Samoan Youth's experience and capacities in supporting family remittances: COVID-19 as a case study

Jamon Losalina Amiga

Master of Disaster Risk Management and Development
Faculty of Health and Environmental Science
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Abstract

Remittances are the money and goods sent by migrants to their home country. They are essential to support people's livelihoods daily and can be critical during disasters. In 2020, the COVID-19 Pandemic was declared and impacted most countries worldwide. For the first time in modern history, a disaster occurred across the world simultaneously: remittance senders and remittance receivers were both affected economically. While there has been extensive research on remittances, little research has focused on those who remit to families abroad during disasters, and there is even more scarce literature that draws attention to the experiences of youth who support their families in sending remittances. Youth are often perceived to be passive victims and vulnerable to the negative impacts of disasters. However, youth are resourceful and often display capacities to overcome disasters. This study focused on Samoan youth with the aim to privilege their voices and gain a greater understanding of the role they played in supporting family remittances. More specifically, this research aimed to unpack the factors influencing youth's decision to support family remittances during COVID-19. The chosen methodology used a qualitative descriptive approach and constructivist paradigm, aligning with the Talanoa method. Six participants from two schools took part in the Talanoa, which was conducted between March and April 2022. The findings indicate that Samoan youth decisions to support family remittances were influenced by the stories and relationships between their parents and kin in Samoa. The findings highlight a relational va within intergenerational households between Samoan youth and their parents that welcome healthy negotiation. The study shows that Samoan youth also faced different challenges in supporting their families to send remittances. Samoan females take on the roles of their siblings to keep the family dynamic going. Some Samoan youth had to seek employment to support their families. Samoan youth behaviour was largely shaped by the reciprocity to their parents that underpinned an extension of their tautua (service) to their relatives.

TRIBUTE

I dedicate this master's research to someone so dear to my heart.

My late grandma, Tuaimoana Rosalina Amiga

(Dec 27th, 1942 – Aug 19th 2021)

Figure 1:My parents and beloved grandma at my 2019 Graduation

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First and foremost, all the glory belongs to God, my creator. This achievement was made possible through him. He deserves all the praise, for he is the Author of my life.

To my soulmate, Suka. What a season! You have seen me at my lowest and still hold me in high regard. Your constant patience, love and wit continue to bless my life immensely. Thank you for weathering this storm with me and being an incredible father to our son. I am excited to return the support through your university studies.

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Fa'afetai, fa'afetai, fa'afetai tele lava

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

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

Sign: _____.____ Date: 17.04.2023

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Disasters present one of the greatest threats to future generations (Tanner & Seballos, 2012). The intensity and frequency in which they occur have increased over the past decade (Osofsky & Osofsky, 2018; Ahmad & Sadia, 2020), affecting more than a thousand youth every day (Niwa et al., 2016) and 255 million people per year (Peek, 2008). The World Youth Report (2020) declare that youth make up 15.5 per cent (1.2 billion young people) of the global population, and projections estimate this will reach 13.8 per cent (1.34 billion young people) by 2050. However, youth represent a significant fragment of those who endure the effects of disasters (Peek, 2008; Amir, 2017) and make up 175 million of those affected (Osofsky & Osofsky, 2018). Research draws attention to a range of important factors that aid in efforts of recovery, one of these key factors being remittances (Pairama & Le De, 2018). Remittances are the money and goods sent by migrants towards their home country. However, remittances can also act as a double sword, placing a significant economic burden upon the remitters (Connell, 2005; Connell, 2010; Macpherson et al., 2004) or even include social coercion as people abroad may prefer to avoid socio-cultural pressures that may arise from their poor remittance maintenance (Petrous & Connell, 2017).

Tanner and Seballos (2012) stipulate the detrimental effects disasters have on youth and recognise their distinct needs for protection, and there is a need for literature to be articulated from the voices and experiences of the youth themselves (McDonald et al., 2021). Meriläinen et al. (2020) highlight that marginalized people are more susceptible to hardship compared to the rest of the population during disaster times. Thus, youth are considered a marginalised group during disasters.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, one of the most noticeable marginalised groups is Pacific people (Teaiwa & Mallon, 2005), with a makeup of 381,642 people (Statistics New Zealand, 2020). The Samoan cohort remain the largest Pasifika community accounting for 16% of the Auckland population group of 182,721 people (Smith, Fereti & Adams, 2021), with a growing and youthful population. The Samoan youth population comprise of 23.5% of the overall Samoan population (Stats NZ, 2018) and are projected to live in intergenerational households with strong Samoan values embedded into their daily lives. Although upholding and exercising Samoan values and traditions is portrayed respectful, it can also elevate the Samoan hierarchy dynamic, widening Samoan youth involvement and input during family matters. Within Samoan families' parental hardships, responsibilities or concerns are rarely projected onto their children (Faleolo, 2019). However, the burden is often felt collectively and passed down to the younger generations (Faleolo, 2020; Ratuva et al., 2020). Studies have not given special attention to youth and their

response and recovery during, and post disasters. Pacific youth voices are often disregarded in the existing literature, positioning them as a minority within a minority (Osofsky & Osofsky, 2018; Lee, 2019). To date, no study has explored the role Samoan youth participate in supporting family remittances during a disaster. This is a research gap this dissertation aims to address.

The following section will define key disaster terminology and the relevance to people's livelihoods during disasters. Section two will introduce remittances and the prominent role in Pacific Islands, section three will explore youth and their contribution to disaster risk reduction through supporting their families during a disaster.

1.2 Key Disaster terminology and concepts

Defining and understanding a disaster in its entirety is complex. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) defines disaster as 'a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with the conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts.' (United Nation Disaster Risk Reduction [UNDRR], 2020). Disasters can be recognised as catastrophic threats in the form of wars, terrorist attacks, severe weather, natural phenomena and most significantly, outbreak of diseases (Masten, 2021). Scholars have expressed the importance of understanding key disaster terminology such as 'hazard', 'vulnerability' and 'capacity' as they are terms that co-exist with one another for a disaster to occur (Gaillard, 2019; Masten, 2018; Wisner et al., 2012).

1.2.1 Hazards

Hazards and disasters are not the same. To better understand these concepts and their significance, Westgate and O'keefe (1976) depicts this through a scenario to show their relationship. For example, a natural hazard, in this case a hurricane, occurring far out over the Atlantic Ocean or an earthquake in an unhabituated mountain region are not classified as disasters. They would be considered natural phenomena's every time they are out of contact with the most significant factor - people. However, if the natural hazard occurred in a place where people are present, this would be considered a disaster in the form of, but not limited to, a hurricane, tornado or tsunami. This correlates with Carr (1932, as stated in Fruedi, 2007) who highlights, without people, there is no disasters. Kelman (2018) also reiterates that events from nature, for example, landslides, a wildfire, or a tornado, is entirely natural and able to produce significant advantages for the environment.

Disasters can impact people physically, economically, socially, and mentally to varying degrees. Although disasters have multiple variations, they pose serious threat to living systems (Masten, 2018). Osofsky and Osofsky (2018) asserts disasters can bring disruption to individuals, families, and communities, whilst magnifying hardships of people's everyday lives. Disasters can also be viewed as an ongoing of everyday conditions with heightened intensity that exposes people's vulnerabilities (Meriläinen et al., 2020). Thus, during disasters, vulnerable populations suffer the most.

1.2.2. Vulnerability

According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction [UNDRR] (n.d), vulnerability is defined as the 'conditions determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets or systems to the impacts of hazards. This concept has become a central pillar in understanding disaster risk reduction [DRR] (Gaillard, 2019). Vulnerability does not emerge in response to a disaster (Fruedi, 2007); however, it is human decisions over a long period that exacerbate hardship forcing natural hazards to expose vulnerabilities (Kelman, 2018). This aligns with Meriläinen et al. (2018) and Masten et al. (2021) who posit the hardships accentuated by disasters, are pre-existing inequalities magnified after many years. In other words, disasters identify the inequalities within society. For communities that experience inequalities or exposed to more harm than other community members, they are referred as 'marginalised people'. Though vulnerability and marginalisation are connected to disasters, marginality should not be considered the characteristics of those who are 'vulnerable' (Meriläinen et al., 2020). Furthermore, marginalised people exposed to traumatic events are not helpless in the face of disasters (Furedi, 2008), and possess capacities to mitigate the effects of disasters (Gaillard, 2010).

1.2.3. Capacity

Capacity is defined as 'the combination of all the strengths, attributes, and resources available within a community, society or organization that can be used to achieve agreed goals' (UNISDR, 2009). Gaillard et al. (2019) refers capacity to the set of diverse knowledge, skills and resources people can claim, access and resort to in dealing with hazards and disasters. Capacities is a relatively recent concept introduced to academia that recognises people can be vulnerable but are also proactive and attain skills, knowledge, and resources in the face of disasters or hazards (Gaillard, 2019). This term can exist in different ways that provide each person with distinct strategies to overcome hazards and disasters. These are natural, physical, human, social, financial, or economic, and political (Wisner et al., 2012). Furthermore, vulnerable people still have material capacities despite their impact of disasters (Anderson & Woodrow, 1991, p.47).

Capacities are seen as an extension of everyday life, hence even the vulnerable and marginalised groups have capacities (Le De et al., 2015). This includes groups usually identified as particularly vulnerable to disasters such as migrants, ethnic minorities, or youth.

1.4 Defining and framing 'Pacifica, Pasifika and Pacific Islander' for this research

Many terms have been used to reference Pacific peoples. Pacific peoples hold a unique heritage identity in their homeland, for example, Samoan, Tongan, Tokelauan, Cook Islander, Niuean or Fijian. Though, it was not until the arrival of many Pacific peoples to New Zealand that Pacific migrants were labelled 'Pacific Islanders', 'indigenous people of the Pacific', 'Polynesians' and so forth (Cunningham, Jesson & Samu, 2022). The heterogeneous term, 'Pasifika' refers to Aotearoa New Zealand-born Pacific peoples from the Pacific regions (Sauni, 2012). The blanket terms mentioned above undermine each Pacific Island's cultural and historical distinctiveness. Central ministries in Aotearoa New Zealand such as the Ministry of Pacific Peoples (MPP) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) use the terms 'Pacific' and 'Pacific peoples' consistently, alongside the Ministry of Education (MOE) shifting from 'Pasifika' to 'Pacific' in 2018 (Cunningham, Jesson & Samu, 2022) 'Pasifika' refers to people of Pacific heritage now living in Aotearoa New Zealand. Although the term 'Pasifika' is problematic, it is helpful to distinguish between Pacific peoples living within nations of the Pacific region and the Pacific-heritage communities of Aotearoa New Zealand (Samu, 2013). Throughout this research, I will use the term 'Pacific' to signify peoples in the Pacific Island regions situated in the islands and 'Pasifika' to establish those who have Pacific heritage but now live in Aotearoa New Zealand.

1.5 Remittances and Pacific people

One of the mechanisms people use in the face of disasters is remittances. Remittances refer to the income and goods sent by migrants to their motherland (Ahlburg, 1991; Brown & Ahlburg, 1999; Bettin, Presbitero & Spatafora, 2017). The act of remittances is known and practiced worldwide but is more significant within many Pacific Island Countries [PIC]. Samoa and Tonga account for the top countries to share and embed remittances within their culture (Browne & Mineshima, 2007; Le De et al., 2015). Scholars working on remittances in the early 1980s predicted this practice would decrease over the years; however, recent data indicate that remittances have steadily increased over the last three decades (Pairama & Le De, 2018). For example, it was believed that remittances would decrease in the face of a crisis, as remitting families would not have the capacity to support their relatives in receiving countries (Connell & Brown, 2005; Browne & Mineshima, 2007). Yet remittances are still active and have increased over time, including during economic crises. In Samoa, remittances are a predominant source of income for

families and villages (Ahlburg, 1998; Connell et al., 2005). Remittances can be seen through transnational cooperation during Samoa's 2009 tsunami and 2019 measles outbreak (Craig et al., 2020). For example, families in Samoa relied on their familial connections from Aotearoa New Zealand, to provide sustenance in the forms of money, clothes, and resources. Ironically, this is the first time in history that both settlements (Aotearoa New Zealand and Samoa) have been simultaneously affected by the same phenomenon. The World Bank (2016) shows Tonga is 39% of the Gross Domestic Product [GDP] whilst Samoa is 25.3% of the GDP, offering a significant investment in sourcing income elsewhere, usually from families living in Aotearoa New Zealand, the United States of America or Australia (Le De et al., 2015). Remittances not only support groups financially or economically but also acquire a complex social aspect. Social remittances include sharing cultural norms, traditions, social practices, and transfer of information (Levitt et al., 2011).

Le De et al. (2015) state remittances are also a social resource based on kinship, people's social networks and their idea of reciprocity. This can be shown through upholding traditional activities, demonstrating cultural values and contributing to the overall well-being, which are often overlooked by economic-based approaches that neglect people's feelings, perceptions, and meanings towards remittances (Le De et al., 2013).

1.5.1 Remittances and Pasifika people

Pasifika people hold an essential role in continuing the remittance mechanism. Both migrant senders and receivers of remittances have important roles, and often share the awareness that their country of origin may have limited economic capacities (Pairama & Le De, 2018). In addition, remittances are not only used to support family financially but used for day-to-day activities, which keeps remittances flowing. For remittance senders, fulfilling their duty to remit stems from cultural obligation, customs and norms that are observed from being born and raised in the islands. Le De et al (2015) implies remittances are a reliable social resource, acknowledging people's relationships with kin, social network, and reciprocity. Reciprocity is essential to the Pacific cultural normalities (Pairama & Le De, 2018). It aids in the purpose for migration, improves welfare, potentially being able to make investments or reduce poverty and inequality (Petrous & Connell, 2017). Remittances reinforce the importance of maintaining family ties outside of their motherland (Petrous & Connell, 2017). Macpherson (1992) denotes that migration of remittance income, was not fully appreciated until the percentage of migrants and their volume of remittances increased. One of the key reasons people migrated from the Pacific to Aotearoa New Zealand was to increase their income and access to better opportunities for their kin and wider networks (Leaupepe & Sauni, 2014; Spoonely et al., 2003). Overall, migrants who remit report positive feelings of being able to assist their families and uphold their duty to their culture. However,

living in a host country can present many barriers to migrants when they remit (Le De et al., 2015).

Connell and Brown (2005) identify some key constraints that migrants experience, such as the level of income and take-home pay, unemployment rate, increase in the cost of living, additional children or change in marital status. Each constraint influences the level of support migrant families can support their aiga (family) back home. In other words, this bestowed obligation to their families abroad and duty to deliver, presents obstacles. Ratuva et al. (2020) express that many Samoan families living in Aotearoa New Zealand remained diligent in finding ways to remit resources, despite their living situations in their residence. However, youth also play a role in supporting their family during disasters (Faleolo, 2020).

1.6 Youth and disasters

Youth have been perceived as naive, passive victims and unresourceful during a disaster. This view is shared in academia and within society, where it is culturally normal to stereotype youth as irresponsible and rebellious (Powers et al., 2014; Lee & Craney, 2019). Despite their image in society, youth are mobilising, organising themselves in groups and demanding attention to issues that impact them worldwide (Powers et al., 2014). There is a lack of youth representation within the disaster risk decision-making spaces; and furthermore, youth are often not taken seriously as political subjects in their own communities (Lee & Craney, 2019). Within disaster studies, youth are highly vulnerable to the negative impacts of disasters (Ronan & Johnston, 2005; Amir, 2017). This includes displacement in safe spaces such as homes, playgrounds and schools and includes school dropout rates or decline in academic grades (Cox et al., 2017). Disasters disproportionately impact culturally diverse low-resource environments. Though studies highlight youth vulnerability during disasters, it is important to identify the cultural factors involved in youth response to disasters (Rahmani et al., 2022). This is alarming as one in ten youth are ‘left behind’, which refers to youth who are no longer in school and are facing challenges to their development (Rahmani et al., 2022). In addition, negative stereotypes for youth stem from a paternalism worldview, where adults fail to recognise the value or utility role of youth as agents, able to assimilate and manage information (Mitchell, 2008). This is also a belief that youth are not properly skilled to convey rational risk choices among family and wider networks (Lee & Craney, 2019).

The unique needs of youth during a disaster are often overlooked. Mitchell et al (2008) portrays no role for youth to communicate disaster risks or the ability to help when a crisis occurs. In line with this, Peek (2008) denotes youth often rely on adults for multiple forms of support and

protection. However, youth attain capacities that they utilise during a disaster and pose strengths that can serve as a significant resource for their family.

This can be seen during the economic standstill sprouting from the COVID-19 lockdown in Aotearoa New Zealand. A surge of high school students discontinued their education and sought permanent employment or twilight shifts to contribute income to their family's livelihoods (Community Waitakere, 2021; Franks, 2020; Mutch, 2021 & Radio New Zealand, 2020). Amir (2017) considers youth who take part in disaster-related activities prior to, during and after a disaster increases their ability to handle the situation practically and mentally. Amir (2017) further highlights the need for an innovative educational approach to expose youth to emergency and disaster management to better equip youth for future events. Extensive research is needed to understand what role youth have during a disaster, and therefore the hypothesis for this research is that due to a standstill in mobility for the Samoan community, disasters have placed millennials and their skills in important positions within their families.

1.7 Disaster context: COVID-19 in Aotearoa New Zealand

The most recent phenomenon experienced is COVID-19 or formally recognized as SARS-CoV-2 (World Health Organization, n.d). Due to its easily transmissible nature, COVID-19 progressed to a global pandemic which related policies, at the time, affected Aotearoa New Zealand's economy and kept the country at interchanging lockdown (Ratuva et al., 2020). As a result, a fluctuation in unemployment rates increased financial distress for many Aotearoa New Zealanders, with Samoans holding a large percentage of those affected (Baker et al., 2020; Brunton, 2020). For the first time in modern history, a disaster occurred across the world simultaneously. While there has been extensive research on COVID-19, little research has focused on those who remit to families abroad during disasters, and even more scarce literature that draws attention to the experiences of Samoan Pasifika youth who support their families in sending remittances. This research aims to fill this knowledge gap as it seeks to understand to what extent Samoan youth have supported their families during the COVID-19 crisis.

1.8 Rationale/Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to privilege Samoan youth voices and understand their experiences during COVID-19. The research aims to explore the elements that shaped Samoan youth decision-making in helping their family through remittances during this disaster and the coping mechanisms they utilise to support their kin.

This overarching question will be answered through three main adjectives:

1. What roles did Samoan youth played in supporting family remittances during COVID-19?
2. How have Samoan youth been impacted through supporting family remittances in this disaster?
3. What elements have shaped Samoan youth's behaviours and actions in supporting family remittances in during COVID-19?

1.9 Dissertation outline

This dissertation consists of five chapters. This chapter commenced with an introduction to the study and the purpose behind the selection of this topic, the research gap, objectives and research questions. Chapter Two focuses on the literature review that critically analyses past literature on remittances in the face of disaster, Samoan youth contribution during a crisis and the cultural underpinnings that shape families remitting. Chapter Three discusses the methodology and design adopted for this research, which utilises Talanoa, a qualitative descriptive approach. It will explore the research design, paradigm, and ethical considerations. Chapter four presents the findings of this study and the analysis of data. Key themes and issues are identified and analysed to conclude. Chapter Five discusses the findings and the wider implications whilst linking them to relevant literature. This last chapter will also identify positive and negative limitations of this research and propose areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Disasters are increasing and a global concern for people (Osofsky & Osofsky, 2018; Shaw Kishore, 2023). The research draws attention to a range of important factors that aid in efforts of recovery, one of these key factors being the importance of remittances (Koaczan & Loyola, 2018; Le De et al., 2015; Le De & Jackson, 2021; Ratha, 2013; Tachibana et al., 2019). The largest remittance levels around the world (as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product [GDP]) reflect Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (Le De & Jackson-Becerra, 2021). Though key characteristics set SIDS apart, like cultural practices, geophysical and biophysical structures, socio-economic models and political systems, SIDS share similar vulnerabilities in the face of disasters and experience similar obstacles (Kelman, 2018). Connell (2010) states SIDS remain the most vulnerable populations within disaster research. Natural hazard and disaster-related research have mainly investigated biophysical and geophysical aspects such as landslides, floods, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis, thus, often overlooking the sociocultural, political, and historical elements that ripple from such hazards (Kelman, 2018; Levitt & Lamba-nieves, 2011; Pant, 2016**).** During disaster, populations from SIDS are not passive nor helpless but display mechanisms to overcome such events. However, few studies have reviewed the role of remittances in SIDS (Kumar & Stauvermann, 2021; Le De et al., 2015). Remittances are part of the daily life of Pacific Islanders and are critical during disastrous events. However, only a breadth of research has examined remittances during a disaster from the viewpoints of the senders, and even fewer studies (if any) have been conducted on the role of youth. Section 2.1 will introduce an overview of transnational remittances. Section 2.2 will showcase remittances' impact on communities during a disaster, specifically within Samoa. Lastly, section 2.3 will offer insight into current literature on youth and remittances and the gap this study aims to address.

2.1 Transnational remittances: an overview

Several authors claim that transnational remittances are the product of assisting and compensating family members for adverse shocks to their income (Bettin et al., 2014; Koczan & Loyola, 2018). Cohen (2011) coins this interaction as ‘unidirectional’ economic transfers from a mobile worker to their sending household, community, and country. According to the International Monetary Fund [IMF], remittances is coined as ‘household income from the temporary foreign economies arising mainly from the temporary or permanent movement of people to those economies. Remittances include cash and non-cash items that flow through formal channels via electronic wire, or through informal channels, such as money or goods carried across borders’ (IMF, 2009 p. 272). Bettin et al. (2014) state a positive correlation between the economic

conditions of relatives back home, suggesting that remittances are driven by self-interest motives such as investment or inheritance. Bettin et al. (2012) denote that if the migrant sender experiences a positive increase in income, remittances sent to their home country are likely to be more significant. In other words, the quantity of remittance to relatives in the home country depends on the sender's economic well-being.

Transnational transfers influence the trade balance, supporting global investments, and economic practices have been vital to sending countries (Cohen, 2011). Remittances involve the transfer of financial resources through money transfer agents, the banking system, or informal channels. Carling (2008) states this is often about the balance of payment statistics contributing to country-level remittance data. For example, remittance flows are evident in Europe, which increased by 7.8% in 2021; Central Asia increased by 6.9% to a $157 billion increase in South Asia in 2021 (The World Bank, 2022). For the same year, remittances inflow to India rose to 8% and by 20% in Pakistan (The World Bank, 2022). However, it is recognised that the recorded remittances capture only half of the real remittance levels (Ratha, 2013).

Pacific nations such as Samoa, the Marshall Islands, Tonga, Fiji and the Philippines remain economies where remittances flourish (The World Bank, 2022). Similarly, in Zimbabwe, remittances serve as the primary source of income for many communities and families (Freund & Spatafora, 2008). For Tajikistan Central Asia, remittances are extremely important in their community as many households rely on remittances to pay for their healthcare (Kan, 2021). This is also common for South Asian migrant workers who send large amounts of remittances to assist family members in their home country (Sutradhar, 2020). Thus, remittances are essential to people's livelihoods and contribute to households' needs in developing countries, especially among people with little access to resources (Ratha, 2013). Connel (2010) denotes that remittances are a diversification approach enabling communities to balance their limited access to resources and take opportunities of globalisation processes. Remittances are linked to 'push' and 'pull' factors such as unstable work income, job opportunities, lack of private insurance and social security, socio-cultural norms, family obligations and immigration schemes, where households may rely on their social ties to deal with daily needs (Le De & Jackson-Becerra, 2019).

Le De et al. (2013) recognise that people's livelihood strategy can be intensified by worsening political, economic, and environmental conditions, disasters, and crises. Remittances are more than the 'unidirectional' flow of money as they entail rich and complex dimensions (Cohen, 2011; Lacroix et al., 2016). Levitt (1998) coined the concept of social remittances to highlight that remittances exist beyond monetary value and encompass identities, cultural practices, values, and social capital circulated between receiving and remitting communities. Social remittances

encompass intentions, aspirations, love, and values alongside channels of financial exchange and should be perceived more than their physical purchasing power (Harper & Zibida, 2018). Social remittances involve social networks that are based on kinship relationships and reciprocity (Tamasese et al., 2010). Levitt (1998) observed this practice between the Dominican Republic and the USA, emphasising that through remittances, migrants transport behaviours and ideas back to their sending communities. Furthermore, Levitt (1998) argued that social remittances could take many forms, including visiting families back home, exchanging e-mails, letters, cassettes, videos, voice calls or blog posts. Put simply, Harper and Zubida (2018) express that social remittances studies allowed for the questions of why people remit, the value of remittances and the meaning of remittances to the sender instead of the receiver.

2.2 Remittances in the face of disasters

In accordance with Le De et al. (2013) remittances have a powerful role in disaster time. In the mid-2000s, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) led the first investigation to identify the importance of remittances in people's struggle to mitigate emergencies and humanitarian crisis (Savage & Harvey, 2007). Following ODI's breakthrough, more studies have investigated the importance of remittances in the face of disasters (Hahm, Subhanij & Almeida, 2021; Harper & Zubida, 2018; Le De et al., 2015; Le De & Jackson-Becerra, 2021). Jukan (2020) states remittances are the most significant capital for people living in developing countries and remains a crucial aspect of a household's livelihood approach to manage natural hazards (Mohapatra et al., 2012). In the same light, Le De and Jackson-Bercerra (2019) denote increase levels of remittances is often seen during and after disasters as migrants help their kin who have been impacted. This was seen during the El Salvador agricultural shocks from 1999 and 2001 when remittances nationwide increased from 40% to 60% (Halliday, 2008). Moreover, research highlights that remittances play a large role in 'consumption smoothing' due to its consistent and reliable practice (Ratha, 2013).

During disasters, the focus is often on response agencies such as governments and humanitarian actors, often overlooking the role of people in mobilising their networks of family and friends to respond, including through remittances (Savage & Harvey, 2007). The sending of remittances has proved effective and consistent as it generally reaches affected communities faster than official government support (Savage & Harvey, 2007). As mentioned before, this assistance can be crucial for an individual to access health and restorative care, provide clothing, food and basic sanitary and toiletry needs to cope with catastrophic events. Following the 2004 Sri Lankin Tsunami, Deshingkar (2006) highlights how efficient Sri Lankan migrants reached out to their kin despite a month of failed government aid. Similarly, rapid migrant assistance was evident after

Indonesians in Aceh experienced the 2004 Tsunami, which enormously helped citizens recover quickly (Wu, 2009).

It is important to not idealise remittances in disaster and recognise some of the challenges associated with this mechanism. For instance, Deshingkar (2006) and Wu (2009) highlight banking system issues as remittance receivers experienced difficulties accessing income their relatives sent. In addition, residents in rural areas suffered significantly due to delays in infrastructure repair and recovery. On the other hand, remittances that were sent informally by avoiding banking system channels were much more reliable and encountered less delays (Deshingkar, 2006; Wu, 2009). Suleri and Savage (2006) examined the 2005 earthquake in Northern Pakistan and noted that households with constant and reliable sources of remittances proved less vulnerable. These families could salvage their area, repair, and rebuild their living area easier than households without a remittance mechanism. In addition, healthcare or distribution points for relief aid was reachable for remittance receivers (Suleri & Salvage, 2006). Nonetheless, Wu (2009) identifies Acehnese households who relied on remittance income days after the tsunami, and claims they were just as affected as non-remittance receiving families. This is because, Acehnese livelihood was disrupted, and they could not meet their everyday consumption needs. Wu (2009) study highlights the problem of households' over-reliance on remittances to make a living and deal with crisis.

Importantly, remittances benefit individuals and households and are important to the wider community and can strengthen it in disastrous times. For example, local markets utilise local produces, generate employment around housing rebuilds and re-establish social structures that benefit the local community. In addition, remittances are important to the response and recovery of people affected by a disaster. Le De et al. (2013) expresses that there are tangible implications that are heavily influenced by remittances such as the reconstruction of housing, reestablishment of businesses, healthcare access, social services, and access to public spaces. Remittances are also intangible and impact an individual's psychological and emotional state.

People who are affected by disasters use remittances as psychological and socio-cultural support which aids in their ability to attend their usual traditions (Levitt, Lamba-Nieves & Prickett et al., 2020). For example, a study by Tachibana et al. (2019) examined 335 individuals affected by the 2015 earthquake in Nepal. The Nepalese migrant population is a large community that pays remittances back to their Nepal nation. The principal finding of this study showed remittances sent after the earthquake, helped reduce Post Traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD] and depression. A study in Mexico also explored mental challenges and analysed the effects of women's mental health after experiencing an earthquake (Huerta-wong et al., 2018). It was found that Mexicans experienced positive effects to their mental well-being when they received remittances.

Remittances was a resource that allowed Mexicans to purchase rebuilding material, durable resources and seek psychological support.

The International Monetary Fund reports Pacific Island Countries being top receivers of remittances worldwide regarding the Gross Domestic Product [GDP] percentage (IMF, 2022). Feeny (2019) explains that remittances remain essential to Pacific Countries than others. Small Island Developing States [SIDS] receive twice the amount of remittance share than 'developing' countries (Le De & Jackson-Becerra, 2021). A common characteristic SIDS share is their reliance on remittances (Hahm et al., 2021). Tonga and Samoa rank two of the highest rates of remittances worldwide relative to the size of their economies (Feeny, 2019). For example, the World Development Indicators claim Tonga received the highest level of remittances, followed by Samoa, Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Kiribati (Hahm et al., 2021). In 2019, Samoa and Tonga held the largest recipient of remittances, with Samoa 17.3% of GPD and Tonga 40.7% of GPD (Le De & Jackson-Becerra, 2021).

Feeny (2019) explains that at a macroeconomic level, economic shocks/financial crises impacted the Pacific Island Countries less than other countries. Though Hahm et al. (2021) highlight the socio-economic fragility of Pacific SIDS and their vulnerability to disasters, remittances are used as an everyday resource. The IMF report states, 'PICs economies are highly dependent on imports and external income (including remittances)'. Remittances are one of the top components of national income. The number of remittances reach levels rarely found elsewhere. Connell and Brown (2005) noticed that more Pacific Islanders from second and third generations had lived away from their home island, which posed an assumption that these generations would or would not continue to remit and whether they fit the image of an islander or migrant. Connell and Brown (2005) assumption are a testament to the trials in which remitters feel they are away from their home island. However, nowadays, remittances remain strong. Therefore, the remittance decay hypothesis does not verify since Pacifica families keep supporting their kin back home, and remittance levels remain high, including during a crisis.

2.3 Remittances in disaster: the case of Samoa

Samoa is located in the Polynesian region of the Pacific Ocean. Samoa's economy heavily relies on remittances proving to be a large source of income for most families (Le De & Jackson-Bercerra, 2021). It is also critical resource during crisis. This was evident through the 1990 cyclone Ofa and 1991 cyclone Val whereby Samoan households in Fusi village confirmed receiving more remittances than in any non-disaster year (Muliana, 2003). Le De et al. (2015) studied the effects of the 2009 Tsunami on five coastal villages in Samoa. They reported remittances were the primary resource that enabled families and households to overcome the

event. Thus, remittances have been referred to as a form of self-insurance. In a disaster situation, social capital is often divided into four components social network support, emotional support, collective action, and trust (Mayer, 2019). Bridging, bounding, and linking social capitals, is also critical in a disaster (Aldrich & Mayer, 2015; Su & Le De, 2022). Cohen (2011) denotes the synergy between those who move and those who remain in the birth land and destination, sending households to define the transnational space in which remittance practices occur. When Pacific Island States face a disaster or public health crisis, transnational cooperation from families nested in adjacent or far countries become powerful mechanisms to ensure their families in the islands are well-assisted (Ahlburg, 1991; Faleolo et al., 2020). High-income countries become significantly dependent on sending money and resources for short- and long-term support, also known as remittances (Ahlburg, 1991).

More recently, remittances can be seen through transnational cooperation during two vicious accounts; firstly Samoa's 2009 tsunami (Le De et al., 2015) and through the 2019 measles outbreak (Craig et al., 2020). Families in Samoa relied on their aiga (family) connections from abroad (mainly Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America [USA]) to provide sustenance in the form of money and food resources. According to Le De et al. (2015) approximately 72% of the resources were remitted within a week post 2009 tsunami in Samoa. This shows how rapid diaspora Pasifika communities work to assist their aiga (family) who suffer the impacts of disaster. This aligns with the Samoan concept of 'teu le va', which refers to nurturing relationships, taking care of, or maintaining them (Anae et al., 2016). The term 'Va' is translated to 'space'; in-between this space is a sacred and spiritual force that binds two entities together (Tiatia, 2012). When Samoan traditions and expectations are obeyed, the 'Va' has been respected and nurtured. Therefore, families in Aotearoa New Zealand who provide for their kin overseas often show 'teu le va' through their actions of reciprocity, a custom that is highly valued within the Pacific paradigm and is a practice continued among Samoan families living in diaspora (Brown & Ahlburg, 1999; Browne & Mineshima, 2007).

The increased flow of remittances is due to high levels of migration since the 1980s to neighbouring countries, each with a strong communal culture of reciprocity (Hahm et al., 2021). MacPherson (1994) highlights that a main reason for migration stems from one's obligation to their family and not for individualistic motives. Brown and Mineshima (2007) and Spoonley et al. (2003) argue it is due to the promising economic prosperities of the likes of Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and USA, and to provide their future generations access to greater opportunities for education and employment (Cunningham, Jesson & Samu, 2022; Leaupepe & Sauni, 2014). This expanded Pasifika social networks, which is an integral part of Pacific people's identity and self-confidence (Faleolo, 2021). Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2011) affirm that

migrants who have settled in a country bring skills, labour and knowledge whilst contributing to development in their place of origin by sending remittances.

On the other hand, many scholars have tried to understand the remitting behaviours of Pacific Islanders and often, findings led to a hypothesis of 'remittance decay', an assumption that over time the number of migrants would decrease, social ties would fade and as a result would not be considered a sustainable livelihood strategy and decline (Le De & Jackson-Becerra, 2021). However, remittances remain strong nowadays, including in crises/disasters. Hahm et al. (2021) state that workers from Pacific Island countries share a sense of social obligation to use part of their earned income to support their immediate and extended families. Often this support is used for housing, food, educational and medical expenses, funerals, weddings, and to assist livelihoods post-disaster.

Remittances are not used exclusively in disaster situations but are also used for meeting day-to-day needs and often a dominant form of income for locals (Le De et al., 2015). Remittances are rooted in Samoan culture as this is the extension of social capital and refer to the notion of reciprocity, support, and help should a difficult time occur. Culture exemplifies common thoughts and ideas of a group that sets them apart from other social groups. Culture encompasses the regular tasks, norms, ways of communicating, and everyday actions between people. Culture also cultivates feelings, thoughts and ideas about family, education, body image, status and social background, activities and religion or faith. These are important factors that are sustained and passed between generations.

The Pacific culture, also known as the 'Pacific Way', differentiates Pacific people from other ethnic groups. The Pacific Way embraces a collective way in every living circumstance and focusses more on the well-being of Pacific families. For example, nobody gets left behind. Collectiveness among Pacific people allows them to look out for their family, extended families, village and communities through sharing accommodation, food and land (Cowley, 2011).

Unlike the individual remitting pattern as observed elsewhere, remittances are an aiga (family) system founded on values embedded in fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way), such as caring for family, respect, and obedience. Le De and Jackson-Becerra (2021) state that more than a third of money sent by remitters goes towards fa'alavelaves. Fa'alavelaves embody traditional customs and practices. For example, this is seen in weddings, matai ceremonies, funerals, birthdays, and other customary ceremonies meaningful within the Samoan culture. While Pasifika communities in Aotearoa New Zealand uphold their obligation to their families in the motherland there are economic and social implications for these senders. Multiple elements affect the ability of

remitters to support their loved ones during a crisis. Barriers include the amount of income after tax, the unemployment rate, and the economic situation of the host country (Connell, 2005).

2.4 Samoan youth and their role in disaster risk reduction

Past disaster literature tends to portray youth as passive and weak individuals who are more susceptible to the negative impacts of disaster (Barlett, 2008; Peek, 2008; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2011). As seen through Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Maria, youth are more prone to experiencing long-term issues (Pittman et al., 2020; Weems et al., 2010). Masten and Obradoric (2008) state that disasters that affect groups or isolate youth from their school friends for a prolonged time seem to experience higher chances of lingering effects.

A lack of emergency mitigation procedures and recovery plans for youth was evident through Hurricane Katrina and the 2011 triple crisis earthquake, radiation and tsunami catastrophe that evolved to the destruction of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear facility (Masten & Obradoric, 2008; Dziuban, Peacock & Frogel, 2017). Most recently, the COVID-19 Pandemic is projected to present new lessons that will improve disaster readiness, as this research is taking place. This disaster has magnified the cost of an inequal social system that in turn has had implications for youth at home. From these devastating disasters and learnt lessons, it is evident that youth should not need to rely on their education institutions to have adequate resources to overcome a disaster. Furthermore, it is evident that all youth require access to WiFi/internet, tools, and skills for continuing their daily routines like learning online. However, it is hoped that resilience planning can be strengthened through all system levels by re-evaluating past disasters. For example, what could have been implemented better.

A 2022 study identified youth as active agents in mitigation and management for disasters worldwide (Bessaha, Hayward and Gatanas, 2022). The authors state that there is an important role of disaster mitigation and response for youth. Youth are perceived as having assets in mitigation and management for disasters in the United States and abroad (Cox et al., 2017) and vital components of DRR efforts worldwide (Cumiskey et al., 2015; Fernandez & Shaw, 2015). Including young people in research and practice initiatives on disaster mitigation and response can enhance their disaster knowledge and practical skill development (Peek et al., 2016). Multiple disaster experts consider youth as leaders attaining important roles, instead of being passive victims (O'Malley 2015; Masten, 2021; Tanner, 2010;). It was through Hurricane Katrina that youth proved they were resourceful 'risk communicators' by supporting their family and communities in crisis (Peek 2008:5; Tanner 2010, p.347).

When youth can learn about risk, they tend to spread that knowledge with their social circles like friends and family members. This is an effective way in mobilizing resources in times of disaster (Peek 2008). A United States of America study involving youth from 13 to 17 years old discovered that their parent's had a large influence on their environmental perceptions. This included the purchased consumables and home energy usage (Mead et al., 2012). Similarly, Masten (2021) argues that educational experience may also have an impact on long-term environmental attitude and actions.

Bessaha, Hayward and Gatanas (2022) study looked over 19 articles detailing research on the role of youth and young adults in mitigation and response to disasters in their communities. This research documented youth from the Philippines, United Kingdom and Taiwan, Canada, Japan, Nepal, India, Dominica, two from the United States, China and Nepal. However, this recent study did not include Pacific Island States, and therefore gives an opportunity for this research to explore further. For example, studies have tried to understand the remitting behaviours of Pacific Islanders and often, findings have drawn closer to the hypothesis of 'remittance decay', an assumption that over time the number of migrants would decrease, social ties would fade and as a result would not be considered a sustainable livelihood strategy and decline (Connell, 2005; Le De & Jackson-Becerra, 2021). However, remittances remain strong nowadays, including in crises/disasters. Hahm et al. (2021) state that workers from Pacific countries share a sense of social obligation to use part of their earned income to support their immediate and extended families. Often this support is used for housing, food, educational and medical expenses, funerals, weddings, and to assist livelihoods post-disaster. Remittances are critical during an emergency, especially within SIDS (Le De et al., 2013).

Culture plays an important role in resilience (Masten, 2018). People's livelihood is embedded in layers of cultural context that influence their identity, education, eating habits, spiritual and social behaviours. Culture heavily cultivates a person's belief and value system (Connell, 2010). Cunningham, Jesson and Wednt Samu (2022) suggest self-regulation habits like prayer that encompass a spiritual element, social systems like family encourage self-belief are essential to understanding life's purpose and provide a feeling of belonging. Within fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way), one of the most essential value is fa'aaloalo (respect) (Fetui, 2020). Respect underpins most of the way youth behave in certain settings. Due to an influx of Aotearoa New Zealanders born Samoans and their constant exposure to the Western world through education institutions, work force and media, it brings curiosity to see if fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way) values are being maintained or lost, and if so, to what degree.

Being a youth within Samoan society has pre-existing expectations such as females helping in the kitchen, preparing to'ona'i (Sunday lunch) or helping their siblings. It is expected that Samoan

youth conform to these family dynamics and relationship norms inside and outside their homes (Fa'alau, 2016). For example, youth are anticipated to behave and communicate with respect and humility toward elders who attain superior status than them. This is also an expectation that youth must adhere to beyond their homes, which is symbolic to the Samoan identity. Showing respect for elders and appropriate behaviour toward them are learnt through observation and participation. Tuafuti (2010) denote youth are taught not to question but to observe, listen, learn, and participate. This is an implication for Samoan youth because during disaster, if youth are presented the opportunity to help their family, they must feel comfortable and confident enough to do so.

There is to date no research on youth and remittances apart from studies that explore 'remittance decay'. Connell (2010) suggests that as migrant families move abroad, their cultural traditions and practices, like remittances, will subsidise and therefore, the generations of newly nested kin will weaken social ties with Samoa. During hardship youth can become an asset and relied upon to maintain the dynamic of their home. For example, youth are commonly removed from school to work or assist their parent's in raising their younger siblings - some youth are considered more resourceful than others (Barlett, 2008). Samoan youth are taught to respect their parents, cultural traditions, other's feelings and rights, teachers, and school staff (Fetui, 2020). According to Connell (2010) Samoan people migrated to fulfil their obligations with their (aiga) without pressure or influence from the ordinary village life, allowing migrants to benefit from migrating.

2.5 Summary

Disasters are increasing worldwide, exacerbating the current socioeconomic inequities of vulnerable communities. Extensive literature proves remittances are a shock absorber for vulnerable families and a daily life resource for receiving families. Remittances can be critical during disaster. However, while disaster studies are slowly recognising the importance of remittances for the Samoan community, there is scarce literature that shows Samoan youth role in disasters. The Samoan community is the largest in Auckland with a growing youthful population. Nonetheless, there is limited research focusing on Samoan youth and their role in supporting their families during disaster, including COVID-19. The next chapters address the research gaps.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach and methods of this study. Section 3.2 will explore my stance as a researcher and the motives for connecting me to this investigation. Section 3.3 will draw upon the Pacific World view, magnifying the importance of seeing research from a Pacific lens that Western approaches would otherwise overlook. Section 3.4 explores the research approach and how it influences the design of this study. Section 3.5 articulates the Talanoa method for data collection. Section 3.6 explores the participants of this study and the process of involving them. Section 3.7 reflects the data collection stage. Section 3.8 presents the data collection process that describes the initial stages of this research and explains the challenges and opportunities during COVID-19. Section 3.9 explores the data analysis process of thematic analysis and the purpose of employing the Fonofale Model of health to make sense of the data. Section 3.9 discusses Ethics, and lastly, section 3.10 will conclude the chapter.

3.2 My position as a Pasifika Samoan Researcher

Reflexivity challenges the researcher to acknowledge how the research process has impacted them (Lambert, Jomeen & Sherry, 2010), and to be self-aware of existing biases. This progresses my growth as a researcher and encourages me to uphold the quality of knowledge constructed from the data. Considering my worldview and understanding how my upbringing and contextual factors influence my views have shown me the importance of trustworthiness and the complexities of objectivism to subjectivism. Consequently, I constantly foreground my own knowledge as I cannot remove my background of being relatable to participants. Hence, I have reflected in the section below.

My interest in youth and their capacities prior to, during and after disasters stems back to three accounts in my life. The first one relates to my identity as an Aotearoa New Zealand-born Samoan raised within multiple Samoan EFKAS churches in Auckland. Samoan values were embedded in me at a young age. The idea that my grandparents left their homeland for better opportunities for our family constantly reminded me to prioritise my education.

Secondly, a week after I had given birth to my son in March 2020, Aotearoa New Zealand announced a Level 4 lockdown. During this time, I was a full-time student working on my assignments and assisting siblings with their online homework, all whilst learning to be a new mother. These were a few responsibilities I had during the lockdown. After seeing articles highlighting the increased dropout rates of Pasifika youth to pursue employment, I was even more interested in the different roles and motives of Samoan youth during COVID-19.

Thirdly, my interest in disaster studies, vulnerable communities and SIDS, and natural phenomena expanded after my travels to Tokelau, a country made of three low-lying atolls. It was the first time I had been exposed to the realities and processes of authentic island lifestyle. There is no commercial aircraft runway, causing heavy reliance on one vessel that transports people and cargo every two weeks (MacIntyre, 2016). I wondered about evacuation protocols if a natural phenomenon occurred, such as a tsunami, tornado, or severe weather. Though resources are limited in Tokelau, there was more joy experienced living among the families. More specifically youth, I was also amazed to see young boys, approximately 10-12 years old, operating a boat and taking me from one island to another in the open sea. The responsibilities upheld and tasks completed by youth triggered a fascination with their abilities during an event. Overall, each aspect of this reflection has afforded me the foreknowledge of relatability to the youth community.

3.3 Pacific worldview

The Pacific is a diverse region that encompasses many sovereign states and multiple cultures. It is understood that the Pacific have common shared values that also transcend beyond boarders to migrant families. However, within Pacific dwellings are specific customs and languages that validate their worldviews (Connell, 2005). This study is based in the Pacific worldview and appreciation of the distinctive epistemologies of Pacific peoples (Du Plessis and Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2009, cited in Tagoilelagi-Leota, 2017). Using a Pacific worldview lens in this study challenges Western-centric ways of knowledge collection through the public view (Cowley et al., 2011). It is vital for research to be rooted within a Pacific worldview even in a Samoan transnational setting (Cunningham et al., 2022). This is because Western ways of knowledge lack the understanding of customs and cultural values centric to transnational communities that have migrated from Samoa (Vaioleti, 2006). Studies on Samoan migrants need to encompass the Samoan lens, which involve metaphors and behaviour (Niuatoa, 2007). It is through these knowledge systems that ancestors are remembered and that the Pacific and Samoan views can be in 'harmony' (Niuatoa, 2007, p.15).

3.4 Research Approach – Understanding Ontology

Before solidifying the type of research approach, it is wise to understand what is important to the researcher and the elements that shape the way the researcher thinks. Ontology is a philosophical study that, in its simplest form, determines how we see the world. The way I see the world, is believing we are shaped by the influence of our environments, observing, learning, and unlearning. This ontology belief determines the type of epistemology I gravitate towards and how I engage with people. To see what knowledge are possible and how we can ensure it is adequate and legitimate, Crotty (1998) dismantles epistemology into three categories of objectivism,

constructivism, and subjectivism. Objectivism is the most used epistemology underpinning most academic property (Levy, 2006), and suggests that knowledge is constructed by individuals independent of consciousness and that data is measurable and observational. Scholars pertaining this view persist with their research in a tradition or correct way, they can discover objective truth (Crotty, 1998). Opposingly, subjectivism relies solely on opinions and assumptions (Levy, 2006). It is important to note that methodologies created to identify problems and resolve issues in a dominant culture, are not suitable solutions for Pacific peoples, whose knowledge, and ways of being have unique epistemologies (Vaiolet, 2006, p.22, cited in Enari, 2021). The epistemology that intrigues me would then determine how I would engage with people and for research purposes, I would closely align with qualitative studies.

3.4.1 Qualitative Descriptive

A qualitative descriptive approach was used to develop an understanding of Samoan youth experience in supporting family remittances in disaster. Qualitative descriptive approach also enables researchers to gain direct descriptions of experiences (Sandelowski, 2010), particularly in areas where little is known about the topic under scrutiny (Doyle et al., 2020).

Privileging Samoan youth voice with a platform to share their experiences is a main theme of this study, which concludes that qualitative approach is best used to explore the thoughts, behaviours, feelings, and views of the participants. This is congruent with Astalin (2013) who states that qualitative studies allow inquiry to be created from the participant perspectives rather than from the investigator's viewpoint. Furthermore, this approach acknowledges social aspects of society and explores reason as to why humans behave a certain way, how attitudes and views are formed, how culture is developed and dictates people's actions, and how people are impacted by their environment (Cheron, Salvagni & Colomby, 2022). The vast richness of qualitative research is key in appreciating a holistic view of service, reciprocity, fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way) and cultural obligations from the perspectives of Samoan youth. Put simply, qualitative descriptive approach allows the participants to interpret the world in which they live and the meanings behind their actions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Therefore, using a qualitative descriptive paradigm is well suited to understand the elements that influence Samoan youth decision to support their families during disaster. Furthermore, a qualitative descriptive approach aligns with Talanoa, which is detailed in a later section.

Within the use of a qualitative approach, I am drawn to use the Fonofale model of health to make sense of the data as the Fonofale model has collective dimensions that are appropriate within the Pacific Way. Haynes (2012) denotes a qualitative study can be interpretive, which calls for a constant reflection of my worldviews and bias throughout every stage of the research process.

3.4.2 Constructivist paradigm

> *Research methodologies that were designed to identify issues in a dominant culture and provide solutions are not necessarily suitable in searching for solutions for Pacific peoples, whose knowledge and ways of being have unique epistemologies (Vaioleti, 2006: 22)*

The chosen approach for this investigation encompassed a qualitative and descriptive design whilst utilising the Talanoa methodology as the dominant approach, to ensure rich data is gathered. Crocombe (1979) believed Pacific concepts share similarities to a constructivism paradigm (Enari, 2021; Vaioleti, 2011). Crotty (1998) described constructivism as the belief that knowledge is not discovered and instead, is co-constructed (Crotty, 1998). Wilson (2017) stipulate constructivism views research and understands that context is needed to understand the situation rather than taking a situation as a universal law. In other words, it allows the researcher to explore views and comprehension of the investigation participants within topic and recognises that each may experience a different understanding of the same situation, flexibility not considered to objectivism (Levy, 2006). Therefore, the ability to consider multiple truths and co-construct knowledge aligns with knowledge construction in the Pacific worldview. The constructivist paradigm afforded me the ability to analyse the different elements influencing Samoan youth decisions to support their family through family remittances. This is important as Samoan youth experiences during disaster are under-reported within academia and must be explored for better understanding. Constructivism gives participants the opportunity to share their truth. Constructivist paradigm is appropriate for this research as it honours Pacific worldviews, especially Samoan people. This paradigm gives mana and authority to the participants which creates a trusting space where participants can share their truth (Enari, 2021). Cowley et al. (2011) declares constructivism ensures Samoan values, beliefs and ways of knowing are viewed as accepted knowledge systems. Therefore, to understand the intricacies that shape the participant's realities, I ensure the participants are the experts of their experiences.

3.5 Talanoa

> *As an effective way of exploring the depths of the reality of Samoan experiences and expressions, the term 'interview' finds little value in this work. One cannot touch the depth of Fa'a-Samoa when research is carried out in terms of formal interviews. Information from interviews, then, remains only on a theoretical level and does not really touch the profound roots of the Samoan life experiences (Niuatoa, 2007: 10)*

The word derives from Tonga, though its concept is widely recognised across Polynesia, specifically within Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, the Solomon Islands and Hawa'ii (Gremillion et al., 2020). Moreover, it is a well-respected and preferred method used within Pasifika research, much so, many studies have depicted Talanoa to be a culturally appropriate way to speak in a Pacifica setting (Halapua, 2007; Latu, 2009; Otsuka, 2005; Prescott, 2008; Vaioleti, 2003; Vakaʻuta, 2009; Vaihu, 2010). Although Talanoa may have different meanings within different nations, it is a concept that stems from traditional knowledge sharing embedded in the community. It is conducted through face-to-face dialogue. To better explain Talanoa, one must understand two ideas: its meaning as separate entities and its meaning as a whole. 'Tala' refers to informing someone or a group, to tell, speak, relate, or command. Whereas 'noa' is translated to no value, with no thought or exertion (Vaioleti, 2011), and interacting without a rigid framework (Vaioleti, 2006). The merging of 'tala' and 'noa' births the idea of 'Talanoa' – an open discussion and an exchange of ideas either formally or informally. However, Vaioleti (2011) explains this meaning of Talanoa fails to encapsulate its breadth and – especially for research purposes – its rigour (as cited in Gremillion et al., 2020). It is important to note that the fluidity of Talanoa does not imply that Talanoa research lack purpose or direction, or that 'noa' means to talk about nothing. Rather, '*noa* creates the space of the conditions' within a Talanoa encounter (Vaioleti 2006, p.24, cited in Gremillion et al., 2020). Fehoko et al. (2022) reiterates that Talanoa is multi-layered and complex, ranging between free to critical discussion. For it is the unambiguousness of the research goals and the lead up to the conversation, that ensures potential participants understand all aspects of what will be covered (Gremillion et al., 2020).

Talanoa as a phenomenological Pacific research framework for this study affirms Pacific thinking, language, and culture (Matapo & Enari, 2021). Vaioleti explored ways Talanoa was set-up and analysed for academia (Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2012). For example, Talanoa was suitable for working with Samoan participants because the face–to-face dialogue allowed for the research and participant to build trust, which was critical in ensuring participants feel safe to share their experiences (Otunuku, 2011). Effort to build and maintain trust and create a safe space for the participants was the responsibility of me as the researcher (Matapo & Enari, 2021; Prescott, 2008). Being confident in sharing common Samoan values also made the Talanoa exchange meaningful. Talanoa is a long-standing, Pasifika cultural practice that embraces an oratory style of communication (Fa'avae et al., 2022). Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba (2012) express Talanoa as a popular way to converse with Pacific participants as it allowed for deep and wide exchange of history, knowledge, and expressions of the heart. An important aspect of Talanoa is for the researcher to listen (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, utilising the use of Talanoa for this research method allowed me to offer space and time for the participants' stories to be heard and valued.

3.6 Participants

Exploring the experiences of Samoan youth meant that it was necessary to have correct representation of members in this study. The guidelines from the Ministry of Youth Development (n.d) state youth are considered to be between 12 to 24 years of age. For the purposes of this research, I defined 'youth' from 16 years old and above.

Recruitment of the participants was a lengthy process. I emailed New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to provide me with a contact email for every South Auckland High School. Although a default email can be found on the Google engine, I wanted to inform them of my research and eventually gain their support. NZQA was happy to support my recruitment process by supplying me with an excel spreadsheet with contact emails of key people in each school i.e. certain teachers or deans. I approached phase two by emailing appropriate staff members (principal included) at South Auckland high schools, for a suitable time to meet, followed by a formal meeting to explain the purpose of the research, what the intended objectives were, who were the desired participants, confidentiality forms and an agreed timetable where I was given permission to immerse myself during certain classroom activities. Of all the schools I had reached out to, four schools responded. For this research each school is referred as School A, School B, School C and School D to ensure they are unidentifiable. Similarly, all participants are given an alias name to maintain trust and confidentiality. A formal face-to-face induction was arranged for two schools to meet key teachers and the principal. I explained the purpose of my research and wishes to conduct my research with their students that fit the criteria. This would be finalised with their permission verbally and on a Principal permission form attached in the appendices.

Unfortunately, School C and School D did not respond to the next step. Though in light, School A and School B were available and able to continue with the study. I visited both schools often and contacted staff regularly to build trust with the potential partnering schools, and use this time wisely by promoting the investigation. Here, the students had time to think about this project and if they were interested in contributing. Participants would be compensated with a koha (gift) of shared lunch, arranged by me. This was a gesture of appreciation to acknowledge their cooperation and give thanks. This is appropriate to give to the participants as food is recognised to show gratitude for one's time in the Pacific culture and is often used in celebratory events to bring people together. Indicative questions for the Talanoa were vetted through an ethics process conducted by AUT and the primary and secondary supervisors of the researcher.

Background of School A

School A is a co-educational state secondary school situated in the Auckland Suburb. It is a decile 2 school with a large community engagement in creative arts and pacific involvement. School A takes pride in taking a holistic approach of education and acknowledges the importance of co-curricular activities for their students. This high school also has an Academic mentor for each class and students check in with their personal mentors' multiple times a week. During the COVID-19 lockdown, many students left school to seek employment or worked nightshifts whilst balancing schoolwork.

Table 1: Participant Details

School A				
Participant	**Gender**	**Ethnicity**	**Age**	**Place of birth**
Noah	Male	Samoan	17	Aotearoa New Zealand
Iaone	Male	Samoan	16	Samoa
Nina	Female	Samoan	16	Aotearoa New Zealand

Background on School B

School B is a catholic all-girls school in the Auckland district. This College is a decile 1 and their student's academic performance, surpasses the average decile 1 attending student. Each learning day starts and with prayer. Academic and pastoral guidance is given to all students who attend. Students from School B also experienced balancing their school assessments with employment during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Table 2: Participants Details

School B				
Participant	**Gender**	**Ethnicity**	**Year level**	Place of birth
Lagi	Female	Samoan	16	Aotearoa New Zealand
Sina	Female	Samoan	17	Aotearoa New Zealand
Anamaria	Female	Niuean	16	Aotearoa New Zealand

Demographics taken from six participants that took part in the Talanoa

3.7 Data Collection

The Talanoa was carried out in April 2022 and constructed over the course of two weeks, from School A and School B. The data collection process included preparing advertising posters, documents to explain the research purpose, recruit and gain informed consent of participants. The criterion for participants was as follows: aged 16 years old or older, of Samoan descent and worked during COVID-19 lockdowns. Prescott (2008) expresses an important feature of Talanoa is not having a dedicated timeframe, as Talanoa is a practice that can continue over hours or days (Cammock et al., 2021). However, this research respects that education institutions have structured days that acquire students to attend. Hence each Talanoa went between 30 to 45 minutes (the agreed timeframe between the staff and I). A total of six participants took part in this inquiry with three students from School A participating in one Talanoa, and three students from School B participating in two Talanoas, a week a part. The reason for conducting two Talanoa with School B was due to the participants insisting on another Talanoa, as they felt the designated time for their Talanoa was not enough to share their experiences. The Talanoa was conducted in English, with some Samoan terminology shared now and then. Jargon was avoided and I purposely used everyday speech to communicate with the participants. South Auckland was the location of interest as it contains the highest concentration of Pacifica people, namely Samoans, for this study (Stats Nz, n.d; Lee et al, 2021; Figure.nz, 2020).

Data collection occurred during the COVID-19 interchanging traffic light lockdowns, which forced schools to operate their daily systems with routine and extra caution. It was strongly communicated that student's health and learning time was to be maximised whilst at school and new regulations were implemented for external guests or school visitors; this included me as a researcher. Ultimately this altered the traditional research experience of Talanoa. For example, wearing a mask was optional yet highly encouraged by the schools. The implications of mask wearing created a barrier between myself and the participants who preferred to keep theirs on. This made it difficult to capture the participants facial expressions that would contribute to the exact emotion they were feeling. Therefore, I had to rely on reading and articulating the messages through participant's body language, tone of voice and eye movement to write insightful findings. This was an implication as it is described that showing '…face to face is the absolute illustration of respect, love, and service' (Tagoilelagi, 2017, p.108) which contradicts the essence of Talanoa – face to face dialogue. The school's regulations also influenced the location of the Talanoa within the school grounds. For example, the location was chosen by the staff members, in both cases being a boardroom with one large table situated in the middle of the room and chairs surrounding

it. I would have preferred the Talanoa to be conducted sitting in a circle on the floor or outside on the grass, reflecting proper Talanoa etiquette, and make the Talanoa less formal by removing the distance that the table had added.

Although many challenges were met at the start of the data collection, a few positive outcomes were made. Firstly, I remained thankful for the location chosen for the Talanoa and made sure to make the space feel welcoming, relaxing, and slightly informal for the participants. The permission I was granted to conduct the Talanoa on school grounds was an advantage to the participants as it is a familiar area and afforded them the efficiency to make it to their next class. The boardrooms were soundproof which minimised staff from overhearing our conversations. All participants had the option to have a teacher present in the boardroom, though every participant declined this offer as this was not a preference. By asking participants what they preferred, allowed them to feel in power and reassure them that this Talanoa was about them and lead by them. I utilised the boardroom to play music on participant's arrival, followed by a greeting. Seating arrangement was adapted to the setting of the room. For example, the participants were seated around the table in a circle which created a united feeling and allowed participants to see each other's face. This seating arrangement aligns with modernised fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way) as the intention to keep Talanoa etiquette was upheld and this created a sharing of power and collectivism, which are common and understood among Pacific people.

Participatory tools were reflected in the two ice breaker activities and used to break the awkwardness between the researcher and participants, even among the participants. I introduced the 'um' activity where each student received a topic (e.g., flowers, South Auckland, pets, etc) and had one minute to speak about it without saying the word 'um'. The rest of the participants acted as judges noting down every time the speaker would say 'um'. The second activity involved using butcher paper to write one word they associate 'life with their families during the COVID-19 lockdown'. Participants then had the opportunity to present and share the reason behind their chosen word. In essence, activity one's purpose was to lift the energy of participants and allow them to explain and articulate random words. The intention behind activity two was to take one word that holds meaning and provide reasoning, which would potentially assist the participants in the Talanoa. This is how the participatory tools supported the initiation of Talanoa, allowing the discussion to flow for the remaining 30 to 45 minutes. Additionally, the face-to-face open-ended questions in the Talanoa facilitated an environment that encouraged participants to share more personal and insightful thoughts and experiences that surveys, or phone calls would not capture.

Each Talanoa session was recorded using a dictaphone and transcribed between one to two weeks of conducting the Talanoa. This was to ensure that the ideas, knowledge, and understandings

obtained from the sessions were maintained. Transcriptions of the Talanoa were typed in English, except for some Samoan terms participants used. Draft copies of the transcriptions were sent to each participant to confirm that the content was accurate and complete, to seek clarification on certain quotes or to add any other comments or ideas further. This was vital as it adds richness to the process of the data. Participants confirmed that the transcripts were accurate and complete. However, it is important to acknowledge something that took me by surprise. During the Talanoa one participant mentioned that she was Niuean. This implied she was not of Samoan descent which could potentially affect the validity of my findings. Within research, if an eligible participant attends the data collection process (i.e., an interview, focus group, Talanoa or completed and returned survey) it would make sense to remove that participant and their input from the data collection process immediately. On the other hand, being a participant involved within a Talanoa is more complex. Each participant has a role or influence in the Talanoa so to remove one participant's contribution in the Talanoa would be overlooking their influence, experiences and thoughts as their input may have prompt another participant to speak, overall add to the direction of the Talanoa. Moreover, this would have been unethical, and it felt like the right choice to keep the participant sharing about her experience. Therefore, I decided to keep the Niuean participant in this study.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis identifies, organises and codes patterns found in data (Patton, 1990). It aims to showcase reoccurring ideas, phrases, behaviours and allows the researcher to identify comparisons (Neuman, 2006). For this research, a thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the data. To further this theme development, I employed the Fonofale model to strengthen Pacific themes through a Pacific lens. This is an important way to showcase Pasifika youth experiences ensuring the chosen research process interweaves the Pacific worldview and is inclusive of Pacific knowledge, skills, and research values (Lingam, 2017, cited in Enari, 2021). Braun and Clarke (2006) explain thematic analysis aided as a versatile approach, and was able to grasp a rich, thorough, and complex understanding of the Talanoa. Thematic analysis reports the experiences, the meanings, and the reality of the participants. It is an exciting process that allows the researcher to discover concepts and themes embedded during the interview (Rubin and Rubin, 2011). Thematic analysis was also useful for summarising key features of the views shared in the Talanoa and it provided a well-structured approach to considering and handling those views (Cassell & Symon, 2004; Cheron, Salvagni & Colomby, 2022). Using qualitative thematic analysis enabled a more organised understanding of the data which uncovered patterns and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Qualitative thematic analysis allowed for a subjective view in making sense of the various experiences, and more clearly understanding their similarities and differences. Utilising

the dimensions of the Fonofale model strengthened the thematic analysis process, as this pan-Pacific model is appropriate within Pacific research and when interacting with experiences from pacific participants (Pulotu-Endemann, 2001). In other words, it is crucial to understand Samoan youth stories in their worldview; therefore, I have used the Fonofale themes to organise the theme.

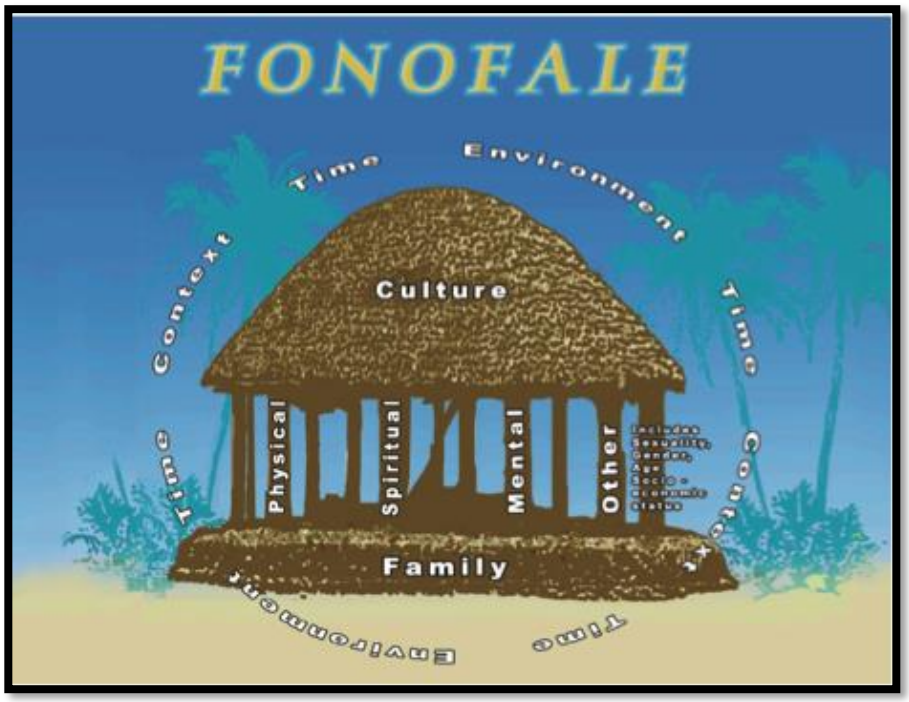

Figure 2:Fonofale Model of Health. Retrieved from Pulotu-Endemann (2001)

The initial phase of interpreting the data involved becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes in different colours, and identifying, reviewing and naming themes. I utilised Pulotu Endemann's pan-Pacific Fonofale model to help guide and make sense of the thematical process. During these readings, notes were made on the margins using a colour coding system to identify themes relating to family, culture, physical, spiritual, mental, environmental and time. These themes derive from the Fonofale model which endorses the Pacific lens in the way the results are managed. Themes were then organised to make consistent and meaningful reports which added valuable insights on Samoan youth role during COVID-19 in supporting their families. In the third stage I developed themes that highlight youth positionality within their family, their obligation to family, their position within their family and their capacities during COVID-19. A few themes were consistent in the Talanoa. Once the transcripts were read over twice, the Talanoa recordings were listened to again to establish if other there were other themes or ideas. The fifth phase defines and labels the different themes for the final phase of discussing the results (Braun & Clark, 2006).

3.9 Ethics

This research involved in-person discussions with high school students regarding sensitive subject matters. Due to the interactions between participants and researcher, ethical consideration was sought prior to contacting potential participants. An ethics application was submitted to the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC). This was a process put in place to ensure participation was voluntary and had time to understand the purpose and processes of this research fully. Although participants over 16 years of age no longer require parental permission to participate in research, I still asked them whether they felt comfortable having a teacher sit in the Talanoa. Prior to the commencement of this investigation, all participants were provided with a detailed purpose of this inquiry, their rights to confidentiality and the freedom to remove themselves from this investigation at any stage. In addition, potential participants were ensured that withdrawing would not disappoint anyone involved in the process.

Though it was expressed for participants to commit to the time frame given for the research, if they withdrew for any reason during the Talanoa, anything they had said would still be included in the overall transcription. This is because, one person's contribution can encourage someone else share their thoughts. I gained the potential participants trust through my physical and verbal approaches. I avoided placing myself in a place of power; for example, for both schools, the available private office rooms, I strategically sat around the circular table to establish unity and avoid the traditional classroom set up where the teacher sits at the front of the class. Although I would have preferred a space without the table being a barrier between the participants and I, I utilised what was available. I utilised open-hand gestures and palms when speaking and holding eye-contact. Additionally, I dressed casually (plain dress shirt and pants) and avoided wearing anything too formal, to create an insider/outsider environment (Merriam et al, 2001). This is because I wanted the potential participants to feel comfortable around me. These were ethical considerations that helped strengthen the research process.

Summary

Applying carefully sought methodology and methods and understanding their purpose was crucial in how the research was conducted. This awareness reduced bias in the process of the Talanoa, the schools that were chosen, how the information attained was analysed, and how they were discussed and interpreted. Understanding the background of how methodologies and methods came to be is a crucial step within research. This allowed me to explore my values and reflect on my experiences and understand that through my relatability and understanding as an insider researcher I was in a position where I could produce culturally appropriate research. This was an important learning as it dictated the way I viewed the participants in this study and the way I frame the overarching questions and title. Basing the data processes through a Pacific Worldview I was able to recognise certain influences that allowed be to connect or disconnect with the

participants. Furthermore, the use of Talanoa allowed for an authentic and fluid discussion to take place. The next chapter will present the findings of the Talanoa.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This study's purpose was to gain greater insight to the views and experiences of the participants involved in this research. The collation of the findings identified patterns and reoccurring themes that emerged during the Talanoa. Participants' views are reflected in this chapter through their own statements. At the beginning of the chapter, a brief introduction will be presented about each participant to contextualise the research. Alias names of the six participants are coded to conceal their identities, a process the participants have agreed to. Questions are open-ended to minimise as much of the researcher's influence over the outcome of the participant's response and allow them to speak on matters that truly aligned with them or impacted their daily lives. The Talanoa reflected strong themes of family relationships, Samoan youth and remittances, the obligation to family and youth resilience. The findings will also be presented in Table 1, detailing the main themes and key features. To better understand the experiences, the data is analysed using different Fonofale dimensions, with the majority leaning towards the dimension of family, culture and mental. This was kept in mind but did not force the model onto the research, and it was in the background to ensure it was aligned with the research questions and framework. A brief description of the complex realities Samoan youth experience before elaborating on the findings.

To better understand the findings of this research, it is essential to highlight that the role of Samoan youth is not black and white. Samoan family dynamics are often guided by the fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way), an umbrella term that encompasses the rights, responsibilities, and behaviours of Samoan people. Samoan youth have complex and fluid roles within their families and is often born into responsibility. Samoan youth is also raised in a holistic mindset and normality to which their culture embodies almost all facets. During COVID-19 Pandemic, the roles and responsibilities of Samoan youth were not new because of the disaster; instead, they intensified, placing more responsibility upon them. Therefore, separating aspects of the Talanoa into categories is challenging due to the complexities as many dimensions interrelate and overlap. Section 4.1 explores different factors that influence their decision to remit. Section 4.2 highlights the fluid role Samoan youth experienced during COVID-19. Lastly, Section 4.3 will explore the coping mechanisms youth use during COVID-19.

4.2 Remitting during disaster despite challenges

Samoan youth experienced many positive and negative challenges. The Talanoa discussed elements that shaped the view of remittances. Firstly, participants had differing experiences with how active their family was with remitting. Only a few participants mentioned that remitting was

an active practice within their family and household. The stories of their parents influence remitting. Participants told stories about their families overseas who contacted them and how they think of that relationship. Their past highly influences the perception of remitting and present parents' experiences with certain family members. A passionate topic during the Talanoa was acknowledging their grandparents, or for most, parents' migration story. Participants knew of the obstacles their parents experienced coming to Aotearoa New Zealand and building their lives in South Auckland. One participant shared that his father was the last of his siblings to move to Aotearoa New Zealand from Samoa, but he had managed to get here without his sibling's assistance, and when his father settled in Aotearoa New Zealand, he was the only one remitting back to Samoa.

> *An uncle calls, 'can you pay my flight? I want to come [to Aotearoa New Zealand]'. My dad says, 'no, not yet. COVID-19's not over'. I feel like he uses us for money. I told them 'don't give' because he was never there for us. I said, 'mum and dad, don't give money because he doesn't deserve it' (Lagi)*

> *I think in a lot of Pacific Island families, oh, and in my family to be specific, my parents hate picking up the call from Samoa. I'm not lying. My parents do a lot for [our family in] the islands, like send food, furniture, and bedding (Sina)*

Their perception of remitting is also influenced by the financial, mental, and social pressure on their parents. Participants share feelings of frustration witnessing their parents provide for people who only reach out when they need something. This feeling played a considerable role in how Samoan youth perceive remittances and the daily act of giving. It was evident that Samoan youth knew the right time and place to speak up when it comes to advising and counselling their parents respectfully. Although the participants see their parents live through those pressures, they know their parent's hearts - still willing to assist the family despite their hardships. When participants shared their views on remittances, it was influenced by their parent's reactions and paired with experiences they had with certain family members. Below are sentiments expressed in participants' responses.

> *We didn't feel like we needed to help them, but my dad is always caring for his siblings and will tell us to buy something and give it. Even though they didn't give us anything, he just tells us to give them stuff (Noah)*

> *I kind of agree with it, but we need to think about them [remittance receivers] making a future for themselves because we can't just keep providing for them when they have heaps of opportunities (Sina)*

On the other hand, one participant shared his perspective and experience of money whilst being raised in Samoa. Money is not something worth holding on to, and the mentality of money being replaceable.

> *Like living in Samoa, we don't think of it as, 'oh, I'm losing money' you know, it just goes. Money goes, money comes. As kids, we don't really value money, but adults need it more. You might not be rich in money, but you can be rich in goods and stuff. What I consider struggling would be different. I don't know about you guys, but life in Samoa is like, you wouldn't consider certain things as "struggling" (Ioane)*

I explained how Aotearoa New Zealand and Samoa experienced the same disaster event [the COVID-19 Pandemic] simultaneously and to what degree their families could assist families back in Samoa. Interestingly, participants mentioned that their families in Samoa were financially better off than they were.

> *It is our family in Samoa that's stable. Most of us that move overseas are the ones struggling. So, we did not have to worry about sending money over (Ioane)*

A participant highlighted specific factors contributed to how well off his family was in Samoa during the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic, the 2009 tsunami and the 2019 measles outbreak. The participant mentioned that all his close extended family live in Aotearoa New Zealand. The one aunty and uncle in Samoa do not have children, live far from the shoreline, and are reasonably financially stable; hence they felt little need to remit during COVID-19. This was the case during the measles outbreak in 2019. Noah's aunt and uncle did not need to worry about it because they had no kids susceptible to contracting the virus. Despite the factors influencing Samoan youth perception of remitting, all the participants in this study agreed that giving money to a family who needed it was essential to them and their culture.

The participants speak highly of the sacrifice their parents and grandparents had made in migrating to Aotearoa New Zealand, which is fuel to keep doing their best in education and supporting their family. Each participant empathised with each other about how taking education was stressed by their parents, suggesting that due to the sacrifices the parents have made to get to the stage they are at, it is the youth's responsibility to pursue education to fulfil their grandparents and parents' purpose for migrating to Aotearoa New Zealand. The parent's view on education also influenced the performance of Samoan youth in school. Many Samoan parents have a mentality that if their child starts working, they will not allow themselves to experience the best education.

My dad said a job is always there, but your one shot at school will not always be there (Lagi)

My parents said the same thing as Lagi [parents]. 'You only have one shot' (Sina)

Moreover, grandparents were also an important figure in the lives of Samoan youth. Grandparents offered a different love and support than parents. During the Talanoa, we discussed how their parents are hard workers, and for the participants, most of their parents are busy and only get to see them in the morning or night. However, because it is common for Samoan families to live in multicultural households, it is likely for the grandparents to spend real time with their grandchildren. This suggests that the role of a parent and grandparent is also complex. The role of a grandparent also encourages education and for their grandchild to do their best. When asked what or who is their drive in life, Sina responded:

My grandma, since primary, has always said, 'focus on school', 'toaga i le aoga, keep on going, keep on going'. My parents, they are always busy, I only see them in the morning or night, but then my grandma, we actually sit down, and then she'll be like, 'go to school, make sure you learn something' I feel like she's been my 'why' since day one. Since I started high school, it's always been my grandma. I know my parents have always been there for me, but I feel like my grandma has had a more significant impact on me. She motivates me (Sina)

Participants were asked about their expectations around remitting and supporting families nearby. A unique term was explained called 'family tax'. Samoan youth born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand can relate to this system in which parents encourage their kids to save money for themselves and their future. One participant in the Talanoa shared that his parents support him and rarely ask for financial support regarding or nearing his pay. When he did receive his pay, his father would encourage him to do something nice for his mother, whether it be taking her out, buying her lunch, pampering her, or simply depositing one hundred dollars into her bank account. It was Noah and his friends who practice 'family tax':

Most of the Samoan families and my boys, we're always like, 'I send family tax' and then send money to mum and dad. It's tempting to spend it but like, using common sense you got to give back to your family. Just to send a little something. The family tax. (Noah)

Especially when it comes to my dad's family its always like 'oh so when's the next money coming in?' (Sina)

Participants discussed their role in setting up meetings for their parents to communicate with the wider family. This was also heightened during fa'alavelaves such as funerals, weddings, and

birthdays. Their families, especially parents would assume they know how to operate everything. However, this was not the case. Although some participants were the eldest among their siblings, they were also students learning hands on how to meet and maintain school standards and support their family through the COVID-19 Pandemic.

> *Me and my siblings had to set up the Zooms, family lives on Facebook and teach our parents how to do it. and then sometimes most of the pressure comes on you. During COVID-19, everyone's rowdy and stuff so obviously you'll get the blame for most of the stuff and that's how I felt at times. I felt that COVID-19 impacted my role a lot being the eldest (Sina)*
>
> *It really impacted me when my adopted siblings came, so now I'm the middle child but [the blame] will fall on me because I'm still the eldest. Sometimes I get frustrated at my parents screaming at me for nothing especially during COVID-19 because we're all bunched up together so obviously, they'll look for that one person (me) and yell at them. It's all right, but at times with family situations during funerals and stuff, that's when it got a bit too much for me (Sina)*
>
> *Having 9 people in 1 house, is a lot. Then being the eldest child in a large family, you're always getting the blame for everything (Sina)*

One participant expressed a strong obligation for her parents to remit to their dad, her grandpa, in Samoa. She described her family's regular remittance to her grandpa to make up for not being physically present to take care of him and his needs. When I asked how their remittance was sent, the participant explained she only knew of one place her family visited but could not recall the bank's name. However, she would go with her parents to the bank when they needed extra help.

> *I just know the bank in Otara (Nina)*

Whereas another participant was able to recall the name of the bank his family use.

> *My family goes to Western Union (Ioane)*

4.3 Impact of COVID-19 on Samoan Youth

Families are the most significant people in Pacific people's lives, including their children, parents, siblings, extended family, village, and church. When participants were asked to describe life with their family during COVID-19. The most frequent topic shared during the Talanoa revolved around family. During the COVID-19 lockdown, participants valued the time spent with their families and bonding with their households. There are multiple layers within a Pacific family, and

with multiple layers derive multiple relationships that are key to understanding the dynamics of each participant's family dynamic. Participants regularly discussed their parents' inflicted feelings of frustration towards their children. Family dynamics and routines were spoken about during the Talanoa. The importance of family was shared frequently, and the bonding within families during COVID-19 was a strength factor during uncertain times. From the findings, parental and youth relationships grew stronger.

> *We have meetings to talk about stuff. We express our feelings to one another [and] that was the biggest opportunity I got. Around 7 or 8 o'clock, we do lotu (church) and sing. My dad would ask and check if any of us had anything to say or had anything to tell them. My dad will let us know him and mum are here for us and not to hide anything. My parents will tell us to do well in school and if we need help to ask them. Yeah, we do that every day (Lagi)*
>
> *My dad said a job is always there, but your one shot at school won't always be there (Lagi)*
>
> *I have schoolwork and he understands (Sina)*

Samoan youth have complex roles that are followed to maintain the pacific family dynamic. The information attained can imply that Samoan youth role, especially for females, can become fluid over time. Taking on multiple roles is a similar experience within their families. The findings discuss how youth view their roles prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

> *During COVID-19, everyone's rowdy and stuff so obviously, you'll get the blame for most of the stuff, and that's how I felt at times.*

This confirms the complexity of youths' abilities to support their family and the element of culture to serve.

The female participants shared similar experiences where they stepped into other roles to support their families. One participant had an older brother who was hardly home during the COVID-19 lockdowns and therefore had to take on the role of the eldest male sibling. This suggests that the roles and responsibilities were intensified greatly during COVID-19. The alternating of gender roles was an added pressure on Samoan female youth. This also contradicts the traditional upbringing where males tend the outdoor chores and females maintain chores in the house such as but not limited to dishes, washing, vacuuming, caring for children, cooking, and cleaning.

> *I became the man of the family. I would help out with the lawn and do everything he was supposed to do (Lagi)*

> *…and that's when I need to step up and take on the role – be the only boy in the family and do all the chores. it's like overall you're taking on different roles in order to make a family a family (Sina)*
>
> *Usually, my role would be to go to school, learn, and come back home and like COIVD came and changed the mindset of 'get a side hustle, help the family, provide (Noah)*
>
> *I also take on the role of being the babysitter. I have 3 younger sisters and sometimes my nieces and nephew come over – so I'd have to baby sit them (Sina)*

The findings from this research frequently acknowledged the importance of positionality within the Samoan family structure. The eldest sibling and their role in supporting the family at whole. However, family dynamics and structure also impacted the wellbeing of most participants. The living area and space, the crowded numbers of family members living within a certain space seemed to frustrate the participants.

> *I feel like the COVID-19 lockdown that I came from was pretty negative because I wasn't really focused on my learning and the number of people, I was around was a distraction as well (Anamaria)*
>
> *At times with family situations during funerals and stuff, that's when it got a bit too much for me (Sina)*

Family relationships also extend transnationally. During the Talanoa, participants shared stories about their families in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas, specifically Samoa. Each participant had varying personal relationships with overseas family or had a significant person in their family that was the rock of their family. On the other hand, most of the youth in this study had a good relationship with their parents and grandparents; where they could speak their minds and, at certain times, advise their parents on matters.

4.4 Samoan youth's resilience and coping mechanisms

The participants in this present study spoke openly about how their roles within their families impacted them and the things they relied on to cope with the day-to-day challenges they faced during COVID-19 Pandemic. The 'coping mechanisms for Samoan youth' theme summarise how the different elements of chores, school, pets and their faith come into play and influence their positive outcome of resilience.

Coping mechanisms were strengthened during COVID-19. For example, having a supportive family dynamic at home allowed Youth to feel comfortable communicating their true thoughts with their parents, even around financial matters, and their thoughts about the cultural practice of

remitting. During the Talanoa, participants shared that the company of their pets helped them overcome feelings of being overwhelmed, uncertainty, pressures at home and someone to confide in. For one participant, her dog was her 'why' when she went to school and returned home. Her dog brought joy into her life despite the challenges COVID-19 was bringing into her life. Another coping mechanism that was mentioned was faith. Samoan youth was raised going to church and believing in God and though the lockdown made it impossible to go to church or physically gather, the isolation time strengthened their faith in God. Two participants shared how their faith, prayer and relationship with God contributed to healthy ways of regulating their emotions and relieving their worries during COVID-19.

> *People were going through difficulties, but God was there. I felt his presence even though I couldn't see him, I felt peace whenever I'd vent to Him [God] (Lagi)*

Another frequently discussed aspect was the youth obligation to their family. In most of their lives, youths consider how they can help their family. When family members acknowledge their obligation, responsibility, and contribution to their families, this strengthens their relationships and brings a level of connectedness (Tiatia, 2007). Two sub-themes emerged when participants discussed how they support their families. The first sub-theme understood how their values influenced their decisions with handling money and through working and giving what they could to their parents and education as an avenue to give back to their family. A burdensome sense of obligation to their parents and family. The sense of obligation stemmed from the sacrifices of their parents to ensure that they could require an improved life with greater opportunities. Therefore, the participants felt obligated to return the many blessings they had received, typically through service to their families and community. For Pasifika people, this is known and understood as reciprocity.

One of the common factors that the participants shared in their stories is their reasons for seeking employment during COVID-19. When asked why they sought employment, many participants shared how their parents did not request them to work; instead, working was their way of contributing to help support their family more. For this reason, participants who voluntarily sought employment showcase the Pacific Island values of serving their family, respect, and reciprocity. As mentioned above, the collectivist culture of the Pacific people puts others first, and this is illustrated in the extracts below:

> *I got a job to help them [his family] a little more. It wasn't a lot, but it still helped, so that's my impact. Doing a little extra work to help provide for the family (Noah)*

I wanted to [work] because I hate asking them [parents] for money and like they need it and I want to work to give back to them as well (Lagi)

I want to be able to work by myself and give back to them because they're doing so much for me and like I want to do something little to give back to them (Sina)

Even though I give them my money, they always tell me to save my own for the future. Like I give them some and some to my savings. And save up for what I want to do. (Nina)

The quote above suggests parents also show her the value of love and service by encouraging her to deposit money into her savings. Lagi expressed her preference of being alone as a coping mechanism to maintain her relationship with her mother.

I rather be by myself when I'm angry cause when I'm having a bad day, I don't want to take it out at anyone in the house

In addition, chores have also provided opportunities for youth to build their capacities by equipping themselves with transferable skills and strengthening family bonds.

Most of the time, I'm stressed and depressed. Chores helps me get over (Anamaria)

Chores distract you and keep you from overthinking. It helps you think of something else instead of stressing out (Lagi)

The conversations around chores also had a perspective that the participants doing chores during COVID-19 were also learning new skills. For example, helping prep dinner afforded them cooking skills. Participants also mentioned that their school environment and teachers contributed to their coping mechanisms during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings below express the importance of having school teachers who understand and cater to students' circumstances.

Some of the teachers understood the situation where you can't do work because you had to go to work and help the family (Noah)

My homeroom teacher, knew I worked 12 hour shifts and yeah, she helped to make it easier for me (Nina)

They [teachers] understood. So, they gave us that space (Sina)

Summary of key findings

The overall findings suggest that Samoan youth have complex responsibilities within their households. Many participants live with a large family at home, so their roles revolve around who is present and who is not. The findings also suggest that Samoan youth seeking employment is not due to their family struggling financially but as an extension of service to their parents and family. Service and love are values embedded in Samoan youth culture. The evident protective factors that arose were completing chores at home, their faith in God, their pets and support from their teachers. These findings emphasise the role and importance of Samoan youth and highlight Samoan youth contribution during a disaster crisis. In addition, it highlights elements that foster resilience concerning disasters.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

While studies have reported on links between Samoan people's motives and remittances during disaster time, there is limited literature that highlights the youth role in supporting family remittances, including the decision-making process, their experiences, and capacities in the context of disaster. This study focused on Samoan youth supporting their family during COVID-19. The objectives of this study were to explore the opportunities and challenges that Samoan youth face during a disaster in supporting family remittances and identify the motives that influenced youth to support their family at that time. Chapter Five analyses the study's findings presented in chapter four and discusses them with the existing literature.

Section 5.2 will discuss Samoan youth as active agents necessary to support the family during a disaster. Section 5.3 will elaborate on the impacts and challenges Samoan youth experienced during COVID-19 and the mechanisms that youth utilised to overcome or embrace them. Section 5.4 will discuss the different elements that shape Samoan youth decision to help their family during disaster time through a framework that emerged from the findings. Section 5.5 outlines the study's limitations, and section 5.6 recommends further research. Lastly, section 5.7 concludes the study.

5.2 Samoan youth capacity and their role in supporting family remittances during COVID-19

Past disaster literature portrays youth as passive and weak individuals susceptible to disasters' negative impacts (Barlett, 2008; Peek, 2008; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2011). However, this study highlights that Samoan youth displayed capacities and mechanisms that actively helped support families and navigate COVID-19 challenges. Table 3 below summarises the key roles Samoan youth took during COVID-19, some existing pre-disasters and intensifying in COVID-19 while others were new.

Table 3: Intensified and new roles undertaken by youth Samoans during COVID-19

		Intensified during COVID-19	New during COVID-19
Daily Roles of Samoan Youth	Assisting with technology to foster communication overseas		x
	Take on another family member's role i.e. 'become the man of the family'	x	

	Advising parents about remitting and taking part in decision making	x	
	Working to generate income		x
	Achieving chores	x	
	Helping siblings	x	
	Delivering quality work in 'not preferred'/new environment		x

This research observed that Samoan youth actively participated in discussions or the facilitation of family remittances. Many elements shaped the decision-making process. Due to new regulations and policies as a result to the nationwide lockdown, families could not congregate and continue traditional events such as birthdays, funerals, graduations, and church services also known as fa'alavelaves, which traditionally would require sending remittances to help support these familial and cultural events. Isolation during lockdowns challenged many Samoan families to go about their usual way of fa'alavelaves.

Samoan youth took on different roles to support their family, which added to their usual responsibilities. As reported in this study, the eldest daughters shared how they would complete the tasks usually performed by their elder brothers, who were not at home during the lockdown. This involved helping with outdoor chores such as car maintenance, yard work, lawn mowing, and managing the rubbish flow. Youth showcased the initiative to step into other family members' roles when absent, implying that Samoan youth, specifically Samoan females, are aware of their family dynamics and willing to go beyond their gendered roles to serve their family. For example, a participant described that her roles would range from babysitting her nieces and nephews to stepping into her eldest brother's role of helping her father with the yard, woodwork, or car maintenance. As a result, this participant was able to shift her perspective and view, taking on her brother's tasks was a blessing and an opportunity to spend quality time with her father and learn new skills that she would not have learnt.

The participant shared an essential insight to the multiple roles '...overall you're taking on different roles in order to make a family a family' emphasising her efforts to maintain her family dynamic. Tamasese et al. (2010) explains that upholding roles and responsibilities fulfils Pacific people's wellbeing. Providing for their family members and broader kin brings confidence to one's ability and skills to provide. This mentality derives from having learnt heroic stories of their ancestors, where highly developed fishing skills and snaring birdlife take place. Much like black

South African youth who are taught to show obedience to their elders by positively contributing to their family by completing daily housework (Theron, Liebenberg & Ungar, 2015). This finding aligns with the observations of Cox et al. (2017), which documented that youth assist their family even more during a disaster. In addition, this is consistent with Samu (2013) observation that is primarily instilled within fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way). Samoan youth expressed cultural values of love, generosity, and respect for their families in uncertain circumstances.

In Pacific Island countries, every person in the family, province or village structure will have a turn to serve their elders, church, wider community and come a time where they will be served by the future generations (Tamasese et al., 2010). Similarly, this finding is connected to a respected Samoan proverb 'le ala I le pule o le tautua' which means 'the pathway to leadership is through service' (Enari, 2021). This implies that the roles and responsibilities Samoan females uphold prior to and during COVID-19, are stepping stones to Samoan people fulfilling their service to their families, and their time for rest will come when they are ready to lead to serve. According to the Tautua Lifecycle, this is usually experienced when someone becomes a grandparent or receives a cultural title (Enari, 2021).

In addition, female participants in this study described how they felt like they had to be the man of the family, which added to their usual responsibilities of indoor housework, including dishes, vacuuming, sweeping, preparing food, washing, and caring for others family members. Similarly, the findings from Brioli et al. (2021) pinned that the sharing of household chores among families increased during COVID-19, and so did the burden upon women. Utumapu (1998) alludes this family dynamic is common within Pacific families who come from patriotic dominant gender role cultures. Pacific female roles are strongly impacted by culture, local authority and the traditional structures that restrict females partake in decision making (Cerezo et al., 2021). Maintaining traditional gender roles prevents females from learning new skills and this is problematic because it undermines female's ability to expand their knowledge of whilst living in diaspora. This is even more problematic in the Western world or during a disaster if Pacific females are working exclusive chores than they will not be active members to assist their families when time comes. Furthermore Cunningham, Jenson and Wednt Samu (2022) alludes culture can be referred as male-dominated, or patriarchal, where the attitudes, beliefs, interests, and roles of men dominate social institutions, decision-making, ideas, and practices in the private and public sphere. It is expected for families who migrate to their new country to uphold their cultural values. Tamasese et al. (2010) shows how culture, norms and values are perpetuated including when away from Samoa. Similarly, Cowley-Malcolm (2005) found enculturation, which refers to the changes in culture over sometime parenting practices and specifically within inter-generational perspectives about parenting practices were apparent.

Samoan youth acquired jobs which extended their cultural values of service to their family. As published from Sullivan et al. (2021) there was an influx of Auckland students 'dropping out' of school due to circumstances at home and the need to support their families financially. Observations can relate to the like of Karpman et al. (2020) who reported Hispanic low-income families also felt the economic hit of disparities in financial security and ability to meet basic needs. Solheim (2022) study examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrant families and expressed that immigrants are generally resilient in their migration and adaptation to America; however, the immigrants have significant vulnerabilities that expose them to financial and financial and relational risk during COVID-19. In contrast this research shows that Samoan youth decision to generate income was not due to their family experiencing financial instability, but because they felt the need to use their good health that they are blessed with to draw in added support for their parents. This complements the work of Fa'aea and Enari (2021) which acknowledge that enacting tautua (service) is one the key fundamental tenets of being Samoan both in the motherland and within diaspora communities in transnational societies. It shows respect, obedience, and diligence in honouring one's elders, parents, and the wider family. This displays New Zealand born Samoan youth who are fortunate to be a part of a family that is financially stable, still has the fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way) values ingrained in them. Reciprocity is expressed through tautua (service) and alofa (love).

Samoan youth continually affirm their love for their family as being a primary factor in their capacity to achieve their most earnest goals. Whilst they have had to make physical and financial contributions, youth have stated that their continued faith has made their journey easier. This attitude is widely respected and is a key motivator that encourages and strengthens families to serve each other when they can. Culture is generally preserved among Pacific Island migrants through their teachings and the way they carry cultural traditions. Tamasese et al. (2010) posits how culture, norms and values are perpetuated and very much alive, including away from the motherland (Samoa). Culture is also seen as the underlying cause for the correlation in economic behaviour across generations (Farre & Vella, 2007).

This study showed that youth within Samoan households were essential in maintaining family connections under lockdown circumstances. For example, youth arranged digital communications for their parents to receive, responded to, delivered, and kept updated with close family, school, work, and church. The capacities of youth to set up channels included, but were not limited to, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Facebook Messenger, updating software and reconnecting Wi-Fi routers for improved digital quality and performance. This allowed their parents and family members to stay connected with church live streams during the weekend and, most importantly, remain connected with their family. By having virtual connection available to Samoan households, their spiritual, emotional, and social well-being was being met, contributing somehow to the overall

health and well-being of Samoan families whose life was disrupted during COVID-19. In this study, youth believed that their parents, throughout the lockdown, thought they were knowledgeable in almost everything. For instance, youth shared that their parents would assume the eldest child automatically knew how to operate technical communications. However, some youths were navigating these digital applications for the first time – learning as they went. This draws connections to the purpose of migrants to initially pursue residence in Aotearoa New Zealand, which was to pursue a better life of opportunity for their future generations. This suggests that the eldest children in migrant families will be blessed to receive the education many in the family could not (Cowley-Malcom, 2005). Similarly, Makrooni (2019) denotes that second-generation immigrants are growing part of the population they have settled in and are significantly better educated than their parents. Therefore, by placing education on a pedestal, having a child partake in education beyond Samoa is seen as a milestone and a way to acknowledge the historic sacrifice of those who decided to migrate.

Parents invest in their children as the next generation of the family (Coleman, 1988), and are important actors in the migration process (Harper & Zubida, 2018). It is generally expected that the next generation will support the parents later in life, including during crisis (Cunningham et al., 2022). This also includes communication about different life issues, such as discussions about education and professions, encouragement, and what they can achieve in their personal life (Masten, 2018). According to Fathi (2018, as cited in Makrooni, 2019), youth's educational achievement and aspirations are largely impacted by parental influence. It is recognised by Ogunjimi, Daum and Kariuki (2022) that youth with increased education stand a better chance of securing jobs in the formal sector. This supports the essence of migration for Samoan families who left their homeland of Samoa to start a new, prosperous life in Aotearoa – 'the land of milk and honey' (Leaupepe & Sauni, 2014). At the heart of this move was to afford their family and future generation of better education and work opportunities that were not available to them in the birth country. Therefore, it is the findings of this study that Samoan youth do well within in their education to honour the sacrifice their migrant grandparents or parents have made for them.

Youth hold an important role when it comes to supporting their parents daily. Makrooni (2019) study shows that because of the skills and new learnings that their education afforded them, youth from migrant families were trusted to help with tasks like translating documents, doctor appointments and even banking. Thus, facilitates youth maturity at a young age compared to other youths. Findings from this study show that Samoan youth sought employment during lockdown and reported that their decision to work was their own. Generating income allowed Samoan youth to support their family through the pandemic. It was also reported that the parents encouraged their children to save their earnings rather than giving all their pay to them. However, some Samoan youth still wanted to give money to their parents regardless of their advice. This is due

to a mix of obligations to their family and cultural values embedded in them from birth as emphasised by other researchers focusing on Samoan migrants and remittances (Cowley-Malcolm et al., 2011; Le De et al., 2016; MacPherson, Spoonley & Anae, 2001). Pilisi (2020) further asserts that this complexity is felt among Pacific tertiary students and the service demands of their family as 'there appears to be no strengths-based research looking at how Pacific youth have been able to successfully manage competing expectations of service, cultural obligations and leadership'. However, this study reveals how Samoan youth mitigate these cultural pressures which challenges the narrative that implied their motive to support was because their family was struggling financially or in a vulnerable position during COVID-19 lockdown. Rather, it was because being employed and earning money is an extension of their service to their family and youth contribute to help support their family. This all goes back to youth reciprocating their parents' sacrifice to them in the past. Fa'aeai (2021) grasps the youth feelings towards service and denotes there is a position of service that displays the capability to respect and shield the family name, is to reach tautua matalilo (words and actions seek to elevate the family). Tautua (service) is evident in this research through the concept of 'family tax', as mentioned by the youth. Samoan youth demonstrated cultural values of service, love, and generosity towards their family. Family tax was highlighted as a modern way to reciprocate love to their parents.

5.3 Impacts and challenges faced in supporting family remittances overseas during COVID-19

While youth played a critical role in supporting family to send remittances the findings show they faced multiple challenges. Samoan youth found it difficult to keep up with their schoolwork whilst needing to uphold their multiple responsibilities at home. Their environment was essential to help them produce quality work. However, most of the participants lived in crowded homes or shared rooms with their siblings, which often meant sharing resources such as the laptop, iPad or computer. Brioli and colleagues (2021) explain that during COVID-19 lockdown the divisions between school, work and home become blurred. The lack of resources and obligation to share amongst family at home provided challenges for Samoan youth to take their time with their studies and increase the chance of receiving an unjust grade. This was an added barrier to staying 'on top' of their education (Henry & Aporosa, 2021; Ministry of Youth Development, n.d), which was often shared during the Talanoa. This dilemma would imply Samoan youth would show the cultural value of sacrifice to allow their family members to use the devices. This aligns with Sullivan and colleagues (2021) who presented a lack of digital devices, reliable Wi-Fi was also experienced greatest among black Hispanic and Black low-income families. Similarly, Weng and Lee (2016) drew on the health and social challenges that threat student's wellbeing highlighting the many disparities afforded to them which impacts their learning. Finally, Solheim et al. (2022) looks at immigrant family's economic realities and states tangible and intangible resources that

embody immigrant lifestyles like sharing responsibilities for children and elders an employ lending circles to save on purchases. Furthermore, immigrants are likely to live in large, overcrowded multigenerational households where resources are shared, such as phones, clothing, food, and cars (Solheim et al., 2022).

Despite the challenges youth encountered with their school assessments and balancing work hours, Samoan youth highlighted that their education was important for them and their family. This finding is congruent with Tamasese et al. (2010) who denotes wellbeing is connected to good education. Within a Pacific lens, education provides skills and secures future employment. Tamasese et al. (2010) highlights that education and qualifications bring honour and status to Pacific families and improving one's life will benefit the whole family and the next generation. Similarly, Fa'avae et al. (2022) participants shared excelling in their studies and work at the university helps them fulfil their responsibilities to their family. A 2019 study observed parents' motives for encouraging their children with their education and denotes parents idolise education because they have first-hand experience of the social and cultural barriers from their life experience (Makrooni et al., 2019).

Another challenge from this study was the constant negotiations that would take place between Samoan youth and their parents of why and when to send money to certain family members. Some youth had limited gatherings with kin from the homeland whilst other youth had stronger relationships with family from the islands, and in most cases be the bridge to contact their relatives. When certain family members reached out to youth or parents for money, youth would often express their thoughts and concerns to not proceed with the fund transfers. Macpherson (1994) indicated the importance of obligations towards the family as a core reason for remitting, rather than individualistic motives suggested by economists. Derby and Adkins (2012) report that transnational families maintain connections through money exchanges and other means. The confusion and questionable understanding of their parents giving money to relatives stems from youth not seeing their family reciprocating the love back to their parents or as evident in this research, the influence of the parents. This is developed through Halse's (2018) research that denotes youths transnational experiences influence their sense of self, cultural and personal identity. Youth construct their understanding of their own and their family's attachment to home (Efuribe et al., 2020). Transnational families can sustain meaningful relationships despite physical separation through, for example, remittances and money exchange, language, regular communication, and family gatherings for religious or other significant events.

In the same way Lee and Craney (2019) denotes that many diasporic youths are also negotiating multi-ethnic identities. Mutual connections can be made with a Swedish study of immigrant youth from Somalia, Iraq, Turkey, former Yugoslavia, and Iran which documented youth had regular

communications with their (mother)land and were active in cultural festivals and communication with relatives in the homeland. However, youth preferred Sweden as the country they would continue their lives (Bak & Von Bromssen, 2010). Though Freeman et al. (2022) study highlights migrant parents with direct connections to the islands find it difficult to maintain pacific familial habitus for their children's sense of belonging when their 'chain of memory' weakens. However, this study reflects that Aotearoa New Zealand-born Samoan youth are capable of upholding pacific values through their thought processes, roles, and obligation for their family. This was widely evident through the COVID-19 pandemic and role in supporting family remittances. Participants expressing praying to God and venting to him helped relieve participants of the worries they had during COVID-19. By keeping their faith strong and turning to God in prayer, Samoan youth received strength from their devotion and reliance upon their belief system, reflecting their resilience and cultural continuity among their family. Similarly, Niuatoa (2007) and Adedoyin et al. (2016) denotes prayer is identified to release burden and a way to regain control over one's life. This resonates with the participants as they describe their faith as central to their personal and family's daily functioning life. In addition, youth come from family dynamics where family meetings, gathering for prayer most evenings help strengthen their faith. This aligns with Walsh (2003), who describes that cultural traditions including praying together and having similar belief systems provide families strength and resilience. Similarly, Muruthi et al. (2020) state that people receive strength when they symbolically give their worries or challenges to higher power. For example, giving their difficulties to God, Jesus Christ. This author shows how diasporic families, Karen refugees, intimate faith bolstered resilience during hard times. The values are tied to their faith and are bestowed to youth by their parents through cultural practices.

Family serves to preserve and safeguard social stamina and is the main system that functions the public (Forrest, Preez & Brownlow, 2020). Due to the complexities of the Pacific community, any decisions made will influence the larger group. Therefore, Pacific people usually reach decisions via unanimity and collaboration with other members in their social group. Decision-making across Pacific communities is founded on the principles of Talanoa that entails formal and informal dialogue with one's composite parts around decision-making. Firstly, it involves deciding if a decision needs to be made. Secondly, choosing who will be involved in making the decision, and how will it be done. Different options must be discussed and the cost-benefit ratio of making the decision is weighed. Indeed, these tenets of consensus decision making are 'the Pacific way' (Connell, 2005). Tamasese et al. (2010) posit that for Pacific people's connections are through web of relationships which connects past, present, and future members, with cultural ideals that guarantees the group's longevity and well-being.

5.4 A framework for articulating elements that shape Samoan Youth behaviours and actions in supporting family

There is extensive literature on remittances and the decision-making process that drive such mechanism during crisis. However, limited research has focused on youth and their roles and elements guiding their actions in supporting family remittances. The framework below aims to articulate the different elements that shape Samoan youth behaviours in support family remittances in disaster. The diagram is based on my findings in chapter four and is a compacted way of how I make sense of the information shared by Samoan youth during the Talanoa. In the proposed framework, Samoan youth decision to support their family in remitting is influenced by multiple elements. The Samoan youth living in the diaspora are impacted by both fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way) and the Western world responsibilities. Four spheres of this framework, articulate the main ideas of youth decision to support remittances. Samoan youth, their parents, transnational family, and family in Aotearoa New Zealand. Within the four spheres are sacred spaces used to articulate each entity's different relationships. Theses spaces are symbolic to show the va exchanging from one sphere to another to uphold the balance of a being Samoan among Pasifika people.

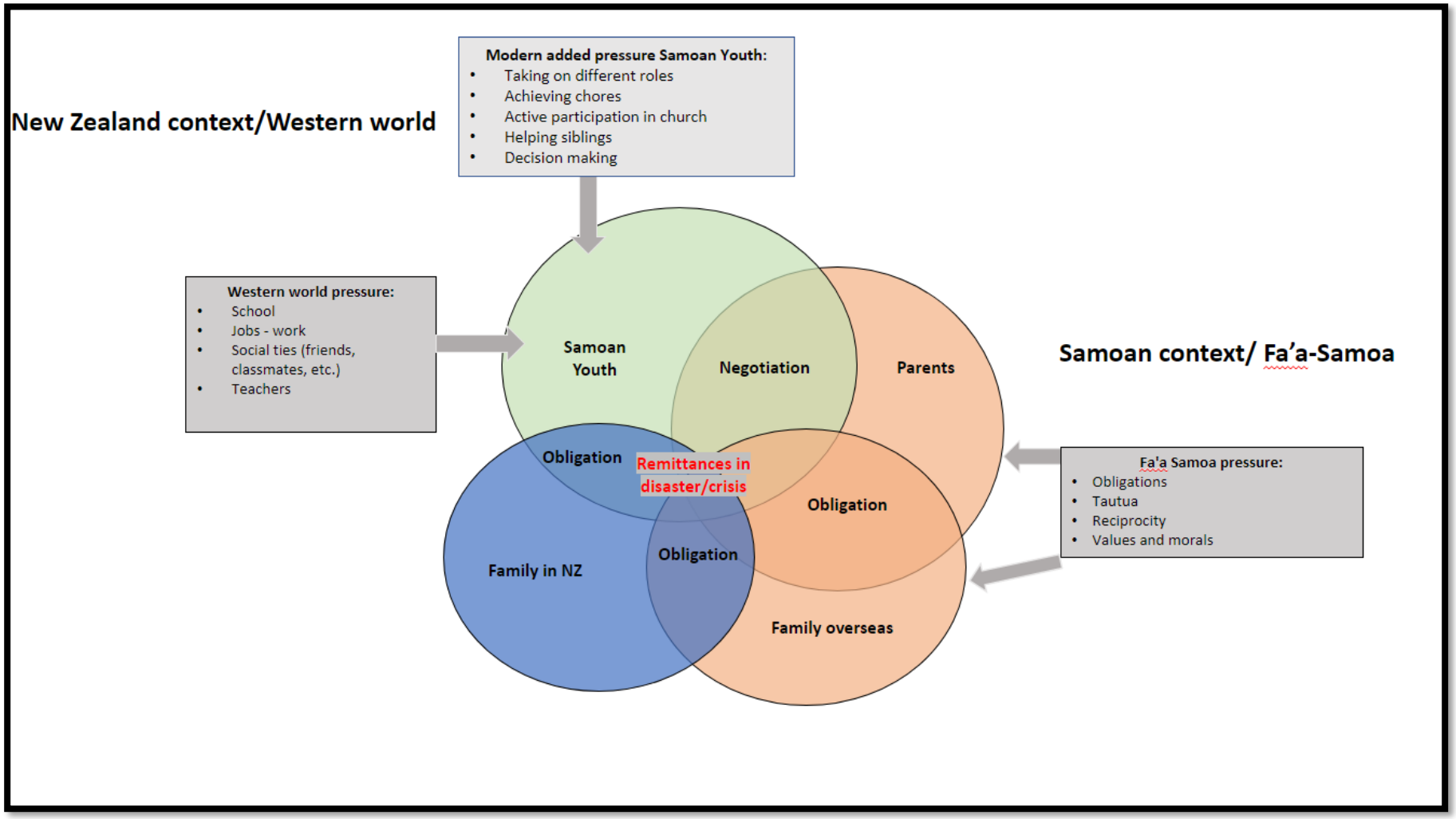

Figure 3: a framework for Samoan youth and parents in continuing cultural remittances.

In the framework presented, Samoan youth are connected to both western and fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way). However, Samoan youth are more exclusively exposed to the impacts of the Western world through their social connections and relationships, education, and employment. These are generally the elements that other (non-Samoan) youth are exposed to. As a result, Samoan youth acquire skills and a new perspective on different aspects. This enhances youths' capacities and through their Western world livelihoods cases like COVID-19 allowed Samoan youths to help foster telecommunication, operate devices to keep their families connected, maintaining cultural norms like fellowship, devotion, celebratory events, or death (Le De & Jackson-Becerra, 2021). On the other hand, Samoan youth are indirectly exposed to the obligation fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way) influences them. For example, the impacts are seen through the need for youth to perform well academically, balancing employment with their academics, isolation from social groups, friends and family but also had to manage added pressure revolving around their family duties, culture, and obligations.

From a strength's perspective, the space between 'Samoan youth' and 'Parents' represents the in-betweenness between two parties which emphasise their sacred space for negotiation. The negotiable space implies that there is compromise between youths and their parents which contradicts the usual fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way) family dynamic where elders of Samoan families would not consider youth's input. This shows that Samoan youth's voice is being heard and considered in the context of disaster remittances – in other words youth are accepted to 'sit at the table' for decision making. Bhabha (1990) describes the in-betweenness through his concept known as 'the third space' with constant openness, revision, compromise and renewal of cultural practices, normalities and identities if needed. Iosefo (2016) (as cited in Tu'itahi (2021)), uses Bhabha's (1990) concept of third space to be creative and construct a world that helps her navigate her academic world. In the process, Iosefo (2016) deconstructs and re-constructs her identity within spaces in tertiary education. In the same vein, Samoan youth use this third space to help them mitigate the Western world and its expectations for education with the fa'aSamoa (the Samoa way) expectations. When youth have the space to negotiate with their parents around sending of money and decisions to send remittances, this is an opportunity for parents to deconstruct and be open to new perspectives sparked by their child. Parents living in Aotearoa New Zealand are still influenced by fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way). This framework shows that the in-betweenness of parents, family in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas are linked through obligation. This emphasises the unique and open-mindedness of the relationship between youth and parents.

As explored throughout the current research, the nonautonomous relational world is embedded in Samoan youth regardless of if they live in Samoa or are part of the Pasifika community in Aotearoa New Zealand. To promote autonomy and independence in an Indigenous child carries the risk of alienating them from their relational world and depriving 'the mind of the soul and its

nurturing and protective qualities' (Tui Atua, 2017, p. xi). For the Pacific youth, successfully mastering the complexities and nuances of interdependency is considered a healthy developmental trajectory (Forrest, Preez & Brownlow, 2020).

5.5 Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to investigate and explore the role Samoan youth play, if any, in supporting family remittances in disaster. It is evident throughout the experiences of the participants that they are constantly navigating the complexities of being a Samoan youth raised between fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way) and the Western world. The COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges that affected Samoans in the homeland and in Aotearoa New Zealand simultaneously. The implementation of social distancing, complete and interchanging lockdowns caused families to be separated from one another, and created uncertainty, sickness, job losses and even death in some unfortunate cases which have in some way impacted Samoan youth severely. A key finding highlighted Samoan youth seeking employment during COVID-19 as an extension of their fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way) values of tautua (service), rather than the narrative of their aiga (family) being financially unstable. This study also presents youth as reliable and valuable members within their family acquiring skills essential to maintain cultural traditions and, as stated 'help their family remain a family'. It is therefore not surprising that despite the strong difficulties faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, Samoans keep helping each other through remittances, even though this might imply struggle financially on the short and long-term.

Despite the obstacles, Samoan youth have demonstrated that their socio-cultural connections and capacity to support family remittances transcends traditional boundaries and hardships. The key findings suggest that Samoan youth are essential to maintaining cultural traditions and relationships during disaster. It is evident through the COVID-19 pandemic that Samoan youth mobilised their skills and were essential in maintaining familial and cultural relationships through assisting in online communications like Facebook live, Messenger, Zoom and Teams. Thus, allowing their families to continue cultural traditions, norms which in turn sustained the well-being of Samoan families This study has addressed the question of what roles and responsibilities Samoan youth have during a disaster and what are their mechanisms to how cope with these added pressures. Samoan youth are provided a platform to share their views and experiences before, during and after a disaster, which highlighted the complex nuances of balancing family and culture, as these were two elements that added pressure to Samoan youth. This impacted Samoan youth making them feel overwhelmed with the roles and responsibilities bestowed unto them. However, family and culture were also the antidotes in fostering Samoan youths' ability to overcome health and social adversities exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic. This study highlights that Samoan youth find opportunities in the tensions presented before them to provide

solutions to their dilemmas, which position Samoan youth, not in crisis but into strengths-based positioning. Consequently, it highlights Samoan youth as stronger members in their families and of their community, as they learn to cope with burden and blessing of both worlds – fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way) and Western worldviews. Central to this research was the welcomed space of negotiation between Samoan youth and their parents. The notion of va – the socio-spatial connection between people and its importance in being nurtured.

Samoan youth in New Zealand are constantly exposed to the Western world through interactions, institutions, perspective of money and education, yet this research shows that regardless of location, Samoan youth remain grounded in the core values that honour fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way). In essence, although remittance is gift-giving geographically across oceans to the islands, in this case between Aotearoa New Zealand and Samoa, the parallel is that there is also a strong intergenerational remittance happening between Samoan youth and their parents.

5.6 Limitations

To uphold the validity of any research, studies must be explored for any limitations. The first limitation regarded the sample size of six participants. A low sample size has a higher influence of subjective opinions among the participants. The findings could have been strengthened by including six more participants to the sample size. However, this research is a 60-point dissertation and I had limited resources to conduct the investigation. The data collection process was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, making it challenging to receive schools approval to do any activities. Lastly, I facilitated multiple sessions of in-depth Talanoa and follow up emails between participants and myself, the researcher. This approach contributed to gain in-depth knowledge about the topic. The study location only considered a specific place in Auckland and does not represent the broader parts of Aotearoa New Zealand. The biggest challenge was adjusting this research to abide by governmental rules as the research was conducted during a pandemic. For example, the study had to be handled cautiously, exercising safety guidelines, and wearing a mask during the data collection phases. This delayed many opportunities to start the data collection phase sooner than anticipated. Unfortunately, two schools did not participate in this study's second stage, the Talanoa. Had this study been conducted before the COVID-19 Pandemic, onboarding schools and facilitating more Talanoa would have been possible and the sample size could have doubled in size. Lastly, there is very little research revolving youth and remittances. This was both a strength as this emphasises a gap in the literature and a challenge as it was difficult to build upon an established body of literature. Therefore, the dissertation draws upon disaster studies, youth, migration, and education literature.

5.7 Recommendations

The traditional fa'aSamoa (the Samoan way) and contemporary Western world values-based systems that Samoan youth are constantly negotiating exhibit the understanding that cultural practices are continuously evolving. This utilises both contemporary and traditional ways of serving and gives reason for social institutions (church and school) to appreciate Samoan youth attempt to honour and deliver these responsibilities. Service to family is central to belonging within a collective and therefore a permanent feature within the Samoan community. This means educational providers must recognise and understand the added responsibilities Samoan youth must uphold to their families, especially during disaster time. It is also imperative that Samoan parents continue to welcome safe discussions with their children and allow for healthy negotiations to take place. This will aid cultural attainment for younger generations while nurturing youth's complexities.

5.8 Future research

There is robust research on remittances but little regarding remittances during disaster. Even more so, there are few studies documenting remittances and youth. However, this research shows that Samoan youth play a key role in this process and that there are impacts, challenges, and implications for their development or performance at school and personal life. This research is likely to be the first, study that looks at youth in remittances and therefore more research is needed, including with larger sample size, and involving more ethnicities.

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Appendices

Consent Form:

Consent Form

Project title: Exploring the experiences of Samoan Youth in supporting family through remittances during COVID-19: South Auckland as a case study.

Project Supervisor: Dr Loic Le De and Dr Jean Allen

Researcher: ***Jamon Losalina Amiga***

- ○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 16 March 2022
- ○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ○ I understand that identity of my fellow participants and our discussions in the focus group is confidential to the group and I agree to keep this information confidential.
- ○ I understand that notes will be taken during the focus group and that it will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ○ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ○ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then, while it may not be possible to destroy all records of the focus group discussion of which I was part, I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ○ I agree to take part in this research.
- ○ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes○ No○

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details (email address, if you wish to receive a summary of the research findings):

.....

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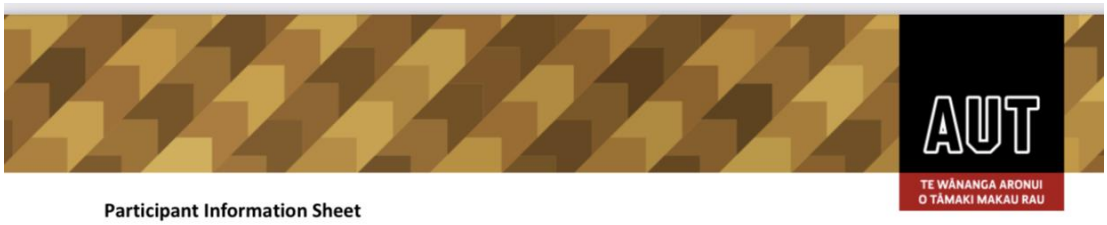
Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 16th March 2022 AUTEC Reference number 21/444

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form

Participant Information Sheet:



Participant Information Sheet

Participants

Date Information Sheet Produced:

17TH March 2022

Project Title

Exploring the experiences of Samoan Youths' in supporting family through remittances during COVID-19: South Auckland as a case study.

An Invitation

Talofa lava, my name is Jamon Amiga. I am born and raised in Otara, South Auckland and a current student at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) completing a master's degree in Disaster Risk Management and Development. I am inviting you to participate in a research project I am undertaking as part of this qualification that aims to explore Samoan Youth's experiences during COVID-19 pandemic. Taking part in this research project will be at your own interest and completely voluntarily after seeing my poster invitation. This is my way of giving back to the community that raised me during my studies and my intention is to provide a platform that privileges Pasifika Youth.

What is the purpose of this research?

This purpose of this research is to provide a platform for you to share your experiences throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This is an opportunity for you to share your perceptions and experiences with other youth who may resonate with your story. The wider community will get an insight of how you (Samoan Youth) have navigated your way through this historic and challenging moment. This research will also provide more information around Pasifika Youth and COVID-19 in New Zealand, which is a topic that requires the privileging of Pacific youth voices. The findings from this research will be used to produce various outputs, such as a dissertation, research reports, journal articles, and presentations to help voice the varying experiences of our Samoan Youth. Furthermore, as key fabric of this research, you will also gain the findings.

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

Initially, I had conversations with your teachers/deans regarding my objectives and the purpose of this study. I was then allowed to stick posters around the school and hold a meet and greet with interested students. For this research, there is an inclusion criterion; therefore, you have been invited to participate in this study because you are of Samoan descent, above the age of 16 years old, living in South Auckland and/or are either holding an employed job during COVID-19 whilst being a full-time student or left high school to pursue employment.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

To participate and be included in this study, you must sign the Consent Form which was given along with this document. Anyone who chooses not to sign the consent form will not be included in this research.

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

What will happen in this research?

This research involves a Talanoa session that will be held at a local South Auckland School at a time that is most convenient for your learning. In this Talanoa, I will have prompt questions around the theme of COVID-19 to start the conversation. From these prompts, you will be able to share your thoughts and experiences. With your permission, the Talanoa will be audio-recorded, and notes will be taken.

The Talanoa agenda will include:

- Introduction and purpose of the research
- Opening prayer
- Activity one which requires groups
- Talanoa with the group
- Light refreshments
- Summary of the Talanoa
- Closing Prayer

What are the discomforts and risks?

While it is not anticipated, it should be noted that topics raised by Talanoa participants, may cause some discomfort. However, there is no obligation for students to contribute to all topics raised and Participants can leave the Talanoa at any time for any reason. Furthermore, students will be provided information of support services that are available to them should they need further assistance. Participants will be reminded that this Talanoa is created and intended to be a safe space for each participant.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

I will do my best to create a space that is friendly and safe at the start and during the Talanoa. I will also remind all potential participants that they are not obliged to answer every question and that they are free to speak about their experiences as they please. The researcher will also make aware the surrounding support you will have access to. For example, trusted teachers, school councillor or support services: Lifeline 0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE) or free text 4357 (HELP) –- for counselling and support or What's Up 0800 942 8787 (0800 WHATSUP) or webchat at www.whatsup.co.nz from 5pm – 10pm for 5–18-year-olds.

What are the benefits?

It is anticipated that your comments will provide important insights to guide future policies, frameworks and in turn, help reduce the scarcity of academic studies revolving around Pasifika Youth. Moreover, your involvement in this research will be a tool for future academics to use. This will also go towards my qualification of a master's dissertation. The research findings will be shared nationally and internationally by producing journal articles, conference papers and presentations. A koha of food will be offered in recognition of your time.

How will my privacy be protected?

If you agree to participate in this research, all the information you supply during the Talanoa will be held in confidence and your name or any personally identifiable information will not appear in any report or publication of the research. Your input from the Talanoa will be coded to remove any personally identifiable information, safely stored using password protection, and only the researcher will have access to this information. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible. However, participants need to be aware that their anonymity cannot be guaranteed due to other participants being present in the Talanoa. You can withdraw from the study and Talanoa at any time, but anything you have said in the Talanoa up until the point of withdrawal will remain as part of the study.

An external storage device with password protection will be used and it will be securely stored and archived for six years at AUT, inside my supervisor's locked cabinet, following completion of the study. After the six-year retention period, all related information will be permanently deleted from research computers, and any hard copies will be shredded and destroyed.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There is no cost for you to participate in this research. I kindly ask you to participate in a Talanoa that will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes of your time.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

I kindly ask you to consider my invitation to participate in this study and provide a response within a week.

My contact details are below:

Email: jamonamiga@hotmail.com

Cell: 02102533977

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

After the study has finished, I will send a summary report of the findings to the address you have provided if you indicate (on the Consent Form) that you would like a copy of this report.

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

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Loic Le De, loic.le.de@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext 7499*

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

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

Researcher Contact Details:

Jamon Amiga, jamonamiga@hotmail.com

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Primary Supervisor : Dr Loic Le De, loic.le.de@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext 7499

Secondary Supervisor: Dr Jean M Uasike Allen, jean.allen@aut.ac.nz, 09 021 9999 ext 7053

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *16th March 2022*, AUTEC Reference number *21/444*.