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**HOW YOUTH PROGRAMME TEACHERS' LEARN TO  
IMPLEMENT PASIFIKA VALUES IN THEIR TEACHING**

**2019**

School of Education

A thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in  
partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Educational  
Leadership

## ABSTRACT

This study focusses on six Youth Guarantee (YG) teachers and their understanding of Pasifika values in their teaching practices. Pasifika students' achievement rates remain lower than New Zealand European and Asian students. The amount of Pasifika youth leaving school without the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 2 is relatively low, with only Maori students rating lower. As a result, many of today's youth are not equipped to move on to higher studies or employment. The need for YG courses to help youth deal with the transition between secondary school and tertiary studies or employment is increasing. This study utilised a qualitative, case study research approach with the use of six face-to-face semi-structured interviews underlined by the *talanoa* interview method. Through these interviews, the participants were able to share their understandings of Pasifika values. These six YG teachers were also able to outline their challenges as teachers of Pasifika students in a YG setting. The findings highlighted the teachers desire to improve their teaching practices of Pasifika students, despite not having the resources or training to implement Pasifika values in their teaching practices. The findings also indicated that many of the current generation of Pasifika youth raised in New Zealand, do not understand their own Pasifika cultures. In addition, participants needed more support to deal with the serious issues that YG students bring to the classroom. The study concluded that managers of organisations who provide YG courses, need to support their teachers to help implement Pasifika values in their teaching practices. To deal with student issues, other government agencies need to step in to support Providers and teachers of YG courses.

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## **ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Iki Nehau Tulisi 13/11/19

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my loving family.

Thank you to my siblings, Ana and Uta, Samson, Choice, Dorothy, Anthony and Trafeena, nieces Audrina, Raven and Lipe, Eve, Genesis, Satori, Sienna and nephews Jayden, Talan and LJ for your never ending support.

To the parents of my loving partner Jack and Jacinta Apelu – my children are blessed to grow up with all their grandparents' love and support.

To my Mum, Sina and my Dad, Misiea. My first and my greatest teachers. Some lessons were hard learnt, but they have made me into the man I am today. I love you Mum and Dad.

To my little angels in heaven Bennett and Sage. You are forever in my heart.

To my two boys Seth Anthony and Riley Samson – I never knew fear until you were born, from that fear I discovered love.

Finally to my beautiful, and very patient partner, Josephine Apelu. Always encouraging me to follow my heart. Thank you for your unconditional love.

O lenei taimi e fia momoli atu ai alofaaga i lou aiga pele. E le lava upu e faamatala ai le loto faaegaeetia, ma agaga faamalo, pau lava o lea faafetai le tou manatu mai ma lo outou agalelei, o le upu moni e le faagaloina. Faamanuia le Atua, faafetai mo mea uma. Alofa atu.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to give all honour and glory to our heavenly Father. I thank our Lord for lighting my path when all I saw was darkness. Thank you Jesus.

My sincerest thanks, gratitude, and appreciation to my amazing supervisor Howard Youngs. Thank you for staying patient and for encouraging me to follow through and complete my research. I could not have wished for a better role model. Thank you to the six participants who took part in this research. It has been a privilege to share your stories and to provide a better perspective on the support YG teachers need to help improve learning for our Pasifika youth.

A special mention to my brothers Oliver Tavita and Francis 'Danger' Vesetolu. Thank you for walking alongside me in my educational journey. Thank you for your support and for 'keeping it real' when I wanted to give up. God bless you brothers. Thank you to my cousin/older sister Jacinta Fa'alili-Fidow and sister-in-law Dorothy Apelu. Thank you for always finding time to help me when I asked. I truly appreciate your help. To my late uncle Numia Ioane Fa'alili, although you are gone, your spirit lives on through your children and grandchildren. Your lessons on service and leadership will never be forgotten. I hope I have made you proud.

In accordance with the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC), the final ethics approval for this research project was granted on 24 November 2017 (Ethics Approval Number 17/407).

Fa'afetai, fa'afetai tele lava

# **Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 OVERVIEW**

Fakalofa lahi atu, Talofa lava, Malo e lelei, Kia orana, Ni sa bula

The purpose of this study is to explore how youth programme teachers learn to implement Pasifika values in their teaching practices of Pasifika students.

This chapter will explore the process on how I came to select the topic of this research. I will then investigate who Pasifika people are in relation to this research. I will discuss the structure of this thesis before ending this chapter with a summary. Pasifika achievement rates are still relatively lower than New Zealand/European and Asian students. Strategies such as the ongoing Pasifika Education Plan (Ministry of Education, 2013), and the Pasifika Operational Strategy (Tertiary Education Commission, 2017) are aimed at improving Pasifika achievement rates and Pasifika transition into higher tertiary study respectively. Alton-Lee (2003) claimed, "the New Zealand schooling system has been performing, on average, less well for Maori and Pasifika students" (p.6). According to the 2017 NCEA annual report, Pasifika learners are still underachieving in the national curriculum levels, with 36.7% of Pasifika attaining University Entrance compared to 71% of NZ Europeans and 73.8% of Asians attaining University entrance (NZQA, 2018).

## **1.2 PASIFIKA PEOPLE IN AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND**

Originally labelled as Pacific Islanders, the term used to describe Pacific Island people has changed in past research and in different organisations. Samu (2015) states that the formal "names or labels that institutions and government organisations such as the Ministry of

Education have applied to this multi-ethnic minority group have ranged from Pacific Islanders, Pacific Islands and Pacific Nations to the more recent term of Pasifika" (p.130).

Pacific can be translated to Pasifika in most Pacific languages but Airini, Mila-Schaaf, Coxon, Mara and Sanga (2010) refer to the title 'Pasifika' as a "term of convenience" (p. 49). They further add that:

It is a term that is in formal usage by the Ministry of Education when referring to Pacific peoples in New Zealand. The term refers to those peoples who have migrated from Pacific nations and territories. It also refers to the New Zealand-based (and born) population, who identify as Pasifika, via ancestry or descent. (Airini, Mila-Schaaf, Coxon, Mara, & Sanga, 2010, p. 49)

In the study of immigration to New Zealand, Mitchell (2003) explains the migration boom from the Pacific islands to New Zealand in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Pasifika people began migrating to New Zealand in huge numbers, because of the rising demand for cheap labour, especially in the city of Auckland.

Since that time, Pasifika have become one of the fastest growing minority groups in New Zealand. In this research, the term 'Pasifika' is utilised as an umbrella term (Samu, 2015, p. 130) to identify the key Pacific nations involved in my research. There are many who feel Pasifika are not limited to people from the Pacific Island nations. Tamasese, Parsons, Sullivan and Waldegrave (2010) point out that the "Pacific population of New Zealand is heterogeneous and is made up of people from three main cultures (Polynesian, Melanesian and Micronesian), and from several different Pacific Islands countries" (p.18). This logic suggests that technically, every nation within the

Pacific ring can be included as part of Pasifika. However, the key Pasifika groups highlighted by the Ministry of Education are Samoa, Tongan, Cook Island, Niuean, Fijian, and Tuvaluan. For this research, I will be limiting my focus to the Pacific nations of Samoa, Tonga and Niue. Being of Niuean and Samoan heritage, I have a personal connection to two of the three focus groups of this research, while Tongan culture is referenced due to being the third biggest Pasifika population in New Zealand.

A census from 2013 showed that 7.4 percent of the country's population (295,941 people) identified with one or more Pacific ethnic groups, compared to 6.9 percent (265,974 people) in 2006. Samoa ranked as the largest Pacific group in New Zealand (48.7%) with Cook Island Maori (20.9%), Tongan (20.4%), and Niuean (8.1%) ranked as the other large Pacific groups in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). The New Zealand curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) reveals, "Pasifika are a young, fast growing proportion of New Zealand's population. Zealand's population compared to 7.8% in 2013" (p.5).

### 1.3 YOUTH GUARANTEE COURSES

Youth Guarantee (YG) courses are 'fees-free' initiatives designed to help students, aged 16 to 19 years of age, who leave school with little to no qualifications. Full funding is provided to Providers for YG programmes as long as the funding conditions are met (Tertiary Education Commission, 2019). The YG initiatives bridge the gap between school and work by providing education through which youth can move on to higher education, training, or employment (Tertiary Education

Commission, 2017). The Tertiary Education Commission recognises a minimum of 100 credits for a fulltime, full year level one, or two YG course (Tertiary Education Commission, 2019).

The students who are encouraged to enrol into YG courses are considered 'at-risk' youth (Tertiary Education Commission, 2016). The findings in chapter four highlight the challenges these at-risk youth face outside of school hours. A study on the learning needs of youth in YG courses showed that the students constantly make comparisons to mainstream schools. The success of the YG courses relies solely on the tutors. They tread a fine line between being firm, while at the same time, trying to treat their students like adults. In terms of pedagogy, the teachers understand theory needs to be taught in short bursts, while designing the learning material to be functional in a workplace setting. Pastoral care and mentoring are also a key part of what YG tutors practice (Manukau Institute of Technology, 2014).

## 1.4 MY PERSONAL BACKGROUND

I was born in Auckland, New Zealand to a Niuean father and a Samoan mother. I am the eldest of four children. Both of my parents were born in their Pacific homelands and they are very knowledgeable in their cultures. My parents raised me using their cultural values but they did not pass on their languages and many of their cultural traditions because they were too busy working to make sure we were never left wanting. My siblings and I enjoyed our childhood, but when we attended family functions, we felt out of place because our extended families were practicing our Pacific traditions and speaking our languages. Most of our cousins, who were also

New Zealand born, were speaking our native tongue, especially on my Samoan side of the family and I always felt that I did not fully belong.

Despite not fully knowing about my Niuean and Samoan culture, my learning in school was good. I was achieving good grades and I never experienced any learning difficulties. For most of my childhood, I lived in Ponsonby, Central Auckland before my parents moved our family to Mangere in South Auckland where I finished my senior schooling. Some of the teachers in my new school in South Auckland did not have high expectations of me but I continued to try my best. In one of my mid-year tests, I was accused of cheating when I scored the top mark, beating all my *Palagi* classmates. This was my first experience of discrimination. I overheard another teacher describe me as a loser. I ended up hating school and skipped the rest my senior schooling, only turning up for sports and my end of year exams. I managed to gain a University Entrance without attending many classes.

I chose not to study any further and I ended up working in hard labouring jobs. In 2009, I applied to become a Police Officer but unfortunately, I obtained a serious knee injury during the process. My experiences and test scores in the Police academic test did not go unnoticed. I was offered a teaching job that I am still working in today. The institute I work in is considered to be a Maori tertiary education provider. Having no qualifications, I was constantly upskilling through Professional Development programmes, while studying a Bachelor's degree in Adult Education.

My re-engagement with education helped me begin my journey of self-discovery. I am slowly learning about my Samoan and Niuean cultures and languages. A journey that I am still on to this very day.



My teaching experiences and studies have helped me realise why some teachers made certain assumptions about me and I have since forgiven the teacher who accused me of cheating back in my high school years. My negative experiences have also made me aware of my own teaching practices and I realise how my actions can affect my students in a positive or negative way.

During my time working as a Pasifika tutor in a Maori tertiary education provider, I have learnt to implement Maori values in my teaching practices. I have had reasonable success with a Maori values based teaching practice. Because of this success, I have questioned whether I could replace the Maori values with Pasifika values, and still achieve the same achievement rates for my Pasifika students.

## 1.5 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The focus of this thesis is to study how Pasifika values can be implemented in the teaching practices of Pasifika students, with a focus on youth programmes, or YG courses as previously identified. I also explore what understanding YG teachers have of their Pasifika students and Pasifika values in general. I examine the challenges YG teachers deal with that impact how they can improve their teaching practices through the implementation of Pasifika values. The overarching research question is:

*“How do teachers’ of youth programmes learn and implement Pasifika values into their teaching?”*

Within the overarching question, are three sub-questions:

1. *What understanding do teachers of youth programmes have of Pasifika values?*
2. *How do they recognise these values in their teaching of Pasifika youth?*
3. *What challenges do they encounter when developing and implementing Pasifika values in their teaching and what support do they need to overcome these challenges?*

A study on values in the New Zealand Curriculum claims that there were gaps in our knowledge on how to implement values in the curriculum and in teaching practices (Notman, Lathan, Angus, Connor, McGregor & Scott, n.d).

## 1.6 RESEARCH APPROACH

Six YG teachers accepted invitations to participate in one off face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. Due to ethical implications, I was unable to interview teachers that worked in the same organisation as myself. Through networks I had developed through my line of work, I was supplied with contact details of institutes that provide YG courses. Five of the participants were based in West Auckland and one worked in South Auckland. I selected three Pasifika participants and three non-Pasifika participants to undertake comparative analysis between the two groups' similarities and differences in their answers. I recorded the interviews and the data were then transcribed and analysed to identify key themes.

## 1.7 KEY FINDINGS

The research identified the following key findings:

- Pasifika students in YG courses have not been taught their Pasifika cultures and values by their parents and extended families.
- The teachers are willing to implement Pasifika values in their teaching practices but they need support from their school management need to provide better development and training.
- Tertiary institutes that provide YG courses need support from other government agencies to deal the personal and legal issues of YG students.

## 1.8 THESIS STRUCTURE

The introduction gives a brief overview of this study. I also share my story while stating the focus of this research. Chapter two reviews literature on Pasifika culture and values, the philosophy of the *va*, and teachers' understandings of Pasifika cultures. Chapter three explains the research design, the research methodology, how I selected my participants, my personal challenges, the data collection process and the ethical implications of this research. In Chapter four, I share the participants' findings before discussing the findings in chapter five. The conclusion attempts to answer the research questions while providing a brief overview of the study. I highlight the implications, provide my own recommendations, before concluding with my final views.

## **Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This literature review explores and compares literature that examines Pasifika values within the New Zealand curriculum. An increasing Pasifika population in New Zealand has seen a growth in strategies aimed at improving the achievement rates of Pasifika students in New Zealand's education system. The Tertiary Education Commission states that by "2038, the Pasifika population is projected to make up 10.9% of New Zealand's population" (TEC, 2017, p. 5).

Samoan scholar, Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop explains that much of her learning in Samoa took place in "the back of the village" (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2015, p. 202). New Zealand teachers who were involved in the 'Pasifika Initiative', an initiative aimed at finding effective ways to meet the professional development needs of teachers of multicultural students, observed this 'back of the village' type of learning while staying in Samoa to research the lives of Samoan students and their families. Upon reflection of their experiences in Samoa, the teachers involved in that research became more aware that their own values and experiences that they brought to their teaching pedagogies needed some development in order to help the students of their multi-cultural classrooms (Allen, Taleni, & Robertson, 2009).

A purpose of this review is to investigate whether implementing Pasifika values in teaching pedagogies improves Pasifika achievement rates. To support my research questions and sub-questions, I have identified three main themes in the literature:

- Teachers and the Pasifika learner;
- Identifying core Pasifika values; and,

- The concept of the 'va'.

The first theme reviews literature on how New Zealand teachers understand their Pasifika students. This section also reviews literature that provides an insight into the lives of the Pasifika learner. In the second section, I also review literature that identifies and compares common values of Samoa, Tonga and Niue. I also review values frameworks that are currently available to researchers and teachers of Pasifika people.

The concept of the 'va' section reviews literature relating to Pacific peoples' acknowledgement of the dimensions of time and space between people that contributes to the building of sacred and social relationships within Pasifika communities. I compare the theories of time and space by scientists such as Isaac Newton, whose theory was that time and space is absolute, meaning that time is the same for everyone, everywhere, no matter what is happening in their space. I also discuss Albert Einstein, who believed that time is relative depending on what is occurring in that space; time is not continuous for everyone as Newton suggested. In this final section, I attempt to explain the concept of the 'va' before highlighting the different levels of relationships that exist within the 'va'. I also explore how Pasifika view their relationships with teachers and education.

## 2.2 TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR PASIFIKA LEARNERS

New Zealand teachers often comment that their Pasifika students do not engage properly in their learning. Research that observed interactions between teachers and their Pasifika students

inform this section of the literature. The following factors have been identified as contributing factors to low Pasifika achievement rates; Teachers' expectations, teachers not understanding the identity of their Pasifika students, lack of effective teaching pedagogy, and relating to Pasifika students (Allen, Taleni, & Robertson, 2009; Samu, 2015).

### *2.2.1 Teachers' expectations*

Children can tell whether a teacher has high or low expectations by the way the teacher behaves towards them (Peterson, Rubie-Davies, Osborne, & Sibley, 2016). It is noted that some teachers can stereotype learners from low socioeconomic backgrounds or ethnic minorities. Even if teachers had high expectations from Pasifika students, they would still struggle at school (Turner, Rubie-Davies, & Webber, 2015). Peterson et al., affirm that "stereotypes, which are cognitive in nature, are usually associated with an affective component: prejudice" (2016, p. 124). In a study about teachers' beliefs on Pasifika values and cultures, Spiller (2012) listed a few assumptions the teachers made. The first assumption is that the teachers thought they held the same authority as their students' parents did to which the students reacted negatively to because they felt disrespected that the teachers would assume they held the same status as the parents. Spiller (2013) also found "that good Pasifika learning requires that the teacher must have all three of the following teaching strategies: allowing Pasifika students respect as a learner; being able to scaffold Pasifika learning at the right level and engaging their Pasifika students in active learning" (p. ii). This requires teachers to earn respect by taking control of their teaching environment, and then earning their students' trust, by trusting in their learning abilities.

The other assumptions teachers had was; they thought Pasifika values hindered the learning of their Pasifika students, and they believed parents contributed to their previous assumptions (Spiller, 2012). These teachers also changed their teaching strategies based on their assumptions but they did not get the results they thought they would. Understanding the Pasifika learner is the first step to engaging with them. In a study exploring the relationship between teachers' expectations and student ethnicities (Turner et al., 2015), the expectations for Pasifika was mixed, with some of the teachers believing that Pasifika were capable but needed a push while others believed Pasifika students were very lazy. Some teachers believed that Pasifika parents were unskilled and they were unable to assist with their children's schooling, however, they were still supportive of their children's education. In conclusion, expectation for high achievement from Pasifika was low, compared to the high expectations of their Asian and Palagi counterparts. Probably the most surprising finding was that the teachers were unaware of the link between their expectations and student ethnicities (Turner et al., 2015).

Tuafuti's (2010) study of silence as another form of communication in Pasifika cultures discusses another issue that New Zealand teachers misunderstand about their Pasifika learners. Teachers often mistake silence as a sign of Pasifika students not engaging in the class activities but Tuafuti (2010) reveals that silence is both a sign respect and obedience in Pasifika cultures.

### *2.2.2 The multiple worlds of Pasifika students*

Hill and Hawk (1998) deliberate that Pasifika students live in multiple worlds while trying to keep each world as separate from each other as they can. This is especially evident in their secondary

schooling years. These worlds are family, culture, church, school, part-time paid employment and the world of their peers. This is a problem as their teachers know what is happening in their school, peers and work life but have little to no knowledge of their family, cultural and church worlds. They further add that they try to keep their parents or caregivers from knowing about these worlds. Siope (2011) talks about the importance of church life in her family, stating that teachers need to understand the importance of this aspect of their Pasifika student's lives "and how churches play a key part in the make-up of their cultural identity" (p.15).

The Pasifika students' persistence in trying to separate their worlds feeds the expectations that teachers have of their Pasifika students, as they do not fully understand their cultural and church obligations. Situations where the students do not question the teachers, or speak up in class are sometimes viewed as the students not engaging in their education which leads teachers to develop teaching pedagogies that do not address the real issues (Spiller, 2012).

Another world that occupies the time of many of today's youth is technology. A study on teen usage and attitudes towards digital technology and online safety by Pacheco and Melhuish (2018), revealed some interesting findings. Their study reveals:

The average daily time spent online by a third of teens (33%) is four or more hours, nearly four in 10 (38%) are online for between two and four hours, and 20% for one to two hours. The remaining responses (9%) either spend 1 hour or less or were unsure about how much time they were online for (Pacheco & Melhuish, 2018, p. 3).



These findings suggest that New Zealand teens engage in some form of technology on a daily basis.

## 2.3 PASIFIKA VALUES

According to the literature I have reviewed, Pasifika value family, religion and culture above all else. Numerous values are evident throughout Samoan, Tongan and Niuean cultures. By cross-examining relevant literature and research by various scholars, I been able to pinpoint the most common core values embedded in the cultures of each of the selected Pacific nations. Values define the actions and interactions of Pasifika, they are "not simply metaphysical phenomena; they also serve as springboards for social action" (Va'a, 2009, p. 21).

Participants in a research conducted by Kalavite (2010) highlighted the importance of Tongan values in their culture with one participant pointing out "we put others first before our own needs and our collective responsibilities is priority to our individual responsibilities" (Kalavite, 2010, pp. 196-197). Kalavite adds that "all the participants in this study thought that it was great to be rooted in their own culture because it reminded them of who they are and they felt confident in what they were doing" (Kalavite, 2010, p. 225). Tavelia (2012) shares similar views about Niuean values, cultures and beliefs. She states that these values "describe the essence of what it means to be Niuean" (Tavelia, 2012, p. 10).

This section reviews literature that explores the following themes:

- Culture and identity;
- Teachers identity;

- Family;
- Religion;
- Other common core values in Pacific culture; and,
- Values in education.

### *2.3.1 Culture and Identity*

Pasifika culture and identity comes with many beliefs and traditions. However, these beliefs and traditions are not set in stone. The following quote describes how Pasifika identity can evolve from generation to generation:

When looking at Pacific, and even Samoan cultural identity, we must keep in mind that these cultural identities are forever in a ‘state of becoming’, people are eternally on a journey to which there is no end, there is no one set destination, there is no right or wrong answer (Lameta, 2015, p. 38)

In Samoan culture, *fa’a Samoa*, or the Samoan way, guide the actions and interactions of Samoan people. However, as research by Lameta (2015) suggests, cultural identity is not confined to the frameworks they identify with. Lilomaiaava-Doktor (2004) interprets *fa’a-Samoa* as being “fundamental to Samoan culture but, like culture, it is not static. *Fa’a-Samoa* is an intellectual tool for the apprehending the world, how Samoans interact with each other, the church, outsiders, and the environment” (Lilomaiaava-Doktor, 2004, p. 9). Samoan scholar and lecturer, Mulitalo-Lauta (2000) encapsulates *fa’a Samoa* in to five key components:

- Samoan Heart;

- Samoan Way;
- Protocols and Values;
- Social structures and Institutions; and,
- Ceremonies and Rituals.

Tongan culture has similar frameworks to those of *fa'a Samoa*. Hafoka, 'Ulu'ave, and Hafoka (2014) refer to *anga fakatonga* (the Tongan way), *faka'apa'apa* (respect), and *fetokoni'aki* (service to one another) as being pivotal to the Tongan way of life (p.130). However, *fahu*, or the father's eldest sister, is another important aspect of Tongan culture.

Niuean culture or *aga fakamotu*, sets the traditions and customs that form the basis of individual identity, social stability and basis of family, community and national development. The foundations of *aga fakamotu* are family, sharing of resources and the importance of land. Niuean culture differs to that of Samoa and Tonga in the sense that there is no hierarchical leadership structure (Toeono, n.d, p. 13).

### 2.3.2 Teachers' identity

Teachers' identity plays a role in the makeup of their classrooms. If the differences in values are not identified and managed, then the potential for conflict in the classroom is high (Walkington, 2005). Walkington adds that teachers' identities and their functional roles are aspects that intertwine to develop the teachers professionally. Brady (2011) states "the dangers in deriving an ideal set of teacher values for effective teaching include the tendency to confuse personality with 'character' (values), and personal values with professional values" (Brady, 2011, p. 57).

### 2.3.3 Family

With reference to the Samoan culture in America, Gabbard (2014) reveals that “much of Samoan life and culture centre around the *aiga*, or nuclear and extended family, guided by the overarching system of *fa’a Samoa*” (p.113). *Aiga*, or family, are linked through *toto e tasi* (one blood) which represents blood links to the *aiga*, and/or *tinu e tasi* (one body) which represents the relational links to the *aiga* (Lilomaiaava-Doktor, 2004, p. 10).

The ‘Pasifika Initiative’ that sent five New Zealand teachers’ to spend ten days with Samoan students and their families confirmed that life is based around the family structure. Allen, Taleni, and Robertson (2009) asked the teachers to comment on this:

The way the families care for each other is really impressive because my homestay... she is a teacher and she lives here to look after her parents, her brother also lives here to look after his parents and, I think, that when others in the family go to New Zealand they are expected to support the family back here (p. 7)

Care for the elderly further reflects the value of the family. It is frowned upon by the Samoan community if an elderly person is put in an institution as it reflects badly on the familial relationships of that person and his or her family (Smith, n.d).

Similarly, the *famili* (family) plays an important role in Tongan culture. Kalavite (2010) states that “the family unit is the basic source of support for its members...” (p. 57). Kalavite highlights this point by comparing the percentage of Tongans living in a family situation in New Zealand, which was at 87% compared to the rest of the New Zealand population which was at 79% (Kalavite,

2010, p. 58). Tavelia (2012) agrees that this value of family is shared in the Niuean culture; “Niue’s social institutions of magafaoa (family), magafaoa laulahi (extended family), and maaga (village) are important because they provide context to the discussion of the key concepts of Niuean cultural values and beliefs” (Tavelia, 2012, p. 10).

Vakalahi (2010) raises the point of the grandparent’s role in raising their grandchildren. His participants discussed the intergenerational transmission of their cultural values, beliefs, and practices (p. 592). Tukimata (2017) mentions the key role her grandparents played in raising her and instilling in her the Niuean culture.

In the past, breakdowns in Pasifika family structure has unfairly shouldered the blame, as being one of the main reasons for Pasifika failures in schools taking the focus off an educational system that did not cater to the diversity of New Zealand classrooms (Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2008). Examples of teaching practices that do not cater to their Pasifika student’s, such as low expectations from Pasifika students, and misinterpretations of authority, can be found in research by Spiller (2013).

### *2.3.4 Religion*

Pacific people worshipped other spiritual beings before the arrival of Christianity in the Pacific (Fitisemanu, 2007). Pacific people believed in many gods and demi gods. Because of their beliefs, missionaries thought of the Pacific people as heathens after witnessing many of their traditional practices ('Ahio, 2007; Fitisemanu, 2007). Research identifying the relationship between religion

and learning for Pasifika found that in some cases, religion took precedent over Pasifika culture (Havea, 2011).

Christianity remains the most dominant religion in the Pacific. Western religion was not initially welcomed until the arrival of the Protestant missionaries, who gained a stronghold in the Pacific in the late 1800s (Ernst & Anisi, 2015). Most accounts of how Christianity arrived in the Pacific come from the perspectives of the missionaries who documented their Pacific encounters. Tonga is believed to have been among one of the first nations in the Pacific to embrace Christianity. Samoan chief, Saiva'aia, travelled to Tonga and accepted Christianity. He then returned to Samoa between 1828 and 1829, with Tongan missionaries and together they were able to persuade the villages of Tafua and Salelologa to embrace Christianity. Saiva'aia then established the first mainstream church in Samoa *lotu Toga*, the Tongan church (Robson, 2009). Heyn (2003) explains that Niueans were not very welcoming of the first European visitors, Captain James Cook and missionary John Williams. Niueans were then kidnapped and converted to Christianity in Samoa before being returned to Niue. It was not until Nukai Peniamina was returned to Niue in 1840, that Christianity began to grow. Since then, Christianity has seen a rapid rise in the last 200 years with over 90% of Pasifika belonging to various Protestant churches or the Roman Catholic church in the 1960s (Ernst, 2012).

On the topic of spirituality, Tamasese et al. (2011) adds:

The sacred is linked to spirituality. In this sense, spirituality is embedded in the four primary relationships: the self to God/Atua, the self to ancestors and heritage, the self to the waters and lands, and the self to other human beings in a context of justice and love.

The two values of sacredness and spirituality imbue the cultures, etiquette and protocols of relationships. (p. 163)

In research on the evolution of women's roles in religion and family, Lameta (2015) noted that pre-Christian Samoan religions were not considered to be the true religion by most Samoans. Furthermore, Samoan culture has evolved to align with the laws of Christianity (Lameta, 2015). The same can be said for most Pacific nations when looking at the Christian population across the Pacific Islands. Despite literature confirming the importance of religion to Pasifika people, a report by the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) found that there is a risk that the practice of Christian values may be lost among the second and third generations of Pasifika in New Zealand (NZEI, 2012). An interesting statistic from a report by the Ministry for Pacific Peoples (2016) shows that the highest percentage of Pasifika that affiliated with no religion were English speaking (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2016, p. 74), which may be a contributing factor to the decrease in Christian values practiced amongst Pasifika people.

### *2.3.5 Other common core values in Pacific culture*

Other common values identified in the literature have different explanations but very similar meanings. Va'a (2009) believes the values of *Alofa* (Love), *Tautua* (Service), *Usita'i* (Obedience), and *Faaaloalo* (Respect) are among the most important core values in Samoan culture. These values are translated as *Ofa* (Love), *Faka'apa'apa* (Respect) *Fatongia* (Obligations to others) *Anganofo* (To stay home or Obedience) (Kalavite, 2010). Niuean culture also share these core values *Fakaalofo* (Love), *Omaoma ke he tau mamatua* (Obedience to parents and elders) and

*Fakalilifu* (Respect). Although *Fakalilifu* means respect it is also about honouring others and putting others before yourself (Tavelia, 2012), but according to Toeono (n.d), the main factors of *aga fakamotu* are family, sharing with others and importance of the land.

### 2.3.6 Values in education

The New Zealand curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) views on values highlights the importance values plays in peoples lives and education; “values are deeply held beliefs about what is important or desireable. They are expressed through the ways in which people think and act” (p.10). This section will review frameworks that would assist researchers and teachers improve the achievement rates of Pasifika learners. The curriculum document states that “every school has a set of values. They are expressed in its philosophy, in the way it is organised, and in interpersonal relationships at every level. Following discussions with their communities, many schools list their values in their charters” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 38). The Ministry of Education adds:

Schools need to consider how they can make the values an integral part of their curriculum and how they will monitor the effectiveness of the approach taken...These statements mean that schools have the option to select what the school values should be, but they may be guided by values recommended by the curriculum. (p. 38)

Another initiative designed by the Ministry of Education is the *Pasifika Education Plan* (Ministry of Education, 2013). The following statement best describes the *Pasifika Education Plan* (PEP):

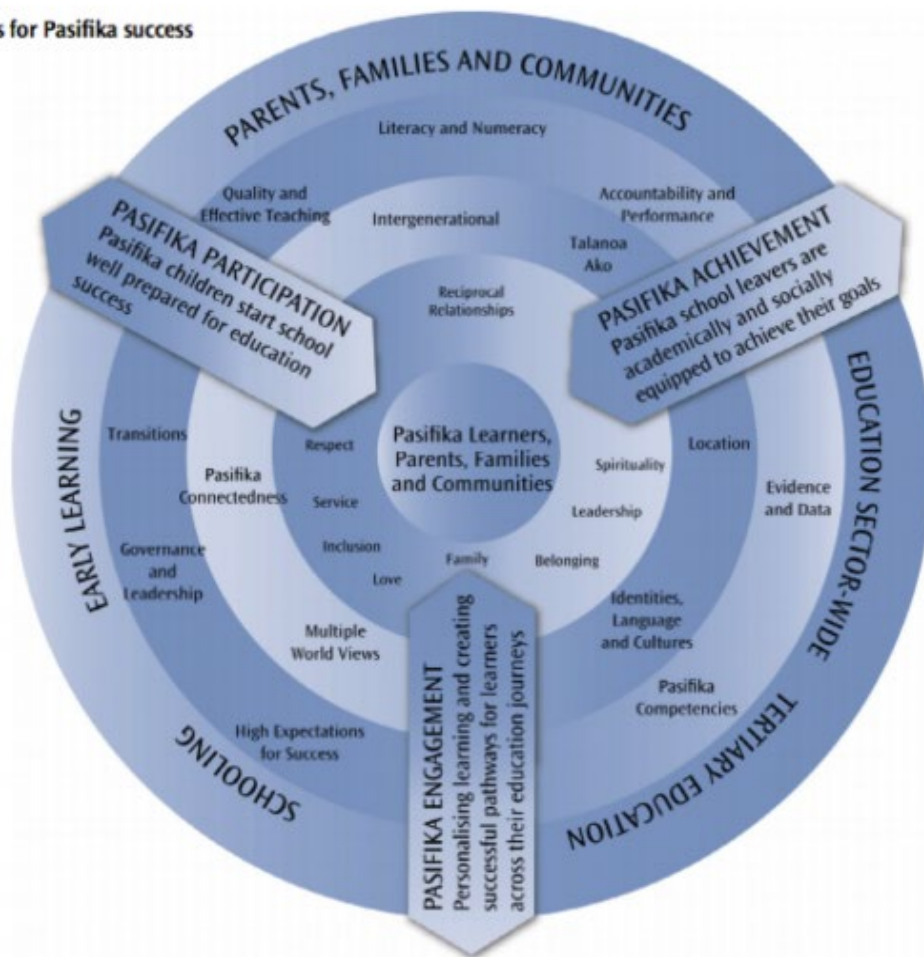


*The Pasifika Education Plan* is an ongoing feature of New Zealand education strategy and planning. This year, and every other year, matters for realising the potential of that plan, with researchers and policy-makers working together in new ways that make a real difference for New Zealand, that make sense to Pasifika peoples and all New Zealanders, and that ultimately fulfil our calling to greatly improve education outcomes for and with Pasifika learners. (Anae, 2010, p. 6)

The PEP claims to have made marked improvements in Pasifika students' participation and achievement in education (Ministry of Education, 2013). The compass for Pasifika success is the framework developed for the PEP (see Figure 2.1). Despite this progress, Pasifika learners are still behind their New Zealand European counterparts. Statistics on school leavers with NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement) Level two or equivalent is evidence of this with European/Pakeha achieving 88% ahead of Pasifika who achieved 78.7% for the 2016 year (Ministry of Education, 2017). On a positive note, Pasifika school leavers showed a 1.1% increase compared to the 0.7% increase of European/Pakeha learners. The Ministry of Education states that:

The plan [PEP] sets out the priority actions for change across the sector. It also recognises that Pasifika education success requires the active involvement of parents, families, and communities. The responsibility for this sits both with those delivering education and with the parents, families, and communities of students. (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 5)

Compass for Pasifika success



Supporting Pasifika success | Information for school boards of trustees

Figure 2. 1 Compass for Pasifika success (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 5)

The 'compass for Pasifika success' relies heavily on the involvement of the Pasifika learners, their families, and their communities. Other frameworks utilised by Pasifika researchers and educators are:

**Kakala** - This model is based on valued contexts of Tongan people, which are - the supernatural; concrete situations; formal conformity; rank and authority; social relationships, kinship relationships; 'Ofa (love/compassion); and restraint behaviour (Helu-Thaman, Towards a culture-sensitive model of curriculum development for Pacific Island countries, 1990).

**Fonofale** - This framework uses the concept of the Samoan fale that brings together values that are important to Pasifika people. The base, or floor, represents the family or foundation of Pasifika cultures. The roof represents the values and beliefs that are implemented in Pasifika families. The four *pou*, or posts, represent the four dimensions of Pasifika wellbeing - Mental, Physical, Spiritual, and Other (Pulotu Endemann, 2001).

**The Lili model** - A relatively new framework based on the *lili*, “a round pandanus mat made up of concentric yet connected circles emanating from the ‘eye’ or centre” (Tukimata, 2017, p. 11). This Niuean artefact is significant to the woven artistry of Niuean women. The weaving represents the binding of Niuean culture and values (Tukimata, 2017).

New Zealand’s Pacific community is diverse and is the fastest growing population in New Zealand (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2018). Multiple cultures mean multiple values, and possibly multiple interpretations of those values. Pasifika covers a wide range of Pacific nations and there are many differences between the various Pasifika cultures. What the literature has revealed is the similarities in some of their core values and beliefs between different Pacific nations. Helu-Thaman (2009) identifies that there needs to be a paradigm shift in order to make teaching and learning more culturally responsive (p. 3). Teachers often try to minimise Pasifika students’ practice of values, especially if they clash with the values of the school (Helu-Thaman, 2009).

## 2.4 THE 'VA'

The *va*, *vā*, *va’a* or *vaha’a* as it is known in Pasifika cultures, acknowledges the metaphysical as well as the physical space between people (Airini et al., 2010). Scholars such as Anae (2010) and

Tuagalu (2008) have referred to the 'Samoan self' as the 'relational self', meaning that the Samoan self only had meaning when they had relationships occurring within the *va*. Efi (2005) states:

A search for peace is a search for harmony. There are four key harmonies that hold the balance of peace for Samoans. These are: harmony with the cosmos; harmony with the environment; harmony with one's fellow men; and harmony with one's self. When all four harmonies come together there is peace. (p. 2)

Webb-Binder (n.d.) believes "the *va* constitutes a realm where personal and cultural stories of identity through space and time are imparted" (p. 27). Wendt (1999) describes the *va* as "the space between, the betweenness, not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-All, the space that is context, giving meaning to things" (n.d.). This statement has been referenced by most scholars who have contributed to literature on the *va* such as Reynolds (2016), and Airini et al. (2010). Anae (2010) adds "the Samoan self is described as reliant on relationships that are occurring in the *va*, or space between" (p.12). The Niuean culture views the world as "being holistic and integrated...the physical body, emotions, spirit and mind of a person are interconnected and interdependent" (Tavelia, 2012, p.10). The 'space between' is called the 'vaha'. Vaha is important to create 'kau fakalatahi' or unity and cooperation (Tavelia, 2012, p.11).

### 2.4.1 Scientists theories of space and time

Ashtekar (n.d) states that:

We think of space as a three dimensional continuum which envelops us. We think of time as flowing serenely, all by itself, unaffected by forces in the physical universe. Together, they provide a stage on which the drama of interactions unfolds. The actors are everything else - stars and planets, radiation and matter, you and me. (p. 1)

This comment reflects the time and space theories held by scholars such as Isaac Newton. He believed that space is absolute (Lin, 2015). He maintained that the space would remain the same, regardless if there were physical matter occupying the space or not (Gould, 1962). This notion of time and space suggests that physical matter does not affect the continuums of time and space. Einstein however, attempted to disprove Newton's theories. He believed that if there was no physical matter in that space, there was still relative matter such as gravitational fields (Kostro, 2004). This theory indicates that space and time are affected by the actions of the matter that occupies it.

Kalavite's (2010) research shares a Tongan perspective on *ta* and *va*, or time and space. Kalavite (2010) also claims that Tongan people organise their time differently to "Palagi people" (p.107). The *ta-vā* theory developed by Mahina (2008) is based on the ontological (nature of existence) and epistemological (nature of knowledge) arrangement of space and time. Mahina (2008) describes *ta* and *va* as being arranged in holistic and circular ways instead of the analytical and linear arrangements of the West. Kalavite (2010) uses the example of Tongans living in New Zealand to explain Mahina's theory; "Tongans living in New Zealand share New Zealand as one

reality (ontological dimension of time and space) and we create and recreate our lives in New Zealand in our own respective or cultural ways (epistemological dimension of time and space)" (Kalavite, 2010, p. 110).

### 2.4.2 *The levels of va*

According to Wendt (2015) the Samoan self "is defined in terms of *itu* (sides) and in the *va*, your connections to the group: *tatou* (us), *outou* (you), *aiga* (family), *nu'u* (village), *itumalo* (district), *atunu'u* (country). You define *o a'u* (yourself, or me) in terms of your *gafa* or genealogy" (p.10). Pasifika believe there different levels to the *va*, such as *va feiloaloai* (spaces between relational arrangements), *va tapua'i* (sacred spaces between relational spaces) and *teu le va* (to nurture and tidy up the *va*) as covered by scholars such as Anae (2010) and Airini et al (2010). There is also another version of *va* which will be discussed in this section of my literature review; *va fealofani*, which covers the sacred covenant between brother and sister, also known as *feagaiga*.

### 2.4.3 *va feiloai*

*Va feiloai* acknowledges the social interactions between families and their village communities. The *saofaiga* (divisions) of Samoan society revolve around the *matai* (chiefs) of the village. Each person, or division, has a set role to play in his or her village. A person's division, and set roles and obligations determine the relationships that occur in the *va* (Tuagalu, 2008). Figure 2.2 shows the social structure by which *va feiloai* operates.

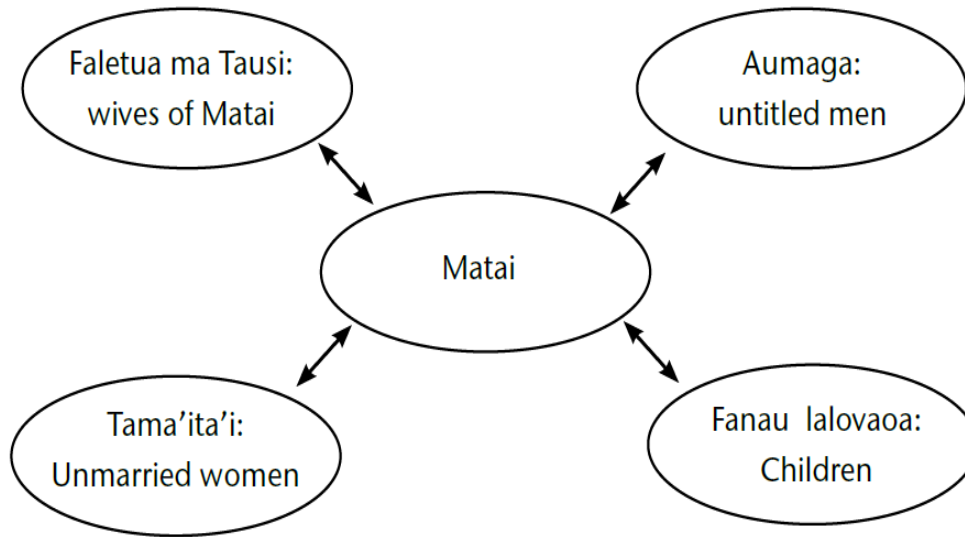


Figure 2. 2 Social interactions between families and their village (Tuagalu, 2008)

In terms of its importance in Tongan families and communities, Kalavite (2010) describes *va* as:

Keeping good relationships amongst the Tongan people, is very important. It is important for Tongan students to understand how to keep their *vā* with their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* so that they *vālelei* (have good relationship) all the time which could enhance the support for their education. (p. 109)

#### 2.4.4 *Va tapuia and va fealofani*

*Va tapuia*, is interpreted as 'sacred space(s)', acknowledges sacred relationships that transcend the physical realm. *Va tapuia* connects Samoans to the land, sea and heavens on a spiritual level (Amituanai-Tolua, 2007). *Va tapuia* was originally the concept that described the 'sacred space' in *feagaiga*, the sacred relationship between the brother and sister. This relationship was considered the most valued of all relationships, which was established and based on *fa'aaloalo*,

or respect (Amituanai-Toloo, 2007). The sister returns the respect by wishing blessings on her brother. A breakdown in this covenant would result in cursings being placed upon the brother (Amituanai-Toloo, 2006; Lameta, 2015; Tui Atua, 2005). *Va fealofani* describes the space in which the sacred covenant between the brother and sister occurs. Tui Atua adds:

The relationship between brother and sister underscores the ideal of male and female relationships. Indigenous Samoan society promoted the virtues of women as special and different but complementary to that of men. The *feagaiga* was founded on the principle that women have the gift of producing and nurturing life. As child-bearers, women were seen as sharing divinity with the gods. By virtue of their links with the gods, namely their family gods, sisters were known as *ilamutu*. *Ilamutu* is the Samoan term for family gods. (p. 10)

In Tongan culture, the brother and sister relationship is highly valued. Observations made in research by Douaire-Marsaudon (1996) show that:

In Tonga, the brother/sister relationship is central to a large (and not always visible) net of social relationships. Without entering into all the details, we may consider certain very important principles which give form as well as content to this relationship. The brother/sister relationship is, like all hierarchical relationships, marked by respect (*faka 'apa 'apa*), taboos and honorific as well as economic privileges. Respect is conceived as reciprocal and, for my Tongan informants, this *faka 'apa 'apa* is the very expression of the *'ofa* or affection which must exist between a brother and a sister. (p. 143)



The relationship between a Tongan male and his eldest sister is the considered most sacred relationship in Tongan culture. The eldest sister of the brother or father is known as the *fahu* or *mehikitanga* (Hafoka et al., 2014). The *fahu* oversees the three main events; “first birthdays, marriages and deaths of her brothers children” (p.130).

#### 2.4.5 *Teu le va*

The definition of *teu le va* means to take care of, or nurture the relationships that have been formed in the *va*. This is known as *tauhi vā* in Tongan culture. *Tauhi* means to nurture or maintain and *vā* is the relational space (‘Ilau, 2005). Niuean culture acknowledges the key concept *Vaha loto mahana mitaki*, which is about maintaining good relationships between people. It is the foundation for holding on to peace or *fakaveaga he mafola*, and the preciousness of connecting to one another also known as *uho he matutakianga* (Tavelia, 2012).

In the classroom, the relationships between students and teacher is automatic (Giles, Smythe, & Spence, 2012). Tuagalu (2008) also acknowledges that the *va* relationship between the teacher and student is automatic, but he adds the subject being taught as the being third party of this relationship. Airini et al., (2010) understand that maintaining good relationships between researchers and teachers is pivotal in the teachers development.

Exploring the concept of *va* is crucial to this research as it gives teachers a better understanding of how to develop relationships in the ‘space between’ with their students in order to get the best results for their students. Tuagalu (2008) states, “an understanding of the *va* provides a different way of conceptualising one’s role of tertiary educator” (p. 122). Each of these levels of

*va* provides teachers with a template on how to build and maintain healthy relationships with their Pasifika students.

## 2.5 SUMMARY

There are many challenges for New Zealand teachers. Despite evidence showing improvements in Pasifika achievement rates, New Zealand teachers perhaps are yet to fully understand their Pasifika learners. This literature review provided similar core values and practices of Samoan, Tongan and Niuean people. In order to implement these core values, it is crucial that teachers get the required support and development. By understanding and respecting the values of Pasifika students, teachers will be better able to empathise, and learn to develop better pedagogies to deal with the challenges of their Pasifika students. This includes understanding the priority religion and family have in Pasifika culture.

Developing understanding of the concepts of *va* will help teachers develop and engage better with their Pasifika learners. Teachers need to understand their role, and the roles of their students in the classroom in order to develop the appropriate relationships that will improve Pasifika engagement. Tuagalu (2008) mentions that teachers need to acknowledge the third party in the covenant, which is the course subject. By developing teachers' understandings of Pasifika values, and then implementing them into their pedagogies would reduce their assumptions of Pasifika learners.

Teachers play a huge role in their students' lives. What is apparent is that they can positively or negatively impact how Pasifika learners engage with their education. However, teachers need to

be supported from their school leaders, government agencies and the Pasifika community to develop their understandings of the topics covered in this literature review. The research that follows helps to understand the realities of a sample of such teachers.

## **Chapter 3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the research approach I used for this study, as well as the justification of this approach. I discuss how I selected my participants and the process I used to analyse the data collected from my participants. I outline the ethical decisions that guided this research, the processes that worked well, and the challenges that I faced during my research.

This research intended to view how tutors of youth programmes, also known as youth guarantee courses, implement Pasifika values in their teaching practices. This study also wanted to understand what challenges teachers of Pasifika students faced in terms of implementing Pasifika values in their teaching practices. As this is a topic that is not commonly researched, I believe that interviewing teachers of youth programmes would be the best way to answer my research questions. In order to obtain data that was rich in quality, I chose to use a qualitative research approach through six semi-structured interviews guided by the ‘talanoa’ methodology. Creswell (2014) states that “qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). This type of research “focuses on reflecting on the quality of something” (Davidson & Tolich, 1999, p. 19). By trying to get a better understanding of the reality of my participants, I am able to contribute to making improvements as well as contributing to the literature around my research topic.

Creswell (2014) developed a framework, which assists researchers in selecting the most suitable research approach for their research that interconnects the researchers’ worldviews, research design and research methods. The worldview is thought to influence the methodology a

researcher adopts in his/her research design (Peterson & Gencel, 2018). The four main worldviews according to Creswell (2014) are postpositivism, constructivism, transformative and pragmatism. Constructivist research relies heavily on the participants' views on the research topic. The researcher uses open-ended questions and allows the participants to share their stories based on their experiences. Through sharing, their "reality is constructed" (Sarantakos, 2013, p. 37). Based on my own experiences and my own perceptions of reality around my research topic, I thought it was important to make sense of how other teachers viewed the implementation of Pasifika values in their teaching.

During the research design process, the researcher must take into account a few factors such as, what 'is known' about an issue, his/her access to participants, and how much time the researcher spends in the participants environment (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). Considering these factors, adopting a constructivist worldview favours the qualitative research approach. Qualitative research relies on the experiences and realities of the research participants in order to answer the research questions. It is "qualitative when they need to collect, interpret and make judgements about data that cannot be measured – such as what people say and do, and why" (O'Toole & Beckett, 2010, p. 28). Creswell (2014) states that "in the entire qualitative research process, the researcher keeps a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research or that writers express in the literature" (p.186). As mentioned previously, qualitative research relies on the experiences and realities of its participants. The perceptual experience of reality is experienced internally and resides in the minds of the participants who construct it (Sarantakos, 2013).

Talanoa relies on the relationship developed between the researcher and the participant(s). It is in this space where the information shared will add quality, or be meaningless, to the research. “The reciprocity embedded in talanoa will raise the expectations that researchers and participants have of each other, promoting mutual accountability, which adds to the trustworthiness and quality of the research” (Vaiolleti, 2006, p. 26).

Having confirmed my worldview and research design approach, I was able to select the research methods that would best help me to answer my research questions. I chose to utilise the case study research method. Case studies have long been established in educational research to present detailed analysis of various issues in the field of education, such as increasing Pasifika achievement rates. As a research method “the case study is used in many situations, to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political and related phenomena” (Yin, 2009, p. 4). There are three types of case study research. These are *exploratory*, *explanatory*, and *descriptive* (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Yin 2009). Exploratory designs aim to explain the research questions or research the practicality of the researched procedures, explanatory designs aim to determine the ‘cause-and-effect’ relationships, while the descriptive design aim to provide a complete description of a phenomenon within its context (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011).

The conditions for selecting the case study method are broken down into three categories, (1) the research questions, (2) the range of control the researcher has over behavioural events and (3) the focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events (Yin, 2009). My research questions are exploratory as they aim to determine how youth teachers implement Pasifika values in their

teaching in addition to their views on the issues around implementing those values. Despite having 'what' questions, which are normally aligned to the 'how much' or 'how many' line of questioning (Yin, 2009), the nature of those questions are exploratory. I have no control on behavioural events, as the quality of my data is reliant on the information shared by the participants of this study. The topic of my research addresses current issues such as Pasifika achievement rates in schools; therefore, the focus of my research is contemporary. Considering these conditions, the case study design, where each participant is a single case is justified.

### 3.2 PARTICIPANT SELECTION

For the purpose of my research, it was important that the participants were teachers of youth programmes, also known as 'Youth Guarantee' (YG) courses. There was also a focus on teachers who had mainly Pasifika learners in their classrooms. I chose to interview teachers of youth programmes because their courses are designed to help students who struggled with the mainstream schooling system. Ladson-Billings (2014) explains this stating that:

A literature that tells us what works for middle-class, advantaged students typically fails to reveal the social and cultural advantages that makes their success possible. But success amongst the 'least of these' tells us more about what pedagogical choices can support success. (p. 76)

In order to compare the participants' views on Pasifika values, six teachers of youth programmes were selected for this study. Three of Pasifika heritage and three of non-Pasifika heritage. I

excluded Maori participants from my research because they are considered to be indigenous to New Zealand. There are also many similarities between Maori and Pasifika values such as the family structure, spiritual connections to both the physical and metaphysical and connection to the land. I felt that this would have an effect on my findings so I decided to exclude Maori participants. Of my participants, I only had one female participant who agreed to participate in my research, while the rest were male. I would have preferred more female participation as they may bring a different approach to their teaching practices. Each YG teacher had more than two years teaching experience.

In my current line of work, I have been fortunate enough to have worked alongside many people and organisations, including my own work place, who run YG programs or who have contacts in the YG sector. Unfortunately, because of ethical implications, I was unable to tap into my networks through my work place but I was fortunate enough to have developed other networks outside of my work place that could direct me onto other providers of YG courses. Through these Providers, I was able to talk to someone who helped me recruit my research participants. Through this contact person, I was able to send a copy of my participant information sheet (see Appendix A), to my potential participants and they were given two weeks to confirm their involvement in this research. The participants showed a lot of interest in my research and they agreed to take part. Before I started my interviews, the participants signed a consent form (see Appendix B). My participants each came with many years of teaching experience; however, they did struggle to answer some of the interview questions even after reading the research information sheet. I put this down to the topic of my research not being something that is



commonly talked about at an in-depth level, but I appreciate that each participant answered the questions (see Appendix C), as best as they could.

I originally intended to interview YG teachers in the South Auckland area, as it would have been more convenient for me, being based in South Auckland myself. Unfortunately, it was difficult to find YG teachers based around South Auckland who would agree to take part in my research. Due to the lack of interest locally, I was forced to look outside of my preferred zone. As my research required YG teachers who had mainly Pasifika students, it did not matter where the YG teachers were based as long as they met the main criteria of potential research participants. All my participants were based in West Auckland bar one who was based in South Auckland. I interviewed all participants during normal work hours during Fridays, as requested by the participants. Friday seemed to be the day where YG teachers did not have classes scheduled and the participants preferred to be interviewed during the day instead of being inconvenienced during their own free time. Travelling out to West Auckland was a bit further than I originally intended to go, but I did not mind, as the well-being of my participants was paramount to me. I was of the opinion that I was more likely to form a better relationship with my participants if they were happy, rather than being tired from travelling to an interview during their spare time.

At the conclusion of each interview, I briefed each participant on what I intended in doing with the information they had shared with me before presenting each of them with a small box of chocolates accompanied by a thank you card, thanking each participant for giving up their time and for sharing their stories with me. My gift was to demonstrate how much I valued their contribution to my research.

### 3.3 DATA COLLECTION

Six semi-structured interviews utilising 'talanoa' as an interviewing method, was the only method used to collect data for this investigation. Seven questions were composed in advance with the aim of answering my research question of how teachers of youth programmes implement Pasifika values in their teaching. By having semi-structured interviews, I was able to use the pre-prepared interview questions to guide the conversations but at the same time, the interviews were informal. I also let my participants talk uninterrupted, avoiding prompts that would influence their answers. As previously mentioned, all interviews took place at the participants' work place during normal work hours on Fridays.

Upon meeting each participant for the first time, I would greet them before introducing myself. I took a packet of biscuits with me to each interview. Before starting each interview, I would have a coffee with the participant where we would then engage in 'small talk', which I used as an opportunity to acknowledge the 'va' between the participant and myself.

My participants would use this opportunity to tell me about what they do in their job and describe what topics they teach. I also shared with my participants what I do professionally before briefing them about my research. Through the developing conversation, all of my participants would express how passionate they were about trying to help youth and how privileged they felt to be a part of my research, while congratulating me on the decision to continue with my studies through my Master's degree.

Before each interview started, as previously mentioned, my participants were required to sign the appropriate consent form. I used a dictaphone to record all my interviews. This allowed me to make sure that all the information shared was accurate and true. The interview times were on average 40 minutes long. At the conclusion of each interview, I would quickly thank the participant before explaining what I planned to do with their information. I told each participant that I would send each of them a copy of their own transcripts within the following two weeks. I proceeded to present the participants with a small 'thank you' gift. Once I had packed up my gear, I would thank the participant again before making my exit.

### 3.4 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

I do not consider myself to be an academic person, so conducting research and pursuing my Master's degree is something that is both scary and exciting. I had been given a brief rundown on the expectations of conducting research from my supervisor, but it is not until you go through the research processes that you can fully appreciate the advice and cautions other people offer you. This is especially true when things do not go according to plan.

My first challenge was finding willing participants. I planned on having participants ready to interview within four weeks after sending out my initial invitation emails but this was not to be the case. After two months of receiving no replies to my initial invitation, I decided to send invitations to YG course providers outside of the South Auckland area. Within two weeks I received a reply and two weeks later I had enough participants to begin the data collection stage.

The entire recruitment process took three months in total, due to the delay in finding participants willing to take part in my interviews.

After finding my participants, booking interview times was my next challenge. With the majority of my participants working in West Auckland, I made the decision to try and interview those participants in one Friday. I originally organised my scheduled to interview the West Auckland participants on the same Friday afternoon, and the lone South Auckland participant the following Friday. The participants were happy with this but when I initially went to interview the West Auckland participants (who all worked for the same organisation), I was asked if I could postpone their session to the following Friday due to a work commitment which they had overlooked. I was happy to reschedule but this did affect my research timeline, which was already behind schedule. Re-booking these interviews clashed with my South Auckland participant's interview, which I also had to reschedule.

To record my interviews, I brought a new dictaphone only a couple of days before I conducted my first interviews. The one I brought was a little more advanced than the ones I had seen other people use in the past but I assumed that it would be easy to use one. Having little to no experience with operating a dictaphone, I quickly realised that operating one was easier said than done. Testing the dictaphone the night before my first interviews caused a few moments of panic before each interview. Embarrassingly, I ended up 'playing around' with the dictaphone in front of the participants before commencing the first couple of interviews while apologising to the participants. Fortunately, for me, my participants were all 'good sports' and we were able to make light of the situation. After the second interview, I had learnt to operate the dictaphone

properly and I learnt a hard lesson on being prepared. I also had to keep in mind that the information being shared is highly sensitive and confidential, which is why I had to make sure I got things right the first time so as not to inconvenience my participants by repeating the interviews.

Probably my biggest challenge was myself, as I have already mentioned, I am a novice in the field of study and research. Although I prepared as best as I could, I found during my data analysis stage that there was a lot more I could have done during the interview stage to extract more information from my participants. I was too focussed on whether or not I was following correct interviewing protocols that my thought process was blurred and things that I should have done became non-existent.

Reflecting back on the interviews, I realised that I put a lot of emphasis on the questions and the answers that I was expecting from each participant that it distracted me from my role as a researcher. I was there to explore the reality of teachers of youth programmes in relation to my research topic yet, when I think back to my thought process during the interviews, I was hoping that the participants' answers would prove my own personal theories on my research topic. A lot of my focus was on trying to keep my thoughts to myself so as not to influence the answers of the participants.

During the interviews, I did not take concurrent notes. This meant that I missed important issues or topics in real time, which I could have explored more in depth. This became apparent when listening back to the interviews and I was disappointed that I failed to discuss further some issues

that the participants raised during the interviews. Something I feel I did too much was to sit back and listen. Talanoa is a discussion where everyone makes equal contribution but I let the participants make 90 – 100 percent contribution to our discussion.

During a couple of the interviews, some very deep experiences were shared. I was totally unprepared for this and I was caught off guard. I did not know how to react and I was caught between trying to be empathetic and remaining neutral. I decided to remain neutral and then after the interview was completed I stopped recording then checked on the participants' well-being. I applied *'ofa fe'unga* in this instance and I was patient with the participant. I gave them time to gather themselves before making my exit.

### 3.5 TRANSCRIPTS

I initially paid someone to transcribe my data. That person was recommended to me by a colleague and she was required to fill out a confidentiality form to protect the confidentiality of my participants' data. Regrettably, these transcripts were erased from my back up drive and I was forced to type out the transcripts again. This was very time consuming as I had to listen and compare what I was typing numerous times to ensure that what I transcribed was accurate.

Once I had finished, I informed my participants that I had completed the transcripts before sending them a copy. This is important as the data recorded needs to be accurate and true. I emailed each participant to find out how they would like me to deliver their transcripts. Using *faka'apa'apa*, I was considerate of the participants' time. They preferred that I email their

transcripts through to them. I asked them to let me know if they were happy with their transcripts. I also gave them an option to change anything they were not happy with or to add to their transcripts. The participants replied after reading their transcripts, informing me that they were happy with me to proceed with what I had recorded.

### 3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analysed firstly by breaking down the information to make the process more manageable. This was done through thematic analysis: identifying and documenting the key points of each question from each participant. I did this in the form of a mind map for each participant. This involved much reading, and re-reading of the data collected. The next step involved putting my data into table format. This was carried out using Microsoft Excel. I entered one question per column and inserted the answers from each participant in the rows below it.

I then started the coding process. I did this by assigning specific colours to the data of each participant. From there the different patterns and themes were placed in their appropriate categories I was then able to see similarities and strong themes in the data coming through. I listed the minor and major themes on a separate excel spreadsheet before listing my findings on chapter four. I will discuss the ethical considerations in the next section. I used *toli*, sorting through the data and arranging them into groups and then identifying key themes.

### 3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before starting research, there are critical steps that researchers must take in order to keep all parties involved in the research safe. These parties includes the participants, staff and students who conduct research. The ethical principles highlighted in Davidson and Tolich (1999) and Tolich (2001) guided the ethical principles that were applied in my own research. These ethical principles and their application to my research are listed below:

- **Do no harm:** The participants were not forced to answer any questions or perform any actions that made them feel threatened and uncomfortable. The participants were also informed that they could stop the interview at any time and they were also given a time frame in which they could withdraw their interview and data from the research.
- **Participation and consent:** Participants were informed of the research before they decided to volunteer to participate. The participants were encouraged to question the research before participating. Participants were provided with consent forms which they voluntarily signed to provide evidence of their participation.
- **Confidentiality:** Participants were given aliases to conceal their identity. Their real names, the names of their work places and any names shared during the interviews were not entered anywhere in the research.
- **Avoid deceit:** I was transparent about my research by answering all the questions my participants had regarding the research. The participants were sent transcripts of their



own interviews to check if the information was correct and accurate. The participants were reminded that they could withdraw their data from the research up until the submission of my final draft.

- **Report and analyse data accurately:** The participants were sent a copy of their transcripts to check the data was accurate, and they were offered an opportunity to add or delete anything from the transcripts.

It was important for me to create a safe space for the participants and myself by answering all their questions. The participants were very inviting and were happy to share information freely. They did not ask many questions as they felt I had explained everything about the research and my intentions for the data openly and honestly. It was my responsibility to make sure no harm came to the participants by forcing them to answer questions. I also met the participants at meeting venues of their choosing. They were also aware of the option to withdraw their participation any time before the submission of this thesis.

### 3.8 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the methodology and research approach used in this research. By using a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews, I was able to gather some rich qualitative data. In this chapter, I was also able to reflect on some of the challenges that arose during the research process. I also discussed the ethical implications. In the next chapter, I will share the findings of the data.

## Chapter 4. FINDINGS

In this chapter, I discuss findings based on the data. I collected the data by conducting six face-to-face interviews with five youth programme teachers working in the West Auckland area, and one working in South Auckland. My objective was to see what values teachers were implementing in their teaching practices of Pasifika students as well as identifying their knowledge of Pasifika values. These interviews also provided my participants with an opportunity to give their recommendations on how they think Pasifika values could be implemented in the teaching of Pasifika youth, and identify who they think is responsible for following through on those recommendations.

Of my participants, three were of Pacific descent, two were New Zealanders of European, and one was of Dutch descent. All participants spoke English as a first language while one of the Pasifika participants could speak Tongan and one could speak Samoan. All Pasifika participants were male, as were the New Zealanders, except for one who was female. Five of the participants worked in the same tertiary institute and one worked for a South Auckland tertiary institute. The table displayed below provides a brief overview of my participants.

*Table 4.1 Participant information*

<b>Participant pseudonym</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Type of work place</b>
<b>Caitlin</b>	New Zealand European	Female	Tutor	Tertiary institute - private
<b>Gordon</b>	New Zealand European	Male	Tutor - Security services	Tertiary institute - private
<b>David</b>	New Zealand European	Male	Tutor - Business	Tertiary institute - private
<b>Tui</b>	Tongan	Male	Tutor - Health & Fitness	Tertiary institute - private
<b>Lua</b>	Samoan	Male	Tutor	Tertiary institute - private
<b>Toru</b>	Cook Island	Male	Tutor - Carpentry	Tertiary institute - private

From the interviews, the tutors were able to answer the questions based on their experiences and by reflecting on their teaching practices. While analysing the data, many minor themes were evident. I was able to identify some common themes, while eliminating what was irrelevant to my research. After reading, and re-reading the data, I was able to group all the minor themes, into three main themes.

**Theme 1:** Identifying common values - I was able to identify what values were important to the tutors. I was also able to identify what values the tutors thought were important to Pasifika learners and Pasifika as a whole. Finally, I was able to get their interpretations on values that Pasifika are thought to be raised with.

**Theme 2:** Challenges – This theme is about the challenges tutors face on a daily basis with their Pasifika students and with implementing Pasifika values into their teaching practices.

**Theme 3:** Recommendations – Tutors share their views on how they could better implement Pasifika values in their teaching. These recommendations include who they feel is responsible for implementing the changes and what type of support they need to make those changes.

In this chapter, these three themes are discussed in detail while making reference to the information shared by my participants.

## 4.1 IDENTIFYING COMMON VALUES

While analysing the data, I found there were many values that my participants thought were important. Their views were based on their experiences with Pasifika people, and their observations of their Pasifika students in their classrooms. What was initially evident, was that each of my participants brought their own set of values to their teaching practices. The data were limited in detail, but I was able to identify similar themes regarding values that the teachers brought to their teaching.

#### 4.1.1 Comparing the participants upbringing

My overall findings underlined some interesting opinions. David considered everyone to be equal, and that we also share similar values. Because of his upbringing, he was taught to appreciate everybody's worth, no matter what race or religion they were.

*As far as for me, my way of thinking is that we are all one in the same, no matter what the colour of our skin, no matter what our beliefs are, but we are all one in the same and that's how I look at it.*

Gordon shared a similar view to David, when he explained how he learned to get along with Pasifika people in the following comment.

*Goes back to the old Kiwi saying you know, 'we're in Gods own' and 'it's our place' and things like that but its not now. Its everybody's place cause we're a multicultural society. Hey, I used to come to Auckland from the country to stay with an aunty in Vermont street, Ponsonby. Here's a good example because she was the only European in Vermont street in those days.*

Caitlin has a differing point of view to Gordon and David. Although she understands we are a multicultural society, she feels that there are significant differences between herself and her Pasifika students.

*I think sometimes, because if you're from a different culture, you cannot necessarily know exactly, you know, where someone is coming from because your culture is very different.*

When I compared the values that my participants were raised with, I found that four of the six participants mentioned that they were raised in families that lived by Christian values. I did not question the other two participants about their religious backgrounds therefore I cannot confirm from their perspectives, whether their values are Christian based or not. These participants

belonged to different Christian denominations but still pinpointed similar values that they adopted through their Christian upbringings.

Toru, who is NZ born Cook Island descent, referred to his upbringing which shows strong connections to Christianity.

*As for values, it was kind of a mix in terms of religion. So I grew up with a Catholic background but also in the PIC (Pacific Island Church) church. Yeah a lot of values that I hold down are closely connected to my faith, my Christian faith.*

Toru related to more than one Christian denomination. Tui also talked about his Christian upbringing.

*Just family, Christian values. Ten Commandments. Those were pretty much the staple.*

David talked about himself as being raised as a Mormon. The following comment is an example of this.

*I was brought up as a Mormon, ok. So my values are based around honesty, understanding, everybody's worth and obviously humility is one of them too, and respect.*

Gordon provided me with example of being raised in a Christian household with similar values to David even though his family belonged to a different Christian denomination which is evident in the statement below.

*Christian values, not like belonging to a church. When I was a young fella, Presbyterian church ...So values I learnt, old fashioned values, honesty, integrity.*

The values of honesty and respect were echoed by other participants, highlighting similarities in their upbringings. From the comments of David and Gordon, there was evidence that values were

universal across the participants. This is more evident when comparing these comments between Lua, David and Gordon who had similar views.

*The values I was raised with, probably the main one would be honesty. Honesty, Integrity. Yeah just along those lines. Honesty and Integrity to me is everything. It's the way I conduct myself before others, and that's how I conduct myself away from others, Just being one hundred percent honest and real all the time. (Lua)*

Gordon told me that he has a lot of experience working with Pasifika people. He believed that learning how to pronounce Pasifika names properly helps build good relationships.

*Also, a majority of the students here are Pasifika and I know, each time they are asked to report to my manager about how they feel, it comes out pretty good. I have a good relationship with all people but Pasifika people, yes I try and understand. But I found the biggest thing, particularly with my old clients, was to learn how to say their names properly.*

Toru talked about the importance of learning the language, speaking from a NZ born Pasifika point of view.

*So, I think the language is important. I'm just unfortunate that I never learnt it. I think when I've spoken to my mum, there was a real push cause I'm the first-generation NZ born Cook Island in my family. Even though my mum comes from a really big family, and I have a really big extended family. But growing up we, because of the fact that, like what I said before about growing up and not having my mum there, so when I was looked after by my aunty, her and her husband spoke English and we went to English speaking schools even though a lot of the kids there were Pacific island or Maori.*

Toru has touched on a few issues here. The first being NZ born and not being taught his mother tongue. Toru also speaks about the reality of a lot of troubled youth who are not raised by their

biological parents. At the end of the comment he touches on schools being all English speaking which makes it harder for NZ born Pasifika to learn their native language.

#### *4.1.2 Religion and Family*

Looking at the major themes, two things were mentioned the most. These were 'religion' and 'family'. The participants named religion and family as the two things Pasifika valued the most. These two themes were most commonly identified and talked about throughout all of the interviews with some of the participants constantly referring back to religion, family or working in a group environment. Lua made quick reference in the next comment.

*I know a lot of them (Pasifika) value their religions. Their God.*

Toru, who already established a strong connection to his Christian faith believed that religion is important to most, or all, Pasifika.

*Religious beliefs play a big part cause I, myself, I'm Cook island and I'm married to a Samoan. My wife is Samoan, so her background is more growing up in the traditional Samoan church and, like I said before, I grew up in the Catholic church with that background but not really fully understanding what it meant.*

In terms of religion, all the Pasifika participants were in agreeance that religion ranks highly amongst Pasifika people.

*Church is in there I guess. God is in there. Religion and education is important (Tui)*

Tui made a brief connection to education. David believes he has a link to Pasifika through his religion. He made reference to the Pasifika population of his church nationwide.

*A big percentage of the Mormon church is Pasifika people in NZ, huge percentage.*

Another of the major themes that I identified was the value of family. Tui referred to this straight away. He understood this, speaking from a Pasifika point of view.

*I know Pacific values. A lot of it is to do with family. Family first. Hard work you know, look after each other, support each other.*

Some of the comments made links between the family environment and group work in the classroom.

*I think very family orientated. So, look after your family, make sure your family is all good you know. It's a big ...Supportive, so you know, supporting the people around you and kind of like, you know, in the group kind of idea that you're supporting everybody around you.*  
(Caitlin)

Toru agreed that family is important to Pasifika but talks about the reality of many Pasifika children who do not experience the family environment at home.

*Family is another one but once again, I think its individual coz some Pacific Island people like myself, I did not grow up with having two parents. I only had one and like my mother never really came into my life as such that I can remember till after I was about 10 years old coz she was dealing with her things. So, I really only knew my...I had a relationship with my mother when I was, say between 12 and 13 onwards. But, today I have a really good relationship with my mum and I think over time she's been able to open up and share a lot of things.*

Toru's experience of growing up without both his parents for most of his childhood is echoed later in this chapter where some of the participants talk about the challenges they face with their students.



#### 4.1.3 Comparing the values of love, respect, obedience and service

When comparing the participants' interpretations of the values covered in my literature review, the answers showed some interesting results. Starting with the value of 'love'. Some of the participants linked love to family first and then love would trickle down in order of how important someone is to you. This view was shared by both Pasifika and non-Pasifika teachers.

*Okay also love obviously starts maybe like within the family. So you've got parents, you know, that love each other and you've got love for the children. Then you've got love for the extended family and then love thy neighbour and you know, friends and stuff like that.*  
(Caitlin)

Gordon also shared this opinion. He believed that family comes first, but through his experiences, his interpretation of love has evolved. He claimed that love is about accepting people and their differences.

*There's various sorts of love. You can love a lady if you're a guy. If you're a man, love a woman if you love a lady. A man love a man, it's not my way of operating but I respect that ...To me accepting people is a great version of love.*

Other participants believed that we must love everybody. The following comment from David is another example.

*I think you've got to love everybody, and I think you've got to love yourself as well right. By doing that, you demonstrate to the youth and the young ones about that value.*

Lua's interpretation has some similarities to Gordon and David, in relation to love having no barriers. His comments also intertwined with the value of service when he talked about not expecting to be rewarded when you do things for others.

*I think love to me is without barriers. Even though it's all of that stuff like being quick to forget and just always being there straight away if something happens. Yeah just doing what you can without expecting anything back.*

These findings have started to establish that everyone is raised with a set of values. The next value the participants were asked to interpret was 'respect'. Toru was raised to respect his elders but believed that the respect was not reciprocated.

*So you know sometimes when I felt when I was growing up, respect was a one way thing. Like as in, that was one way to your elders and that's it sorta thing. But as a teenager and growing up, and growing more in my Christian faith, I began to like, understand that it's about, also about, having respect for other people.*

Caitlin's interpretation of respect is also about respecting elders but she further explained how her understanding of what respect is, has changed over during her years in the education sector.

*Respect...now that's one where maybe I've changed my understanding or my thoughts on over the years. For me I was always taught you had to respect everybody, like people that are older than you and stuff like that, and it was automatic. But I think in later years people have kind of said to me in education "Oh, you kind of have to earn respect as well". So, for me now, I see it as kind of double. I still think that automatically I would respect elders and things like that and I think that that's just some engraved kind of thing that I can also see, especially out from the youth and the young people these days.*

When speaking about the value of respect, there were several things that stood out. According to David, one of the things teachers thought, was that listening to his students was a sign of respect.

*They want to be treated with respect, and they want to be listened to also.*

Along with gaining respect, Tui added that the youth of today communicate differently and listening to his students sets a good example and helps to build trust.

*To build trust, you gotta build by showing that you care, that you're willing to listen as well. You gotta lead by example and I think listening is a key factor for them. Listening and communicating cause kids these days communicate a little differently because of devices and stuff so they're actually quite smart. You just got to communicate in their language, which is, over time you will build that experience with them and build that trust.*

The last two values 'obedience' and 'service' took the participants a bit longer to answer. Most of the participants gave the literal meaning of obedience. There was a negative tone when I asked the participants for their interpretation of obedience. Caitlin said:

*Obedience, doing what they're told to do, without any questions. To me straight up is obedience.*

This is a literal interpretation of the word. Tui makes a similar comment.

*Being able to do things even though you do not want to do it. Whether its work related or family.*

David and Toru both commented on the consequences of being disobedient during their childhood.

*...when we were growing up, you were obedient otherwise you got the bash.*

Toru added:

*Obedience for me was more that you had to be obedient to your parents or else you got disciplined. I think I grew up with the hard side of things. Not only me but yeah. Obedience kind of, growing up was more like you had to do it or else you got punished for it.*

Gordon linked his interpretation to professional practices.

*It's actually the action of doing something that you have been tasked with. It could be your normal job, it could be something out of the ordinary and I teach here if you've got an order, you do it unless its going to put you in danger and then you've got to think about the legislation of health and safety and things like that, but obedient is obeying something.*

Interpreting the value of 'service' was difficult, especially for the non-Pasifika participants who needed a bit of time to think about their answers. Caitlin made links to serving the church.

*Service, I think the first thing that comes to mind I suppose is service, is a little bit the Christian thing where, kind of going on a mission or something like that and serving your church and your religion.*

Gordon again made reference to professional practice.

*When you think of respect, service, you have a contract with somebody, an employer. Could be just a voluntary thing, could be a friendship, but if you are providing a service for someone, you provide that service and it's not half baked.*

The other participants shared the same interpretation. They believed that service meant to give of yourself to help others.

*I think we have to give of ourselves to others. To me that's what I would think service was.*  
(David)

Toru talked about service as a form of sacrifice.

*I'm more of a person that will be willing to serve if I can, help people you know. Even when, sometimes you're in a position where you have to sacrifice certain things. Especially when*

*it comes to family. Sometimes its serving when its coming at a cost for you. May be your time or your money, or those sort of things.*

Tui's brief comment aligns with Toru's comment.

*Service, so you give time to do something. Could be good will or an act of kindness.*

Lua's comment agreed that service requires sacrifice but added that service is also about using your initiative to prevent any issues from getting worse.

*Service. Just doing whatever you can for everyone. If you see something that needs to be done, just doing it, using your initiative. Not waiting for it to be a bigger problem. If you see anything, just fix it or do what you can.*

Comparing the participants' interpretations of the values highlighted in the literature review chapter shows that there is more common ground between Pasifika and non-Pasifika. Regardless of what the participants had in common, they felt there were many challenges with trying to implement Pasifika values in their teaching.

## 4.2 CHALLENGES

There were many challenges that the participants talked about that made things difficult, or in some cases, almost impossible to implement Pasifika values in their teaching practices. The answers varied but some comments shared some harsh realities of the students in these classes. Some of the participants were very emotional when sharing their stories as some of the things they experienced with their students would be hard for most people to handle.

### 4.2.1 Cultural differences

One of the first challenges identified was the cultural differences between Pasifika and non-Pasifika. The non-Pasifika participants made several comments relating to these differences. Gordon believes that there is a place for Pasifika values to be implemented in teaching practices but acknowledges teachers need to understand the different cultures. David, who mentioned earlier that Pasifika values are all the same, asked questions concerning these differences.

*I think it needs to be a part of the education system. In saying that, would a young man from Tonga accept someone teaching him values of someone from Samoa? Are those values the same? Are the perceptions in how they see things the same? Would parents agree to that kind of stuff? You understand what I'm saying?*

Gordon commented on the differences.

*Hard to say but I know you learn a lot of customs here and seeing what various students do. First thing you actually need to do is to actually find out why you're doing that if its something you haven't come across before because it can differ extremely, very highly to European values.*

Other teachers agreed that trying to find common ground with students of different cultures was difficult. One of the comments from a Pasifika viewpoint suggests that we must be careful of trying to implement Pasifika values in teaching practices, so we do not forget where we are.

*I been doing this for a while now with my students and something that we always come across, like for us, we're over here in NZ and so we try and teach them using our cultural values. But then also, keeping in mind that we're in NZ, not Samoa or Tonga where things are done differently over here. (Lua)*

David believed that cultural values should be a part of what teachers use in their teaching, but he spoke of the culture differences between NZ raised Pasifika and of those raised in their

homelands. He believed that Pasifika youth raised in suburbia NZ, are being raised in an environment that is contributing to the decline of Pasifika values being taught in Pasifika homes.

*I think a lot of youth that we've got now are so engrossed in the suburbia type thing that they've lost touch with their cultural values. That's what I believe is wrong. That's why they're struggling, because they've got no ownership, and nobody owns them either you know. For me I think it should be a part of what we do.*

David's comment has a tone of frustration which is reflected by some of his other counterparts who feel that they are fighting an uphill battle. Lua's comment aligns with David's comment about the differences of how things are done in the youth are raised in the 'islands' compared to how they are raised in NZ.

*Being from outside of the country, I think that's a really massive thing, and then, also because our Pacific island students that are coming through, they're sorta raised differently. So they're more of the NZ/Europeans. (Lua)*

Other cultural differences that were mentioned also involved how Pasifika and NZ European children are raised. Toru pointed out the difference between how Pasifika and Western youth would interact with each other.

*Yeah I grew up understanding that in the cultural scene is that respect was very important but once again, my understanding of it was mixed because in some ways, I went to family occasions and stuff where you had to be respectful and that, and then I went to maybe more European, or Westernised places where you know, you were open to sort of speak your mind.*

Lua made a few interesting comments relating to the differences between Pasifika and NZ classrooms. His following comment about the social standing of teachers in Samoa compared with the social standing of teachers in NZ.

*I think its just cultural differences. Like, I know in Samoa, if you're a teacher, you're pretty high up there. You're held to a high extent. So, people look up to you like you're a Pastor if you're a teacher but, whereas, when you come to NZ, a teacher is just the same as a bus driver you know. Its just a role over here, it's a position. Whereas, in Samoa, it's a lot more than just a job and I think its that, it's the cultural differences.*

Tui's brief comment about Pasifika students taking time off school due to family events brought to light Pasifika priorities choosing family over school.

*They could be away for a whole week due to a family death. Cultural differences as well. So just knowing or understanding those values will help tutors to work together to get through with the students. Understand what they're going through. Help support them basically.*

Tui believed that by understanding the culture, teachers would be able to support their Pasifika students better through situations where they are required to fulfil their cultural obligations. Lua talked about discipline in the islands compared to NZ.

*Like how islanders like, run things in the islands, and then coming over here and its way different. Like another thing I know we can't do over here that I know my parents always talk about is disciplining the students. Like we obviously can't do that.*

David questioned whether he would be the right person to teach Pasifika values.

*Whilst I do not believe that I'm probably the best one to be able to teach that, I think there should be a place for that to be a part of it.*



#### 4.2.2 Struggles of Pasifika students and their families

Being teachers of Youth Guarantee courses comes with its own challenges because the eligibility criteria means the students bring their own learning barriers. Youth Guarantee courses are designed for youth aged between 16 – 19 years of age who have struggled with mainstream education.

*So, trying to have to put that on them as well is a challenge and I guess school, a lot of them struggled at school, end up with us. So that's why we have them I guess, because we get a bit more hands-on approach with them. So, yeah, it has its challenges. (Tui)*

The reasons for their struggles vary. The participants described the life of their students outside of school as other reasons as to why their students struggled at school and it is not unusual for some of the students to be referred to Youth Guarantee courses through the justice system.

*Because of the area of training that I do, its like you know, some of them come with a whole lot of baggage from their own personal lives and I would say sometimes, some years its been almost like 50% of my class comes from, they're like student referrals you know. They've been through the system, they've been through abusive situations and so on and so on. (Toru)*

Life at home is also a struggle for the students. Some teachers felt that the cost of living was too high for some families and the parents of their students were struggling to make ends meet, leaving the children to raise themselves at home.

*I think the pressure of Pasifika people in NZ is they want to get ahead. They're trying to survive. They're trying to put a roof over the head of their children, they're trying to put food on the table and power in the house. I think that sucks that cultural thing right out the window. So I think a lot of these kinds end up. When school ends and they've got no sense of direction, no sense of value. For me to try and start teaching them that at 16 is*

*difficult, you know what I mean? I think its something that should be part of what they're learning from day one. (David)*

David was very passionate about talking about the struggle of Pasifika families at home. He talked about what life for his students are like.

*I think the pressure on the family home unit is the problem with the issue more than anything. Mum, Dad having to work. No one at home. These kids have got no, you know, they're fending for themselves afterschool, or before school you know what I mean? Mum and Dad are under a huge amount of pressure. The easy access to alcohol, drugs and all that sort of stuff is there. Its prevalent, bombarding these kids. A lot of these kids smoke dope like its normal life, and a lot of it is because that helps em get through the day. I have to admit that there are times when I sit down with some of them and they tell me about their personal stuff because that's how we get right, and I do not judge them and I do not comment, but they get to the stage where they can tell me some, and some of the stuff would make you cry, and they have. Sometimes I've gone home in tears. I just can't believe that this [sic] still happens today, and it shouldn't. But, it is not going to get any better.*

Toru commented about similar issues.

*So yeah, that's the thing. It is very challenging, especially when you're dealing with issues around legal issues. Issues to do with drugs and alcohol. Then you throw in learning difficulties like dyslexic you know. Students, and then you know, then just the dynamic at home. You know, some kids do not have parents too, let alone one parent and some of them do not have any parents and they've been brought up either by other family members or they're just living with people you know.*

David and Toru have brought to light the struggles of many of our youth today. In relation to the discussion around the challenges the participants deal with, Toru and David shared the most. Although not many others made similar comments, the information they shared holds a lot of

value because it also highlights other issues of Pasifika learners away from the classroom that teachers may not be prepared for.

#### *4.2.3 The role of grandparents in raising their grandchildren*

They both talked on the importance of the grandparents in raising the grandchildren. David believed that grandparents played a big part in instilling Pasifika values in the children. Something that he says is not as common now days.

*We used to give our children to our grandparents to bring up right, and we would go to work and we would support our grandparents and help them financially because they had our children, they looked after them. Our grandparents taught our children the cultural values right. That does not happen today. So all those old teaching, they're all gone. Nobody's passing them on and these kids do not get to know about it until its too late.*

Toru's comment adds to David's argument. In his comment, Toru talked about his children who are learning their Samoan culture because his wife's parents help with his children's upbringing.

*Probably more so, they grew up with a more Samoan background with language and things like that because of their grandparents. So they grew up having both their grandparents on my wife's side bringing them up, but also trying to get them to speak Samoan, but even my wife went through that thing where, as a young child she spoke Samoan, but as she got older, she ended up speaking more English than Samoan.*

#### 4.2.4 Lack of trust in leadership

Toru felt that organisations only valued Pacific cultures when they felt it would benefit them.

*Working for this organisation is sometimes when I see Pasifika values used, they're only taken from the surface, for what benefits the company you know, which is a shame. So, for example, if we have an opening of a new premises, then all of a sudden, you see Pacific Island performances, songs, singing, things like that, and one time, they did try and use a Pasifika model based on, there's no picture here [looks around classroom], I used to have it in my classroom and they had a Samoan fale (house) and the pillars of the fale had different values on it. So, yeah its kind of strange coz you know, they try and implement it because, I mean, you look at it, most of our clients that come here, most of the students here are all Pacific or Maori, or of that mix, but yet, we think these Pasifika values are only useful for the company, you know what I mean, and that's how I see it you know, yeah, which is kind of sad.*

Toru's comment of his workplace providing training in trying to understand Pasifika values suggests that his organisation recognises the need to upskill its teachers in that subject. However, he still believes the Pacific culture is being exploited somehow. David talked about a meeting he attended in South Auckland with regard to adult literacy and numeracy.

*We were in the auditorium and the Education department was giving a breakdown of how things were working, and they said that they put aside millions of dollars a year for Pasifika learning that 7% of Pasifika youth. Its budgeted for 7% of Pasifika youth to be expelled from school before they turn 16. The percentage of Pasifika people that actually go on to higher education is point zero something, and so I said, I said if you were in the corporate world, you'd all be fired. They all went quiet because I said "if you're budgeting for 7% of Pasifika youth to be expelled from school before they turn 16, and you're spending millions of dollars on education for Pasifika people, I would suggest that that's an absolute failure. Why would you budget for that? Why wouldn't you be budgeting on the basis of zero and looking at how you can save that 7% or increase that zero point.*

David's comment revealed his frustration in relation to the strategy to budget for failure instead of investing for success. The challenges, or issues described in this section reveal that teachers care deeply for their Pasifika students, but they lack support or the right development which would help them do their jobs better. Their recommendations are listed in the next section.

### 4.3 PARTICIPANT RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants were able to express their views on the challenges in trying to implement Pasifika values. They also had some recommendations to address the issues highlighted in the previous section of this chapter. Gordon made many references to making sure he knew how to pronounce names properly. In his earlier comments, this was his way of building relationships with Pasifika people.

*Knowledge of customs, pronunciation of names. Remember that, you know the 'g' sometimes there, sometimes not, but learning that does not take long. If you say it wrong they correct, hey that's fine, you know you appreciate that. I think you know you can't really say much more than the fact there's, understand the culture. Understand that sometimes they may not want to do the work at that particular time, they may be a bit slower, but work with them.*

Building relationships with Pasifika in general seemed to be a common theme with all the participants.

*Ok. So I think the first thing is building that trust and building up rapport, and maybe not forcing things that might make somebody feel uncomfortable. So maybe, you know, take that, take those steps just to get the respect from both sides, and things like that and then be able to, you know, work in groups and have the support kind of system going on, and of course always including some food if that's possible. So that, and then, you know maybe also integrating some sport and stuff like that. Just things that you start to get to know*

*each other. More than just “oh, we’ve just gotta sit, we’ve gotta learn this today ok?” So that you’re building that whole kind of, I do not know, I guess that kinda family feel, that kind of support and belonging so that you can then voice any issues you might have or any problems. (Caitlin)*

David also highlighted the importance of building relationships with the students, but he also understood there are many challenges in doing so. His suggestion recommends having the right person in the classroom to help reconnect the students with their culture.

*I hate to think we read about our culture out of a book. I think it’s more likely the best scenario is someone like a Kaumatua (Maori elder), or a chief being appointed to travel around and teach, or even the women you know. These kids will react, young ones will react better to a woman talking to them. Sitting down with them talking about culture than they would a man doing it, because most times, they see the man as the authoritarian side of things. These kids are already struggling with that part of it. Generally, most of them have had a dealing with the Police at some stage or another. So, authority to them is a toughie. It’s a tough one. They need someone that sort of, can come in and sit down with them and show them empathy and be sensitive.*

The Pasifika participants claim that there is an instant connection. Lua believed that it is Pasifika values that draws Pasifika to one another.

*I just think, you know for us as Pacific Islanders, that’s how we operate. That’s all that stuff. That’s respect, not only for yourself, but for others. Love as well, not only for yourself but for others as well, and I think inside a classroom, or just with education as a whole. I think it draws us as Pacific Islanders closer to each other, like straight away, straight off the bat you know. Just your energy you give out you know, it will connect you with other people’s energy, and there’s like a mutual unspoken agreement sort of thing.*

Toru believed that being Pacific automatically helps build relationships with his Pacific Island students.

*Well, I know that as a Pacific Island male, I have a certain style and technique that reaches out to Pacific Island students. I think, because one thing, I'm brown and that sort of breaks down that barrier.*

Caitlin's comment mentioned the importance of group work. This was identified as another strategy to help engage with Pasifika students. It also aligns with the family values discussed in earlier sections of this chapter. Other participants coincided with the notion doing things as a group as being beneficial to their teaching practices. Gordon initiates the team mentality from the beginning and incorporates work specific activities to help his students understand the concept of teamwork.

*So it's everybody's responsibility for doing so but it grows down in here [points to heart] and the way they, from the first day when they come in, if they're part, we have a team in this particular, I think, probably through the entire institute, but we have a team mentality in here. We have a team paper which I always leave till the end and we cover the fact that we do a patrol. I send two of the boys or girls, or one senior and one junior. Generally we got hi-viz vests in there, we got radio telephones. They go and do a patrol, they report to another person, I listen in on the fourth one. They work together and that is part of that sort of whole thing that comes back to me and goes up to our staff meetings and spreads through the company, because we got such a wide variety of ethnicities anyway.*

Toru talked about group activities in the community, as a means to do something positive for his Pasifika students.

*So it's tryin' take the focus off all the that maybe negative in their life and putting the focus on something positive for them. That was really good and we used to do clean ups and things like that. Yeah they moaned and groaned you know, but it was like "hopefully*

*when you guys get a little bit older, you might wanna do this for other family members or people in your community. Do not just concentrate on yourself and tryna get paid, pay day and all that sort of stuff" you know. There's more to life than that.*

When the participants were asked who they felt was responsible for implementing these changes, the answers in general were vague but I was still able to identify some common themes. David's opinion is that it needs to come from the Pasifika people.

*I think it needs to come from the Pasifika people themselves. I think we need to give, I think we need to treat it seriously, but I believe it should come from the people. Shouldn't be something that some overeducated white person sitting in an office decides "this is what we're gonna do" and so forth. I think it does need to come from Pasifika people.*

Lua said that everyone is responsible.

*I reckon everyone. Everyone that's in a position to teach. Everyone that's a Pacific Island educator. Its all our responsibility.*

Tui said the same but puts emphasis on the students.

*I think everyone. Tutor, the student, the students parents, social workers. Everyone's responsible, but the bottom line is the student is the main person that needs to be responsible as well you know. Everyone can only do what they can. They also have to want to do it as well. If they do then everything will work well. If they do not then it will be a bit of a struggle and it will take time.*

The remaining participants mentioned the important part management and leadership plays.

*Well, I think myself as a tutor, because I'm the one that's got the classroom of people that I'm working with and so I'm the one that creates the kind of environment and the feeling*



*in the classroom, but then again I suppose that you would want some support from your organisation as well to be able to implement things. (Caitlin)*

Gordon said.

*Everybody, everybody. You have a manager, but its only reflected. The managers works are reflected by the staff and a good relationship between tutors and the students, because if it works between you and them, its gonna work because it goes up the chain of command.*

Toru believed that management can make the changes but through his experiences, believes he has been let down too often by the leadership in his organisation.

*Personally, for me, I feel that I have a responsibility to play in that, but yeah, I can't do it on my own. It's good if there is that support system and backing. I know that with our company, sometimes, like I said, they say a lot of things but they never come through with it you know. So it would be good if they did follow through on a lot of those things, in implementing values and that. (Toru)*

## 4.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The answers provided in this chapter have identified common values, the challenges the teachers find in implementing those values and their recommendations on how they could develop the appropriate learning spaces for their Pasifika students. Table 4.2 provides an overview of these findings.

Table 4. 2 Overview of findings

Values	Challenges	Recommendations
Family	<p>Parents too busy trying to support family financially. No time to teach children about family values.</p> <p>Some students come from broken homes.</p> <p>Cultural obligations.</p>	<p>Create family environment in classroom.</p> <p>Grandparents to be involved in raising children.</p> <p>Teachers need proper development to help them understand cultural values.</p>
Religion	<p>Priority over schoolwork.</p>	<p>Teachers need to understand how to work around this. Need support from school leadership to support the students</p>
Pasifika interpretations of values	<p>Not being taught from a young age.</p> <p>Culture not being passed on like it used to.</p> <p>Too late to teach youth about culture at 16 years of age.</p>	<p>Pasifika need to educate their children from birth.</p> <p>Need Pasifika community to help their youth.</p> <p>Teachers need more development around understanding cultural values.</p>

Values	Challenges	Recommendations
Pasifika interpretations of values	<p>School leaders pick and choose when to acknowledge Pasifika cultures.</p> <p>School leaders provide professional development as a formality.</p>	<p>School leaders need to learn to respect and fully embrace the cultures in their schools.</p> <p>School leaders need to take their teachers' development seriously.</p>
Cultural differences	Non-Pasifika teachers do not understand Pasifika beliefs and culture.	School leaders need to provide appropriate training to help non-Pasifika teachers understand their Pasifika students better.
Pasifika youth knowledge of their own culture	Can't implement values and culture if the youth do not know it themselves	Pasifika youth need to be taught their culture from a young age.

The findings in this table highlight what values the teachers think are important to Pasifika, the challenges the teachers face with implementing these values and their recommendations for solutions. Teachers of youth guarantee courses face a unique challenge, because most of the students did not succeed in the mainstream schooling system for various reasons. These points are discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 5. DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This research aimed to understand how youth programme teachers of Pasifika students implement Pasifika values in their teaching practices. The theory behind this research was to identify the teachers' values and to compare them to the values used in their teaching pedagogies. Key points highlighted in the literature review aligned with most of the comments made by the participants in the findings chapter. This chapter will discuss the findings while making relevant links to the literature review.

Some key themes that emerged from the findings in chapter four are discussed in this chapter.

There are also some findings not linked to the literature.

### **5.2 TEACHERS IDENTITY VS PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

Every teacher has their own set of beliefs and values. The main link between four of the participants was their Christian upbringings and values. Four of the six participants identified with Christianity. Despite belonging to different denominations, their Christian values will be very similar. The comments from the participants show that their Christian values are implemented in their practices. David commented on being able to love yourself to love everybody to set a good example for the youth, while Lua spoke of love having no barriers. Honesty and integrity were other values that were frequently mentioned among the participants.

Walkington (2005) explains that teachers' identities help to shape their teaching pedagogies and creates a unique look in each classroom. All the teachers' comments showed that they genuinely

care for their students. The non-Pasifika teachers especially showed that they were willing to evolve their teaching pedagogy to engage with their Pasifika learners better. An example of this is how the non-Pasifika participants described the different ways in how they form relationships with their Pasifika students. Gordon described how learning to pronounce Pasifika names properly helped him during his time working in South Auckland. David believed that treating everyone as equals helped break down barriers while Caitlin mentioned earning respect is important.

### *5.2.1 How Pasifika teachers relate to Pasifika students*

The Pasifika participants spoke of making instant connections with their Pasifika students. Lua believed that the Pasifika values draw Pasifika people together, while Toru spoke of his unique style as a Pasifika teacher that connects with his Pacific Island students. Toru also mentioned that his Pasifika students relate to him immediately because of his Pacific ethnicity. This unspoken connection that Lua and Toru have highlighted acknowledges the concept of the *va* (Airini et al., 2010; Allen et al., 2009; Kalavite, 2010; Tuagalu, 2008; Tui Atua, 2005). Pasifika students feel an instant connection to Pasifika teachers which means they do not have to work as hard as their non-Pasifika counterparts in regards to forming a bond with their Pasifika students. However, this instant connection does guarantee a strong relationship between the teacher and student. Pasifika teachers still have a responsibility to work on this relationship to maintain this bond. The literature described this as *teu le va* (Airini et al., 2010; Anae, 2010) or *tauhi va* ('Ilau, 2005).

Good teaching pedagogy maintains the relationship with the students when they are engaged in the third party of the relationship, the subject being taught (Tuagalu, 2008).

### ***5.2.2 YG teachers teaching practices***

The participants' comments explained how they step outside of their normal teaching practices in order to form a better relationship with their students. Toru talked about going offsite to play sports, while Caitlin talked about adding food. From a Pasifika perspective, Toru understands that Pasifika students do not like being indoors all day. Caitlin understands the importance of food in Pasifika cultures.

While this practice might be useful for the participants, they need to be wary of how far they can go past their professional boundaries. The findings show that YG teachers can be emotionally invested in their students. An example of this is David's comment about going home in tears after hearing some of the struggles that his students go through outside of school hours. Brady (2011) speaks about professional standards working together with personal beliefs and values that contribute to building relationships with the students, which is a key component to effective teaching pedagogy.

### 5.3 THE ROLE OF FAMILY IN PASIFIKA STUDENTS' EDUCATION

Much of Pasifika life is centred around the family structure (Gabbard, 2014; Kalavite, 2010; Tavelia, 2012). The findings from the interviews identified family as being one of the main values of Pasifika people. Although only a few comments relating to family were highlighted in the findings chapter, all the participants agreed on this point.

The findings suggest that Pasifika life revolves around their family. Tui mentions that family is first and their priority is to look after each other and to support each other. Caitlin links the support of family to the idea of working in groups. This notion of family and community echoes the findings from research by Allen et al., (2009) where the participants observed how closely involved Samoan families and communities are with their childrens learning and education.

#### *5.3.1 Involvement of grandparents in raising grandchildren*

Two of the participants talked about the role of grandparents in raising their children and the transfer of culture and knowledge that comes with their teachings. Toru spoke of the role his wife's parents play in raising their children. Toru mentioned that he was not taught his Cook Island culture so in that regard, he is unable to pass on the knowledge of his Cook Island culture on to his children. He goes on to talk about his wife's parents, who he says have been instrumental in teaching them their Samoan culture and values. In contrast to Toru's experience, David argued that there is a lack of grandparents involvement in raising their grandchildren, due to financial difficulties and the high cost of living in todays society. A recent report on Pasifika people in New Zealand found that from 2001 to 2013, there has been a consistent decline in

fluent language speakers across all Pasifika cultures (Pasifika Proud, 2016). Vakalahi's (2010) findings align with Toru and David's comments about the involvement of grandparents in raising children. Vakalahi's (2010) participants agreed that their involvement in raising their grandchildren was the perfect vehicle to pass on their Tongan culture and beliefs.

### *5.3.2 Family obligations*

Tui spoke the familial obligations of his Pasifika students. He explained that if there was an important family function on, the students were more likely to miss school. He felt that teachers of Pasifika students need to understand that family takes priority in these cases.

### *5.3.3 Breakdown in the family structure*

Toru and David shared the reality of some Pasifika students. Speaking from personal experience, Toru explained that he was not raised by his biological parents until his mother came into his life when he was 13 years old. He believed that there are many other young Pacific children who are raised with only one, or in some cases, no parents.

Toru's experience as a YG teacher highlights some of the challenges he faces. He points out that many of his students are referred through the justice system, or come from broken homes. David's viewpoint of troubled youth stems from his observations of his Pasifika students. He stated that many of his students have to look after themselves because their parents are too busy working.



These comments contradict the literature by Gabbard (2014) and Hafoka et al. (2014) who express that Pasifika communities bind closer and form strong social support networks when they are in a different country. The findings also exposes another world of YG students. Hill and Hawk (1998) discussed the multiple worlds that students live in adding that Pasifika students try and keep these worlds separate from each other, so breaking down these barriers can be frustrating for YG teachers because issues highlighted by Toru and David, such as drug and alcohol abuse, or a breakdown in the family structure cannot be addressed through good teaching pedagogy alone.

## 5.4 RELIGION AND PASIFIKA CULTURE

The participants described religion and church as another core value of Pasifika students. The literature shows both supporting, and contrasting views. Tui, Toru and Lua's comments all agree that Pasifika cultures value church and religion. The participants were in agreeance that they felt religion is important to their Pasifika students. Havea (2011) shared findings where cultural traditions took precedent over religion. Both Havea (2011) and the NZEI (2012) state that Christian and Pasifika values are intertwined.

Despite the participants strong beliefs on the importance of religion to their Pasifika students, the NZEI (2012) found there was a decline in Pasifika who believe in Christianity. Some of the comments regarding the struggles of the Pasifika students did not align with the assumptions that religion and Christianity are a priority for Pasifika students in YG courses. Toru made an interesting comment about growing up going to a Catholic church, but not fully understanding

his religion. He felt that going to church was more of a formality when he was younger. He understands his faith better now and has since changed his Christian denomination.

## 5.5 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

The participants all recognised that there is a place for Pasifika values to be implemented in teaching practices of Pasifika students. Despite this acknowledgement, the participants' comments highlighted differences in culture as being a barrier to helping their Pasifika students. I asked the participants to provide interpretations to core values highlighted in the literature review; *love, respect, obedience and service* (Va'a, 2009). When comparing the values of *love, respect*, and *obedience* all the participants answers were very similar.

### *5.5.1 The participants' interpretation of the value of 'service'*

The participants' interpretations of the value of *service* showed there was a big difference between the non-Pasifika and Pasifika participants. When I initially asked the participants to describe what *service* meant to them, two of the non-Pasifika participants were puzzled and took some time to come up with an answer. Gordon answered me instantly, linking *service* to the practice of honouring a contract with another person. Caitlin thought *service* was linked to serving your church and going on 'missions', while David made a similar comment to the Pasifika participants.

The Pasifika participants all had similar interpretations of *service*. They talked about giving of yourself to others to help them, even if it may come at a cost. Lua also added that *service* involves using your initiative, meaning that things must be done in order to prevent problems getting worse. They also mentioned that you must help people and not expect anything in return.

### ***5.5.2 Teaching practices in the islands***

Lua compared the differences of teaching practices in Samoa to teaching practices in New Zealand. He explains that teachers in New Zealand cannot discipline their students the way teachers in Samoa do. Lua also compares the way teachers are acknowledged in Samoa compared to New Zealand. He feels New Zealand teachers are less respected in general whereas teachers in Samoa are held in high regard. Giles et al., (2012) suggests that the loss of respect can be related to how the teacher engages the space between the teacher and student. Teachers who do not have good relationships with their students are said to be present in the 'teacher-student' space but not engaging in that space (Giles et al., 2012).

### ***5.5.3 Accepting cultural differences and similarities***

David questioned whether Pasifika people would accept someone from another culture teaching their cultural values. He also questioned whether the values from different Pacific cultures would be the same. David also questioned whether the parents of Pasifika students would accept their children being taught with pedagogies that have implemented values that are not from their own cultures. As a Samoan teacher, Lua stated that he had been implementing his culture and values

in his teaching practices for a long time. However, he cautions that as a Pacific teacher, he needs to remember that he is not in the islands. This is because some practices, such as the disciplinary methods mentioned earlier in this section.

In response to David's question on whether values from different cultures would be similar, the findings identified family and religion as paramount to all Pasifika cultures. The literature also discussed the values of family (Gabbard, 2014; Kalavite, 2010; Lilomaiaava-Doktor, 2004; Tavelia, 2012) and religion (Ernst, 2012; Ernst & Anisi, 2015; Heyn, 2003; Lameta, 2015) in chapter two. By analysing literature by Va'a (2009), Kalavite (2010) and Tavelia (2012), I was able to identify other core values classified as common across the Pacific nations of Samoa, Tonga and Niue.

The participants cited cultural differences from both a Pasifika and non-Pasifika perspective. Aside from the obvious cultural differences such as language and traditional practices, the findings show that aside from the value of *service*, there were many similarities when analysing the interpretations of the other core values. The challenge with implementing the values looks to be a development issue for the teachers.

## 5.6 CHALLENGES FOR YG TEACHERS

The participants highlighted the challenges they face with their students. These challenges affect their teaching practices and hinder the learning of their students. Aside from Gordon who felt he was happy with his teaching practices, the other participants highlighted many challenges and frustrations that come with being a YG teacher. This section will discuss some of the challenges identified by the participants. This section will also answer the following research sub-question:

- What challenges do youth programme teachers encounter when developing and implementing Pasifika values in their teaching?

### *5.6.1 Manipulation of Pasifika culture*

Toru was very vocal about Pacific culture being manipulated by his organisation. His comments indicate that Pasifika are only acknowledged when it suits the company. He gives an example of his organisation that does not normally acknowledge Pasifika culture unless there are visitors coming and then they organise cultural performances.

Toru also mentioned a professional development workshop where him and other teachers were shown a framework embedded with Pasifika values. His description of the framework sounded very similar to the Fonofale model (Pulotu-Endemann, 2001). Toru felt that the training was more of a formality rather than a genuine attempt to upskill the teachers. These experiences have caused Toru to lose trust in his organisations management team. Chu, Glasgow, Rimoni, Hodis and Meyer (2013) found that governance and leadership that utilises achievement data as a foundation for designing new ways to support Pasifika learning and professional development for their teachers had positive outcomes for their Pasifika students.

### *5.6.2 Challenges of Pasifika youth in New Zealand European culture*

Lua spoke about the way Pasifika youth are raised in New Zealand. He feels that Pasifika youth are raised differently in New Zealand and they are influenced by the New Zealand/European culture. This suggests that Pasifika youth raised in New Zealand may not be living by the

traditional Pasifika beliefs and cultures. David also shared a similar view on the suburban influence on Pasifika culture. Pacheco and Melhuish (2018) found that New Zealand teens engage in some form of technology on a daily basis. Technology and social media platforms are a major influence on today's youth in general.

David found that Pasifika parents were struggling with the high cost of living in Auckland which meant the children had no one to raise them at home. The Auckland Council (2016) reports that Pasifika families struggle to make ends meet and to make matters worse, they are expected to contribute to any family or cultural functions.

David further comments that drugs and alcohol are easy to access for youth and smoking marijuana had become a daily practice for some of his students. Toru made similar comments and added that some youth come from broken homes, or have been abused while growing up. David also touched on the topic of suicide explaining that in one of his classes, all his students bar one had suicidal thoughts.

A report on Pasifika people found that Pasifika children were 4.8 times more likely to die from child abuse or neglect than any other ethnicity, with Maori rated higher. Pasifika aged between 16 – 24 years of age were more likely to consider suicide or attempt suicide compared to the rest of the Pasifika population (Pasifika Proud, 2016). These issues are likely to lead to alcohol and drug use that Toru and David speak about.

### ***5.6.3 Linking Pasifika culture to Pasifika learning***

Caitlin admitted that her teaching practices do not always cater to her Pasifika students but adds that she would be able to help them better if they spoke up and told her what they needed from her, instead of trying to guess what works best for her Pasifika students. Caitlin's frustration regarding the silence of her students is documented in the literature by Tuafuti (2010) who explains that silence is a sign of both respect and obedience. Tui shared that all the students who are enrolled in YG courses did not do well in mainstream schooling. Toru also briefly touched on the learning disabilities of some of his students. This adds an extra challenge to YG teachers but it also suggests that it is imperative that YG teachers have different teaching practices as opposed to the teaching practices utilised in mainstream schooling.

## **5.7 TEACHERS RECOMMENDATIONS**

The participants were asked about their recommendations in response to the challenges that they shared in the previous section. Some of their recommendations were pedagogy based, some related to leadership while some participants stated that more involvement from the Pasifika community was required.

### ***5.7.1 Building relationships with Pasifika students***

Gordon felt his experiences growing up in a Pasifika community and later working with Pasifika for many years in South Auckland has helped him in his teaching practices and working with his Pasifika students. He mentioned many times that learning the basics of Pasifika languages had helped him build good relationships with Pasifika people in general. Caitlin also talked about

building a rapport was important in building relationships. She added that she does not like to force things and it earns a mutual respect between teachers and students.

The comments from Gordon and Caitlin coincide with the literature that describes the concepts of *va* as described in the chapter 2 (Airini et al, 2010; Anae, 2010; 'Ilau, n.d; Tuagalu, 2008). Their experiences working with Pasifika students has helped them to understand that building good relationships is important to Pasifika people. By understanding their own identities, and the identities of their students, they would be able to build more productive relationships (Tuagalu, 2008).

### *5.7.2 Involving Pasifika communities in Pasifika learning*

David talked about the importance of the Pasifika community involvement in Pasifika education. This notion was also recommended in a report to the Ministry of Education by Chu et al., (2013). David went so far as to say that an 'overeducated white person' sitting in an office should not decide on best practices that address issues in Pasifika education. David also voiced his contempt for the way government agencies were addressing the school dropout rates of Pasifika students. His comments imply that government agencies only provide short term solutions. The PEP's 'compass for Pasifika success' (Ministry of Education, 2013) places the Pasifika community in the centre of its framework, alongside Pasifika learners, parents and families.

Tui made an interesting comment. He felt that Pasifika students need to take ownership of their learning. He states that everyone can only do so much for their students but they must want to change. What makes this comment interesting is that Tui works in the same organisation as David



and Toru who were shared some harsh realities of their Pasifika students. It raises the question about whether the students in Tui's classroom share the same challenges as Toru and David's classroom. If they do, How well does Tui understand his students, and is he acknowledging the *va* that the literature describes as being important to Pasifika people.

### *5.7.3 Who is responsible for the changes?*

When asked who is responsible for implementing Pasifika values into their teaching Toru, Gordon and Caitlin initially stated that they, as teachers, are responsible for implementing Pasifika values into their teaching practices. However, they add that they need support from their school leaders and management. Chu et al., (2013) place an emphasis on leadership working together with teachers to find solutions that address challenges to learning. Toru also concurs that teachers need support from their school leadership but his experiences demonstrate that his school's leadership does not provide much support for its teachers. Tui and Lua gave broad answers when they mentioned that everyone needs to be involved in improving education for Pasifika. Upon reflection of the findings, their comments hold some truth in regards to the support YG students and teachers require.

## **Chapter 6. CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study was to explore how youth programme teachers learn to implement Pasifika values in their teaching practices of Pasifika students. To answer the research questions, three Pasifika teachers and three non-Pasifika teachers were selected to participate in the research, which used a comparative case study method and six semi-structured interviews guided by the talanoa methodology. The research was guided by the following research questions:

Overarching question

- How do teachers' of youth programmes learn and implement Pasifika values into their teaching?

Sub-questions

- What understanding do teachers of youth programmes have of Pasifika values?
- How do they recognise these values in their teaching of Pasifika youth?
- What challenges do they encounter when developing and implementing Pasifika values in their teaching and what support do they need to overcome these challenges?

The findings chapter provided an opportunity for the researcher to identify differences and similarities, while the discussion chapter was able to synthesise the findings with the literature from chapter two. The participants were able to share their stories and this study identified the lack of a values structure embedded in YG courses. By comparing interpretations of core values, this research found similarities between the Pasifika and non-Pasifika participants. They also pinpointed family and religion as being a priority to Pasifika people.

This chapter will discuss and answer the research questions by analysing the synthesis of the participants' findings. While the participants may not represent all YG teachers, this research hopes that their stories resonate with other YG teachers, so that they may understand the values that the teachers and students bring to the classroom. The participants' stories should also help school leaders and institutions that provide YG courses provide the appropriate support and development for their teachers and Pasifika students.

## 6.1 IMPLICATIONS

The findings show that there were significant challenges for the participants and their Pasifika students. The first implication is the starts with the development of the participants. All the participants agreed that they would be willing to implement Pasifika values in their teaching but they did not know how this would happen. They did not know who would be responsible for their development, although some of the participants did mention that they would like some support from their school leadership or management. Toru was the only person who mentioned some sort of professional development and although he tried to stay positive about the training, he felt it was not helpful. It is important that school leadership take their teachers' development seriously. It can be very frustrating for YG teachers especially, because their teaching practices need to accommodate the learning styles of their students who have already dropped out of the mainstream schooling system. Therefore, it is not logical to apply the same teaching practices that have already failed their students.

There seems to be confusion on the teachers' part about implementing Pasifika values in their teaching. Some of the comments implied that they would be teaching their Pasifika students about their own cultures, which is not the aim of this research. Implementing Pasifika values would help YG teachers understand their Pasifika students better. A better understanding would contribute to forming better relationships with their Pasifika students by acknowledging the interactions occurring in the *va*. Teachers can work alongside their leadership to develop better teaching pedagogies.

The participants claimed that their Pasifika students come with no knowledge of their Pasifika cultures. If this is true for all Pasifika students enrolled in YG courses, then they might not be able to relate to teaching pedagogies that have implemented Pasifika values. The participants' description of the struggles that many of their Pasifika students go through outside of the school highlights another problem for YG teachers. They are expected to develop teaching pedagogies that will improve the achievement rates of their Pasifika learners, yet the issues described by the participants regarding drug and alcohol abuse, learning issues, and breakdown of the family structure are issues that need to be addressed by government and social organisations.

## 6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants argued for methods that would improve their teaching practices of their Pasifika students. The tertiary institutions that provide YG courses need to recognise that their teachers need the right development to address the learning issues of their Pasifika students. This is also

a recommendation Chu et al (2013), that school leaders must work together in order to create effective teaching practices that will help their Pasifika learners.

### ***6.2.1 Inclusion of Pasifika frameworks***

Organisations that provide YG courses which cater to mainly Pasifika students, need to research what Pasifika frameworks are being developed by the Ministry of Education and Pacific researchers. Initiatives such as the PEP (Ministry of Education, 2013) and the Fonofale model (Pulotu-Endemann, 2001) contain values which are inclusive of the major Pacific groups identified by the Ministry of Education.

The Pasifika Education Plan provides a template for school leaders and their teachers to successfully include Pasifika parents, families and communities in the learning of Pasifika students. The aim of the PEP is to get Pasifika learners engaging and achieving in their education, while being comfortable within their Pasifika identities and cultures. The Fonofale model, described in chapter two, is based on the structure of the Samoan *fale*. The floor is creates the foundation of family, sheltered by Pasifika core values, held up by the four pillars of Pasifika wellbeing.

Understanding these frameworks would create a safe platform for non-Pasifika teachers to implement Pasifika values in their teaching practices. The values are able to override cultural differences and language barriers as shown in the findings. Providing proper teacher development to fully understand the frameworks is required by school leadership.

Understanding these values will also minimise the assumptions teachers make of their Pasifika students as highlighted in literature by Spiller (2012, 2013) and Turner et al (2015).

### ***6.2.2 Pasifika parents responsibilities***

Pasifika parents have a responsibility to pass on their culture to their children. The participants stated that it might be too late for YG students to try and understand cultural values that they were never taught. The discussion chapter revealed that there is a decline in fluent Pasifika language speakers (Pasifika Proud, 2016). With parents working hard to provide the basic necessities for their families, there is a need for Early Childcare Education centres to pass on Pacific values to the next generation of Pasifika learners.

### ***6.2.3 Addressing the issues of Pasifika students in YG courses***

The comments regarding their students' issues outside of school makes it clear that there is a disconnect between government and social agencies, and providers of YG courses. It is unfair to expect YG teachers to help troubled youth when they have not been trained to deal with issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide. Providers of YG courses need to create partnerships between the appropriate organisations to ease the stress and workload of YG teachers. These agencies would be able to provide the support that YG students need, allowing the teachers to concentrate on creating effective teaching pedagogies that improve the achievement rates of their Pasifika students.

### 6.3 CLOSING WORD

The current research identified that there is a place for Pasifika values to be implemented in teaching practices of Pasifika students. All the participants agreed that there is always room to try new things even though they had their concerns, they would be willing to try anything that helps their students. The study highlighted the fact that YG teachers deal with more problems than the average teacher as most of their students come with their fair share of issues.

Research is required to identify why Pasifika students continue to struggle in mainstream schooling. This includes research into how New Zealand teachers are trained, what government agencies should be involved in dealing with troubled Pasifika youth and how they can support the teachers who teach them.

With new Pasifika frameworks being developed to address the low achievements rates of Pasifika students, it is easier for schools to develop their teaching practices to include Pasifika frameworks in their pedagogies. In closing, more research is required to identify how Pasifika values are implemented in mainstream schools and how the training needs to be conducted for all New Zealand teachers.

***la fili i le tai se agava'a.***

**(Let the high seas choose the best person to steer  
the canoe)**

A Samoan proverb used to explain that experience and skill should decide who should lead.

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# GLOSSARY

## Samoan words

Aiga	Family
Alofa	Love
Atua	God
Fa'aaloalo	Respect
Fa'aSamoa	The Samoan way
Feagaiga	Sacred covenant between brother and sister
Gafa	Geneology
Itu	Side
Lotu	Church
Matai	Chief
Nu'u	Village
O a'u	Yourself or me
Outou	You
Saofaiga	Divisions or settlements
Tatou	Us
Tautua	Service
Teu le va	Nurture the relationship, or the space between us
Tino e tasi	One body
Toto e tasi	One blood
Usita'l	Obedience
Va	Space, relationship
Va fealofani	Space, or relationship between brother and sister
Va feiloa'l	Social spaces or relationships
Va taupua	Sacred spaces or relationships

## **Tongan words**

Angafakatonga	Tongan way
Anganofo	Stay at home, being obedient
Fahu	Males oldest sister
Faka'apa'apa	Respect
Fatongia	Obligations to others
Fetokoni'aki	Mutual helpfulness, reciprocity
Mehikitanga	Males oldest sister, fahu
Ofa	Love
Tauhi va	Nurture the relationship, or space between us
Ta-va	Time and space
Vaa	Space, relationship

## **Niuean words**

Anga fakamotu	Niuean way
Faka'alofa	Love
Fakalilifu	Respect. Putting others before yourself
Fakaveaga he mafola	Holding on to peace
Maaga	Village
Magafaoa	Family
Magafaoa laulahi	Extended family
Omaoma ke he tau mamatua	Obedience towards your parents and elders
Uho he matutakianaga	Preciousness of connecting to one another
Vaha	Space, relationship
Vaha loto mahana mitaki	Nurture the relationship, or space between us



# APPENDIX A: Participant Information Sheet

**AUT**

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI  
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

Date Information Sheet Produced: 01/10/2017

Project Title: How youth programme teachers learn to implement Pasifika values in their teaching

## An Invitation

Talofa lava. My name is Iki Tulisi and I am a Masters student in Educational Leadership at the Auckland University of Auckland (AUT). I am conducting research as part of my thesis. This research aims to discuss what youth programme teachers who teach Pasifika students, understand of Pasifika values and how they implement them into their teaching.

- You are invited to take part in the above mentioned research project. Your participation in this research is voluntary.
- Your identity and contact details will remain anonymous throughout this research should you accept to participate.
- Your participation in this research will not affect your current, or future, work practice.
- Once the dissertation is completed, only your own transcripts will be available to you.
- By participating, you agree that only the researcher and research supervisor have access to the research data.

## What is the purpose of this research?

This research aims to create discussion about implementing Pasifika values in classrooms with Pasifika students

This research is part of my thesis for the Masters of Educational Leadership

## How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

I am inviting you to participate in my research because you are a youth programme teacher who teaches Pasifika students. I am inviting three Pasifika and three non-Pasifika teachers (who are also non-Maori).

I previously contacted your programme manager who has forwarded this invitation on my behalf.

Teachers who I personally know or work in the same organisation as myself will be excluded.

## How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you wish to participate in this research, you are required to sign the consent form attached with this information sheet. It is recommended that you carefully read the consent form before signing.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

## What will happen in this research?

- Should you accept this invitation, you are required to attend one face-to-face interview that will be recorded.
- The minimum length of the interview will be 30 minutes and the ending time (up to a maximum of 90 minutes) depends on how much qualitative information you wish to share with me.
- The interviews are semi-structured and will be focussed around your knowledge of Pasifika values and your ideas on how to implement them in teaching practices.
- The interview will take place at AUT's South Campus.
- Once your interview has been transcribed, you will be sent a copy of your own transcript. You will be asked to review, edit and make any deletions from the transcript before returning it for use in the research;
- You are free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation up to two weeks after receiving this transcript. You may withdraw without influencing any present and/or future involvement with the Auckland University of Technology (AUT).
- You will be given petrol vouchers to compensate for your travel costs.

## What are the discomforts and risks?

By agreeing to participate, you may be required to travel to the interview venue (AUT's South Campus) if you do not have an available venue where I can conduct the interview with you. Please note the interview cannot take in a home.

The interview will most likely take place during your own free time.

## How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

AUT Health Counselling and Wellbeing is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research, and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

- drop into our centres at WB219 or AS104 or phone 921 9992 City Campus or 921 9998 North Shore campus to make an appointment. Appointments for South Campus can be made by calling 921 9992
- let the receptionist know that you are a research participant, and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on <http://www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-postgraduates/your-health-and-wellbeing/counselling>.

## What are the benefits?

Benefits to the participants:

- This is an opportunity for teachers to reflect on another aspect of their teaching beyond their teaching methodology
- Create a safe space for non-Pasifika teachers to reflect on, and learn more about, Pasifika values

- Allows Pasifika teachers to be more confident in implementing their own values in their teaching if they aren't already doing so  
Benefits to researcher
- Contributes to gaining Masters degree  
Benefits to the community
- Open up discussions about implementing Pasifika values in initiatives aimed at improving Pasifika learner achievement rates
- Could warrant further research

### How will my privacy be protected?

- Your name and the organisation you work for will not be recorded or written down anywhere in my research.
- Pseudonyms will be used instead of real names
- The data shared by you will be stored on a memory stick and locked in a cupboard in AR120 separate to the consent forms.
- All data will be destroyed once the final draft has been handed in

### What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no costs for participating in this research.

### What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You have two weeks to reply to this invitation starting from the date this invitation was sent out to you.

### Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You will receive a 1 – 2 page summary report of the findings.

### What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Howard Youngs, [howard.youngs@aut.ac.nz](mailto:howard.youngs@aut.ac.nz) , +64 9 921 9999 ex 9633

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTECH, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz) , 921 9999 ext 6038.

### Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Iki Tulisi

Email: removed

Phone: removed

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Howard Youngs

Email: [howard.youngs@aut.ac.nz](mailto:howard.youngs@aut.ac.nz)

Phone: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 9633

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *24/11/17*, AUTEK Reference 17/407

## APPENDIX B: Consent Form

For use when interviews are involved.

*Project title:*                   **How youth programme teachers learn to implement Pasifika values in their teaching**

*Project Supervisor:*       **Dr Howard Youngs**

*Researcher:*                   **Iki Tulisi**

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 01/10/2017.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ☐        No ☐

Participant's signature:

.....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

.....

.....

Date:

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 24/11/17 AUTC  
Reference number 17/407***

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*

## **APPENDIX C: Interview Questions**

**Q1. Please tell me about the values that you were brought up with.**

**Q2. Please explain what understanding you have of Pasifika values.**

**Q3. What is your interpretation of the following values**

**Love:**

**Respect:**

**Obedience:**

**Service:**

**Q4. Do you think there is a place for Pasifika values to be implemented in teaching practices of Pasifika students?**

**Why/Why not?**

**Q5. What challenges or barriers do you think teachers of Pasifika students face in terms of trying to implement Pasifika values in their teaching practices?**

**Q6. What are your personal recommendations for implementing Pasifika values in the teaching practices of Pasifika students?**

**Q7. Who do you think is responsible for implementing these changes?**

**Do you have anything extra to add?**