

**Career Progression of Pacific Island People  
in Tertiary Institutions**

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in Tertiary Institutions**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Pacific Island people are generally underrepresented in senior roles across the various tertiary institutions in New Zealand. This observation is apparent for Pacific Island people employed in either an allied or academic pathway. The purpose of this research is to investigate why Pacific allied staff at a tertiary educational institution do not progress into senior roles in New Zealand.

A qualitative research method was adopted using semi-structured interviews with integration of talanoa to explore the career progression of Pacific staff at a tertiary institution. The study was conducted in Auckland where the majority of the Pacific population resides.

The study found that organisational support, family upbringing and values, skills and competencies, and personal characteristics have been discovered to be the main contributing factors to career progression. It also found that organisation culture and practices, Pacific culture, personal choices, lack of skills and competencies and lack of confidence are key factors that hinder staff from career advancement. A long career pathway for progression for Pacific people was also discovered.

Organisations play a significant role in the career progression of Pacific allied staff as they rely on the organisational support and culture to progress. To facilitate the progression of Pacific allied staff into senior roles at tertiary institutions, organisations need to value Pacific culture and incorporate it into institutional policy and procedures.

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## **ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP**

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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.

Margaret Lisa Amoa

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## **ETHICS APPROVAL**

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This dissertation was approved by Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK) on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015. The reference number was 15/342

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Background

Within tertiary institutions in New Zealand, more Pacific Island people are employed in allied staff positions than academic roles. However, very low numbers progress to senior positions of influence. As the number of Pacific Island students increase in tertiary institutions, there is a need for more Pacific Island staff to hold senior positions that will provide better representation and contribute to the decision-making that directly affects Pacific learners. Little is known about the career progression of Pacific Island people in New Zealand and the key factors influencing progression. This study aims to identify the factors that have assisted or hindered Pacific Island allied staff progression in the tertiary education sector.

Tertiary education in New Zealand, like other similar countries, has dramatically changed in the last 10 years with shifts in external conditions putting pressures on tertiary institutions. The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) is the crown entity organisation responsible on delivering strategic direction set by the New Zealand Government for tertiary institutions. The disparity in educational achievement and the rapid growth of global competition for higher skilled jobs has caused the TEC to focus on improving New Zealand economic outcomes through its Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) 2014 – 2019. According to the New Zealand Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) 2014-19 the international challenges from the global financial crisis and the changing needs of the economy and society have put pressure on the New Zealand government to look for ways to improve economic conditions. These challenges have caused the TEC to change its strategic focus to improve economic outcomes by “building international relationships that contribute to improved competitiveness, support business and innovation through development of relevant skills and research and improve outcomes for all” (NZ Tertiary Education Strategy 2014-2019). Six priority areas were identified as steps to achieving the new strategy goals (TEC, NZ Tertiary Education Strategy 2014-2019).

Lifting Pacific achievement levels to equal that of the general New Zealand population is one of the six priorities listed in the New Zealand TES strategy to achieve economic outcomes. To ensure the Pacific learners’ achievement levels are reached, the TEC Pasifika Framework 2013-2017 was developed to make certain that the tertiary education system was responsive and collaborative in achieving levels on par with other non-Pacific

learners. A study commissioned by Ako Aotearoa in 2012 (Horrocks, J., Ballantyne, N., Silao, A., Manueli, K., and Fairbrother, P.) about the impact of Tertiary education strategies on the success of Pacific learners from 2002 to 2010, highlighted the importance of the role of Pasifika staff and Pasifika stakeholders in supporting and accomplishing these achievements within universities, Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) and wānanga. Furthermore, having Pacific people appointed to senior management positions will also assist (p. 31). It was therefore important that this research explored the factors that helped support or hinder the advancement of Pacific people in senior roles.

For the purpose of this research, “senior roles” will be referred to as roles or positions of middle and senior management that have the following criteria:

- are budget holders;
- have direct reports or human resources responsibilities;
- are accountable for delivery of institutional strategic outcomes;
- can influence others through significant people leadership and
- directly influence growth, achievement of strategic goals and financial success.

## **1.2 Rationale for the study**

Little is known about the factors that influence or deter Pacific people moving to senior roles at tertiary institutions. Previous research studies in tertiary institutions in New Zealand have generally focussed on female academic staff development (Airini, Collings, S., Conner, L., McPherson, K., Midson, B., Wilson, C. 2011) and women’s representation at leadership levels (McGregor, J., Ramsay, E., & McCarthy, D., 2014). The limited literature that does exist for Pacific people has looked at the glass ceiling in New Zealand organisations generally (Tupou, 2012) and the successes and challenges encountered by Pacific senior managers as they aspire to be Auckland primary school principals (Cardno & Auva, 2010). A Career Progression and Development Survey by the State Services Commission in 2000 (State Services Commission, 2000, website) looked at career progression opportunities and the work environment of the public sector, including Pacific workers. Recently, the Project Lumana’i investigated the type of resources that Pacific young people require to expand their career horizons (Careers NZ website, 2016). This study seeks to provide additional knowledge about Pacific people’s career progression in the tertiary educational industry, contributing to the little that is known.

Pacific students represent a relatively significant proportion of the student population in many tertiary institutions but this proportion is not reflected in the make-up of the senior management of these institutions. While the TEC has identified the success and retention rates for Maori and Pacific students as a priority, the absence of Pacific Island people around the management decision-making table does not reflect this national strategy. The findings of this research will contribute to ways in which tertiary institutions in New Zealand can more proactively embrace the challenge of fostering career advancement for Pacific peoples in the education sector.

In tertiary institutions there are more Pacific people in allied positions than academic ones. “Allied staff” known also as “general staff” or “professional staff” are largely invisible (Szekeres, 2004) and overlooked at tertiary institutions, yet they are a very important part of the organisation (Castleman and Allen, 1995). Given their significant contribution, it is vital that tertiary institutions explore the career progression and advancement of allied staff.

Existing research in this area is mainly from studies in Australian universities although the recent study in New Zealand by Ricketts and Pringle (2014) explored female general staff progression barriers and their perceptions of career using a quantitative survey. Their study sheds some light into the experience of allied staff who have long been neglected in the New Zealand tertiary sector. It is hoped that this study will provide opportunities to rediscover known factors or uncover new ones that may hinder or help Pacific people progress into senior levels. The findings may assist Pacific people who are in similar situations to support their career progression. The study may also contribute to tertiary institutions and other organisations understanding culturally responsive career progression pathways for Pacific people.

“Improvement in education outcomes by Pacific peoples of New Zealand matters for the whole of New Zealand society” (Airini, 2010, p. 1). At a personal level, as a Pacific person working in a tertiary institution with 35% of its roll being Pacific students, this researcher reflects on observations of the work environment and wonders why there are not many “brown faces” making decisions that influence the lives of our young Pacific people. As part of an ethnic Pacific Island group and community, Pacific people should have the experience, cultural understanding, knowledge and competencies that are required to succeed, yet it seems there are blocks that stop them from reaching a senior position of influence. Adding to my personal frustration and unanswered questions are

the enquiries raised by non-Pacific people as to why Pacific people do not apply for senior positions or progress to higher level positions. These statements have encouraged and motivated me to take up this study to try and find some answers to the questions.

### **1.3 Objective of the study**

The key objective of this study is to identify the potential factors that help or hinder Pacific allied staff at tertiary institutions advance to senior roles. By exploring the career journey of Pacific staff at a tertiary institution, the themes analysed from their collective stories will assist institutions to better understand what is required to enhance the career advancement of Pacific staff in the tertiary sector.

### **1.4 Terminology and Definitions**

The term “Pacific” refers to people who identify themselves and have cultural connections with the countries of Samoa, Tonga, Tokelau, indigenous Fiji, Cook Islands, Niue, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati and other Pacific countries (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA)<sup>1</sup>, 2014). The terms “Pacific Island people” and “Pacific peoples” used throughout this paper are interchangeable. These terms are both used throughout research in this field but have the same meaning.

The term “allied staff” are generally defined as “being those staff in tertiary institutions that is predominantly administrative in nature” (Szekeres, 2004, p7-8). They are also called “professional staff, non-academic, general staff and Higher Education workers.” The focus of allied staff is to support the organisation in delivering the best outcomes for the learners, through supporting academic staff and students or learners with non-academic matters and they also support research endeavours. In reporting the research literature the name used in the studies are repeated in this thesis. Hence in the literature review section, staff are variously referred to as general staff, allied staff and professional staff. For the purpose of my study I have referred to them as allied staff to align with common usage in New Zealand.

The term “career progression” is defined as the advancement of an individual into employment positions with increased responsibilities (Sargaria and Johnsrud, 1988).

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<sup>1</sup> MPIA – Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs is now known as Ministry for Pacific Peoples

## **1.5 Overview of Research Methodology**

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive methodology guided by an interpretivist paradigm. The study focuses on investigating the career progression of Pacific people to senior roles at tertiary institutions by bringing together their stories, views and experiences. The methodology adopted was also guided by the researcher's ontological, epistemological framework of realities (Lincoln and Guba, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Data was collected from talanoa sessions (similar to semi-structured interviews) of Pacific Island staff and were audio-recorded. A thematic approach was used to categorise and analyse the data into identified themes.

## **1.6 Reflective Stance**

I, the researcher, was born in New Zealand raised from birth to teenage years in Samoa then returned to New Zealand for further education. I have worked in the tertiary sector for four years as an allied staff member. Therefore my worldview that I bring to this study is from different angles. I have been in a role where I have observed the increasing number of Pacific people being employed as allied staff, yet noticed very few in senior roles. Hence the topic of this study.

Being a Pacific Island female member of allied staff has contributed to this study in many ways. The pre-existing relationship between myself, as a researcher and the participants has facilitated the research methodology. These relationships helped to make connections with other Pacific staff. In addition, the communication and networks established through work activities also contributed to the process. These connections earned the trust of the participants sufficiently for them to agree to partake in the study.

My cultural background combined with my work experience has created an awareness amongst the participants that I understand the realities that exist within Pacific culture and the world of allied staff. The participants were also aware of their realities and how the research question was applied to them. I believe these reasons made a positive impression on the participants and their desire to be involved. More importantly they placed their trust in me with their stories and experiences. This is the reason why the talanoa method was incorporated for data collection.

During interviews (talanoa) we would openly share experiences, frustrations and laughter about the various topics discussed. This is the talanoa way. It was from these discussions that valuable data unrelated to the guided questions of the interview were uncovered. This

would not have been possible if the trust relationship between the researcher and the participants had not existed prior. Whilst I was interviewing, I found myself in their stories as if they were telling mine. It was also during the data collection process that it occurred to me that this study does not belong to me, it belongs to the Pacific people, the allied staff who have openly shared their life stories in the hope as they mentioned in the interviews, to benefit “our people.”

## **1.7 Dissertation structure**

This dissertation consists of five chapters. This chapter began with the introduction to the study and the reason behind the selection of this topic.

Chapter two focuses on the literature review of allied staff at tertiary institutions with emphasis on previous research on career progression and barriers. It also provides an overview of the demographic composition of Pacific ethnicities in New Zealand and Auckland and details their standings in the tertiary education sector.

Chapter three discusses the methodology and design adopted for this study. The qualitative descriptive methodology that was used to interpret interviews and the talanoa approach, a Pacific data collection method, is explained. The process of analysis into themes is described.

Chapter four presents the findings of the study and the analysis of data. Key themes and issues are identified and analysed to draw conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter five discusses the findings, the implications and makes recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

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Little is known about allied staff in tertiary institutions with limited literature available in New Zealand. This chapter examines the nature of allied staff, their status and their position in tertiary institutions in Australasia. In addition, the presence of minority groups in tertiary institutions in various countries will be explored to draw from their experiences and knowledge of similar stories of successful or challenging factors that align with Pacific staff. As this study is about Pacific people, a description of Pacific values and culture will be explored to provide an understanding of what constitutes Pacific culture and identify cultural factors that might hinder or help career progression. The final section of this chapter will provide an overview of the minority ethnic groups.

### **2.1 Allied Staff in tertiary education**

The lack of recognition and neglect of allied staff in tertiary institutions has been an ongoing factor in institutions. “The working lives of general staff in universities have been a rather closed book until recently, having been largely ignored in both academic and non-academic literature” (Szekeres, 2006, p.133).

New Zealand is no different from other countries when it comes to the amount of research focussing on academic staff but that is not the situation with allied staff. Australia has carried out considerably more research on allied staff in universities when compared to New Zealand. Research was on the roles and contribution of allied staff (Szekeres (2006), nomenclature preferences for non-academic staff (Sebalj, Holbrook, & Bourke, 2012), professional development for general staff (Graham, 2009) and the contribution of professional staff to student learning outcomes (Graham, 2012).

Allied staff are largely overlooked, invisible, under-researched, undervalued and often appear to occupy a forgotten land with universities. Szekeres (2004) in her study of administrators’ positions in tertiary institutions as depicted in a range of government reports, academic writings and novels, found that allied staff are largely concealed as they are hardly ever mentioned in these texts compared to academics. Furthermore, Castleman and Allen (1995) believed the reason for this situation is that: “It is also a feminised workforce which perhaps partly explains its invisibility” (p.65). In addition, the very limited research conducted on allied staff, the lack of data and being somewhat overlooked by tertiary institutions when compared to their academic counterparts has

resulted in their being described as “the forgotten workforce” (Castleman & Allen, 1995). Ricketts and Pringle (2014) note that the longer allied staff remain invisible in both the workplace and in literature, the harder it is to recruit, retain and progress university administration as a chosen and valuable career as little is known about this profession. Their study examined the career motivation, subjective discrimination and home and occupational salience of female general staff across New Zealand universities through an online questionnaire. It was found that allied staff had high levels of motivation and desire to progress in their roles, however, the lack of suitable openings was ranked the greatest hindrance for their progress. The confidence in their abilities and the skills recognised by their managers contributed positively to their career attitude but did not have a great impact on their motivation to progress.

Allied staff are an essential component of tertiary institutions and integral to their success. Their frontline interactions with students and their contribution to the core operational, management and financial support functions are an important factor in student achievement, development and persistence (Rosser, 2000). Rosser (2000) elaborates further by stating that they are the “unsung professionals of institutions” (p.5) because their loyalty, skills, knowledge and commitment, and “adherence to high standards of performance and excellence: are rarely recognised” (p.5). In his report to the Australian Tertiary Education Management in 2008, Hoare highlighted that allied staff in particular make a significant contribution to the efficiency of tertiary institutions. In addition to supporting academic staff by facilitating teaching and research roles, they also provide expertise in policy development, finance, library, information technology, student administration, management, marketing and infrastructure (Hoare, 1995; Rosser, 2004; Szekeres, 2006).

In Australia, women make up the majority of allied staff, yet are underrepresented in senior positions (Gray, S. 2015; Simpson & Fitzgerald, 2014). Gray, S (2015) recorded that in 2013 approximately 55% of employees in Australian universities were professional staff or non-academic staff. According to the Work and Careers in Australian Universities survey in 2012 found 79% of professional staff have a degree with 42% having a qualification higher than a bachelors degree, Wallace and Marchant (2011) reported that in 2004, 64% of allied staff were female and according to the Department of Education and Training Australia in 2015, 55.4% of university staff were allied 64.7% of them were females.

Given their significant contribution, tertiary institutions would do well to pay attention to the needs and aspirations of allied staff. Tertiary institutions like other organisations, are likely to continue to face challenging changes in the future and therefore institutions will be required to develop and support people's capability to successfully adapt to change. Graham (2009) argued "that Australian universities need to invest in the professional development of general staff in particular early career general staff, to ensure continued success in the twenty-first century (p. 177). This argument could equally apply to the New Zealand tertiary education sector.

Allied staff continue to be invisible, overlooked and forgotten. It appears from recent research that not much has changed for the last 20 years. Compared to New Zealand, Australia has conducted more research in this area.

## **2.2 Demographics of Pacific people**

New Zealand has a significant population of Pacific people with 7.4% of the population (293,841 people) identifying with one or more Pacific ethnic group. Pacific people were the fourth largest ethnic group in 2013 behind European, Maori and Asian ethnic populations (Statistics NZ, Census 2013). The New Zealand Pacific population is youthful and growing. It is projected that by 2026, 10% of New Zealand population will be Pacific compared to 7.4% in 2013 (Ministry of Pacific Peoples (MPP), 2016 website). (Refer to Table 1) According to the Ministry for Pacific Peoples (MPP), Pacific people are a "diverse and dynamic group" with 46.1% under the age of 20 years old compared with the 27.4% of the total population and over half of the population (54.6%) less than 25 years old (MPP, 2016).

Table 1 NZ Census Population Count 2013

Ethnic group	Number	Percentage (%)
European	2,969,391	74.0
Māori	598,605	14.9
Asian	471,711	11.8
Pacific peoples	295,944	7.4
Other Ethnicity	67,752	1.7
Middle Eastern, Latin American, African	46,953	1.2

Source: Statistics NZ

According to the Ministry for Pacific Peoples (MPP), the term “Pacific” or “Pasifika” is defined as a collective term used to refer to people of Pacific origin or descent who are born or migrated to New Zealand. For the purpose of this research, I will use the term Pacific to refer to people who identify themselves and have cultural connections with countries of Samoa, Tonga, Tokelau, indigenous Fiji, Cook Islands, Niue, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati and other Pacific countries (MPIA, 2014).

Samoa remains the largest Pacific people’s ethnic group at 48.7%, Cook Islands 20.9%, Tonga 20.4%, Niuean 8.1%, Tokelauan 2.6% and Tuvaluan at 1.0%. Refer to Table 2 and Figure 1 below.

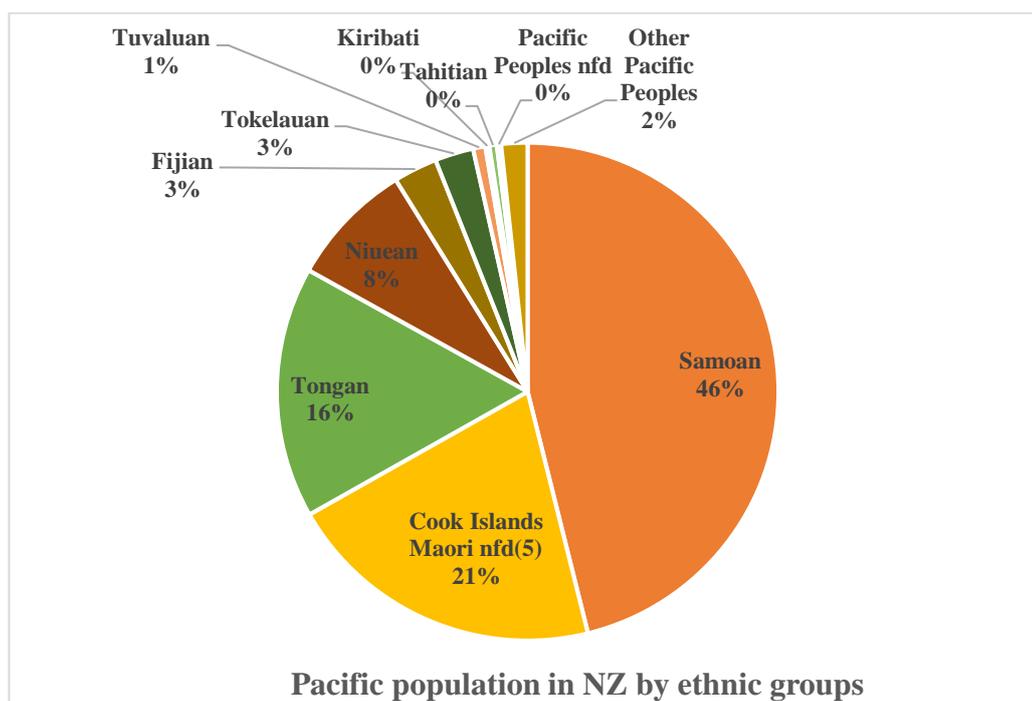
Table 2 Pacific people population in NZ by ethnic groups

Pacific people population in NZ by ethnic groups Pacific Peoples	2001 Census	2006 Census	2013 Census	2013 (%)
<b>Samoan</b>	115,017	131,103	144,138	48.7%
<b>Cook Islands Maori nfd*</b>	51,486	56,895	61,077	20.9%
<b>Tongan</b>	40,716	50,481	60,333	20.4%
<b>Niuean</b>	20,148	22,476	23,883	8.1%
<b>Fijian</b>	7,041	9,864	14,445	4.88%
<b>Tokelauan</b>	6,204	6,819	7,173	2.6%
<b>Tuvaluan</b>	1,968	2,625	3,537	1.0%
<b>Kiribati</b>	645	1,116	2,115	0.71%
<b>Tahitian</b>	1,200	1,329	1,407	0.47%
<b>Pacific Peoples nfd</b>	678	789	1,026	0.34%
<b>Other Pacific Peoples</b>	4,218	4,311	4,866	1.64%
<b>Total Pacific Peoples</b>	231,798	265,974	295,941	

NZ Statistics Department: 2013 Census QuickStats about culture and identity

\* nfd – not further defined is a residual category used for responses that have insufficient details for a lower level of a classification in the hierarchy

Figure 1 Pacific Population in NZ by ethnic groups



### 2.2.1 Pacific people in Auckland

This study was conducted in Auckland where the majority of the Pacific population resides. Statistics NZ recorded that 92.6% of Pacific people lived in the North Island with over 60% residing in Auckland. According to the TEC Pasifika Framework, (TEC 2013-2017) 72% of all NZ Pacific learners are in Auckland. Refer to Table 3 for the ethnic composition of the Auckland population.

Table 3 Population by ethnic groups in Auckland

Auckland Region	2006 Census	2013 Census	2013 %
<b>European</b>	700,158	789,306	50%
<b>Māori</b>	137,304	142,770	10%
<b>Pacific Peoples</b>	177,948	194,958	14%
<b>Asian</b>	234,279	307,230	22%
<b>Middle Eastern/Latin American/African</b>	18,561	24,945	2%
<b>Other Ethnicity</b>			
New Zealander	99,474	14,904	1%
Other Ethnicity nec*	651	738	
<b>Total people, Other Ethnicity</b>	100,110	15,639	1%
<b>Total people stated</b>	1,239,051	1,331,427	
<b>Not Elsewhere Included</b>	65,907	84,123	6%
<b>Total people, Auckland Region</b>	1,304,961	1,415,550	

nec – not elsewhere classified

Despite Auckland's increasing diversity, there is little evidence of targeted efforts to attract and develop staff from the various communities that represent the population of Auckland. Pacific people are a young population with 46.1% under the age of 20 compared to 27.4% of total population. The successful employment and career progression of this young population will have a significant impact on the future of the New Zealand economy. Consideration of initiatives or policies to ensure this success must be a priority.

### ***2.2.2 Pacific culture/values***

Culture has been described by Hofstede as members of the same group sharing common social beliefs, values and practices in the same geographical location. According to Hofstede, culture exemplifies the common thoughts and ideas of a group that are distinctive from other groups (Hofstede, 1980). It is a human phenomenon that people learn from each other through everyday tasks, actions, stories, norms and the way they communicate with each other. Furthermore, it is about ideas, facts, feelings, thoughts about family, faith or religion, education, food, appearance, activities, status and social background. These practices and features are passed from one generation to the next.

The 'Pacific Way' differentiates Pacific people from other ethnic groups. According to Tupouniua, S., Crocombe, R. G., & Slatter, C (1975), Pacific culture (also known as the Pacific Way) focuses mainly on the well-being of their families, for example no one gets left out. It is a collectivist culture meaning everyone looks after each other, within families, extended families, villages and communities and there is communal sharing, for example sharing of food and land with families living together sharing accommodations. They take the collaborative approach to everything they do. Foliaki (2005) proposed the most common practices by Pacific Island communities are; teamwork, devotion and trustworthiness, traditional values, respect and acknowledgment and respect of status (cited in Tupou, 2012).

### ***2.2.3 Pacific people in tertiary institutions***

Sourcing data for Pacific people in tertiary institutions is challenging. There are 8 universities in New Zealand, 18 polytechnics and 3 wānanga. Finding and collating source data on the number of Pacific staff in these institutions has been difficult which perhaps reveals a lack of reporting. These data used to appear routinely in Annual Reports for tertiary institutions but recently only a few have reported this information. For example, in the Auckland area, one institution reported total staff ethnicity data whilst three reported total allied staff but no breakdown of ethnicity in their annual plan reports. It appears that University of Auckland (UoA) is the only institution that reported the number of Pacific allied staff (i.e. 153.5 FTE). These figures were not in their annual plan but was extracted from the Equity report (UoA, Equity Office report 2015). For this study I have been advised by various government departments that the data that I am trying to source are Human Resources data so are confidential. It poses a challenging question about why institutions are reluctant to release these data in their annual reports. Interestingly, there is no central point of data collection for Pacific people.

The first Tertiary Education Strategy included an objective for “an increased proportion of Pacific staff at all levels of decision making in the tertiary education system” with an intended outcome being an “ability to participate in governance, management and learning roles” (Associate Minister of Education, 2002). From the Ako Aotearoa Report 2012 of the analysis of annual reports and interviews of key informants of 18 Tertiary Education Institutions (8 universities and 10 ITPs) from 2002 and 2010, it was found that there seemed to be a lack of awareness of the objective of the first TES in relation to increasing the proportion of Pacific staff at all levels of decision making within the tertiary sector. (Horrocks, J., Ballantyne, N., Silao, A., Manuelli, K., and Fairbrother, P., (2012). The report found a number of institutions reported on ethnicity of their staff but few reported on their target Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to improve the proportion of Pacific staff.

The literature review showed little research has been published on the career journeys of allied staff and of Pacific people in New Zealand. Recent articles revealed that allied staff are still largely invisible and neglected by tertiary institutions. This study aims to contribute to this gap by gaining an understanding of what factors support and hinder career progression of Pacific people.

### ***2.2.4 Pacific people in Public Sector***

Tertiary Education is part of the public service sector (PSS), therefore it is appropriate for this study to provide a brief overview of the PSS and an overall background of Pacific staff within the sector.

The under-representation of staff in management roles and over-representation in front-line and clerical occupations is not a new issue according to State Services Commission (SSC). The SSC in their ‘EEO (Equal Employment Opportunities) progress in the Public Service with special focus on Pacific Peoples report 2004’ stated that the under-representation in management roles results in fewer opportunities for Pacific people for their direct contribution into decision making. Furthermore, the report continued to reveal that there were willing Pacific staff who have aims and aspirations to advance to senior roles and are in need of active support and encouragement, with clear goals and guidelines for their development. The lack of experience, lack of qualification, lack of other people’s confidence and concerns of fairness of selection processes were barriers that hindered them from applying. Identified strategies were recommended to address these issues, such as acknowledging cultural skills as being relevant to business, monitoring organisational cultural environments, formal mentoring arrangements, and access to wider experiences by secondment to name a few.

Eleven years later Pacific people continue to try and address the same issue. The recent Human Resource Capability in the NZ State Sector Report 2015 from the State Sector Commission reports that Pacific staff in the public sector are still over-represented in front-line and clerical occupations and under-represented in management and policy roles (HRC, 2015). These roles are lower-paid occupations therefore Pacific people are earning less compared to non-Pacific staff but equally with the Maori and Asian in these occupations. In terms of senior leadership roles, there been a small increase for Pacific staff from 1.8% to 2.6% in 2015; a marginal improvement of 0.8% more Pacific staff in the public sector workforce (Refer to Table 4 below).

*Table 4 Diversity in senior leadership, 30 June 2011-2015*

*(HRC, 2015 State Services Commission)*

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Public Service workforce (2015)
Women	39.6%	42.1%	41.5%	42.0%	44.2%	60.5%
Māori	9.2%	9.6%	11.2%	12.0%	11.1%	16.4%
Pacific people	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.8%	2.6%	8.0%
Asian	1.9%	2.6%	2.3%	2.4%	2.1%	8.5%

Given that Auckland is one of the most diverse cities in the world and its diversity is continuing to accelerate, it is important that the public sector increase the representation of this diversity in senior roles to ensure policy and practice meet the needs of the entire population. Representation in the education sector is critical for the youthful Pacific population to guarantee the development of the required skills and knowledge to flourish and contribute positively to the nation and its economy.

### ***2.2.5 Pacific careers***

Career definitions have changed over time from the traditional paid employment to begin to include non-paid work and all of the varied experiences (intrinsic and extrinsic) through which the individual will grow and change throughout her/his life. Changes in economies also lead to changes in career theories, however the emphasis of career remains limited to the individual. According to Gander (2017), career was traditionally a form of employment where the organisation provides “long-term employment and guaranteed benefits in return for high-commitment and high-productivity” (p.8). Career was defined as “the evolving sequence of a person’s work experiences over time” (Arthur, Hall & Lawrence, 1989, p.8). This definition was confined to paid employment and to experiences within (one organisation) until the introduction of boundaryless career theory where individuals movement between organisations was emphasized. Building on this Sullivan and Baruch (2009, p.1543) defined career as “an individual’s work-related and other relevant experiences, both inside and outside the organisations that form a unique pattern over the individual’s life span.” The latter definition has assumed that individuals will be motivated by extrinsic factors. Within the Pacific context, career could be defined as work-related activities and other relevant experiences, both inside and outside of an individual’s life that forms a unique pattern that contributes to the individual’s family and community well-being over the individual’s life span.

A search of the literature showed little has been published on the career journeys of Pacific people in New Zealand. This study aims to contribute to this gap by gaining an understanding of which factors may support the career progression of Pacific people. Career services in New Zealand were first introduced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and have undergone many developments and changes since then. Despite its long existence “little career theory has been developed” for Pacific people (Furbish 2012, p.20). According to Furbish, developing Pacific career theory is a challenge because of the consideration of

the diverse cultures of various Pacific Island nations that made up Pacific people population particularly in the New Zealand (Furbish, 2012).

Initially, Pacific people migrated to New Zealand during the 1950s to fill the gap in demand for the low skilled labour market during the time when New Zealand was expanding its industrial sector (Tupou, 2012). Their contribution was significant in rebuilding the New Zealand post-war economy by providing the unskilled labour that was not available locally to expand the industrial sector. Pacific people saw this migration as an opportunity for a better future and to help their families. Few studies have been conducted on careers of Pacific people. Parker (2005) in her paper on ‘Intelligent Careers of Pacific Island leaders’ focussed on Pacific professionals working in the public sector specifically for the Ministry of Health and the Pacific Island Affairs office to provide practical support for them in their career and leadership development and to consider the impact of culture in the process. The Pacific Adolescent Career Pathways: Final report 2014 from the Ministry of Pacific Peoples (MPP, formerly the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs) reports the findings of their longitudinal study to gain an understanding of students’ career choices and the factors that influence them (MPIA, 2014).

This MPIA Adolescent Career study found despite supportive environments (school and home), psycho-social factors such as self-belief, confidence and motivation are lacking for many students. It was recommended that investment in activities of boosting confidence, sense of belonging, self-pride, motivation and esteem are important enablers to help with their career choices.

Career success and advancement for Pacific people is partly to enhance their family well-being and to impact change in their communities. Parker in her report found “the interdependence of motivation, skills and knowledge and relationships strongly influenced the career and leadership behaviour of Pasifika people to enhance the outcomes for Pacific people in New Zealand” (Parker, 2005, p. 1). This report was an empirical study conducted with Pacific professionals working in the public sector who had been recognised for their potential to influence Pacific peoples. These Pacific professionals attended a professional development workshop that included a careers component. Parker found that Pacific professionals’ motivation to work was for the betterment of the family to enhance their position in New Zealand. A collectivist approach which aligns with Pacific values of looking after each other and the family being the most paramount aspect of Pacific culture. They must be equipped with specific skills and

knowledge that is accepted in the Palagi<sup>2</sup> context of leadership compared to their inherited knowledge and natural leadership skills from their families and communities. Many Pacific people are natural leaders with inherited knowledge in their families and in their communities. These skills and knowledge do not translate into the workplace, as Pacific leadership style is about “getting the work done rather than leading from the front” (Parker, 2005, p. 9). Leading was seen as a service to their community not a self-serving position. Compared to strategic thinking of seeing the bigger picture, conceptualising complexity, initiating innovative ideas and many other features in which they perceived as a “skill useful in the Palagi world and one to be learned from them” (p.13). However, learning new skills and opening up to new ways of doing things is recognised as an important component of career development to improve Pacific outcomes.

Tupou (2012), in her qualitative research explored the effect of the glass ceiling of ten Pacific Island women from reaching senior positions in New Zealand. This study found gender discrimination, organisational culture, Pacific Island culture, organisational support, ethnic background and personal characteristics to be the key barriers for Pacific Island women to reach top level of their organisations (Tupou, 2012). The ten Pacific Island women in this study held various roles within government and private organisations. They were representatives from each of the island groups of Samoa, Cook Island, Fiji, Tonga and Niue. All were university graduates (Bachelors, Postgraduate Diplomas and Masters) and aged between 20 to 50 years old.

In a small qualitative study, Cardno and Auvaa, (2010) examined the factors that impacted on aspirations of eight Pacific Island senior managers in NZ primary schools to progress to becoming principals. It is important to note that three of the participants in this study were unsuccessful when they applied for principal positions. The study found that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors were important. Intrinsic factors such as “being committed to serving their community and being guided in their decisions by deeply held religious values” were recognised as contributing to their success” (p.91). Extrinsic factors such as some experience in senior management, encouragement from family and peers and unexpected succession have also supported their progress. The barriers or challenges faced were the lack of confidence, lack of career planning and ethnicity barriers, lack of institutional support networks, role models, institutional racism and the absence of Pacific Island targeted leadership programmes. Cardno and Auvaa (2010)

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<sup>2</sup> Palagi is a Samoa word used to describe foreigner of Caucasian origin

argue that minority groups in senior leadership positions add their rich cultural heritage to the well-being of the school, provide role models, and in the process play a unique role transforming adding to the organisational culture and future aspirations.

Overall, there has been a lack of research on Pacific people's careers. The limited research that has been conducted has tended to focus on managers' reflections on their past progress and in small samples. In this study, the researcher has focussed on Pacific people across a range of positions (i.e. from receptionist, administrators, specific Pacific focussed role, personal assistants, middle management and senior management) and range of experiences from people who have been successful and others who were faced by different challenges. This study specifically seeks to address the research question: What are the factors that support or hinder Pacific people's progress to senior level positions?

### **2.3 Minority Ethnic Groups**

Currently in New Zealand minority groups made up 35.3% of the population (refer to Table 1), a relatively high proportion compared to other similar countries. For example, the Catalyst Knowledge Centre report in 2007 on Career Advancement in Corporate Canada projected that by 2017, minority groups in Canada will represent one in five people (20%) in the workforce and will make up a sizeable part of the labour force. In New Zealand it is projected by 2030 that they will make up over half of New Zealand's population, with Pacific people expected to make up 10% of the New Zealand population and with its younger population. This group of people will have a large impact on the future of the New Zealand economy. For both countries, the increasing population of the minority groups' workforce is critical to the future growth and performance of their competitive economies.

Minorities seeking success in the workplace regularly encounter roadblocks that prevent them from reaching their goal. These include discrimination, racism and misconceived perceptions, lack of organisational support, lack of opportunity to advance, as well as other blocks. These roadblocks have presented different challenges in their career progression. In the case of Aboriginal public services in Canada, it was found that the factors perceived by Aboriginals to be the most important factors to progress were different from what the organisations viewed them as (Dwyer, 2003). Leadership experience, education and job assignments (e.g. projects and secondments) were identified by the Aboriginal staff as contributing to career

progression. Networking with management and having mentors were viewed important by the organisations. These differences perhaps reflect the organisations' lack of understanding of the Aboriginal minority groups and their cultures. Thomas (2001) in his study of career progression of minorities at United States corporations, found that white professionals tend to advance earlier in their careers compared to minorities.

There is a distinct pattern to the career progression of minorities compared to whites (Thomas, 2001). Thomas (2001) in his study of career progression of minorities at United States corporations have found "white professionals tend to enter a fast track early in their careers, whereas high-potential minorities take off much later" (p.99). In addition, having strong network of mentors and corporate sponsors who nurture their professional development was identified as the one attribute that the minorities who advanced had. In other situations, minorities have been able to gain entrance into workplace, and often climb into lower and middle-level managements, however for some their career path ends there (de Morsella, 2016). According to Kerka (2004), there is limited "research on career issues for minority groups" (p.62). Given that there is an increase in minority ethnic groups worldwide and in some countries like New Zealand with nearly 40% of the population diverse and continually increasing, it is important to understand career development for this specific groups for future growth of the economy.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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This chapter outlines and discusses the methodology and the method used to investigate the research question. The processes for participant selection, data collection, the method of talanoa and the analysis of the data, are also explained.

### 3.1 Qualitative research

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) defined qualitative methodology as:

multi-method in focus involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 3)

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive methodology (Sandelowski, 2000) guided by an interpretive research paradigm (Grant & Giddings, 2002) to investigate why Pacific allied staff do not progress into senior roles in tertiary institutions. An interpretivist research paradigm is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live in.

According to Smythe (2012) qualitative descriptive methodology allows the voices of people to be heard. This qualitative method is used to allow researchers to interact with participants in order to understand their perceptions and experiences and collect in-depth information of their reality (Grant & Giddings, 2002, Bryan and Bell, 2011). The researcher is able to explain the reasons for a reality or phenomenon by asking “what, how and why” questions. In addition, Gray pointed out a qualitative approach is appropriate to research an area that is new or unexplored and seeks to “draw a picture of a situation, person or event or show how things are related to each other” (Gray, 2014, p.36). For this reason, such an approach is appropriate to apply in this new and unfamiliar area of career progression for Pacific allied staff in New Zealand tertiary institutions by aiming to answer the main research question “*What are the factors that support or hinder Pacific people’s progress to senior level positions?*”

As noted above, the study was guided by an interpretivist paradigm. Pacific allied staff including two additional non-Pacific managers were selected to study their lived

experiences or reality of working at a tertiary institution. Their stories, experiences and views of their world at tertiary institutions helped to identify the objective of the study i.e. identifying the factors that help or hinder Pacific allied staff progression. The information and knowledge co-constructed from both Pacific and non-Pacific staff realities will be interpreted by the researcher which is a further factor that supports the interpretivist paradigm as being appropriate.

### **3.2 Method – (Talanoa)**

An interview is the most common form of data collection in research (Mason, 2002; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). It allows the researcher to explore particular interests from participants and has flexibility to respond to enquiries and emerging concerns. Talanoa, a culturally appropriate research method was selected for data collection. Pacific researchers (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt Samu, & Finau, 2001) have seen the growth of Pacific research over the recent years and have therefore advocated the use of culturally appropriate methodologies that are respectful, considerate and reflective of Pacific values. Talanoa has become the culturally appropriate research method of data collection for Pacific studies. It has widespread use in Pacific research in the areas of education (Man'uatū, 2000; Otsuka, 2005; Vaioleti, 2003) and increasing use recently in Pacific business (Prescott, 2008; Masoe, 2010).

Talanoa takes into account a number of issues such as the participant's Pacific culture, language, values, attitudes, education, perceptions of the research and importantly the relationships and interactions with one another and the researcher (Prescott, 2008, p. 128). The researcher attempted to take written notes in the first interview and immediately abandoned this process as the researcher found it to be disruptive during the interaction with the participant, particularly when the interview involves a lot of engagement or responses between the parties involved

Talanoa is a common form of communication in the Pacific that creates and transfers knowledge. It composes of both a formal and informal exchange of ideas. "It is used across a number of social settings, from the informal talanoa that can take place between friends to the formal setting of a kava reception" (Prescott, 2008, p. 63) or a family meeting between parents and their children. The word Talanoa has been defined as 'tala' meaning to "talk (in an informal way) to tell stories or relate experiences" and "noa" meaning "zero or without concealment" (Churchward, 1959, p. 447.) In most situations, talanoa as a process of obtaining information is carried out face-to-face (Vaioleti, 2006)

in interviews (Prescott, 2008) and finding out how people felt about things (Otsuka, 2005). Therefore it was fitting that semi-structured interviews integrating Talanoa method was appropriate for this study. It enabled the researcher to understand, capture, describe and interpret the Pacific participant's experiences of their career journey from their worldview. Talanoa methodology is relatively new to the area of business so a brief account of this approach follows in the next section.

Talanoa methodology was first proposed to the academic world by Timote Vaoleti in the early 2000s as a culturally appropriate approach for Pacific research that aligns with their worldview and culture (Vaoleti, 2013). Vaoleti discovered that the Western research approaches that he was applying was not accurately capturing the worldview of Pacific people in describing and interpreting their experiences of the phenomenon being researched. Central to the Pacific worldview are the sets of values, beliefs and practices regarded as their reality and to Vaoleti these vital aspects of the Pacific world were not being included in the methodology that he was using. As Halapua (2000) pointed out, Talanoa “embraces our worldviews of how we can and ought to live and work together collectively, and relate to one another as members of society” (p.1)

The emphasis on exploring the lived experiences of the participants is a common feature for Talanoa and related research methodologies. Talanoa is positioned within the qualitative research, grounded theory, naturalistic and ethnography research approaches. It belongs to the phenomenological research group as its emphasis is on exploring the lived and shared experiences of the participants. According to Vaoleti (2006), Talanoa is a “personal encounter where people story their issues, their realities and aspirations (p. 1). It is through these shared story telling that issues facing Pacific people emerged. These issues are identified, validated and theorised and Pacific people can then co-construct the knowledge and answers required for themselves. As Violeti (2006) pointed out, Talanoa can provide reliable and authentic data more effectively than other research approaches due to its endorsements of the experiences and behaviours of Pacific people in New Zealand.

The heart of Talanoa is based on mutual engagement which leads to co-construction of knowledge (Gageo & Gageo, 2001). Building, strengthening and maintaining relationships based on reciprocated trust, respect and empathy of all involved is a key feature of the Talanoa process. The strength of these relationships is to enable connection to occur between all involved and also enabled them to respect and learn from each other.

Knowledge and understanding evolved from Talanoa assists to reduce tension and conflict, and in doing so, fosters stability and mutuality in relationships (Halapua, 2000). For Talanoa to be effective, mutual trust and mutual respect must be fostered between participants and researchers as a necessary condition.

Halapua (cited in Farrelly and Nabobo, 2012, p2) pointed out that talanoa is also a philosophy involving an “open dialogue where people can speak from their hearts and where there are no preconceptions”. This open dialogue cannot occur unless the foundations of rapport and relationship between the researcher and the participants have been laid based on mutual trust and respect.

### **3.3 Rationale for adopting Semi-structured interview and talanoa**

Talanoa requires researchers to be active participants in the study. This involvement with the participants is similar to the Qualitative Descriptive approach where the researcher is involved by interacting with the participants except with Talanoa, the process takes into account the culture and the social connections and context of the participant. Unlike the semi-structured interview, “the openness associated with talanoa is a product of the underlying trust relationship and sense of cultural connectedness between those involved” (Prescott, 2008, p. 130). In addition, the relationship between the researcher and the participants raises expectations therefore promoting mutual accountability and contributes highly to the quality and trustworthiness of the study.

As a Pacific Islander researcher, I needed to engage with the participants in a culturally appropriate manner. Talanoa is about respecting the space or the ‘va’, the safe environment. The ‘va’ is the space between the researcher and the participant. Fortunately for me, the relationships have already been established with the participants through being employed at the same institution. This was a great advantage in terms of the participants’ openness in providing me with data that is trustworthy and honest. They trust that I will respect their privacy and their identity. The existing relationship has allowed them to be open, freely giving their stories.

A significant and distinctive feature of the Talanoa research methodology that truly aligns with my own values and Pacific worldview of this study is the accountability to the Pacific people. This study does not belong to me, it belongs to the Pacific people and Pacific allied staff whose stories were entrusted to me to be shared in the hope that it will benefit Pacific people more widely. As explained in the quote below from Vaioleti (2013) I am

only carrying out responsibilities to ensure this piece of work is completed and given back to the Pacific people.

*“It is important to appreciate that an outcome of talanoa based research must benefit Pacific peoples and their interests, with accountability back to the Fonua (land) and the ancestors, therefore the researcher still has a clear leadership role in carrying out Talanoa Research Methodology” (Vaioleti, 2013, p. 194).*

### **3.4 Rationale for study location**

From the 2013 New Zealand census, it was reported that Pacific people represent 3% of the total number of people working in tertiary institutions compared to 10% Maori and 73% European and far fewer working in academic positions than allied staff. (Statistics NZ, 2013). However, the researcher decided to focus this study on support roles as this is where the majority of the Pacific people are being employed and have the potential to be promoted into more senior and influential roles. Although they are in support roles in greatest numbers in tertiary institutions, very few progress beyond the lower levels. It is for these reasons that the researcher decided to undertake this study to hear peoples’ stories about their lives and their journeys with the aim that their contribution may be of benefit to current and future Pacific staff looking to take this career path.

With the majority of the Pacific population residing in Auckland, particularly South Auckland, it was decided that this study would be carried out in this area. The study focuses on one of the tertiary institutions located in South Auckland. The rationale for this decision was:

- a) That 35% of students enrolled in this organisation are Pacific Island therefore providing an ideal sample with which to explore the career progression of their Pacific staff.
- b) In addition, the researcher is an employee of this organisation and can access information and participants easily through their existing network.

### **3.5 Ethical Considerations**

Ethics approval for this study was required as it involved face-to-face interviews. Ethics consideration was submitted to the AUT Ethics Committee and was approved on 18 November 2015 – Application Number 15/342 (refer Appendix One)

Protocols were implemented to protect the identities and rights of the participants in compliance with the Ethics approval. Participant's rights were communicated and informed in several ways. Initially, the participants were notified of the study through the Participation Information Sheet (refer to Appendix Three) that assured them that all information gathered would remain confidential. Prior to beginning the talanoa session, participants were given a form (refer Appendix Four) seeking their consent to record the interview. Once again the researcher informed them of the ethics process, ensuring them that their identities would be strictly protected and remain confidential. The right to withdraw from the study at any time and up to a certain point during data analysis was highlighted to them. Given the small number of Pacific Island staff at tertiary institutions, the possibility of identifying the participants in the study was high. More detailed information about assigning pseudonyms to their names and generalising secondary data collected were also provided to reassure them of their confidentiality.

In compliance with ethical practices, the access and storage of information gathered has been followed. Transcript recordings and soft copies of talanoa sessions have been stored in the researchers Personal files which is accessible by password known only to the researcher. All consent forms are stored in Professor Judith Pringle's AUT lockable filing cabinet.

### **3.6 Sample**

A total of 15 Pacific participants were selected for the study. The sample was not based on any statistical standards. The initial intention was for the sample to be based on the responses received from the invitation sent out to staff via the Pacific staff network. This approach did not turn out as planned and therefore the research adopted a purposive sampling approach instead.

Purpose sampling was selected to capture the various realities of the factors that influenced career progression of Pacific allied staff. Purposive sampling “focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study”

(Patton, 2002, p. 230). The selection of participants from various areas of the institution was to gain insights and capture the experiences of allied staff across areas.

In order to identify the factors that supported or hindered career progression of Pacific staff, a selective sample based on status, roles, direct reports, years at work, gender and areas of work were chosen to gather widespread perspectives of the realities of working in a tertiary institution. Two participants were selected from non-Pacific staff who have direct reports who are of Pacific ethnicity. The aim was to explore these managers' perspectives and what they perceived to be the main factors faced by Pacific staff wanting to progress.

### **3.7 Recruitment and Selection**

#### ***3.7.1 Selection criteria***

Participants for this study were sought from people self-identifying as of Pacific ethnicity. All participants had to be of Pacific Island descent from the following Pacific Island groups: Samoa, Tonga, Cook Island, Niue, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Indigenous Fiji, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati and other Pacific Islands (MPIA, website). They must work fulltime and more importantly as an allied worker, or in other terms be a non-academic staff member. Indian Fijians have been excluded from the study as they are not of Polynesian descent within the Pacific region. As a result they may be more aligned to their Indian ancestry.

#### ***3.7.2 Recruitment Process***

The initial recruitment for potential research participants for this study was channelled through the Pacific staff network at the tertiary institution where the study took place. The researcher, who is also a member of the network, made a request for an opportunity to speak briefly about the study at the next Pacific staff network meeting and this was granted. The purpose of speaking to the meeting was to make Pacific staff aware and understand the rationale of the study prior to them receiving information about it. By understanding the importance of the study, potential research participants that did volunteer initially may have been encouraged to participate when their colleagues put their name forward. It is important to note that the Pacific staff network comprises of both allied and academic members, but it was clear that only allied staff were asked to volunteer for the study.

The follow up approach to securing potential participants was via the Pacific staff network email. At the Pacific staff meeting, potential research participants showed enthusiasm and support for the study, however not one talanoa session was secured. Another request was put through to the executive committee of the Fono Tagata Pasifika for dissemination of the participant information sheet and the letter specifically asking for their voluntary participation. Again this request was granted and the information was sent to the Pacific staff network and was distributed to the group members by the executive committee via their group email (Please refer to Appendix Two for copy of the recruitment letter and Appendix Three for the Participation Information sheet). For the second time no responses were received.

Overall, the confirmation of Talanoa sessions received from the meeting and the emails took longer than expected. Initial responses received from the Pacific staff network was lower than what the researcher anticipated. Two participants responded straight away and appointments made. Some participants gave verbal consents but no official confirmation was received from them, while others hesitated to take part. The low response rate was probably due to the timing of the initial email sent as many staff were planning to take leave prior to Christmas and therefore it was not a priority for them. The researcher decided to approach potential participants after the Christmas and New Year holiday season.

In the majority of cases, it was the researcher's relationship and networking contacts that secured most of the keen participants. In many Pacific Island communities, networks play an important part. Most Pacific people prefer to interact with people that they know, trust and are comfortable with. The researcher recruited most of the participants by contacting them directly via follow-up emails, face-to-face interactions and phone contacts. With this more personalised recruitment approach, the response rate was higher and participants responding fast to secure talanoa sessions in early 2016. Others who hesitated initially changed their minds after hearing from their colleagues who have already participated and therefore were then willing to partake. In total, 15 Pacific people were interviewed for this study.

### **3.8 Pre-planning Interviews (Talanoa)**

Efficient planning and processes must be in place to ensure a seamless flow and a successful data collection. Firstly, email was sent to each of the research participants in the sample requesting their participation to this study with attached documents about the details of study as mentioned earlier. Once the confirmation was received via email, a response was sent indicating a date, time and location that is suitable for the participant to meet.

A demographic questionnaire (refer Appendix Five) was developed to capture and gather generic information about the participants. Information such as gender, age range, qualifications, status, earnings, dependants, positions and hours of work. These data have assisted the researcher in putting together a profile for each of the participants. This questionnaire was provided to the participants at the interviews who were asked to complete them prior to the start of the interview.

Indicative questions were prepared to ensure interviews were conducted in a strategic and respectful way that would capture the essence of the research topic or question (refer Appendix Six). These questions were used as a guide by the researcher and were structured to ease the participant into the main questions. The first question was intended to help the researcher map out the participant's career journey and pathways, how they got their jobs and how they got to where they are now. Questions followed were directed towards answering the research question about the factors of career progression. Finally, the last question aimed to uncover the participant's future career journey and aspirations. Part of the conversation included exploring what and how the participant was going to achieve these goals.

Time and location for the Talanoa is an important part of the process. Halapua (2003) stressed the important of space in Talanoa, in that the participant must be in a place in which they feel comfortable to participate. Therefore, the participants were given the opportunity to select their preferred space and time for the session. For the most part, Talanoa sessions were carried out at the participant's workplace. In addition, four sessions were held at restaurants and cafes. Talanoa sessions at workplaces were held during working hours and at lunch time. Of the talanoa sessions carried at restaurants, three were conducted outside of working hours and one was during lunch break. The recording in restaurants was difficult and the settings was less appropriate for interviews to take place due to the background noise of restaurant, patron conversations and disruptions from

people that recognise both the researcher and the participant and interrupt and say hello. The researcher reconsidered locations after the first three interviews and thereafter most of the interviews were conducted at work during working and lunch hours in spare classrooms and in offices.

### **3.9 Conducting Interview (Talanoa)**

It is important to note that research participation was voluntary. As well as a core principle of AUT ethics approval, this concept aligns with the Talanoa characteristics of the process as voluntary and the participant's willingness to participate (Robinson & Robinson, 2005).

Prior to the start of each interview (talanoa) key elements of the study were explained; the purpose of the interview (talanoa), ethics in terms of privacy and confidentiality, the recording of sessions and consent for its use and the right to withdrawal at any time. Once all explained and with no questions from the participants the consent form was given to be signed. A small number of demographic questions on paper were also given to be completed. As mentioned earlier, the educational data from these questions have provided the researcher with more insights to assist with painting a picture of the participants 'profile' to support the talanoa sessions. Once all the paperwork was signed, the researcher expressed gratitude for agreeing to take part in the study. The researcher chose this time to perform this gratitude gesture after the documents were signed as to not disrupt the flow of the talanoa sessions. All participants gave consent to record.

### **3.10 Data Collection**

All talanoa sessions were carried out face-to-face, audio-taped and later transcribed. The length of the talanoa session range from between 40 minutes and 120 minutes. All talanoa sessions were conducted in English, with few sessions fluctuating from English to Samoa. Sometimes Samoan words were used interchangeably with English if they couldn't find the appropriate English word to describe the situation. The researcher is fluent in both English and Samoan and so participants felt comfortable to talanoa in both languages when they saw fit and comfortable. For example using the word "fia poku" to refer to a situation where they were not voicing their opinion because if they do they are described someone who thinks they know it all but they actually know nothing! The Talanoa process ensures that the participants were comfortable to freely express views and opinions on the subject matter through building a trust relationship and a sense of cultural

connectedness with the participant (Halapua, 2003). At times, this trust relationship has resulted in longer talanoa and off the subject conversations. The researcher had to steer the talanoa back to the planned structure and this is where the indicative questions were useful to redirect talanoa back on track. Recordings were used to capture each participant's stories and expressions accurately and some notes were taken. This note taking varied and was based on the researcher's assessment of the talanoa and whether taking notes would disrupt the participant's connection with the researcher. At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher thanked the participant and as a token of appreciation for their valuable knowledge provided, the researcher prepared a small gift for the participant. This is an act of reciprocity common in Pacific culture.

Transcripts were written in the language used during the talanoa and were transcribed word for word. (Riessman (1993)) commented that transcribing data can be time-consuming, boring and frustrating at times, but it is a very useful early stages of analysis resulting in a familiarity with the data.

### **3.11 Data analysis and coding**

This study used a thematic analysis method to analyse data. Thematic analysis is a method for "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data collected" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). The focus of this approach is to search across the data and look for repeated patterns of meaning of participant's responses instead of how things were said in relation to the research question (Creswell, 2007). Steps taken to analyse data were adopted from Braun & Clarke's (2006) and the guidelines followed are described below:

- a) Transcripts were read for the first time and a brief impression of ideas were noted on the transcripts. Transcripts were repeatedly read and more notes were added. Repeated words, similar subjects, phrases and sentences were highlighted. This reading process continued until the researcher felt that all the data had been identified and that there was no more information in the transcript to be uncovered. During these later readings, patterns started to emerge and meanings to develop and the researcher started to categorise these data into some order and structure.
- b) The researcher started to categorise notes and highlighted words, sentences or paragraphs into a structure. Firstly, the notes were mapped out on a large piece

of paper and were grouped into supportive and unsupportive factors as these categories were related to the research question. Other data that did not fit under these groups were mapped out independently. As mentioned earlier, mapping out words on paper helped the researcher identify various patterns and themes. New themes were uncovered during this process. Once this process was complete, the data on paper was transferred to an excel worksheet.

- c) Themes were reviewed to make certain the identified patterns were categorised and grouped correctly. It was important to recheck and clarify data collected to ensure each participant’s accounts of her/his experiences were captured. Some data were challenging to try and work out where they should sit. In these cases the researcher re-read the transcript for more clarification of meanings.
- d) Themes were then grouped into the order of the indicative interview questions and in the order of their career journey as a guide of how these would be reported.
- e) Next was data coding. Themes and sub-themes (or topics) were given a code. For example the theme Hindrance or Challenges were given the Main code ‘C’ and then challenges or factors that contributed to Pacific staff not progressing such as Culture, were given a sub-code ‘C1’ and so forth. Refer to Table 5 below. Some codes did not fall into any of the main themes identified. These were grouped into “Miscellaneous”.

*Table 5 Data coding example*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Coding</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Sub-coding</b>
Hindrance Factors/Challenges	C	Culture	C1
		Person	C2
Reasons working at Tertiary institutions	T	Just came up	T1
		Passion	T2
		Job security	T3
Supportive Factors	S	Family	S1
		Qualifications	S2

- f) Once all the coding for themes and sub-themes were completed, the researcher went back to the transcripts and started applying these to the highlighted phrases and sentences or where notes were made. At the same time, the researcher started identifying phrases or sentences that would be useful in supporting findings.

These highlighted phrases and notes were made available for extraction. Coding was completed on transcripts now to aid recording of occurrences.

- g) Occurrences were recorded to determine the factors that the participants reported in their stories as the most supportive or challenging in their career progression. The researcher went over the transcripts and counted the number of occurrences of each sub-code and recorded them.
- h) The total of each of the sub-code or sub-themes were added up and reported in the order of relevance based on the highest to the lowest number of occurrences.

Data analysis is an on-going process. The analysis for this study began when the first talanoa session took place or when the data collection started. From the first talanoa the researcher started to analysis the story told before it was transcribed. Themes started to emerge, some experiences were expected while others were new.

### **Summary**

This study employed a qualitative methodology to determine the factors that helped or hindered Pacific staff progress in their careers. With a new unexplored area of study, adopting semi-structured interviews and incorporating Talanoa features was appropriate for the Pacifica sample. The themes abstracted from talanoa sessions will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

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This chapter presents the findings from analysis of the interviews, presented in six parts:

- 1) Demographic summary of the participants
- 2) Pacific allied staff career journey into tertiary institution
- 3) Factors that support and hinder progression
- 4) The factors that supported progression
- 5) The factors that hindered progression
- 6) Additional findings from non-Pacific managing staff

### 4.1 Overview of Participants

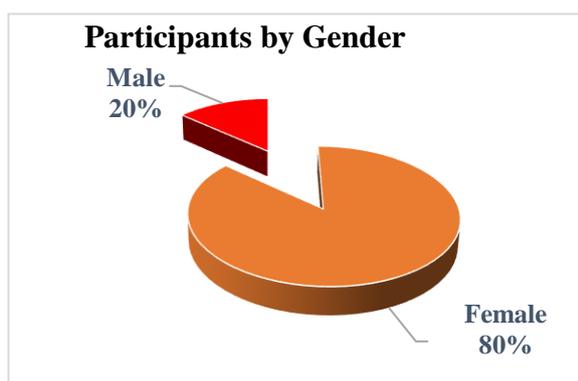
In total, 17 participants took part in the talanoa, 15 were of Pacific Island ethnicities and two additional participants were of non-Pacific background. The two additional participants are male managers who have many Pacific staff as their direct reports. Their inclusion in the study was to explore, from their perspective what they saw as the factors that may have progressed or advanced Pacific people into senior roles. Their responses are presented in a separate section.

Of the 15 Pacific Islands participants, there were 12 females (80%) and 3 males (20%) (see Table 6 and Figure 2 below). The gender findings reflect the literature about allied staff being a feminised workforce, with more women than men. Their ages range from 20 to 50 years, with most being in the 30-49 years old range.

*Table 6 Profile of participants in the study*

Age	Female	Male	Total	%
20-29	1	0	1	13%
30-39	6	2	8	53%
40-49	5	1	6	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>20%</b>		

Figure 2 Participants by gender



The majority of the participants interviewed were of Samoan origin, (refer to Table 7 below), but given that Samoans represent 45% of the Pacific population in Auckland, it can be expected that Samoans would have a high representation.

Table 7 Profile of participants by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Female	Male	Total	%
Cook Islander	0	1	1	6.7%
Fijian/Indian	1	0	1	6.7%
Niuean/Samoan	1	0	1	6.7%
Samoan	9	3	12	80.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The participants held various positions across the institutions ranging from senior managers, middle managers, team leaders, administrators to specialised roles such liaison officers. From the data collected, the participants were well qualified with 40% holding Bachelors and Master's degree and 40% with Diplomas (See Table 8 below). Only 13% had no qualifications but were in the process of gaining them.

Table 8 Participants with Qualifications

Qualifications	Female	Male	Total	Total %
Level 4 Certificate	1	0	1	7%
Diploma	5	1	6	40%
Bachelor	2	2	4	27%
Post graduate (Masters)	2	0	2	13%
Study towards Qualification	2	0	2	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

In summary, the study is based on a group of participants that is predominantly females and highly qualified (with 80% having diploma, bachelors and masters qualification) with

80% of Samoan ethnicity and generally aged 30-49 years old. Half of the participants are single with 29% married, 14% separated and 7% in relationship. Sixty percent (60%) of participants have children and four have dependents. Six participants gained qualifications during the period from 2010 – 2014, four from 2000 – 2010 and three prior to 2000. Table 9 below shows the number of years each participant had been working in this institution. Table 10 indicates that 60% of the participants worked in supportive roles and 40% are from middle to senior management positions.

*Table 9 Number of years the participants employed at organisation*

<b>Years employed</b>	<b>No of participants</b>
<b>Less than 1 year</b>	4
<b>1- 3 years</b>	2
<b>3-5 years</b>	0
<b>5- 7 years</b>	3
<b>8- 10 years</b>	1
<b>10 – 15 years</b>	2
<b>15 years and over</b>	1

\*Note: Two Pacific participants did not respond to this questions.

*Table 10 Number of participants from range of roles*

<b>Range of roles</b>	<b>No of participants</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Supporting and designated specialist roles</b>	9	60%
<b>Middle and senior management roles (supervisors, team leaders etc.)</b>	6	40%

The next section of this chapter will discuss the findings, starting with a discussion of the entry of Pacific Island allied staff into tertiary sector employment and the reasons for selecting their positions including education sector as a place of work.

## **4.2 Pacific staff career journey**

In general, Pacific people took up employment at tertiary institutions not to build their careers, but mainly to provide for their families. It was discovered from the findings that a significant number of participants were encouraged or recommended by their colleagues or friends to apply for advertised roles at tertiary institutions. Job security was the main reason for seeking employment which was important in enabling them to provide for their families.

More than half of the participants initially started in rather insecure employment at the tertiary institution. Some began as part-timers, casuals, others covering leave and some were on fixed term contracts. Pacific people have long pathways to career advancement. A small number of participants applied for middle level to senior positions at tertiary with the majority entering in lower level roles such as receptionist, administration and in precarious employment arrangement.

### ***4.2.1 Reasons to work in Tertiary Institutions***

Out of the 15 Pacific Island participants interviewed, only three entered into employment with tertiary institutions for the purpose of fulfilling a passion for education and the willingness to help people access further training. *“I myself am passionate about Education in general” (P7)*

The rest of the participants reported that they took the jobs as the opportunity presented itself. *“It was an opportunity that popped up.”(P10)*

Employment was a means to an end for Pacific people. It appears from the data collected (refer to Table 11 below) that approximately 50% of the participants disclosed their reasons for taking up employment was simply not to build a career but a means of providing financial security for their families. Having a passion for education and the willingness to help others gain further training made up 21% of the participant and 28% were either encouraged or advised by their colleagues, families or friends to apply for the positions.

Some of these available employment opportunities were precarious in nature, and in low-level positions (for example receptionists and administrators) and for some of the participants this is where their journey started. This is evident in the number of staff that

started working at tertiary institutions as part-timers, casuals, fixed term until they secured a full-time employment. The findings showed 7 out of 15 participants started in these types of roles.

*Table 11 Responses for Reasons for Working at Tertiary Institutions*

Reasons	Participants	%
Opportunity presents itself	4	29%
Job security/provide for family	3	21%
Encourage to apply (friend/colleague)	2	14%
Made aware of the job advertised	2	14%
Passion for Education	2	14%
Help people like myself	1	7%
Provides opportunity for a career	1	7%

#### ***4.2.2 Reasons for career advancement***

Pacific people like many other ethnic groups, advance in their careers in order to access a better future. As stated above, the participant's roles ranged from administrators, liaison roles, assistants to senior managers. The participants were asked whether they had had any progression during their employment in tertiary institutions and if they did what were their reasons (refer to questions, Appendix Six). Their responses are recorded in Table 12 below. It was found that the reasons for progression at the different position levels (administrators, middle-managers, senior) varied. Staff in lower-level roles (e.g. receptionist, administrator or non-permanent roles) progressed to the next level up to secure full-time employment and it was natural progression to the next job level some. As for senior managers, their intentions for progression was to seek more challenges, learn new skills and the opportunities to advance into more senior management positions. Some of these managers expressed that they had outgrown their roles.

Table 12 Reasons for Progression

<b>Participants positions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Entry level roles (i.e. receptionist, administrators, some on non-permanent roles)	Entry into full time employment Natural progression to next job level Encouraged to apply
Managers –middle or senior, team leaders	Seek more opportunities Seek more challenges Opportunity into management Outgrown role

### 4.3 Factors that support or hinder progression

In this section, responses to the research question of ‘what are the factors that support or hinder career progression of Pacific allied staff’ are discussed. The section will begin with presenting the supportive factors first, then followed by the factors that are perceived to hinder career progression.

Table 13 shows the factors that supported progression. These factors are listed in the order from the most to the least frequencies based on the number of mentions by the participants.

Once the order of frequencies were in place, the factors were then sorted into personal (P) and organisational (O) factors as shown in Table 13. This categorisation has enabled the researcher to analyse data further by determining the factors that are individually targeted and organisational focussed. By presenting the findings in this perspective has provided another view of the findings where some factors can mostly be controlled or changed by the individual, and others that can come under the organisation’s control

Table 13 Factors that supported progression

Supportive Factors	Frequency	(%)	P/O
Line Manager Support	13	19.7%	O
Family upbringing, values and background	7	16.7%	P
Personal Drive	6	9.1%	P
Recognition of skills/abilities by Line Managers	5	7.6%	O
Skills/Competencies	4	6.1%	P
Church	3	4.5%	P
Family support	3	4.5%	P
Mentors	3	4.5%	O
Professional Development	3	4.5%	O
Experiences from previous roles	3	4.5%	P
Provide for family (job security)	3	4.5%	P
Supportive from team members	2	3.0%	O
Role models for their children	2	3.0%	P
Career development planning	1	1.5%	O
Secondment	1	1.5%	O
Raised in Pakeha surroundings	1	1.5%	P
Good relationships and networks	1	1.5%	P
Right place at the right time	1	1.5%	P

\*P = Personal, O = Organisation

To better understand the impact of these supportive factors on progression, they were then grouped into major themes and patterns identified (Refer to Table 14 below). Grouping them into categories or themes of organisational support, family upbringing, values and background, personal, competencies, church and other factors provide a clarity and detail on the aspects important in progression.

As indicated in Table 13 and 14, it emerges that the participants consider line manager or senior staff support to be the most important factor that assisted them to progress. Family upbringing in terms of the values their parents instilled in them were second, followed by own personal drive and recognition of capabilities by their supervisors, team leaders or

managers. Supportive assistance from families, mentors, team members and professional development were also identified to have a minor impact. Other various factors such as career planning, secondment, good relationships and networks were the least mentioned influential factors.

*Table 14 Key supportive major themes*

<b>SUPPORTIVE FACTORS</b>		
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Identified features</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Organisational support	Supportive line managers/supervisors/senior staff Recognition/Acknowledgement of capabilities and abilities by managers or senior staff Team support	42.4%
Family values/upbringing	Work ethics Culture of serving others Family Support Provide for family Family background	25.8%
Skills/Competencies	Skills/competencies including experience and skills gained from previous roles/positions held Qualifications	10.6%
Personal characteristics	Ambition motivation to advance	9.1%
Community/Church	Skills/experience gained from church involvement Volunteer experience in the community from Church as youth leaders, Sunday school teachers are applied	4.5%
Other factors	Become role models Raised in Pakeha surroundings Relationships/networking Being in the right place at the right time	7.6%

The following section discusses each of the themes outlined above in Table 14, illustrated by direct quotes from participants.

### **4.3.1 Organisational support**

Organisational support plays an important part in the career development of Pacific staff. Supportive management, (for example, direct line managers, team leaders and senior staff) have emerged as the most important factor in supporting Pacific people to progress in their careers. Having managers or senior staff that encourage and guide Pacific staff to their next role makes a critical contribution. In addition, acknowledging and recognising their capabilities to advance by way of shoulder tapping, making referrals, making available Professional Development or considering them for progression are other vital factors in their career journey.

*“She understood how PI people think that is why she keeps encouraging and directing and building my confidence that I can do it.”(P10)*

*“My senior when I was the administrator team person, was a biggie for me. Every time she saw a position in-house she will come up and say have a look at it. She’s been quite encouraging and also knowing that she knew me well too especially for this position came up and the first person she thought of was me straight away.”(P7)*

*“She was the one who gave me a break, she always gave me opportunity.” (P1)*

*“She saw the potential, she wanted to help me grow anyway possible within her means. She helped me progress from reception to senior administrator to the point of where to from there as there is nowhere else to go. She helped us moved on and opened new doors.”(P3)*

*“I have been lucky to have great and supportive bosses with Professional Development. Our leader encourages us to do PD and we have to in our field to upskill all the time.” (P5)*

The viewpoints and opinions of work colleagues also play a vital role in the career advancement of Pacific people:

*“Our team here is an amazing team, so you know you never do anything on your own so I know for sure that my success in my role at the moment because I have such an awesome team supporting me.”(P7)*

Team support allows Pacific people to be in a family like surrounding where decision making and goal setting are shared and agreed upon for the benefit of all. Pacific people are collectivists in their thinking and upbringing so working together with team members is comfortable and is normal for them.

*“there is a lot of love in the team, everybody is all out to make sure each of us is successful in whatever we do.”(P2)*

Adopting collaborative work practices and collective decision-making aligns with Pacific people's collectivist structures, cultures and the values of sharing and looking out for each other in a way that no one feels left out.

#### ***4.3.2 Family background and values***

Families are the most important people in the lives of Pacific Islanders. For Pacific people the most important priorities in their lives are parents, siblings, children, extended family, village and church. For that reason, some Pacific people delay furthering their education to provide for their families. In this situation, Pacific people take up employment to provide for their families irrespective of whether the role is a full time position.

Family background, upbringing and values of helping each other have become strong foundations for Pacific people. It is clearly evident that a significant number of participants are from families who started with humble beginnings.

*“We didn't have a summer we [didn't] worked and I am thankful for that appreciating what we had. Working outside is so much harder than working indoors and so my siblings and I have found we have done well because of what our parents taught us in our childhood.”(P1)*

They have watched their parents working long hours and in mostly lower level and labouring jobs to provide them with better futures.

*“I think I guess it's values; my parents didn't come from much and so all they knew what to do is to work and work really work hard.”(P7)*

These experiences have been kept close to their hearts and have made them work even harder to progress as an acknowledgment and to reward to their parents for the sacrifices that they have made for them.

*“Education for them was important and were always encouraged to go through secondary, university and to get good jobs and was always to serve your people.”(P13)*

Pacific people tend to be very compassionate and caring and want to help others, working in the field of education is seen to be one area where Pacific people can help their own people to succeed.

### ***4.3.3 Skills and Competencies***

Qualifications, experiences, skills and competencies are essential factors that participants should have to advance in a career. Ranked as the third most important supportive factor, it seemed like the participants were also aware of the importance of qualification. This is portrayed earlier with most of the participants holding qualifications ranging from certificates to postgraduate qualifications. As one participant puts it:

*“So the roles that I have applied for need a tertiary qualification and because of my staff development I have continued to work on my diploma and degree and has opened those doors.”(P6)*

Experiences from previous roles and working across various positions within the institutions have contributed to gaining widespread of skills and knowledge that is required for progressing.

*“Working around in many different departments, helped gained various skills that enabled me to move into a full time employment.”(P2)*

Some participants have worked in other sectors prior to getting employed at the tertiary institution and their experiences in a different organisation gave them a broader base from which to apply to the next level.

*“I was working at the bank when I first left school. I ended up going temping that was good I think it grounded me looking at different offices and see how they all are like.”(P11)*

With Pacific people projected to continue to increase their population, language becomes an important skill to have in serving this diverse group of people and therefore is a factor that help supports progression. As one participant shared:

*“I think it was more, I think being bilingual was part of it.”(P8)*

It is important to note that cultural competencies should be considered particularly when serving Pacific communities. Pacific people respond and engage better with their own people when they can understand their culture, experiences and speak their language.

### ***4.3.4 Personal Characteristics***

Both personal aspiration and skill utilisation led to career advancement. Some participants agreed that their personal drive to make something of themselves and being role models to their children have supported them in their desire for career advancement.

*“I think for me personally was my own personal drive to get somewhere and you know and make something of myself especially because I have two kids looking at me and watching everything that Mum did.”(P7)*

*“I think after all of that it was my motivation to want to be something more than I was at that time.”(P3)*

A good work ethic was also found to aid participants to apply or progress to the next level. Personal skills and experiences gained from various roles or family responsibilities were also seen to be characteristics that favoured career progression. As some of the participants explained it.

*“I guess the values of [institution] identifies with my own personal values.”(P13)*

*“I think it’s because I can pick up things really really fast. I make management decisions when it is urgently needed knowing that’s what these guys want.”(P8)*

In essence, systems, processes and support can be put in place for people to progress, but without motivation and the personal drive to succeed these efforts can become insignificant.

#### **4.3.5 Church and Community involvement**

Church is an integral part of Pacific people and with 83% of Pacific people in New Zealand belonging to religious organisations (Statistics NZ, 2013) it is no surprise that church arose as a factor in the findings. Participants believed that skills and experiences gained from church and community involvement helped prepared for them for employment and career development. The extracts below indicated that these participants acknowledged the support and guidance of church elders and community leaders in nurturing them:

*“Definitely my time in church, community support and what I have learnt from grassroots level and working with youth has definitely prepared me for the position I am in now. The support from elders, family, church leaders even community leaders has helped.”(P6)*

*“I think the church has a lot to play in developing our people, because you learn all those skills at church being a youth leader, organising Sabbath school, arranging family functions things like that.”(P14)*

#### **4.3.6 Other supportive factors**

Other factors mentioned covered a range of factors such as having mentors, available professional development (leadership workshops), being brought up in a predominant

Pakeha environment, secondments and good network relationships were also seen to be supportive factors in career progression.

*“I think being in the right place at the right time where opportunity has presented itself and making the most of those opportunities.”(P6)*

*“Since I have been here I have had a lot of opportunities to do project work which help enhances skills experiences and new challenges. A good manager and good leadership that was supportive makes a big difference.”(P13)*

Being a good role model for their children was also mentioned.

*“I think it all came from the need to provide for my family to set an example for my daughter and so I wanted to be something more than a receptionist.”(P3)*

In summary, the organisation plays a huge role in supporting the career progression of Pacific people. Family values, as well as the right set of skills and personal drive combined with previous experiences gained from church and other organisations, have been found to contribute to their progress. Mentoring, professional development and secondments have also been identified as having influenced their progression.

#### **4.4 Factors that hinder career progression**

The factors in order of importance were: organisational culture and practices, Pacific culture, individual characteristics, choice, lack of confidence, lack of skills and competencies, gender and status, stereotypes, prejudice, other people’s perspectives and contentment with their current situation (see Table 15 above).

Table 15 Factors that hindered progression

Hindrance Factors	Frequency	%	P/O*
Pacific Culture/Values	11	17.7%	P
Satisfied with current role	6	9.7%	P
Lack of confidence	6	9.7%	P
Individual characteristics	5	8.1%	P
Unsupportive Management	5	8.1%	O
Lack of Professional Development	4	6.5%	O
HR Processes/Practices	3	4.8%	O
Lack of experience	3	4.8%	O
Status	3	4.8%	P
Perceptions (non-Pacific)	2	3.2%	O
Lack of qualification	2	3.2%	P
No appealing roles	2	3.2%	P
Prejudice/Racism	2	3.2%	P
Time Management	1	1.6%	P
High expectations from Pacific people	1	1.6%	P
Non-flexibility to change	1	1.6%	P
Stigma	1	1.6%	O
Acculturations	1	1.6%	P
Work ethics	1	1.6%	P
Outside commitments	1	1.6%	P
No mentors	1	1.6%	O

\*P = Personal, O = Organisation

As mentioned earlier, the factors were sorted into personal (P) and organisational (O) categories to enable the researcher to determine which factors were individual related and which ones were organisation focused. Presenting the findings in this view has enabled the researcher to discover that some factors can be changed by the individual and others are controlled by the organisation. These findings are presented in Table 16 below.

Table 16 Hindered Factors into identified themes

<b>HINDRANCE FACTORS</b>		
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Identified features</b>	<b>%</b>
Organisational culture and practices	No professional development No mentors Management supervision practices. Unsupportive managers Recruitment and Selection practices Skills/expertise from family roles are not transferrable to work	21.0%
Pacific Culture	Underselling, Pacific people do not praise themselves Respect for elders, senior staff or bosses Collectivism approach No self-promotion	19.4%
Individual characteristics	Aspirations – that you want to progress Up to the individual to make something of their lives	15.6%
Matter of choice	Suit lifestyle Comfortable in space/satisfied with work arrangements Matter of choice Outside work commitments	11.3%
Lack of confidence	To apply for high level positions Second guessing their abilities Not putting their hand out to advance	9.7%
Skills/Competencies	Lack of qualification Lack of experience	8.1%
Status	Single mums Being brown and female	4.8%
Stereotypes	Prejudice/racism Preconceived ideas Stigma	6.5%
Other Factors	No flexibility Acculturations Work ethics/time management Other Pacific people's expectations	8.1%

#### **4.4.1 Organisation culture and practices**

The culture of the organisation has an impact on the success of Pacific staff progression. The lack of support from managers, the ‘one size fits all’ approach, human resources practices and policies in terms of recruitment, selection and professional development have all been expressed as the main hindrance factors for non-progression of Pacific staff. Some of the participants expressed concerns around the recruitment and selection as follows:

*“The interview framework doesn’t suit us, we should be given, what suits us, maybe a trial where we get to show through our actions how we work instead of focus on interview.” (P6)*

*“Having better [HR] better processes and more hiring managers that are more Pacific in their values, encourage more Pacific staff.”(P13)*

Another concern focussed on the difficulties of Professional Development process.

*“Also notice Professional Development is very generic, targeted to general population and it’s not targeted to Pacific Islanders particularly PI’s have a different way of learning etc. e.g. PERFORM<sup>3</sup> questions are culturally inappropriate when they ask to talk about yourself, your strengths and weaknesses.”(P5)*

A lack of mentors was also revealed as a factor that hindered their progress. Moreover, Pacific men in allied roles discussed the importance of having mentors except there are not many around because it is a female dominant workforce. As for women, having few Pacific female in management roles meant they too do not have ready access to mentors.

*“You sort of getting to a position where there is nowhere else for you to move so you need to move out. But I was trying look for some guidance look for somebody to be a mentor.”(P7)*

The participants also mentioned that non-recognition and non-transferability of skills and expertise learned from their roles with family and in the community have not been considered by the organisations. Because these experiences and skills have not been recognised or identified by the organisation, it has been assumed that they are not equipped with this expertise and therefore have not be considered for progression. As one participant expressed it:

*“Even our school home help, that’s team management but it’s not formalised at work and not recognised. Organising cousins and a family reunion. Some of us don’t think*

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<sup>3</sup> PERFORM is a performance review instrument.

*like us because it is something that we always do, sometimes you need to think outside the box about experiences that you have.”(P2)*

#### **4.4.2 Pacific culture/values**

One of the common factors that the participants shared in their stories is that Pacific people do not praise themselves. Pacific people do not talk about their achievements, strengths or promotions, or mention capabilities to progress into senior roles. This aspect of the Pacific culture translated as humbleness does not support their progression. As mentioned above, the collectivist culture of Pacific people puts others first and this also can be misread as not putting themselves forward. This is illustrated in the extracts below:

*“It is hard for us to tell people what you are good at, people will think that I am just arrogant.”(P2)*

*“Work hard just to make yourself to recognise your work it is also a challenge when you don’t blow your own horn.”(P11)*

*“We are not a showy type of people.”(P14)*

These actions can be misunderstood as lack of confidence in their skills, lack of interest, and some may be interpreted as needing more development before advancement.

Respect is one of the common practices of the Pacific culture or values (Foliaki, 2005). The respect for elders, boss, senior staff or colleagues and those with status often hinder the opportunity to advance. As one participant expressed:

*“I love our culture, but the whole respect thing can really oppress us as human beings, as individual. It makes you hold your tongue, not put your CV forward for a position and not do things. Even bringing up something with your boss, it is hard because of that respect thing. You don’t challenge and you do as they say.”(P10)*

Therefore, it is crucial that tertiary organisations looking at appointing more Pacific people into senior or leadership positions need to consider alternative approaches of recruiting and promoting them, as Pacific people do not self-promote themselves. One approach could be through recognition of potential Pacific people with capabilities to advance, by nurturing their talents and skills to progress.

#### **4.4.3 Individual characteristics**

Participants acknowledged that although there are many obstacles in their pathways to progress, what really matters is the individual's decision to set goals and plans to make something of themselves in advancing their careers.

*"I think it is really within yourself too, you can have the great support but if you yourself don't lead what you can potentially do and see it makes it harder for those that are supporting you make it realise for yourself."(P3)*

This involves taking the initiative to seek and utilise opportunities available to achieve their goals.

*"Pacific people must prepared to take more initiatives in seeking opportunities for progression, they must be prepared to put their hand out and say I want this job. They should discuss with the line manager about career pathways."(P13)*

Furthermore, they continued to highlight that individuals need to recognise their areas of strengths and weaknesses and therefore seek assistance for development and be prepared to step out of their comfort zones.

*"I think it is more about me asking for that help because it is there, it is there I haven't taken advantage of it. I probably do have opportunities to do that but I probably don't take it on."(P2)*

For example seeking professional development to upskill, seek further assignments or join a project team.

*"It could be that I need to do my own personal development."(P8)*

It was evident from the study there is clearly a lack of career planning and goal setting for the majority of the participants. The need to invest in their own personal development was also mentioned. These matters raised can only be addressed if the participant or individual has acknowledged them and are willing to take measures themselves to seek progression. As one participant has commented, organisations can have systems and processes in place for development but the individual must have the courage and the confidence to take that next step.

#### **4.4.4 Matter of choice**

It must be noted that progression is not for everyone. *“Balancing work with other activities after work.”(P2)*

Approximately eleven percent of the participants (11.3%) indicated that they are happy with their existing roles and would not be seeking progression anytime soon. They went further to explain that their decision to not progress was a matter of choice.

*“I am not really driven to do that mainly because I am so busy outside of work. I am still in the same position. To be honest that more a matter of choice, then anything else.”(P5)*

Their current roles suited their lifestyles, commitments outside of work (for e.g. church, sports, and social) and most importantly for Pacific people caring for their elderly parents, and extended families:

*“I am happy at where I am. Here suits me for my holiday and for Mum who is at home. My mother needs me.”(P14)*

*“I think my issue at the moment, my life right now I have too much going right now. Recently I pulled back to focus on my role and my studies.”(P6)*

Participants explained that taking up senior level roles means additional commitments and responsibilities and in some instances these are more time consuming. Therefore, with their non-work commitments they will not be able to fully commit to making these roles successful and opt to remain with the status quo:

*“I don’t want to take the commitment on when I can’t commit to it. I really want to do a good job and make sure it is a world standard.”(P7)*

*“I know I can do a good job but I have to have full commitment.”(P5)*

In conclusion some Pacific people value their work life balance as indicated by comments about having space in their lives to meet commitments other than work.

#### **4.4.5 Lack of confidence**

Self-belief is a common hindering factor. *“I think it might be just me having the confidence to put myself up there” (P2)*

A lack of confidence was a common feeling that came through the study from a significant number of participants. Some participants expressed their lack of confidence by second guessing their opportunities to apply for a high level position.

*“There’s heaps of us at working here, but most of us are in lower to middle positions not any positions where you have a voice. There are a lot of Pacific leaders that will be good for the roles, maybe they just don’t put their hands up.”(P2)*

From the extracts above, Participant 2 acknowledges the issue of confidence in that he/she recognises the capabilities of Pacific staff to undertake senior roles and speculates that it could be an individual factor of not putting themselves out there. It is usually when a colleague, senior staff or manager confirms their capabilities to carry out the responsibilities of a high level role that they can then believe that they are capable.

*“My boss sat me down and said you know what, you can do it, you know what your problem is it is you and you just need to pick up your confidence and run.”(P10)*

Not stepping forward and putting one’s hand up for the role, could be lack of confidence, or is it cultural values and norms? As one participant expressed it:

*“It’s not our confidence, it’s a cultural thing, but it could be perceived as weakness and not confidence.”(P6)*

#### **4.4.6 Lack of Skills and Competencies**

All participants were well aware of the importance of education as the key to a better future for them and their families. Upskilling and accumulating experience have been identified as necessary for career advancement. We have seen evidence of the increasingly number of Pacific Islanders being tertiary qualified with 83% of the study sample having tertiary qualifications (refer to Table 8). Hindering factors from this study are not from lack of qualifications, rather it was more about the lack of skills that the participant were required to have to be in a senior position. Going by the study sample, only two of the participants have business qualifications, the rest gained qualification from areas of Education, Science, Communications and Arts. This could indicate that there may be additional skills (management or leadership) required to be eligible to apply to senior roles, as participants are already tertiary qualified. This is not to say that the tertiary qualifications were not relevant, it is more about a gap being identified may affect the progress of participants. Some participants expressed the need for professional

development to gain more work experience and also to continue further post-graduate studies to enable them to reach that next level role.

*“I feel in my instance, the reason why I am studying is because I don’t feel that as if I can confidently walk into management space. It’s a different level I recognise that so for me to feel confident to walk into that level, the postgraduate qualification will give me substance.”(P1)*

#### **4.4.7 Other Hindrance factors**

Other factors such as status, work ethics, other Pacific people’s expectations, have also been mentioned as some of the challenges that they face. There still exists stereotypes and preconceptions of being brown and female as one participant expressed it:

*“Others see you as this brown female person so obviously. The first thing I am brown and when you have an Island name people assume you can’t speak English and I do not know much and then female also they even lower down than as supposed to males.”(P13)*

Overall, the findings have found that organisation plays a significant role in the career progression of Pacific people in terms of supporting and hindering their progression. Family values and upbringing were also highly supportive of career progression, whilst Pacific culture can be a major roadblock. Skills and competencies together with individual characteristics are also factors that participants have considered to contribute to progress or hinder development. In addition, there is a proportion of participants’ comments that progression is not for them. Their priorities are their commitments outside of work, which includes caring for parents, church and family

## **4.5 Non-Pacific Managers**

### ***4.5.1 Rationale for inclusion***

Two non-Pacific participants were included in the study. In the past the researcher has been asked by non-Pacific people as to why Pacific staff do not progress or put their names forward for promotion. Managers (non-Pacific and Pacific) play a primary role in the support of their staff to apply for promotion. For these reasons, non-Pacific managers were included in the study to explore their views of the factors that Pacific people have confronted with or have assisted them with progression. These views are based on their management experience. The findings will assist in understanding the factors perceived by non-Pacific managers as to why some people progressed and others do not, and to see if these are aligned with the views of Pacific staff.

### ***4.5.2 Selection***

The researcher approached the two participants to be part of the study based on the number of Pacific Island staff who were under their leadership or management and their long-term commitment to Pacific people.

### ***4.5.3 Method***

The methods used were the same as for non-Pacific participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted for these participants that enabled the researcher to capture their stories and their realities of their experiences working with Pacific people. The already established relationship between the researcher and the two non-Pacific participants has allowed the researcher to understand, captured, described and interpreted the interview data.

The research questions asked of them were the same, except the questions about the supportive and hindering factors. This particular question was reworded to read “What do you see are the factors that contributed or hinder the progression of Pacific staff in your team? (Refer to Appendix Seven).

### ***4.5.4 Background***

Both participants applied and entered senior roles at tertiary institutions to fulfil their goals and ambitions of serving communities and making a difference in people’s lives. Their responses for their reasons for joining the tertiary institutions were:

*“Interested in the progression of students into tertiary educations so I thought it is a natural step of being able to help young people access tertiary institutions so that they could get jobs.”(M1)*

*“I deliberately chose to work in a tertiary institution so I can make a difference in the community.”(M2)*

Their career progression appeared to be a relatively clear pathway. They moved into this area of education for specific reasons and goals. For both participants, the opportunities came along at the right time to work in an institution that will help them accomplish some of their goals that they set for themselves.

Success came from various factors. Enjoying the job is a great motivational factor in progressing and having a successful career.

*“I liked what I was doing that was the key really therefore I suppose I worked quite hard, therefore I suppose I was good.”(M2)*

Timing, leadership and people skills and management approach are factors that were indicated to have contributed to their success. Both participants did not talk long about their personal success factors rather they expressed that was more of a team success.

*“I am very much in to team and group rather than individuals. As a leader I see myself as a facilitator.”(M1)*

#### **4.5.5 Confronting factors**

##### ***More qualifications***

A lack of qualifications have been identified as hindering factors in career progression.

*“If two are people are equal, the higher qualification wins if all other things are equal”*

It was explained that the education in terms of profiles of Pacific communities for qualifications is below that for Palagi<sup>4</sup>, so if qualifications matter a palagi is going to be more competitive than Pacific. Moreover, if the first qualification gets a person into a job then to get promotion a postgraduate qualification maybe needed to provide the edge. As a result, few Pacific people compete for these senior roles if Palagi have higher qualifications.

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<sup>4</sup> Palagi is a Samoa word used to describe foreigner of Caucasian origin

### ***Transferability of skills***

This will enable Pacific people who do not quite have the qualifications to get the jobs to be able to match their abilities to the jobs. For example, the role that Pacific people has within the church needs to be mapped out for skills and knowledge. It also gives opportunities to identify specific skills that need to be enhanced to be able to secure the role.

*“Career planning is absolutely critical. Some people do not have the qualification to get the jobs that match the ability. RPLs<sup>5</sup> (Recognition Prior Learning) has to reflect the sensitivity of Pacific leadership and knowledge and culture and not just palagi. So the role that Pacific person has within the Church ought to be mapped for skills and knowledge.”(M2)*

### ***Institution policy or procedure***

Developing policy or procedures for increasing the recruitment of Pacific people in senior roles should be an institutional approach. This will only work if the institutions are willing and wanting to put this in place and if this is seen as a priority for achieving organisational outcomes and to increasing achievement levels of Pacific students.

### ***Pacific modesty***

It is interesting to note that the lack of confidence or Pacific modesty referred to in the conversation with Pacific staff was not mentioned in these interviews. However when asked about it, the participants responded with their comments below:

*“You see that in the development of the CV Pacific people they often undersell themselves. Pacific people don’t read the same print media that we read. Perhaps a lack of confidence and excess of modesty are two sides of the same coin.”(M2)*

*“sometimes our staff particularly who are in allied situation lack confidence and they don’t believe that they are capable of progression.”(M1)*

The researcher decided to bring up the question of culture with Managers to see whether they had experienced a non-Pacific participant experiencing a lack of confidence and how did they address it. The Managers seem to be aware of this issue and commented, on occasions that Pacific staff have identified further studies and the Managers believed it to build confidence and broaden capabilities.

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<sup>5</sup> Recognition Prior Learning is an assessment process that formally recognise skills, knowledge and experience acquired from informal learning (work, workshops etc) to gain credits towards a qualification

The managers' responses are aligned with the Pacific culture aspect of humility that the Pacific staff will not put themselves forward or make it known that they are interested in progressing to a higher level role or they are capable of taking senior positions.

Overall, the participants felt that having more qualifications will provide Pacific staff with more opportunities to progress into senior roles. From their experience, they agreed that Pacific people are compassionate people and would go out of their way to do their jobs. Both have identified potential Pacific staff in their areas to progress and have supported them in their development through furthering their studies. It is their view that promoting Maori and Pacific into leadership team or role had positive impact on the outcomes as they bring their language and cultural values and experiences to enable the organisation to develop plans that meet the needs of their students.

#### ***4.5.6 Further comments***

Career advancement for Pacific people must be planned and the non-Pacific managers discussed how applicants must have a range of attributes. Both participants agreed that in order for Pacific Islanders to be successful they have to be competitive in the following key factors:

- a) Fit for the role
- b) Must be good at their job (skills and experiences);
- c) Be qualified (qualifications), and
- d) Assert themselves as Pacific leaders (leadership skills and drive).

They mentioned that working in an education institution, people must also have the commitment for helping others access education. Empathy is something that most all Pacific Island people have, as it is in their culture to help and serve people. This is evident at work as one participant commented, "*way they presented and the way they have gone about doing their jobs.*"

The participants pointed out that career planning is absolutely critical for Pacific people. As for the institutions, career planning structures must be in place and must be targeted to Pacific people. Another approach mentioned by the participants was developing institution policy or procedure for recruitment of more senior Pacific staff.

## **Summary**

The overall findings recognised the importance of organisations, Pacific culture, family upbringing and values to the career advancement of Pacific people. Organisational support was ranked the most important factor, with family values and upbringing following. Alternatively, organisational culture and practices and Pacific culture hinder progression followed closely by personal choices, lack of confidence and matters of choice. In order to find out which factors that are under a personal control and potentially changeable by individuals, Table 17 below broke the factors into two areas. Personal factors are things that potentially can be changed by participants that are seeking higher positions. The second column lists responsibilities of and within the organisation, potentially factors are under organisational control. Pacific culture cannot be changed by the individual but individuals could consider and apply flexible practices around principles to suit different situations as appropriate. Then the organisation can support them by developing appropriate procedures and systems.

Table 17 Factors in career progression

<b>PERSONAL FACTORS</b>	<b>ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS</b>
<p><i>Supportive Factors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family upbringing</li> <li>Personal motivation and aspiration</li> <li>Skills and Competencies</li> <li>Family background</li> <li>Church influence – skills</li> <li>Family support</li> <li>Experience from previous roles</li> <li>Job security</li> <li>Be a role model</li> <li>Raised in non-Pacific settings</li> <li>Networking</li> <li>Right place at the right time</li> </ul> <p>57.4%</p>	<p><i>Supportive Factors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Line manager, senior staff support</li> <li>Recognition of abilities</li> <li>Having mentors</li> <li>Professional Development</li> <li>Support from team members</li> <li>Development career planning</li> <li>Secondment/Projects</li> </ul> <p>42.3%</p>
<p><i>Hindrance Factors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pacific culture</li> <li>Satisfied with existing role</li> <li>Lack of confidence</li> <li>Individual characteristics</li> <li>Status</li> <li>Lack of qualifications</li> <li>No appealing roles</li> <li>High expectations of own Pacific people</li> <li>Non-flexibility to change</li> <li>Acculturation</li> <li>Work Ethics</li> </ul> <p>69%</p>	<p><i>Hindrance Factors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of Professional Development</li> <li>Human Resources Processes/Systems</li> <li>Lack of experience</li> <li>Perceptions</li> <li>Preconceptions from others</li> <li>Stigma</li> <li>Prejudice/Racism</li> </ul> <p>30.6%</p>

The next chapter will discuss these findings, their implications and how they address the research question: *What are the factors that support or hinder career progression of Pacific people?*

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION**

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This chapter will discuss the main findings from the study relevant to the research question. Other literature that has also been identified to have major influences on career progression of Pacific staff and allied staff will also be included. Limitations will also be discussed including recommendations for future research and direction.

The key findings of this study are summarised below:

- 1) Organisational support arose from the participant interviews as having a significant influence in assisting progression into senior roles, second only to family upbringing, values, skills and competencies and personal characteristics;
- 2) Organisational culture and practices, Pacific culture, individual motivation, personal choices (satisfied with current circumstances), lack of confidence, and lack of skills and competencies have been identified as major hindrance factors to progression;
- 3) The motivation for Pacific people to enter employment in tertiary institutions is generally to provide for their families not to build careers;
- 4) There is a delayed career pathway of progression for Pacific staff
- 5) Allied staff in New Zealand are “invisible” and overlooked in tertiary institutions.

### **5.1 Supportive Factors**

This study has found that the most important supportive factors for career progression identified by Pacific staff are those which are most aligned with their cultural values and collectivism. The Pacific way of everyone supporting and looking after each other has come through strongly in the findings. This is evident in the responses with 43% of the sample identifying the support of the organisation as a significant influence on their upward career movement. Over a quarter (26%) responded that their family upbringing and values also had a major influence. Factors pertaining to individuals such as skills, competencies and personal characteristics were the next most influential to their progression. Each of the major key factors that support career progression will be discussed in turn.

### ***5.1.1 Organisational support***

A major finding of the study is that organisational support is the most significant factor in their decision making when considering applying for the next senior role. Organisational support means support from line managers, team leaders, supervisors, colleagues and senior officers. The recognition of the participant's skills and capabilities by managers and the encouragement received from colleagues and managers plays a vital role in their progression.

Pacific people are collectivist and familial in their upbringing. In the Pacific culture, respect is one of the most important aspects of their culture and includes respect for elders or those in superior positions (Foliaki, 2005). Elders are defined in many ways, they can be parents, uncles, aunties, older siblings, older members of extended families, leaders of church, communities and villages or generally people that are older. Some of the elders are leaders of the families (extended) and have the roles and responsibilities of leading and making decisions for the betterment of the family. The significance of the level of respect afforded to Pacific leaders is immense and is transferred into their work practices. Pacific staff attribute the respect for elders in their cultural context, to their line managers and senior staff in their workplace.

There is a Samoan saying..."O le ala i le pule o le tautua" translated 'the pathway to leadership is through service.' This concept is foundational in the Samoan approach to leadership. An individual's contribution through service is paramount and is the recognised progression to leadership and often begins within the families and within the villages, and the wider community. In Samoan society, a leader's recognition and acknowledgement of each individual's contribution is highly valued. An individual takes immense reward and pride through this acknowledgement of their service. Therefore, when they receive acknowledgment and recognition for their great skills and competencies in getting the work done, it is rewarding and also a source of confidence knowing that their performance is of a high standard. Consequently they start to think and accept that they have the abilities to move to the next senior role. In addition, not being boastful or self-promoting because of their cultural upbringing, the recognition and acknowledgement is considered to be a confirmation stamp that they have the skills to move forward.

Support from work colleagues is also a highly valued factor as it is seen in the same light as support from the family. Pacific people consider work and their colleagues as another

family away from home, so their opinions and views matter to them. The encouragement and support from their team members is treated as a family matter where everyone looks out for each other and wants the best for all.

This is the reason why participants value the support of their organisation so highly. Culturally, to them, the workplace is like a family environment where leaders or managers (elders) and colleagues (siblings, extended family) support and look after each other's well-being.

### ***5.1.2 Family values and upbringing***

The experiences that come from being brought up in humble beginnings and circumstances and having witnessed parents providing for one's family, are motivational and provides supportive factors for career progression. It is clear from the stories, that the participants hold their parents in high regard because of the sacrifices and the difficult challenges that they faced to provide a better future. An inherent work ethic exemplified by parents was also a big factor, believing that hard work brings further opportunities. With that in mind, these sacrifices have motivated participants to do well in education, secure employment and to progress into senior roles that not only will be for the betterment of their families but also to serve the community. As one participant sums it up,

*“Coming from the area in which this particular organisation is located, I felt a sense of responsibility to give back to the community where I was raised and to help others who were less fortunate and to help encourage others to take the opportunities that tertiary study can give. Wanting to give back to the local community, but to Pacific people in particular, was also a desire.”(P13)*

In this study, over half of the participants entered employment in tertiary institutions for the main purpose of providing for their families regardless of whether the job was on a part-time or on a fixed term basis. The decision to take up employment was not for individual gain but for the betterment of the family providing further evidence of Pacific culture values of families being an influencing factor in their decision about work.

### ***5.1.3 Skills and Competencies***

Both Pacific and non-Pacific participants agreed that qualification and skills provided better opportunity for career progression. The findings have clearly indicated that Pacific people have increasingly gained higher qualifications. This evidence supports the results from the 2013 Census that 70.1% of Pacific peoples have formal qualification up from

64.7% in 2006. From the findings, having qualifications certainly does help in gaining access to employment but might not necessarily be adequate to secure senior roles. A gap has been identified and this raises a question about what else is required or missing so that Pacific people can advance.

More qualifications have been identified as a supportive factor for career advancement by non-Pacific study participants. As explained, when two people apply for the same job, the most seemingly obvious key criterion for selection means that the person with the highest qualification will most probably get the job. Experiences from previous roles outside the organisation and across the institution positively supported progression. These various positions certainly provided new knowledge and skills that participant could offer to new positions. As one manager noted, qualifications, experience and the being fit-for-role are all important factors for recruiting and career advancement.

#### ***5.1.4 Personal Characteristics***

Personal drive and career planning are considered to be essential for career progression. Pacific people need to plan their career according to one of the non-Pacific participants and this is something that did not come up from the Pacific participants in the interviews. The reason for not being included in the conversation is probably due to the majority of the participants sharing the view that their priority of getting a job was to provide for their families. So, careers were something that were not thought of, let alone planned for.

A strong supportive factor, probably the most important for individuals is the personal motivation to develop oneself, to aim for the senior role or any other potential position. The motivation to be a good role model for the children, the youth at church or to make the family proud through successes was individually driven. In summary it was up to the individual wanting to take the next step.

## **5.2 Hindering Factors**

### ***5.2.1 Organisational culture***

Organisational culture and practices have been identified by participants as the main factors for hindering progression. Both Cardno and Auvaa (2010) and Tupou (2012) in their studies have identified organisational culture as the main hindering factor to career progression of Pacific people aspiring to be principals and Pacific women into senior

leadership roles. Participants have shared their experiences of having unsupportive managers in terms of not supporting them to undertake further studies. They have also discussed organisation policies and procedures that are not ‘Pacific Island friendly’ and may contribute to them missing out on opportunities to advance. The concerns or the barriers for their progression lies mainly with the Human Resources (HR) area.

There are culturally inappropriate recruitment, selection and performance processes in place. Participants felt before they even start to consider applying for a higher level position, the system has already discredited them. For example, during interviews and PERFORM sessions, questions about their strengths and weaknesses were asked. These questions are culturally inappropriate as in Pacific culture members are taught not to self-promote or be boastful. Therefore the participants hesitate and struggle to respond. This is an area that participants found uncomfortable to answer and hence why some felt they were overlooked. There is also the composition of the interview panel with representatives from various parts of the organisation. It is important that Pacific are represented on interview panels. If they are not, it is equally vital that a representative of the panel understands Pacific culture and values. The participants expressed the view that it appears that they only have a Pacific representative on the panel when there is a specific position designated for “Pasifika”. Considering that 35% of the students are Pacific then it could be that not only are Pacific staff not being considered, but also there is a degree to which Pacific students and their needs are being ignored. It is reasonable in the view of the participants to ask that the interview panel representatives understand Pacific culture and values. If not and alternatively, the panel needs to have appropriate ethnic representatives.

In terms of Professional Development (PD) the participants expressed the view that there is no current professional development targeted to Pacific Islanders. As recommended by Participant 1, an organisational formulated tailored leadership development programme is required that specifically targets particular aspects of leadership skills or career development needs specific to and required by Pacific Islanders. This development programme could be tailored to their particular learning style.

### ***5.2.2 Pacific culture***

Pacific Culture was cited as a barrier for career progression. A participant in the study commented that “*Pacific culture is unique but it doesn’t mean that it translates into the workforce.*” Some of the common values and practices of the Pacific culture hinder

career advancement. For instance, respect is one of the common practices used at workplaces which has caused misunderstanding as some managers do not understand this cultural value and its importance to Pacific culture. The respect for people in authorities (e.g. managers) means that it is inappropriate for a Pacific employee to question the views of people in a superior position even though they may disagree with the manager. Being respectful to others also means that it is inappropriate to talk about achievements as it is seen to be 'boastful'. The respect for team members can mean that Pacific staff members do not apply for the same role if their colleagues (older or employed longer) are also applying, even if they are more capable. It is these kinds of respect that stops them from pursuing advancement. These actions of the Pacific people are misunderstood by those in authority and are viewed as simply a lack of skills, of being not forthcoming or not career orientated as such behaviour suggests to the manager they have no plans for development. A cultural competency workshop would assist organisation members especially managers and senior officers to understand Pacific culture and therefore be able to acknowledge, reward, encourage and promote the progression of their Pacific staff.

### ***5.2.3 Career Planning and Individual Motivation***

A lack of career planning was another factor identified by a non-Pacific participant as hindering advancement. The topic of career planning or goal setting did not come up in the Pacific participant interviews. With so many challenges that they face in their career pathways, individuals need to set their goals, and seek opportunities to achieve them by, for example identifying professional development programmes that will assist them individually to better prepare themselves to take up the next role. Cardno & Auvaa (2010) agreed that lack of career planning was also a hindering factor. This is a big challenge for Pacific people as they are not individualistic and prefer to work in teams. A possible solution might be the development of a cultural career framework that is underpinned by Pacific cultural values and practices and is delivered to collectives of individuals rather than on an individual basis.

Pacific allied staff in the study generally did not work for career advancement purposes, rather work is a means to an end. During their time of employment, some managed to progress, but their progression was driven by line-managers' recognising their skills and abilities and approaching and encouraging them to apply.

#### ***5.2.4 Lack of confidence***

Lack of confidence; is it really a hindrance, a weakness or a cultural factor? One participant identified her lack of confidence as lack of holding a higher (postgraduate) qualification to enter senior roles. She continued to mention that by gaining a higher qualification, it will make her confident to take the next step. Lack of experience in career planning and the lack of leadership and management skills or a lack of ability to do the job have all contributed to her not applying for senior roles. Lack of confidence was also identified by Cardno and Auvaa (2010) in their study of Pacific Island senior management aspiring to be principals. Managers or people in positions of authorities should seek to understand that some Pacific people are capable and are able, provided they receive encouragement to apply for promotion. Managers need to recognise their capabilities and encouraged them to apply.

The study by Ricketts and Pringle (2014) found that managers recognised and had confidence in their abilities and skills to positively contribute to their career, however did not have a great impact on their motivation to progress. In contrast, the findings of this study are that the recognition of Pacific staff's capabilities and abilities by managers gave them confidence and had a significant influence on their motivation to apply for senior roles. It appears that the differences in these findings may be attributed to the Pacific cultural values and practices of leadership and respect.

#### ***5.2.5 The 'long' pathway***

It was interesting to discover that there is a delayed or 'long career pathway' for Pacific people. From mapping out career journeys of the participants it became clear that the precarious nature of their early jobs meant a delay in their journey as they waited for full time employment to reach and start progression. The precarious nature of employment for their initial job, then delays their career progression which does not begin until they are fully employed. This finding was supported by Thomas (2001) in U.S. research on mentoring minorities generally. He found that white professionals tend to enter a fast track early in their careers, whereas the minorities start off much later, and usually after they have reached middle management.

There were three reasons for the long delay in their career pathways. The first is obtaining qualifications late. For example, one participant started working full time then left after 3 years to study fulltime and then return to the workforce and start the cycle again. Others started studying towards their qualification after they were employed, whilst participants

who gained postgraduate qualifications also received theirs during employment as part of professional development. This was in contrast to other ethnicities who are more likely to attend tertiary institutions to gain their first qualification and then continue to postgraduate without entering the workforce in between. The second reason, is the precarious nature of the employment. Eight out of the 15 participants started on this delayed career pathway. Pacific people started on non-permanent positions and waited for full-time employment. Thirdly, the laborious process of waiting for recognition before taking the next step. Participants were needed to be encouraged by managers to apply for senior roles.

### **5.3 Other**

This study has uncovered some interesting data on qualifications of allied staff. The findings from the Work and Careers in Australian Universities survey (2012) found that 79% of allied staff have a degree with 42% having a qualification higher than a Bachelors degree (including postgraduate diploma, Masters and PhD). This set of statistics compares with those of the sample of this study of which 80% hold a qualification (diploma to Masters) and 13% hold a qualification higher than a Bachelors degree. This indicates that the Pacific allied workforce follows a similar pattern of acquiring higher level qualifications.

### **5.4 Significance and Contribution of the study**

The first contribution of this study is to the literature. The review of the literature identified a dearth of research of allied staff in tertiary institutions in New Zealand. This study is the first to be conducted on Pacific allied staff career progression in tertiary institutions in New Zealand and reveals the importance of Pacific culture in career progression.

The second contribution is the use of talanoa as a research methodology. The use of this methodology allowed the Pacific cultural values and practices of the researcher and participants to be reflected in the research practice. This is empowering and has increased the pool of knowledge from which creative solutions for Pacific career progression within tertiary institutions can be developed.

The third contribution is to practice. The findings of this study can contribute to developing culturally relevant career progression policy and practice aimed at educating managers into features of Pacific culture.

## **5.5 Limitations**

There are a number of limitations to the study. The qualitative method adopted for this study explores opinions and experiences of just 15 Pacific allied staff at one institution. The findings do not represent a general view of Pacific allied staff across a wider group of tertiary institutions. In addition to the sample being small, the majority of the sample are Samoans and therefore should not be considered as necessarily reflecting all of the Pacific cultures. Other tertiary institutions have different organisational cultures and systems so the findings of this study does not represent a general view.

## **5.6 Recommendations and Future Research**

The findings of this study raised some critical considerations for tertiary institutions to develop and review institutional policies and procedures to support and enhance career advancement for Pacific Island allied staff.

A need to review and develop new HR frameworks to integrate and reflect Pacific values, practices and culture that will enhance career progression has been identified as an area requiring attention. Such recommendations in this area include reviewing selection and recruitment processes to allow for activity based assessment in terms of secondment or being involved in a project.

There needs to be a consideration of setting up of tailored organisational Professional Development (PD) leadership programmes to achieve equity and progression of Pacific staff. These PD programmes should be aimed at developing specific skills that are required to apply for senior roles. Learning styles of Pacific people should be incorporated in these programmes. An example for consideration may be the Aniva Pacific Health Leadership Programme for the health sector.

Systematic consideration of the transferability of skills and expertise from the community, church and family roles that would enable them to be recognised in the workplace should also be considered.

Further study is required on cross-sector, cross-institution and different levels or stages of progress for Pacific people. A study to explore the relationships between the

supportive factors identified in this research against skill sets advertised for senior positions to determine if there is a gap that hinders opportunities for Pacific people would be valuable.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

In summary, organisations play a huge role in the career advancement of Pacific people. The findings of this study suggested that Pacific allied staff rely on both organisational support and organisation culture for progression. They have identified factors that are aligned and integrated with their culture to be of significant importance in their career progression or lack of progress. Organisational support, family upbringing and values, skills and competencies, personal characteristics have been discovered to be the main contributing factors to career progression. Organisation culture and practices, Pacific culture, personal choices, lack of skills and competencies and lack of confidence are factors that hinder staff from career advancement.

Getting a job for Pacific people can be a means to an end and they usually start at low and medium level jobs and on casual, part-time or limited tenure basis and as a result their career progression pathway is elongated and delayed. For Pacific Island staff to progress into senior role at tertiary institutions, organisations need to value Pacific culture and incorporate this into institutional policy and/or procedures to support their progression.

An overall view from the Pacific allied staff in this study is succinctly expressed as:

***“We don’t get paid to be us.”***

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## **APPENDICES**

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### **Appendix One: Ethical Approval**

The following page is the letter of ethical approval by the AUTEK committee for the current study. This research received full approval on the 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2015. AUTEK reference number 15/342

18 November 2015

Judith Pringle  
Faculty of Business and Law

Dear Judith

Re Ethics Application: **15/342 Pacific people's career progression in a tertiary educational institution.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 17 November 2018.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 17 November 2018;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 17 November 2018 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply there.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz).

All the very best with your research,



Kate O'Connor  
Executive Secretary  
**Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee**

Cc: Lisa Amoa [ntk1214@autuni.ac.nz](mailto:ntk1214@autuni.ac.nz)

## Appendix Two: Letter to Potential Participant

### Letter to Potential Participant

Talofa Lava, Kia Orana, Nisa Bula Vinaka, Malo Lelei, Fakaalofa Lahi atu, Malo E Lelei, Taloha Ni and Warm Pacific Greetings

I am a Samoan student at the Auckland University of Technology who is currently studying towards a Master's Degree in Business. As part of my degree, I am conducting a research to discover the potential reasons behind why Pacific people in tertiary institutions are not progressing into senior roles.

I am writing to request if you would like to participate in this research. The research will be in the form of Talanoa (semi-structured interview) where I will have some questions to ask you. It is anticipated that the interview will last from 1.00 – 1.5 hours. Please note that your participation is voluntary and that you can choose to not participate and you will not be disadvantaged in any way. And if you decide to participate, you can withdraw at any time prior to the (date inserted) when the data collection is completed.

An information sheet is attached providing you more information about the research in the forms of Questions and Answers. If you still like to know more about this research and still have some questions, please feel free to contact me at my details below.

If you decide that you would like to participate in this research please contact me either via email [ntk1214@autuni.ac.nz](mailto:ntk1214@autuni.ac.nz) or mobile 021 752 399 no later than... (*insert date two weeks from the date the information is sent*)

Thank you for your time and hope to hear from you soon.

Faafetai lava

Lisa Amoa

## Appendix Three: Participant Information Sheet

### Date Information Sheet Produced:

16 September 2015

### Project Title

Pacific people's career progression in a tertiary educational institution

### What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to understand the potential reasons behind why Pacific people at tertiary institutions in New Zealand do not progress into senior roles. There are many Pacific people employed at tertiary institutions in both non-academic (allied) and academic roles yet they do not progress into senior roles. This research seeks to determine key reasons for the non-progression of Pacific people in their careers at tertiary institutions with particular focus on allied Pacific workers.

In addition this research will contribute towards the completion of my Masters in Business qualification.

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

You would have received this information because you have responded to my advertisement and have shown interest to be part of this research by either contacting me directly or through a colleague that might have suggested your contribution will be valuable to this research.

You have been identified as a non-academic (allied) worker who has been working in the tertiary institutions for a number of years and who has valuable information from your experience that would be of benefit to this research. In addition your work experience journey, the challenges and the successes in your progression is what I am seeking in this research, including any factors that may have hindered your progression.

### What will happen in this research?

The research will involve your participation in an interview about your experiences and knowledge of the factors behind your career progression within the tertiary institution. The interview is expected to last between 1.00 to 1.5hours.

Should you decide to be a part of this research, complete confidentiality is assured. A consent form will need to be signed assuring your protection and confidentiality in this research. This can be explained further once you have made the decision to participate. Data collected (emails, audiotapes, notes) will be kept secured and it will only be available only to myself and my principal supervisor. Findings of the study will be published in the form of dissertation.

### What are the discomforts and risks?

I do not anticipate that there will be any risks in this research. If you feel uncomfortable you can decline to answer any of the questions.

### How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If you feel discomfort at any time; you do not have to answer the question. In addition I can stop the recording at your request.

### What are the benefits?

The findings of this research will

- provide additional knowledge into Pacific research around career progression of Pacific people with a particular focus in tertiary organisations.
- assist in developing professional development framework for Pacific people to progress into senior or leadership roles

- support tertiary institutions in understanding Pacific peoples approach to career progression, to enable to create and target professional development to meet Pacific peoples aspirations.
- benefit Pacific community in understanding more about factors that support the success of Pacific people
- contribute towards completing my Masters in Business qualification.

### How will my privacy be protected?

Participants will be identified only by code reference without disclosing the organisations or participant's name. Details of age, position titles, gender or nationality will not be disclosed and referred to in summary form. All information gathered will be locked away at the Primary Supervisors office. Whilst every care is taken to protect your identity, given the nature and size of this research sample, there may be an occasion when your identified maybe guessed by a third party.

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

As a follow up, I will be in contact with you over the next two weeks to arrange an interview should you decide to participate in this research. Please feel free to contact me before then. My contact details are noted at the end of this sheet. Please remember this is voluntary so you can always decline.

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

Should you decide to be a part of this research, I will be in contact with you to arrange a time and venue to meet for the interview and talk more about the research. Prior to the interview taking place a consent form will be explained to you and will need to be signed before the interview starts.

### Will I receive a copy of my interview transcript for reviewing and confirmation prior to finalising data recording?

A copy of your interview transcript will be sent to you upon request for reviewing, editing and confirming that this transcript is a true and accurate record of your interview.

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

A summary of the findings will be sent to you for your comment prior to submission for publication.

### 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;

*Project Supervisor, Professor Judith Pringle, via email*  
*[judith.pringle@aut.nz](mailto:judith.pringle@aut.nz),*  
*phone (09) 921-9999 ext 5420*

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, 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?

#### *Researcher Contact Details:*

Lisa Amoa  
Email: [ntk1214@autuni.ac.nz](mailto:ntk1214@autuni.ac.nz)  
Mobile: 021752399

#### *Project Supervisor Contact Details:*

Professor Judith Pringle  
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Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTEK Reference number *type the reference number*.

## Appendix Four: Consent Forms

Title of Project: **Pacific people’s career progression in a tertiary educational institution**

Project Supervisor: **Professor Judith Pringle**

Researcher: **Lisa Amoa**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the *(Information Sheet dated 18 November 2015)*
- 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 I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes  No
- I understand that published data will not report the names or affiliations of informants and will use pseudonyms

Participant’s signature: .....

Participant’s name : .....

Participant’s Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

.....

Date:

*Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 18 November 2015  
AUTEK Reference number 15/342.*

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form

## Appendix Five: Demographic Questions

# Demographic Questions for Interview Participants

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1. Are you Male or Female?
  - Male
  - Female
2. Which category below includes your age?
  - 20-29
  - 30-39
  - 40-49
  - 50-59
  - 60+
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
  - Bachelor of Law
  - Bachelor of Commerce
  - Bachelor (other)
  - Post Graduate Qualification
  - Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
4. In what year did you complete your study? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is your marital status?
  - Married/Civil Union
  - Separated
  - In a relationship
  - Single
6. What is your approximate average personal income?
  - \$0-\$40,000
  - \$40,000-\$50,000
  - \$50,000 – \$60,000
  - \$60,000 – \$70,000
  - \$70,000 - \$80,000
  - \$90,000 - \$100,000
  - \$100,000-\$149,000
  - \$150,000-\$200,000
  - above

7. What is your approximate average household income?
- \$0-\$49,999
  - \$50,000-\$99,000
  - \$100,000-\$149,000
  - \$150,000-\$199,999
  - \$200,000-\$249,999
  - \$250,000-\$299,999
  - \$300,000-\$349,999
  - \$350,000-\$399,999
  - \$400,000-\$449,999
  - \$450,000-\$499,999
  - \$500,000-\$549,999
  - \$550,000-\$599,999
  - 600,000 +
  - Not applicable
8. How many children currently live in your household? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Are you responsible for other dependent adults (e.g. parents)?
- Yes
  - No
10. If dependents exist, are you their primary caregiver?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
11. What is the job title for your current position?
- \_\_\_\_\_
12. About how long have you been in your current position? \_\_\_\_\_
13. About how long have you been with your current firm? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?
- Employed, working 1-24 hours per week
  - Employed, working 25-39 hours per week
  - Employed, working 40-50 hours per week
  - Employed, working 51-60 hours per week
  - Employed, working 61-70 hours per week
  - Employed, working 71-80 hours per week
  - Employed, working 80 + hours per week

## Appendix Six: Research Indicative Questions – PI Interview

### Research Indicative Questions for Interview – Pacific Island staff

Welcome/Introductions

#### Question 1:

Briefly, tell me about your career journey leading up to your current role.

#### Question 2:

Can you give me the reasons why you

- (a) decided to work in a tertiary institution?
- (b) took up this role?

#### Question 3:

What factors have contributed to your success in your career?

*Prompt: Responses to this question can be grouped into these factors below;*

- (a) Personal*
- (b) Community/Cultural*
- (c) Organisational*

#### Question 4:

What challenges have you encountered that you feel have held you back in your career progression?

#### Question 5:

How do you foresee your career unfolding/developing in the future?

## **Appendix Seven: Research Indicative Interview Question – Non-PI**

### **Research Indicative Questions for Interview – Non-Pacific Island staff**

Welcome/Introductions

#### **Question 1:**

Briefly, tell me about your career journey leading up to your current role.

#### **Question 2:**

Can you give me the reasons why you  
(c) decided to work in a tertiary institution?  
(d) took up this role?

#### **Question 3:**

What factors have contributed to your success in your career?

*Prompt: Responses to this question can be grouped into these factors below;*

- (d) Personal*
- (e) Community/Cultural*
- (f) Organisational*

#### **Question 5:**

What would you say are the reasons/challenges that may have;

- (a) contributed to the success of Pacific Island staff
- (b) held back career progression of Pacific Island staff?

#### **Question 6:**

How do you foresee Pacific Island staff career unfold/develop in the future?