes when he saw me. Without hesitation, I began to hit him so hard with my hands, screaming and swearing at him for breaking a drinking glass and making a mess on the kitchen floor. My husband heard the commotion and rushed to see what was going on. He could not believe what he saw when he entered the kitchen. He grabbed our son from me, picked him up and hugged him so tight. With tears in his eyes he turned to me and said, "Sofia, we can buy a million glasses, but we can never afford to buy another son". Oh, my heart felt so low and so ashamed of what I had just done. My husband's reaction to what I had done also impacted on my head that day. I had no idea I was getting out of hand in the way I had disciplined our children. I realised it was getting to the stage where I was very capable of seriously hurting our children. From that day, I felt so

scared of myself. I was contemplating suicide. I wanted to change but I did not know how. I loved my children but the only way I had learned to demonstrate that love was through the violence that had been shown to me as a child. That caused so much fear in me. I told my husband that if we were to separate, he would have to take the kids with him. I did not trust myself, and I knew my children were better off without me.

Beginning school

My number one goal when our children began their schooling was that we wanted them to have the best opportunities in life through their education. That was not what I learned putting them in a Decile One school. My hopes and dreams of what our children would become in life were far from what was happening at school. At school there was so much bullying going on. My attitudes and my behaviour as a parent towards our children kept them from informing us about what was happening at school. As a parent I did not care about their feelings about school, I only cared if they were doing well at school. They were not doing well, even though I was helping them with their homework, their reading, writing and maths. They did not like school. In fact, they hated school. This puzzled me. I could not understand how easy life in Aotearoa New Zealand was, yet our children were not coping. I felt our children needed more discipline to cope at school. But that did not help. It created further issues with our son, who was constantly feeling unwell during the week, and could not go to school. I did not know any better. Schooling and academic work were my only focus. I did not care about their happiness or such like. I felt they were kids and adults know best. Yet most of our children's teachers were telling us that our children were not doing well at school. At one parent-teacher meeting my husband and I attended, the teacher went on about how our son did not know how to do this or that. She spent the whole time telling us what our son could not do, and nothing about what he could do. When I brought to her attention what she had said, she went quiet.

Our children were failing school

As parents, the understanding that our children were not doing well at school and that they were labelled as having special needs was insulting and hurtful. That created further issues in our home life and in my relationship with my husband. I personally felt insulted as a Samoan parent. I was hurt, and the more I felt hurt, the more I hurt our children physically and verbally. I was very angry and did not know how to deal with our situation. I was mostly angry with myself

because I felt I could have done more. I was desperate for answers. I felt that my children's failure was my failure as a parent. That thought was almost unbearable.

Further issues at home

The fighting between my husband and I continued and did not stop until we had a physical fight and the police were called to our home. When they arrived, they interviewed us separately. We had both hit each other, but the police saw a scratch on my face and decided on their own to arrest my husband. They took him away from home that night, and that was the longest night of my life. It was also the lowest point of my life. In my heart of hearts, I knew my husband was a very good man. In that moment, I had so much fear about whether my in-laws knew what was going on at home. My husband was not a violent man and his whole family knew that. That was the turning point in my life, especially seeing him sitting in the dock the following morning when he appeared in court. I felt so ashamed of myself, knowing I should be the one in the dock, not my husband. I slowly came to understand that we could not change what had happened to our family, but we could change how we responded to it.

Having good friends

When our children were very young, a very good friend of our family used to allow our children to spend a week over at their place during holiday breaks. My children loved it and always looked forward to the holidays so they could go over to her house. She was a good cook, she was fun and all the kids in the church loved and trusted her. In one of those holiday breaks when I came to pick up our children, she asked me if we could have a quiet chat. She then explained to me what our children had told her of what was going on in school. On the drive home with our children I did not say a word, but I was very disturbed about what my children were going through at school, and that they did not trust to share it with me.

Road to change

The thought of my children trusting someone else enough to share such issues with, instead of their own mother, began to torment me. I wanted so much to change but I did not know how. It was like I wanted to change, but I felt that if I did change to accommodate a child's needs, they would show me less respect. There was this powerful battle in my head, one part of me needed to reach out to my kids, and one kept telling me that giving in to my kids' needs was a sign of being a weak parent.

Reaching out for help

I wanted to change but I did not know how. I tried to remember the Samoan axioms of 'o au o matua fanau', children are the pinnacles of their parents' love, or educational philosophies to give me guidance in my desperation to help and to reach out to my children and to be their mother. But nothing was powerful enough to remove the permanent image of my own upbringing from my life. If I were to remove that image, what would I replace it with, I wondered. I was not going to give up the only way I knew how to discipline my kids, which was through the Samoan saying, 'nana le alofa': conceal your love. It means that you love your kids in your heart, but do not demonstrate to them that you do. Ultimately, the help I needed came from a divine intervention. It was the beginning of my personal relationship with my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ that I slowly recognised the evil of the spirit of controlling.

Journey to recovery

I started attending Bible study on Saturday nights and started to read the Word of God. Through reading the Bible, listening to the teachings of the word of God from wise men and women of God, I slowly realised the error of my ways. Through my personal relationship with Jesus Christ, he taught me what I could learn from my upbringing and from all the lectures I had on my academic journey. I learned that I did not own my children. I was just a carer for a little while. These children belong to the Almighty God and my role was to nurture them. I was to show them kindness, demonstrate to them the peace and the love of God in everything we do. I was to care for them but I was not to worry about their future. It is all in God's control. They belong to God – not me.

The beginning of my walk raising God's children began to unfold. This perspective gave me and my family so much peace and so much joy. There were times when I made some bad choices, but I knew God understood I was only human. This love of Christ and how he made me understand my responsibility as a parent has sustained me as a parent to stay strong and keep my cool. This included those times when the kids would misbehave, leave their clothes all over the bathroom, or not wash their dirty dishes. Things my former self would have not let them forget, or would have punished them for severely, I tried to respond to as graciously as I could. I began to realise they are God's children and His responsibility.

There were still struggles though. When the school stated that our son was not doing well at school and our daughter was having problems learning, things started to go wrong at home. My

husband and I were constantly fighting. We accused each other of being the reason why our children were doing poorly at school. We did not question the role of the school in the way they interacted with our children. Yet there was a lot of pressure on us as parents to do reading and maths at home with our children. I was a very unpleasant mother, especially during the times I had to help my children with their homework. I must say they were perhaps the darkest times of my family life in New Zealand; something I would rather forget. For me, I believed it was the only way for my children to be successful in their education, and it was my duty as a parent since the school expected me to help them with their homework. I tormented them at home during their homework. My children hated it, and they became very unhappy. They did not want to attend school and they had very few friends. This was something that none of the teachers or the principal of the school knew. We were helpless as parents. I took my children's failure at school as my failure as a mother and as a Samoan parent. I did not enjoy being a parent.

Letting go of the control and learning to enjoy life

Letting go of the control I exercised on our children was also releasing the burden of all the responsibilities I felt I had to carry. It was through the letting go that I felt peace. At the same time, there was so much healing taking place in our home. Slowly, I realised our children were commenting on how good it was that I was not screaming at them the whole day. Then it went on for a whole week. Every time they noticed those changes, they gave me massive hugs. They thanked me for keeping my cool. There were times when they did something and they were scared I was going to lose it, but my reaction towards them surprised them. Whenever that took place, it was so unexpected. The feeling of empowerment became real.

The first change I made as a mother was to become big and powerful enough to ask my husband for forgiveness for all the years he had witnessed my shortfalls in many aspects of our family life. Secondly, I asked our children's forgiveness for the physical discipline as well as the harshness of the words I used when I was angry with them. Then, slowly, conversations in our home became a two-way channel. I was able to listen to their ideas and their concerns. I was strong enough to let them know that, if I slipped up, they needed to understand I would never become a perfect mother. We also set up a rule that we were to be accountable for our own actions and take the necessary steps to redeem oneself without placing blame on someone else. Our family slowly grew from its dark side to a friendlier one. We started enjoying each other's company.

Changing school

Our two older children were not particularly intelligent, but they were very nice. They were very wise and sensitive to what goes on around them, especially at school. So, since we had found out what was going on at school, we wanted to ensure we had a clear idea before we looked at making a change of school. We arranged with the principal for us to sit in our children's classrooms to observe what was going on, and why they really did not like school. We arranged for different days and different times, both indoors and outdoors, to see what was going on. It was at that time that I learned that New Zealand has a decile school rating system. This means schools are rated from decile 1 to 10; with 10 as the highest, determined by the socioeconomic status of the parents. Therefore, schools with the lowest decile rating often cater for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds with diverse social issues, including behaviour problems. This was not obvious to me as a migrant parent. The school they were going to, despite being in the middle of a very low socio-economic neighbourhood, was a decile 1 school.

There was so much control on what and how children learned. This control had a major influence on our children, who were experiencing life at school exactly as what life was like in their home. They developed such a hatred for school. Perhaps they hated home too but they had no choice. We were the parents and they still had to come home at the end of a terrible day.

From our observations of our children's interactions with the school, my husband and I came up with similar results. There were far too many children in the classroom, including new refugees. Teachers often had to attend to behaviour issues in the classroom rather than teaching children. Having a class with more than one child with behaviour problems was bad. Having more than four to seven with serious behaviour issues created a nearly impossible learning environment. Children who came to school ready to learn, without behaviour issues, were often left out and did not get the help they desperately needed in the classroom. Teachers became social workers and counsellors to, not just to the kids, but also to their parents.

For us as parents, we realised that the three years our children had been at this school were not going to help them in their future schooling. We wanted our children to succeed in their education. From that day, the educational goals I made as my priority became the foundation of my expectations. All I wanted was for our children to be happy and enjoy life. They had a bad start in life with me as their mother and a bad start with the school. I just wanted them to be kids. I placed no expectations of school on them but enjoyed the time we had as a family.

My husband and I recognised that leaving our children in that particular school was not going to do any good for them. Leaving them there would be like watching someone destroying your most valuable possessions right in front of your eyes. As parents, we stayed strong and stayed together. Then we decided to apply to home-school our children, which was perhaps the best thing we could have ever done for them. To this day, they thank us for doing what we did.

Government's alternative schooling

After two years of home schooling, we decided to look for a school. We did not look for just any school. We looked for a school without teacher intervention. That was when we heard about the government's alternative schools. One of those schools was known as Tamariki School. This was the school that really helped our children to grow to love school and love life. We witnessed the new joy they had. They looked forward to going to school any day of the week the school was open. Tamariki had a different system than normal schools. Children were allowed to play all day if they wanted to. Children take control of their environment, negotiate the rules and their roles as students. For our children, life at Tamariki School gave them so much hope and confidence in themselves, and made them realise that we as parents cared enough about them to place them in a learning environment that was vastly better than the one they had experienced originally. We know that the choices we made as parents in our life-time will impact on them and their families in years to come.

Schooling option

Home-schooling was not a popular path to support our children, considering the low number of Samoan parents who choose that path for their children. The road to public schools and private schools was well accessed and walked often. It was a familiar path. Choosing home schooling by a Samoan parent in New Zealand was unheard of. Our integrity and morals as parents were often questioned by people at our church. Some elders tried to convince us that the best place for our children was in a normal classroom with other children. The conviction we had and the peace God placed in our hearts as we were making that choice gave us the final answer: home school. As parents in New Zealand, I believe we have a choice. If I were to be a new parent now, I know exactly what I did wrong in my first trial. I will spend more time with my children. I will listen to them more. I will have special time with each of them doing the things they love doing. I will give more hugs and less talking, unless it is necessary. I will use opportunities to build them up rather than breaking them down. I will give them the basic living

water, the Word of God. Many New Zealand-born Samoan kids, like my kids, do not know what love looks like from their own parents. It is within this relationship that parents matter in their children's lives. When parents raise their children with love, children will do anything to please them, no matter what.

If it happens in the workplace, it also happens in the school

I often hear from many Samoan parents who complain about the unfair situations they constantly experience in their workplace, in terms of favouritism, discrimination and racism. Yet parents have very different expectations of schools - as if those very issues are absent and do not exist in that area - ever. Such perceptions were a myth then and are a myth now. Regardless of government policies and regulations, those aspects of human life will continue to exist, no matter what. Based on my experiences and my children's experiences of school and of life, what these Samoan and other Pacific Island parents experience in the workplace is not unlike what their own children experience at school. Racism, discrimination and favouritism come in different forms and sizes. One thing that cannot be disputed is the hurt it leaves on those affected.

Reflecting on the experiences of my two older children and how they struggled and the process of helping them regain their self-confidence, I had never considered that our third child had gone through a difficult time at school. One day she explained about one of the teachers she had hated so much at school. She said the teacher disliked her and would deliberately exclude her from class activities. In her own words, this teacher made her feel "dumb" and "stupid." This specific topic emerged in a late-night talk with my 14-year-old daughter, when she was by this time in high school. She wanted to let me know that there were some things that she kept in her heart but had not mentioned before because she was not sure how we as parents were going to react. This time, she had the courage to share her worst school experience in Year 7 with me. She talked about how difficult it was for her to learn and to make friends in her Year 7 class because she felt the teacher was very mean and was constantly picking on her in class. She said whenever she asked a question when she did not understand something, the teacher always seemed to raise her voice and made her feel like she did not belong there. She felt like an outcast in that class and the teacher made her feel very unsafe. This was to the extent that she did not trust anyone in that class to be friends with, and worst of all, she hated the teacher. Those issues were massive barriers to her learning. She also talked about one instance, where one of the boys in her class yelled at her during physical education in front of the whole class,

"Hey you, get your ass here". She expected her teacher to deal with it appropriately and yet her teacher totally ignored the incident. In her own words, she said "I was not sure which one was more insulting, whether it was what the boy said, or the teacher totally ignoring me when I brought the matter to her attention."

As she emotionally explained what it was like for her in her Year 7 class, my heart sank. I had no idea that such issues were going on at school. I felt deeply sad that she, as a child, had no support at all from anyone, including us as parents. It was because we were so focused on her learning rather than her wellbeing. However, while she spoke of her own ordeal and her struggle at school with this teacher, she also made the following comment which concerned me more as a Pacific parent. "Mum, I know I did not have a very good experience, but that was nothing compared to how Island boys were treated at school. Most teachers did not have any expectations of Island boys. They showed more interest in Island students when it came to sports rather than their schoolwork".

My daughter's experience, and many other children's experiences of what school is like, helped me realise that if both the home and school are not catering to our children's social and emotional needs, then it will be hard for these children to progress in life. Many Pacific parents do not understand the dynamic and diversity of the issues that their children experience in New Zealand schools. I have often heard of many parents' negative experiences of their workplace where their bosses tended to show more respect to white employees than to non-white ones, or stories about being discriminated against in the workplace. Yet, parents do not even consider such issues are taking place within the school environment. Parents need to understand that whatever issues they experience in the workplace, these are similar, or perhaps worse than what their children experience in school. For many Pacific children, they often get into trouble at school when they speak up or retaliate against those types of issues. These are the realities for Pacific children, and they differ little from what their parents experience in their workplace.

Summary

Families experience diverse issues in Aotearoa New Zealand that can have tremendous negative consequences on parents' lives, and especially the lives of their children. My struggle with my children's schooling made me realise that I needed to dig deeper into myself and recognise things that were causing issues in our home and for our children at school. Recognising I had a problem made me look for answers to help me cope and to give me guidance. I did not find the

answer in my culture. I did not find the answer in the theories and the philosophies of the most intelligent human beings in life. I found the perfect answer through my relationship with Jesus Christ. I learned the best life lesson ever about who I am in relationship with the Almighty God. I learned to be an imperfect parent and to enjoy the company of my imperfect children, under the sanctuary of our imperfect *aiga.* This knowledge has placed everything into perspective, not only for my family, my children, and my husband, but especially for me.

The argument this account intends to put forward is that the *aiga*, home, is where Samoan parents should concentrate and make it their priority. The teachers' roles are to teach. The parents' roles are to parent. This means parents are to provide encouragement, motivation and to nurture children's wellbeing so they will remain persistent even when they experience the many challenges they face at school. Parents must ensure that their children are safe and that they are not scared to share such experiences at home with their parents.

SECTION FIVE

Resting place: a small islet off the shore of Motu-Mu Island

I am a little breathless as I look back on what I discovered on Motu-Mu. It was hard to write the report. I wrote many drafts in which past and present muddled together and went around in circles, and I threw them all away. But something inside me made me determined to tell my story as honestly as I could. I think I was trying to understand it.

As I learn to face my own story I also face a lot of questions about the relationship of my own story and that of others and the relationship of my story with faasamoa. I wonder if my story is unique. Perhaps my family faced challenges that other families in Samoa did not face? My brother-in-law showed me he had learned a different way of life. But I also know that the experiences I had at school and at church indicate that physical violence was not limited to my family. I ask myself if it is part of an on-going warrior tradition within Samoa or if that warrior culture somehow changed with colonisation. As Samoans we have kept our traditional family and village structures, but did the impact of nineteenth European ways of relating to people change how we related to each other? I think again of the mists that had covered Motu-Sa and I wish I could have found a way to go deeper inland and understand more of the Samoan history and traditions that seem to have got lost.

I think about the changes God has made in my life and I wonder why similar changes are not visible in the Samoan churches I have known. Is that part of colonisation? Or is that too easy an answer?

I look again at the stories my participants told me on Motu-o-Tagata and I am aware that only my story contains these violent and unhappy experiences. Perhaps none of my participants faced the same struggles in their parenting, or perhaps, if some did have similar kinds of experiences, those kinds of struggles were not what they were willing to share in an interview. I reflect that although my approach to interviewing was open-ended, the process of interviewing has limitations. Participants will only share what they want share about themselves, and I have no right to ask more personal questions. So I don't know if the struggle to become a better parent is just my own or if it belongs to more of our people. I decide that all I can do is put it forward as my struggle and so as part of the bigger question that I asked at the start of my study.

I feel anxious that my story may have a negative impact on readers and may reinforce some deficit conceptualisations of Samoan families. However, I recall the words of Tupua Tamasese Efi that I cited in the first chapter. "We need people," he said, "to be willing to speak – faults and all, and without pretensions – from deep within our hearts." Tupua Tamasese Efi argued that such honesty is needed to heal the pain that young people experience and to enable them to grow up whole and safe. As I reflect on my story and the ugly things within it I also see my childhood craving for more fairness and kindness and my adult desire to become a better parent. I see myself as an evolving human being. I think that deficit is not a useful way to recognise that desire to evolve and grow.

By the time I came to write the final draft of my exploration of Motu-Mu, I had found some stretches of calmer seas in my student journey. There is a new Head of Department for Pacific Studies. He is not Samoan but he is Pasifika and he has created a warm and nurturing place for us as postgraduate Pasifika students. We have shifted into the central body of the university campus and we have a floor to ourselves that allows us to relate to each other in ways that feel both natural and supportive. I still miss having a Samoan mentor but my supervision team now feels solid behind my back. Nevertheless, I still have questions about the meaning of what I have explored on each of the islands I have visited and questions about my journey into the complex currents of doctoral study. I explore these questions as I set out to sea again.

Just as I am pushing my vaa off the shore to head out to the ocean I find a hard wooden object almost buried in the sand. It turns out to be a water-logged box. The faded lettering on the outside shows it was directed towards the library on Motu-o-Tagata. It must have been lost overboard in a storm. I prise the planks open and find bundles of books. Almost all of them are unreadable because of their immersion in the water, but in the centre, there are a few that are still dry and I pull them out and take them with me on my vaa. I can read them later if I am becalmed again.

Chapter Eight

The Ocean

When I was on each of the islands I felt I had solid ground beneath my feet, even though the heights of Motu-Sa disappeared into mist and Motu-Mu rumbled with former and ever-present volcanic eruptions. I found, not always easily, solid things to record. The ocean is different: it too has shapes and moods but they are always changing. There are often strong currents. One dominant current is the mainstream western tradition of doctoral research which mandates that I present concrete findings about my journey of inquiry. Another powerful current is the call to voice a Samoan way of understanding the world and to offer a contribution to a wider project of decolonisation. And running counter to these two main currents are shifting surface winds that lift and curl the waves making it hard to set direction and steer a clear course and sometimes threatening to overturn my *vaa*. One such precarious wind has been the erratic development of the Pacific Studies Centre at my university in the past; and another has been my struggle to make sense of my own life and the parenting of my children. In this chapter I seek to summarise and reflect on what I learned on the islands and in the ocean journey. I start with what I found on the islands.

What I found on the first island

> *E iloa le lima lelei o le tufuga i le soofau*
>
> *The mark of good leadership is shown in blending idiosyncrasy (Tui Atua Efi, 2016).*

"*E iloa le lima lelei o le tufuga i le soofau*" is a saying that is metaphorically linked to the art of house building in Samoa and the style of leadership involved in the construction of the fale, house or building. For a master *tufuga*, builder, the wisdom in taking on such a demanding task requires patience, care, time, love and sacrifice to fullfill the task. In this study, the parents are master *tufuga*, leaders likened to Samoan master builders. Parents' understanding of the complexities of New Zealand life, had not only influenced the level of support and engagement in their children's lives and study, but had altered the style of their parenting.

This section provides answers to the formal research question I began with: how do Christchurch Samoan parents engage in furthering their children's education? In doing so, the

section explores the Samoan parents' experiences and beliefs, which motivated their engagement in their children's lives. I also provide an associated reflection on my personal experiences as a child raised under the authoritarian regime of Samoan parenting and the negative impacts of such style of parenting for my children. Finally, I provide an analysis of my personal journey into a PhD, as a mature, Samoan-born adult student operating under a multitude of challenges in New Zealand. These issues will be discussed next.

Shift of mindset in how they parent

One of the most significant issues that parents indicated in the many choices they had to make as parents, was a deliberate choice to shift their style of parenting from the authoritarian, disciplinarian style, to an authoritative way of parenting. There was strong sense that parents' support for their children was much more warm, gentle and friendly than the distance parent-child relationship in Samoa when children were much older. All the Samoan-born participants recognised this as crucial for them as parents, and more so for their children. Furthermore, the parents understood the multitude of challenges competing for their children's attention, so they did their utmost care to ensure they communicated their desires and expectations for each other, in their shared conversations and social discussions in the home.

These parents understood how crucial it was for their children to know that they loved them and that they cared about their future. The deliberate shift in their parenting had also increased the quality of their relationships with their children. The parents expressed how they were able to chat, joke and laugh together with their children at home. In doing so, parents also recognised the need to spend one-on-one time with their children as they got older. Parents and children had developed trusting relationships and were able to share issues at home with each other. Parents were very aware that their home was the only place their children were able to freely express issues they experienced at school and outside the home. Furthermore, parents spoke about how the conversations in the home had become a two-ways stream, rather than them dominating the discussions and conversations in their home. These parents strongly believed, shifting the way they parent had increased their children's chances in furthering their education. In demonstrating their great desire to engage in their children's academic journey, some of the parents had sought professional help through reading more library books to attending parenting training.

Parents' respond to cultural and extended family demands

Cultural and church obligations were some aspects of the Samoan culture that the parents in this study identified as having negative influence on families in New Zealand today. Although all the parents appreciated their culture, there was a strong indication that some aspects of the Samoan culture had negative effects on families and family life. All parents noted that some of the cultural demands in terms of prioritising the extended family faalavelave or making church contributions over the wellbeing of their children had to change. For example, the demands for monetary contributions to family faalavelave was a major disruption for the parents and often put pressure on the parents' relationships. The parents felt that some of those demands have become overwhelming as most families struggle to make ends meet in this country. They felt Samoans in Samoa were not working the plantations any more, but were just waiting for families overseas to send them money.

All parents recognised the demands of the Samoan culture to have negative effects on family life and family resources. In such cases, some families have changed religions in order to avoid the demands of traditional Samoan churches. While many of the parents stated that they used to make monetary contributions while their children were young, changes in their circumstances also changed their stance on such matters. Although these parents had sent money to their extended families in the past, such practice has slowly shifted and parents have also discussed such issues with their own children. Parents had now recognised that doing so had put their own families under unnecessary stress. Furthermore, parents wanted to commit their resources to supporting their children, instead of supporting their extended families or paying for their extended families' children's education.

Quality relationship in the home

Another issue parents spoke about was the importance of providing a safe, fun, loving and a peaceful home in which their children can enjoy the company of their parents as well as their siblings. All parents insisted that, if all else failed, they wanted their children to know that they did their best to provide the home environment to ensure they were happy and safe. Having a good home helped all members of the family to nurture and develop deep relationships with each other. Parents also spoke about the significance of trusting relationships between themselves and their children. Parents insisted that, because they trusted their children, they would not restrict them from going out, attending their friends' parties or to go night clubbing.

The parents understood how vital it was for them to trust their children no matter what. For example, one parent talked about how and when her sons decided to go night clubbing, no matter how late the night was, they had never gone to any of their friends' homes because they did not feel safe anywhere else besides their home. In contrast, when her sons' friends came to their house, they would be staying over for a number of days before she would intervene by asking the young people if their parents were aware of their whereabouts. All the parents believed that it was the quality of their relationships with their children that had encouraged their children into furthering their education.

Schools are not the most welcoming space for students

Participating parents had learned through their engagements with the schools in different forums, that schools were definitely not the most supportive, welcoming or a happy place for their children. The majority of the parents had experienced first-hand how complex it was for them to try to address issues of racism, discrimination and bullying that affected their children at school. As far as the parents were concerned, the school and the Board of Trustees had not responded or dealt with their grievances or some other matters satisfactorily. As far as the parents were concerned, such issues were ongoing in most schools but had never been satisfactory dealt with, as they had experienced themselves. For them, it was crucial that they supported and engaged with their children at home, constantly having conversations about matters that were out of their control. In some difficult cases, parents were forced to make some difficult decisions, including relocating their children to different schools to minimise the stress children experienced under such circumstances. Therefore, the participants truly believed, if they had not actively involved with their children's lives, supporting them, comforting them, encouraging them and ensuring them they would be all right, it would not be easy for their heir children to make it any further than just completing secondary school.

Parents felt such responsible for their children's success

All parents felt a strong sense of responsibility for their children's success in education and in life. Some parents indicated that whenever there were cases of young people at their workplaces, they would share and have constructive conversations with their children, informing them of their rights, as well as their obligations to their families and to the community at large. With the majority of the parents having limited education background, they were keen for their children to do better than themselves. They wanted their children to have qualifications

that would keep them away from working in low paying, and demanding types of employment that any island parents worked in.

Seeking employment during the holiday breaks

All the participants had grown-up children in either their first year at university or in their final year of high school. Finding employment during school time was not an option parents recommended for their children. Parents understood that seeking employment during school time would be a major distraction to the progress of their studies. Instead of working during the school time, parents only allowed their children to work during the school breaks. Parents commented on the temptations to earn money which can be a hindrance to furthering education. This issue concerned the parents a lot, especially seeing what some students had done, where they ditched their chances to further their education because of some few dollars they were paid once they had picked up a part time job at McDonald's, KFC or at a petrol station.

Personal reflections of the participants' parenting journey

Hearing the parents' stories and listening as how they managed to engage in furthering their children's education clarified a few important issues. One, these parents had wisdom, patience, love and time to ensure they would communicate their desires and expectations with their children. Second, these parents had to constantly working on improving their relationship with their children. Third, the parent-child relationship was a give and take type of relationship. There was no authoritarian approach, but parents established a safe space where their children would become safe, happy and respectful to each other.

Associated reflection on my parenting

Changes in my parenting stance had actually made me feel free and less stressful. I used to feel that parenting was hard, because I felt I had to do everything as a parent. My perfectionist conduct was challenged and since I let go of the power and control attitude I had over my children and my family, life has become more enjoyable and less stressful.

What I found on the second island and I how I thought about it later

I went to the second island to discover and explore *faasamoa*, because it was something that was highly valued by all my participants and also, perhaps unconsciously, by me. I did find a lot of descriptions of Samoan culture, values and traditions and I have recorded these in Chapter

Six. I am not sure if what I found was the *faasamoa* that my participants talked about when they talked about wanting to ensure their children grew up honouring and been nurtured by the values of faasamoa. As I explained earlier what I found on that island does not fully match what I intuitively feel is the Samoan way of life that I experience with my friends, with the Pasifika students I teach and with my Pasifika colleagues in our hub at the University. I have begaun to wonder if we hold an abstracted concept of *faasamoa* that lightly acknowledges the complexities and hardships as well as the richness of our collective and individual pasts but puts more emphasis on the informal sharing of our daily lives and on the intimacies we have created among ourselves in an environment in which we are a monority.

In one of the calm periods on the sea I opened one of the books I had found in the wooden box. It was *Sapiens* by Yuval Noah Harari (2015). The author subtitled it as a brief history of humankind. I thought that it would be even more challenging to write such a brief history than to summarise my doctoral investigation so I skimmed thorough the book with curiosity. I found that he describes cultures and religions as collective imaginings. Such imaginings, he says, are no less powerful or useful because they are not based on empirical facts. I do not think I fully agree with him, but it made me think further about the nature of faasamoa.

Certainly, there are ways that Samoan society was structured at the times when the ethnographers I read wrote about it. And there are behaviours that I remembered from my childhood that matched some of what I read in books. But what aspects of that society were the same as before colonisation by the Germans? What aspects were part of the challenges of survival on a small groups of islands in the ocean and resisting attacks by other island peoples? What aspects were caused by the influence of nineteenth century Europeans? What aspects were caused by economic hardships that impacted globally during and after the two world wars? In other words what aspects were essentially Samoan? And is the faasamoa that we invoke when we want to talk about our special difference here in New Zealand something with cut and dry specific features or a collective imagining?

I played with the idea for a while, but was worried that it might be too disrespectful. Then I opened one of the other rescued books. It was Gee's *The Social Mind* (1992). Gee explains that memory is a social phenomenon and that our knowledge of history and cultures is held together in terms of stories of what various social groups find useful and beneficial.

So I am left with questions as well as new provocative insights. One set of questions is about the relationship of colonisation and stories of *faasamoa* and the relationship with movements

of decolonisation. I need to do further research to begin to untangle those relationship and that research is well beyond my present project, but it is important to note here that *faasamoa* is not a simple unproblematic concept. My experience as well as that of other Samoan tells us there is a Samoan way of doing things and we recognise its value to us. We can describe aspects of it, but we need to be careful to avoid seeking absolute definitions. In my introduction I talked about wanting to explore a Samoan epistemology. An epistemology is a way of formulating and communicating knowledge. It is not an absolute truth. However, epistemology has impact on how we develop attitudes and understandings. Descriptions of stern, and sometimes physically violent parenting, can prevent the development of the kinds of trustful relationships that my participants reported. I argue that it is important for us to become aware of different stories about faasamoa and so begin to deconstruct the messages we receive.

What I found on the third island and I how I see its importance now

I describe Motu-Mu as a volcanic island that reflects the painfulness of events in my personal story and the painfulness of acknowledging and reporting them. As I look back at what I found on the island I see parallels with what I have just written about *faasamoa* and the impact a particular way of seeing the world, or story, can have on our lives. I realise I grew up seeing the world, and my role as a parent, in a particular way. I also carried a lot of unhappiness that had come from the ways the schools and church of my childhood had interpreted the world.

I argue that telling my story is an important step in deconstructing the world view that I grew up with and a provocation for others to undertake similar deconstructions. Another of my rescued books was *Research through, with and as storying* by Phillips and Bunda (2018). I wished I could have read it much earlier when I set out on my doctoral journey, as it might have given me some useful compasses. However, it helps me look back on what I have found so far and to see that stories are not just words but embodied understandings of our experiences. It also helps me understand that stories have a relationship to place and that my story is one that began in a place that held a mix of Indigenous and colonial values and later unfolded in a place where I was an immigrant. As immigrants, we often want our stories to be the ones that show the nobility and goodness of our native cultures. Such stories exist and they are valuable. But there are other stories too that show mistakes and uncertainty and they too are important and valuable. I see my story in that space.

A volcanic island is turbulent, but it is also in the process of becoming a land with new possibilities. Although I found it painful to tell my story I see it as a way of deepening my own

understandings of what it means to be Samoan in a country where I am an immigrant and in a minority. Perhaps it will also deepen other people's understandings.

The task of navigating the ocean: My PhD journey

The island offered some sort of solid ground. The ocean around and between them was often stormy.

Shared struggles

Some of the difficulties were those that many older PhD students encounter. I needed to balance my work and my study. I also had family obligations as a wife and mother. From time to time each of those spheres of my life brought unexpected challenges. Those of us for whom English is a second language faced further challenges. The English we use for daily communication is different from the language we find in journals and academic books. Like so many other second language speakers I found it relatively easy to express my ideas in conversation but I would find those ideas become muddled, and sometimes disappear altogether, when I tried to write them down in academic English. Those of us who lived in Christchurch faced more, sometimes huge challenges from the earthquakes that destroyed a large part of our city and much of our university. We lost buildings at the university and initially many courses took place either on line or giant tents. Then there was a move to prefabs while buildings were demolished and new building projects took place. Homes too were damaged or destroyed and in many cases insurance claims were complicated, delaying repairs year after year. Intense aftershocks also continued for years. I have reported that I lost my original participants when they left Christchurch after the major earthquake. These were problems I shared with many others. Some postgraduate students gave up, some of us continued but for some it meant that our doctoral candidatures stretched out over more years than we expected when we set out.

Some other challenges came from being a Pasifika doctoral student.

Macmillan Brown legacy and a growing Pasifika community in Christchurch

The Pacific Studies Centre was set up as a result of a substantial bequest by a renowned academic who had a personal fascination with the artefacts and cultures of the Pacific. The subsequent focus of the centre was traditionally anthropological. European, and later Māori, scholars studied the exotic features of Pacific Islanders. The anthropological focus was often

admiring or kindly, but it was external. Pacific cultures were objects to be studied. This was still the predominant orientation of the centre when I began my postgraduate study.

However, the Pasifika community in Christchurch was becoming increasingly visible and more concerned with the promises of university education. In addition, a number of Pasifika people were visibly taking leadership roles outside their immediate communities. Several universities appointed Samoan, Tongan and other Pasifika scholars. These scholars were not interested in anthropology; rather they were concerned with improving the well-being of their people, both in New Zealand and in the Islands. My university developed a Pacific Plan and set up the review of the Macmillan Brown Centre that I reported earlier.

The gradual impact on those of us who were beginning their research was that we were expected to open up new pathways into Pasifika knowledge, and we too thought we could do that. However, such expectations took us into very turbulent waters. Firstly, we were a group of keen Pasifika students who had been taught that knowledge was to be found in books. We had passed our undergraduate courses by applying the codes we learned from western academic traditions. We started postgraduate study expecting to work in the same way and to be guided by our teachers and supervisors. Secondly, our teachers and supervisors were almost all western academics who regarded the Pacific with external and objectifying eyes. Once or twice a Pasifika scholar was appointed on a temporary basis, but their contracts were not renewed. As a group of students, we did not have the resources to close the gap.

One conclusion I have reached through my research journey is that a university needs to provide Pasifika leadership for Pasifika doctoral students. The Christchurch earthquakes may have played a part in limiting my university's implementation of what was recommended in the review. However, I question whether it is realistic to expect novice researchers to bridge the gap between traditional anthropological approaches and looking at Pasifika cultures from the inside. My doubts were reinforced when I read accounts in another of the books I rescued from the sand. Windchief and San Pedro (2019) brought together a group of North American Indigenous researchers to talk about the values and processes that characterise Indigenous research in ways that are meaningful for their tribal communities. At the core of each account was a focus on tribal knowledge as opposed to western academic knowledge. The writers also stressed the difficulty of conducting Indigenous research in institutions where there was no Indigenous leadership.

Academic and Samoan traditions.

In most of my research journey I felt I was alternatively swept along by either western academic traditions or by my leaned habits and emerging intuitions of what it meant to be Samoan. These were two strong currents and trying to navigate between them was always turbulent.

As I mentioned above, I began my doctoral research in the expectation that I would follow western traditions of knowledge seeking. I understood that this would mean that I would read books and carry out a qualitative case study based on interviews. My first supervisors encouraged this view. At the same time they wanted me to find a Samoan perspective. The first and second islands are the products of my search for Samoan perspectives at the same time as I sought to comply with academic protocols. I believe the findings on each of these islands are useful but they tell only part of a bigger story. I unconsciously broke away from the formal academic traditions I had learned in recording my discoveries on Motu-Mu. My findings there offer different dimensions to the story. However, I am aware that there are tensions between what I found on each island and new questions that arise. I realise that these three islands are surrounded by a much greater ocean that I and others may further explore in future research. My reflections about the currents I have found in the ocean seek to place my island findings into a context that acknowledges the complexity of the research quest.

Becoming willing to be a sailor

This has not been an easy journey. My limitations in all aspects of being a researcher and conducting a scholarly task have been challenging in many ways. For example, I had no prior research experience, I had English as my second language. I was a mother and wife. All these factors contributed to many limitations in my journey. In hindsight, I often wondered about and continued to question my own integrity in taking on such a task, because, I often doubted I had either the resource or the mental ability to do this.

However, even though I did not know what it would entail I had started the journey, and I did not think it right to give it up. My ancestors not only worked the plantations in Samoa, they also went out into the ocean. They were courageous sea-farers. Repeatedly, I put aside my doubts and fears and turned my vaa into the wind, and sailed forward. I found fresh courage when my two current supervisors helped me understand that knowledge is not linear or single-facetted. They variously argued that knowledge is not something that is permanently fixed or

universally applicable, and that there are many different ways of seeking knowledge and recording what we find. They encouraged me to explore the ocean as well as the islands.

Suggestions for practical action

Because I have emphasised the complexity and situated partiality of my findings I am hesitant to make firm recommendations. However, as I haul my vaa up out of the waves and onto dry shore, at least for now, I make some suggestions for further discussion.

Firstly, I would encourage Samoan parents to develop trustful, supportive relationships with their children that allow ther children to seek their advice and help in navigating the conflicting currents they find in schools, peer groups and church.

Secondly, I would encourage schools to find ways to listen to Samoan, and other minority groups and parents, and find out what they want for their children and how they are supporting their children. Too often the dialogue is one-way and in the opposite direction. Schools often report only problems to the parents, rather than developing collaborative relationships with them.

Thirdly, I would encourage universities that want to encourage Pasifika doctoral research to ensure they provide Pasifika academic leadership and mentoring for their students.

Fourthly, I would encourage Pasifika doctoral students to not only support and encourage each other, as they tend to do, but also to challenge and question each other, which they rarely do. We need to help each other be explorers instead of sitting passively in the back of the vaa.

And finally, I encourage myself and my Pasifika colleagues to keep heading out into the ocean and to share the skills we learn in navigating it.

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Appendix A: Ethical approaval

Ref: 2010/80/ERHEC

17 December 2010

Sofia Daly
130 Aorangi Road
Bryndwr
CHRISTCHURCH 8053

Dear Sofia

Thank you for providing the revised documents in support of your application to the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee. I am very pleased to inform you that your research proposal "The effects of faasamoa on Samoan parents' involvement in their children's academic journey in higher education" has been granted ethical approval.

Please note that should circumstances relevant to this current application change you are required to reapply for ethical approval.

We note that you are planning on offering petrol vouchers and suggest you revise that decision based on the monetary cost of supplying petrol vouchers to potentially a large number of participants. However, this is your decision. If you do offer these, we suggest you add the following sentence to the information sheet, bullet point number 3:
"Upon completion of this interview and transcript review process, you will receive a petrol voucher".

If you have any questions regarding this approval please let me know.

We wish you well for your research.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Surtees
Chair
Educational Research HEC

"Please note that Ethical Approval relates only to the ethical elements of the relationship between the researcher, research participants and other stakeholders. The granting of approval or clearance by the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee should not be interpreted as comment on the methodology, legality, value or any other matters relating to this research."