

PUKEPUKE FONUA:

**An exploratory study on the *faikava* as an identity marker for
New Zealand-born Tongan males in Auckland, New Zealand**

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This thesis is an exploratory study of the experiences and perceptions of a group of New Zealand-born Tongan males living in Auckland on what participation in the Tongan cultural practice of the *faikava* meant to them, how they valued this experience and whether they believed participation could help minimise some of the social pressures Tongan youth face today – such as alcohol and drug abuse and youth gang affiliation. Reports indicate that a factor in New Zealand-born Pacific Island youth engaging in these and other risky behaviours in New Zealand is their lack of cultural identity and security. As a Tongan, raised in a traditional Tongan family in New Zealand, I had learnt the *lea* (Tongan language) and *anga fakatonga* (Tongan culture). This knowledge had been reinforced when I participated in the *faikava* with my father from a young age.

For this study, I wanted to see if the *faikava* experience which is often regarded as a purely recreational situation and ‘waste of time’ could be a place for cultural reinforcement and maintenance for other New Zealand-born Tongan males as well. The methodological framework of phenomenology and *talanoa* was employed in this study involving individual *talanoa* with 12 participants who were members of *faikava* clubs in the Auckland region. These clubs were mainly linked to churches, villages and old boys associations. The *talanoa* were conducted in Tongan and English and were recorded.

Findings were that the *faikava* played a significant role in teaching and reinforcing the *pukepuke fonua* or maintaining the *lea* and *anga fakatonga* for this group. In fact, they referred to the *faikava* as a cultural classroom where through engagement in debates, songs and music, they learnt, rejuvenated and maintained the *lea* and *anga fakatonga*. In summary, the *faikava* was a supplementary education site. In addition, this cultural practice also fostered intergenerational harmony, as the elders passed on customary knowledge. They also listened to the views of these younger participants. Finally for this group, the *faikava* had served as a diversion from alcohol consumption and affiliation with youth gangs. All 12 participants affirmed the value of the *faikava* and hope that this would be maintained in the future. On the basis of the results of this research, it can be concluded that the *faikava* is serving as an identity marker for New Zealand-born Tongan males today. This is a place where the Tongan language and culture is learnt, reinforced and

maintained. As this study does not represent the total population of New Zealand-born Tongan males living in the Auckland area, further research is warranted.

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List of Abbreviations

ALAC:	Alcohol Advisory Council
ATYBB:	Auckland Tongan Youth Brass Band
AUTEC:	Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
ECE:	Early Childhood Centre
LDS:	The Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormon Church)
MCNZ:	Methodist Church of New Zealand
MoH:	Ministry of Health
MPIA:	Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs
MSD:	Ministry of Social Development
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Poly:	Polynesian
Polyfest:	ASB Polynesian Festival
WHO:	World Health Organisation
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Glossary

This glossary contains non-English words that are used in this thesis. A majority of the translations are drawn from Churchward's (1959) '*Dictionary: Tongan – English, English – Tongan*'. Other translations are from other formal sources including literature and personal communications.

<i>'ofa:</i>	To love, to care
<i>Ako:</i>	To learn, to study, to receive an education
<i>Akoteu:</i>	Preparatory or primary school
<i>anga fakatōkilalo:</i>	Humble, self-abasing, deferential or unassuming
<i>anga fakatonga:</i>	Tongan culture, Tongan way of life
<i>Fa'aSamoa:</i>	Samoan culture, Samoan way of life
<i>Fāai kavei koula:</i>	Four golden values identified by the late Queen Salote Tupou III
<i>Faikava 'eva:</i>	A private kava session where the young female serves the kava for the circle; allowing the two couple an opportunity to talk while the members in the circle play love songs
<i>Faikava:</i>	To prepare and drink kava together with due form or ceremony in Tongan
<i>Faka'apa'apa:</i>	To respect
<i>Fakahua:</i>	To joke or banter
<i>Fakatalanoa:</i>	To start up a conversation with
<i>Fale:</i>	House, building
<i>Fatongia:</i>	Duty, obligation
<i>Fe'ilongaki:</i>	To know of each other's identity (each knowing who the other is) or of each other's presence or doings or plans
<i>Feohi:</i>	Fellowship or communion or moral and spiritual comradeship with one another also material of things
<i>Femahino'aki:</i>	To be understood by each other, to understand each other
<i>Fetokoni'aki:</i>	Mutual helpfulness, reciprocity
<i>Feveitoka'iaki:</i>	Reciprocal respect
<i>Fono:</i>	Meeting in Samoan
<i>Fonua:</i>	Land, country, territory, place; afterbirth, placenta

<i>Hiva:</i>	To sing, a song, singing
<i>Hou'eiki:</i>	Chiefs
<i>Kailao:</i>	Originally from the islands of Uvea and Futuna, this war dance is largely performed at public and private ceremonies. Predominantly a male item, chants and clubs are accompanied by empty kerosene tins
<i>Kāinga:</i>	relation, relative; brother or sister in the sense of comrade or compatriot
<i>Kakala:</i>	A sweet-smelling flowers, or trees or plants bearing; sweet-smelling flowers of any kind
<i>Kalapu Fofu'anga:</i>	An established kava club that is now segregated around Tonga, New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America
<i>Kalapu kava Tonga:</i>	A Tongan kava-club
<i>Kava:</i>	A cultural drink made from dried roots of the pepper plant <i>piper methysticum</i> ; ceremonial presentation on a large scale and with a big piece of kava plant in the lead; feast given in someone's honor
<i>Kavaholic:</i>	A person who consumes kava excessively for an extensive period of time
<i>Kava fakasiasi:</i>	Sunday kava
<i>Kumete:</i>	A kava bowl
<i>Lakalaka:</i>	Termed a standing dance as opposed to a sitting or solo dance with the combination of poetry, dancing and choral singing which can last up to 15-20mins with over 100 performers, depending on the occasion. Performing the <i>lakalaka</i> is preserved for royalty or nobility.
<i>Lautohi fakasāpate:</i>	Sunday school
<i>Lea fakatonga:</i>	Tongan language; speak in the Tongan language
<i>Lī pa'anga:</i>	Giving of money
<i>Maheni:</i>	To be accustomed to or familiar with; to be on friendly or familiar terms with or to be personally acquainted with
<i>Mamahii me'a:</i>	To be zealous for, to stand up for, to contend or strive or fight for
<i>Matāpule:</i>	Man of honorable rank or status; minor chief; chief's attendant and spokesperson
<i>Mātu'a:</i>	Old or elderly person, or elder, male person of any age when one speaking in a derogatory way; parent, father, husband
<i>Mea'ofa:</i>	A gift, present, gratuity, tip

<i>Ngatu:</i>	Tapa cloth: made by Tongan women from the bark of the <i>hiapo</i>
<i>Noa:</i>	Any kind of, any old, of no particular kind, common, of no value, worthless, zero, meaningless
<i>Olovaha:</i>	part or side of a kava bowl, opposite the hanger
<i>Pa'anga:</i>	Tongan currency, coin, money
<i>Pālangi:</i>	Person of Caucasian skin/used to describe a white person
<i>Pō talanoa:</i>	Talking for a long period of time in the night
<i>Pukepuke fonua:</i>	To hold on to or keep hold of the land (culture) to retain or maintain
<i>Siasi:</i>	Church
<i>Siasi Tonga Hou'eiki:</i>	Church of Tonga
<i>Ta'ovala:</i>	Piece of matting worn around the waist over one's lion-clothing (without this, a Tongan is not considered properly dressed)
<i>Tala:</i>	To tell, relate; to state, assert, to tell, to command; to ask, to reply
<i>Talānga:</i>	To have a friendly discussion
<i>Talanoa:</i>	To talk (in an informal way), to tell stories or relate experiences
<i>Talatalanoa:</i>	Of <i>talanoa</i>
<i>Tau fakalokua:</i>	A <i>faikava</i> session by farmers or fishermen's
<i>Tauhi vā:</i>	Maintaining relations or space
<i>Taumafa kava:</i>	A royal kava ceremony with the presence of the Tu'i Tonga
<i>Tohi kakai:</i>	Census, population
<i>Toks:</i>	Slang term for the Tongan term, <i>tokoua</i> (brother)
<i>Tou'a:</i>	Persons whose duty it is to prepare kava for drinking
<i>Tu'i Tonga:</i>	King of Tonga
<i>Vā:</i>	Distance between, distance apart; relationships, towards each other
<i>Vahefonua Tonga 'o Aotearoa:</i>	Tongan Synod in the New Zealand Methodist Church
<i>Yaqona:</i>	Kava in Fijian terms

To'ukai mo hono lohu. 'Oku 'uhinga ki he 'alu pe me'a mo hono taimi pe ta pē kuonga. Na'e ikai fa'a tolonga 'a e lohu 'o e to'ukai 'e taha ki he to'ukai 'e taha, pea na'e pau leva ke ngaohi ma'u pē ha lohu fo'ou ki he to'ukai fo'ou (peesī. 10).

Nothing is static – all things change with time. *Lohu* are forked sticks used to pick breadfruit from their tress. They are not expected to last from one season to the next and so new ones are made each season (page. 10).

Vaevae melenga kae pikipiki katea. 'Oku 'uhinga ki ha kakai 'oku nau fakapotopoto'i ha'anau me'a 'i ha feitu'u 'ē ngali hoko ai ha faingata'a (peesī. 49).

When people take great care about something in a place full of potential risks (page. 49).

Inu tī inu kota. 'Oku 'uhinga ki ha taha 'oku 'ikai ke pau ki ha to'ongamo'ui. 'Oku taku ko e me'a muli 'a e tī kae me'a faka-Tonga 'a e niu. 'O kapau leva 'e toe fakahu'akau'aki ha huhu'a niu ha iputī pe kuo na fio mo fihi 'o 'ikai leva pau ē mei hē. 'Oku 'uhinga 'a e kota kihe penu 'o e niu kuo 'osi tatau, 'o 'uhinga pē ko e taipe 'o e huhu'a'i niu (peesī. 82).

Drinking tea, drinking *kota*; When someone continually shifts between two ways of life Tea is considered foreign and coconut Tongan. When coconut cream is used for drinking tea, the two ingredients become indistinguishable. The term *kota* refers to the squeezed scraped coconut flesh after cream has been extracted (page. 82).



This thesis is dedicated to my beloved and inspirational parents, Koli and Siu Mo'unga Fehoko and to my rock, my everything, my forever loving Grandmother, Malia Sita Taiseni

I also dedicate this work to my brothers Sione Finau, Etuate, Sione Fehoko Jr and Hingano Fehoko Jr and my sisters Laumanu Asinate Fehoko-Tuifua Jr and Nancy Sela Taumafa Fehoko-Fangaloka Jr. Lastly, a special dedication to my beloved Aunties and Grandmother who passed away to be with our heavenly father during my journey. Rest in Peace and Love to Ma'ata Kava Anau and Lavenoa He-Lotu Tangi and Nana Asinate Laumanu Fehoko Snr.

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A massive fakafeta'i and fakamalo to my beloved and inspirational parents Koli and Siu Mo'unga Fehoko, my Grandmother Malia Sita Taiseni who has been my mentor, my leader and my rock. To my two little brothers, Feleti Hingano and Sione Fehoko and my twin and little sister Laumanu Asinate Fehoko-Tuifua and Nancy Sela Taumafa Fehoko-Fangaloka and their family and my cheeky little nephews, Timote Kafavalu Tuifua, Makamoui-i-Vakavakaua Tuifua, Edmond Samuel Tapuaki-mei-Langi Jr Tuifua and Taukolo Ki-Langi Fangaloka Jr. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this journey. This journey was always going to be an uphill battle, but I sincerely want to say THANK YOU for having the patience, faith and belief in me to one day make a change for myself and our familia. The late nights, early mornings, faikava sessions, midnight feeds, tears, prayers and laughter, I am forever grateful to have my family be a part of this journey. Apologies to my parents and nana, I will start going back to church.

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'Ofa lahi atu moe lotu,

Siuatama Fakaola-mei-Aotearoa (Chiefly name of my father)

Fisi mo Ha'amoā (Chiefly name for the people from the Island of Kotu, Ha'apai)

Kava'uhi (Chiefly name for the people from the Island of Mo'unga'one, Ha'apai)

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 nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a University or other institution of higher learning except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.

Signed.....

Date.....

Chapter 1: Introduction

“*Selemaia 29:11 – He ‘oku ou ‘ilo pe ‘a e ngaahi fakakaukau ‘oku ou fakakaukau kiate kimoutolu, ko Sihova ia mei he Ta’ehamai, ko e ngaahi fakakaukau lelei, ‘o ikai sio kovi, ke ‘ange kiate kimoutolu ha ‘amui mo ha ‘amanaki*”

“Jeremiah 29:11 – For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (New International Version)

Introduction

As a young New Zealand-born Tongan male in New Zealand, I found my life quite challenging at times. However, I was warmly surrounded by my parents who reminded me constantly about their journey from Tonga in search of a better life here in New Zealand and my grandmother who emphasised the importance of the *anga fakatonga* (Tongan culture), *famili* (family), *lotu* (spiritual faith) and *fetokoni’aki* (reciprocity). From my young days also, my father had taken me along to various *faikava* sessions where I sat and watched and listened to the songs and jokes being shared and the reaffirming and establishing of networks and relationships through the comradeship. From this humble but strong family hub, the *faikava* helped in the reinforcement of my love and my own understanding of the Tongan language, culture, values and beliefs.

I did experience some of the identity struggles which the literature proposes that young Pacific Islanders born overseas from their homelands face in western, modern and cosmopolitan societies such as New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America (see Morton-Lee, 1996, 1998, 2003; Anae, 1998; Hansen, 2004). For example, Fairbairn-Dunlop and Makisi (2003) described the feelings of living in a world of ‘two minds’ associated with being a member of a minority group in New Zealand’s increasingly multi-cultural society. I was also aware of the reports and data which showed Pacific youth, and my Tongan friends, were increasingly exposed to social influences and pressures such as underage binge drinking, youth gang affiliation, drug abuse, smoking, truancy and youth suicide. It was hard to understand and grapple with these and other challenges often linked to Pacific youth behaviours, which contrasted with the Tongan values and beliefs which I had learnt at home. Reports stress of how these social pressures had their roots in migrant youthful feelings of identity and identity security. A UNESCO report, for example, notes:

(that) from the depth of understanding and value of traditional forms, students will gain a strong sense of cultural identity and understanding of who they are ... this will provide a foundation for the development of further skills and knowledge bases, contexts, and understandings for life in the twenty-first century. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3)

Culture, language, identity and traditional Pacific values seemed to be the important 'protective' elements in the lives of Pacific youth. How could these understandings be fostered and reinforced in New Zealand? Heather-Latu (2007) made this challenge to Pacific families living in New Zealand:

We Pacific Islanders must take the time to understand today's economic and social reforms, the roller coaster of technology, the market and globalisation. We must understand the influence of the media, especially television on our lives and those of our children and what the supports are that our children need ... Our Pacific Island leaders must appreciate these changing times and guide us through them, leaving our identities intact, our uniqueness unique and our spirits alive. (p. 42)

There is a significant amount of evidence to show the constant and consistent work that our Pacific communities and non-government organisations (NGOs) and churches are carrying out to ensure that our Pasifika youth, especially Tongan youth, receive guidance about and protection from the economic and social challenges they face in New Zealand today (Anae, 1998; Schoone, 2008, 2010; Faleolo, 2012; Fehoko, 2013). Other fundamental agencies which are at the heart of the *anga fakatonga* are our families, homes and churches; each are perceived by many Pacific peoples, especially Tongans born overseas, as the places where they are able to nurture and maintain a sense of the *anga fakatonga*, or the Tongan values and beliefs (Morton-Lee, 2003; Lee, 2004; Hansen, 2004; Daly, 2009; Small, 2011).

The maintenance of the *anga fakatonga*, including the *fāai kavei koula* (four golden values which are respect, humility, willing heart and maintaining good relations), strong religious beliefs, customs, and oral traditions, to name a few, are constantly reinforced, rejuvenated and maintained in daily life at home and by the church.

What has not been so well explored or understood is the role that particular cultural practices, such as the *faikava*, can play in securing and maintaining identity security for Tongan youth, especially I believe, and the focus of this thesis, those born and raised in New Zealand.

The *faikava* is a well-known ceremonial cultural practice that in recent times has been adapted as an informal and recreational activity embedded in the activities of some churches and other agencies in Tonga and, in Tongan migrant communities in New Zealand, Australia and in the United States of America as well. As reported, this cultural practice of the *faikava* includes aspects of socialising, sharing and talking whilst drinking the narcotic beverage of kava. Predominantly a male practice, the significance of the *faikava* is known as a place of social bonding, and fosters camaraderie, the reaffirming and establishing of networks and relationships, the exchange of stories and knowledge and life-experiences. This indicates the increase in popularity of the *faikava* in Auckland, with over 50 kava-drinking sessions held regularly in the South Auckland region alone.

Drawing on my experience of what the *faikava* had meant for me, I decided to explore the experiences and perceptions of other New Zealand-born Tongan males participating in the *faikava*, with a view to understanding how they value this cultural practice and how participation might reinforce feelings of identity and security for New Zealand-born Tongan males today and in the future.

Why the *faikava* and New Zealand born Tongan males?

Churchward (1959) noted that *faikava* means “to prepare and drink kava together with due form or ceremony” (p.21). Though this definition is deemed correct by many, there are also other definitions. For example, the *faikava* has been viewed as a social medium for informal discussions of any social, political, spiritual and cultural issues under the sun (S. Kava, Personal Communication, 25 March, 2013). Others note that the *faikava* served as a safe place, during the Dawn Raids of the 1970s (Koloamatangi, 2007).

In the 1970s, the New Zealand Police together with immigration officers carried out nationwide raids on illegal over-stayers from the Pacific Islands including Tongans, Samoans, Niueans and Fijians. These raids were authorised by the New Zealand government at the time. Once caught, these illegal over-stayers and in some cases, their families were often prosecuted and then deported back to their country of origin (Anae, 1998; Fairbairn-Dunlop & Makisi, 2003; Mallon, Māhina-Tuai & Salesa, 2012). Koloamatangi (2007) recounted how during these stressful

times, the *fofo'anga* kava club in Grey Lynn and other *faikava* clubs in Auckland became avenues for avoiding the police and deportation. Other views are that the *faikava* is the place where New Zealand-born Tongan males can learn from the Tongan elders. Furthermore, that New Zealand-born Tongan males participating in a *faikava* can learn and maintain the *anga fakatonga* (Koloamatangi, 2007; Nosa & 'Ofanoa, 2009). In this study, the purpose and valuing of the *faikava* as a group activity will be self-defined by the research participants.

Before he was diagnosed with renal failures, my father was a hard-working, caring man and, a 'kavaholic'¹. It was because of my father that I first became aware of the *faikava* at a very young age. Every Sunday morning, Tongan men at church would have a kava ceremony before a lay preacher would commence the sermon. In this Sunday kava session, they said the cup of kava symbolised a covenant or a sacrament. Because I did not enjoy attending the *lautohi fakasapate* (Sunday school), I sat next to my father in the kava circle from the age of 14 years. During these times when I participated in a *faikava* with my father, I would see a different side of him and other Tongan men who were sitting in the circle. At home, my father was the very staunch and macho man with his presence; not offering a smile at any given time. However, in the *faikava*, male social bonding, lengthy and in-depth discussions and the playing and singing of songs written by famous composers such as the late Queen Salote Tupou III – my father was a different man. I would sit and listen as the Tongan men used certain Tongan words that I did not understand or had not heard before. The use of metaphors in the phrases also made it hard for me to understand what was being said. I was too shy to ask but fortunately, other participants including the young New Zealand-born Tongans would ask the speaker for clarification of his metaphoric speech.

Based on my experiences, I decided the importance of exploring how the *faikava* could serve as a place for learning and reinforcing Tongan cultural values and beliefs and language for other New Zealand-born Tongan males. My focus on New Zealand-born Tongan males was chosen because I am a New Zealand-born Tongan male who has experienced the *faikava* and

¹ According to Helu (1993), a *kavaholic* refers to a person who consumes a large amount of kava on a weekly basis

what this offers to the development of my understanding of *anga fakatonga*. I will draw on my own experiences through this thesis. Also the *faikava* is predominantly a male activity, the focus on NZ-born Tongan males has further importance because data and other anecdotal evidence indicate these males to be a vulnerable group in New Zealand today.

Research Purpose

There are several reasons why this research needs to be carried out. Firstly, there is little literature on the *faikava* in diasporic communities such as New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America. Though there is anecdotal information on kava use in overseas communities of Tongans, there is a lack of empirical evidence. This thesis aims to fill this gap in the literature by presenting a New Zealand-born Tongan male perspective.

Furthermore, while much of the research on kava has been medically related, this thesis seeks to provide a sociological perspective with less emphasis on the health dimensions. The extensive research by health professionals, documenting the positive and negative effects of kava consumption, is acknowledged. Anecdotal reports also suggest that the *faikava* has a significant negative influence on families, e.g. the removal of the father for a long period of time and the financial impact. However, this research focuses on the role of *faikava* in the development of Tongan identity amongst New Zealand-born Tongan males.

Finally, this research aims to explore whether participants in the *faikava* can help alleviate some of the challenges faced by New Zealand-born Tongan males who are navigating the 'duality' of their lives in New Zealand. For example, they are being exposed to alcohol binge drinking (Finau, 1996; WHO, 2004; ALAC, 1997), youth gang affiliation (Tupuola, 2004; Brooking, Gardiner & Calvert, 2008), smoking (Ministry of Social Development, 2010), drug use and abuse (ALAC, 1997), teenage pregnancy, youth suicide (Tiatia, 1998; MoH, 2010), truancy, low attainment in education (Baleinakorodawa, 2009; MSD, 2010), unemployment and gambling.

The Ala Fou Pacific National Report prepared by the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA) (2005) after a period of extensive consultation summed up the situation with these words:

For some second-generation Pacific peoples, the bonds of Pacific culture are not as strong or dominant and have resulted in a loss or weakening of Pacific

identity, particularly for those of mixed marriages who increasingly do not identify as Pacific. This has implications in terms of cultural and language preservation, Pacific identity and traditional Pacific values (p.3).

Aims are that this research will shed some light on the importance of maintaining the uniqueness of the *anga fakatonga* in New Zealand, including how identity security can assist vulnerable youth to achieve positive outcomes in environments which are very different from those in their ancestral villages and likely in their own family homes as well. I acknowledge at the outset of this research that many New Zealand-born Tongan males have their own views and perceptions about the value of the *faikava*. This research will explore and present the views of a small group of New Zealand-born Tongan males that live in the Auckland area.

Research Questions

My research focus is the lived experiences of New Zealand-born Tongan males who attend a *faikava* on a regular basis. It explains the valuing of the *faikava* and its contribution to the identity and well-being of New Zealand-born Tongan males. The research questions are:

- i. What do New Zealand-born Tongan males value from participating in the *faikava*?
- ii. Can the *faikava* have a positive influence on social pressures that they may be facing?
- iii. How do they perceive the future for the *faikava* in New Zealand?

Underpinning these research questions are the words of Dr Malakai Koloamatangi (a political scientist and the chair of *Kalapu Fofu'anga* in Auckland) that the *faikava* in New Zealand is a meeting place where youth can stay out of trouble; stay off the streets and away from alcohol and crime. Furthermore, that the *faikava* is another method by which youth can understand the *anga fakatonga* through the Tongan art of speech, comedy and oratory which exist in the *faikava* (Nosa & 'Ofanoa, 2009).

My Story: From Humble Beginnings

As the eldest son of migrant Tongans and the first generation born and raised in Auckland, I look back on my family experiences and feel grateful and quite humbled when I witness my parents' daily work-life struggle. For my parents and to a certain extent for me too, every day is marked by a work-life struggle to survive culturally and economically. My parents were doing the 'hard yards' during the early years when they were young parents in the late 1980s and 1990s with small children. Their major goal was to provide food on the table, and to find an affordable roof to keep us warm in the Auckland winter. They walked and used public transport to commute to work. At the same time, to be true to their culture and identity, they spoke the Tongan language, as much as possible. They were proud to wear their *ta'ovala* (Tongan mat that goes around the waist) to church. They were proud to sing the traditional songs, including church hymns, and perform traditional dances wherever and whenever there was a Tongan gathering. In other words, despite the fact they were now living in another country, they strongly maintained their pride in being Tongan.

Being a New Zealand-born and raised Tongan, I learned how to speak Tongan as a child but eventually lost most if not all of the Tongan language as English became my primary method of communication in education. However, the Tongan values and religious beliefs remained. As my educational journey progressed, I realised that the Tongan ideals that I had learnt from my parents and grandmother were beginning to weaken as a result of becoming exposed to modern and western ways of life. For example, in the classroom, I was told that if I wanted to get clarification on something that I could not understand, to ask and ask and ask the teacher. However, I found there was conflict and tension when I applied this mentality at home. I also knew that I would not talk back to my parents and elders.

I am grateful that my beloved grandmother has been a part of my life since the day I was born. Twenty-four years later, my grandmother is still giving me the blessings and teachings. The saying 'it takes a village to raise a child' certainly applies to my upbringing and educational journey. Since migrating to Auckland in the late 1980s, my grandmother has been and still is my teacher, mentor and caregiver as well as being another mother. Through my educational journey

in my teenage years, my grandmother constantly and consistently gave me what I call 'Tongan 101', even up to this very moment.

Though it was hard at times due to my not knowing the right Tongan term to use in certain discussions, my grandmother would give me the correct term to use. The most inspiring and motivating value my grandmother has given me is the importance of invoking the presence of God in everything I do. The use of biblical verses at the beginning of each chapter is to acknowledge my grandmother's faith, which has become my faith. Furthermore, the bible verses provide motivation and a framework for each chapter.

Structure of Thesis

This thesis comprises of six chapters, including the present introduction chapter. The contents of the remaining five chapters are as follows:

Chapter 2: Tongan Community in New Zealand The second chapter identifies and contextualises the Tongan community in New Zealand with a specific focus on Tongan youths.

Chapter 3: Literature Review The third chapter contains a critical review of literature under four different sub-headings: Kava as the beverage of the Pacific; different kinds of *faikava* sessions; origins and development of the *faikava* in New Zealand; and the importance of social and cultural space. The chapter lays the foundations for the research.

Chapter 4: Research Method and Methodology The fourth chapter outlines the qualitative research method used and draws on the phenomenological framework. Because the medium of the *faikava* is *talanoa*, it was appropriate to use the *talanoa* research method for the data collection phase.

Chapter 5: Participation in the Faikava Drawing on the material gathered in the *talanoa* sessions, Chapter five gives voice to the perceptions and experiences of 12 New Zealand-born Tongan males who participate in the *faikava*.

Chapter 6: Discussion of the Findings This chapter compares and contrasts these voices with findings from the literature.

Chapter 7: Conclusion Chapter seven provides a summary of the main findings of the research. It provides a critical review of the strengths and limitations of this study and suggestions that warrant further research.

To note, while Tongan words used throughout the thesis are set in the glossary, key terms used are defined here. *Anga fakatonga* is defined as the 'Tongan culture, Tongan way of life'. *Faikava* refers to the 'preparation and the drinking of kava together with due form or ceremony in Tongan'. *Faka'apa'apa* is defined as 'to respect'. Kava in this thesis refers to a 'cultural drink made from dried roots of the pepper plant *piper methysticum*'. The term *lea fakatonga* refers to the 'Tongan language; speak in the Tongan language'. The term *tauhi vā* is 'maintaining relations or space'. Finally, the abbreviated term of NZ-born Tongan will be used in this thesis.

Summary

This introduction has presented a succinct understanding of the purpose of this research, my humble beginnings, the endurance and sacrifice that my parents had to make, the forever loving nature of my grandmother and the inspirational role model and presence of my father have been the key influencing factors in my journey. This chapter also briefly highlighted the place of Tongans in New Zealand today and, the popularity of the *faikava* in Auckland. It concluded with a statement of the Research question, and a brief review of the research process which will be followed.

The following chapter is an analytical review of literature of the Tongan community in New Zealand with a more specific focus on Tongan youth. Further emphasis is placed on the vulnerable issues that NZ-born Tongan males are facing as they effectively 'live in two worlds'.

Chapter 2: The Tongan Community in New Zealand

“Loma 8:18 – Seuke, ‘oku te pehe, ko e ngaahi mamahi ‘o e taimi ni ‘oku ‘ikai kākunga ke tatau mo e lāngilangi ‘oku ene ke fakae’a mai, ‘o ai kiate kimoutolu”

“Romans 8:18 – For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (New International Version)

Introduction

Pacific peoples have been voyaging to New Zealand in search of a better life for themselves and their children for over a half a century (Bedford, 1994; Bedford & Didham, 2001; Fairbairn-Dunlop & Makisi, 2003; Lee & Francis, 2009; Mallon, Māhina-Tuai & Salesa, 2012). Opportunities for better employment and education were key motivating factors in our Pacific forefathers moving from their ancestral homelands to this so-called land of milk and honey, New Zealand. Tongans have played a significant role in the Pacific migration story. The rapid increase in the Tongan population in New Zealand is a result not only of in-migration but also of an increase in the number of Tongans born and raised in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a, 2006b).

This chapter briefly reviews the social, economic and cultural status of the Tongan community to set the context for this thesis. Specific attention is given to Tongan youth and the challenges they may face as members of a minority group within a minority migrant population in New Zealand. Research also indicates there are different experiences between Tongan-born and NZ-born Tongans (Taumoefolau see Agee, McIntosh, Culbertson & Makasiale, 2013). As translated by a notable Tongan anthropologist, Dr ‘Okusitino Māhina, the Tongan proverb *‘To’ukai mo hono lohu*’ metaphorically illustrates the understating that the *anga fakatonga* changes within time and space, a point which encapsulates the overarching theme behind this chapter.

‘Oku ‘uhinga ki he ‘alu pe me’a mo hono taimi pe ta pe kuonga. Na’e ‘ikai fa’a tolonga ‘a e lohu ‘o e to’ukai ‘e taha ki he to’ukai ‘e taha, pea na’e pau leva ke ngaohi ma’u pe ha lohu fo’ou ki he to’ukai fo’ou

Nothing is static – all things change with time. *Lohu* are forked sticks used to pick breadfruit from their trees. They are not expected to last from one season to the next and so new ones are made each season (Māhina, 2004, p.54).

This chapter is in four parts: Part one is a brief review of the Tongan social hierarchy including the *anga fakatonga*. Part two presents some of the available data about the Tongan community in New Zealand drawing largely on the 2006 census, followed by part three, which explores issues that Tongan youth may be facing today. This concludes with a critical discussion on some of the ways the Tongan community are reclaiming the *anga fakatonga* in New Zealand.

Tongan social hierarchy & anga fakatonga

Tonga comprises over 170 small far flung islands of atoll origin with the capital and administrative centre of Nuku'alofa on the mainland of Tongatapu. A population of over 100,000 Tongans in Tonga were recorded in the latest census. The significance of Tongan migration is seen in the fact that over 50,000 live in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a) and there are others throughout the world, for example, Australia and the United States of America.

Tongan society is hierarchal (Kaepler, 1971; Marcus, 1975; Gailey, 1987; James, 2003). It encompasses three different distinct levels as seen in Fig. 1. The top layer comprises of the Tu'i Tonga (monarch) and his family, the second layer are nobles and the third layer *kakai tu'a* or the commoners. Kalavite (2010, p. 27) proposes that an additional level has emerged in recent times consisting of elites including 'government officials, wealthy people, educated elites, religious leaders, heads of departments and principals of institutions'. I have added the value of *faka'apa'apa* in Fig.1 to show how the relationship between these levels is based on and grounded in respect and respectful behaviours.

Figure 1:

Tongan Social Hierarchy

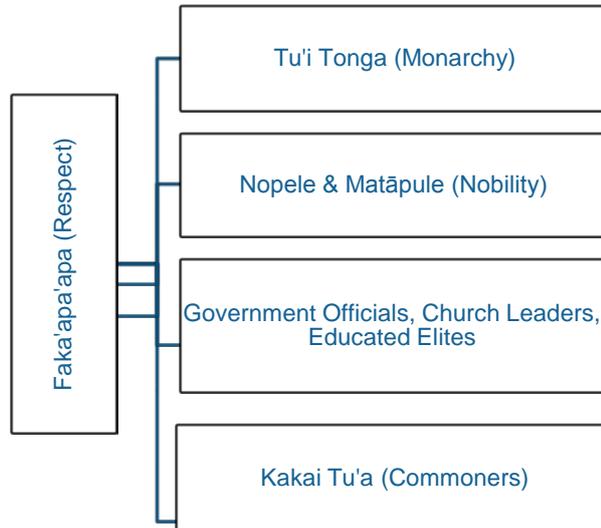


Figure 1: Adapted from Kalavite, T. (2010). *Fononga 'a fakahalafononga: Tongan Students' Journey to Academic Achievement in New Zealand Tertiary Education*. (Unpublished PhD Thesis), University of Waikato, New Zealand.

The concept of *anga fakatonga* is a polysemic term that embraces everything that is locally defined as being Tongan (Besnier, 2011). The *anga fakatonga* is based on key fundamental values such as *faka'apa'apa*, *'ofa*, *tauhi vā*, *mamahi'i mea* and *anga fakatōkilalo* to name a few, which can be expressed in many forms and in many levels. The positive value of the *anga fakatonga* is emphasised and embodied constantly in Tonga towards their God, monarch, families, land and village.

Taumoefolau (2013) proposes that *faka'apa'apa* is the backbone of the hierarchal organisation of the society. Keller and Swaney (1998) noted that *faka'apa'apa* underpins every action and behaviour. Taumoefolau notes that *faka'apa'apa* is expressed through ways of behaving, including dress (wearing of the *ta'ovala* or the waist mat). *Faka'apa'apa* is embedded in every aspect of social behaviours and ceremonies including *hiva* (singing), *faiva* (performing), *talanoa* (talking) and *tu'unga fakafamili* (gender roles) among others. Taufe'ulungaki, Johansson-Fua, Manu, and Takapautolo (2007) describes *faka'apa'apa* as an unwritten social contract that all Tongans aspire and adhere to in various degrees and contexts. *Faka'apa'apa* entails and

encompasses a shared understanding of a relational social contract between peoples and communities.

'Ofa is another centred Tongan value defined as love and care (Churchward, 1959). Tongan values such as *faka'apa'apa* and *'ofa* are learnt and practiced in everyday Tongan life. For example, in the family setting, *faka'apa'apa* and *'ofa* is shown in the *vā* or space between the brother(s) and sister(s), between children and father, and between children and father's sister. The term *vā*, which is found all over the Pacific, has been defined as the space between people or things (Ka'ili, 2005). In Tongan terms, *vā* is defined as the space or distance between. *Tauhi vā* is the term signifying maintaining relationships. As an important value within the *anga fakatonga*, *tauhi vā* illustrates the importance and significance of respect and love (Tutu'u, 2010). A report noted that the 'golden value' of *tauhi vā* has been under scrutiny in recent times given the changes taking place in the lives of Tongans today (Vaihu, 2010).

The proverb, 'it takes a village to raise a child' applies well in Tonga. As is well documented, the village settings and communities are the places where elders engage in vigorous dialogue with younger members as they are continuing passing on customary ways and behaviours. Research shows that grandparents and elders especially, play a tremendous role in the teaching, transferring and preserving of the *anga fakatonga* from one generation to another (Vakalahi, Toafa & Moala, 2008, p. 306). The *kāinga* (family) is the main unit in Tongan society. The *kāinga* usually consists of parents, children, grandparent(s) and other extended family members. Helu (1999) proposes that:

Kāinga network is a pivotal axis where societal and familial relationships form the basis for economic gain and distribution, profit-sharing, re-distribution and discourages profiteering and capitalistic tendencies. (p. 147)

The data confirms that as in Tonga, Tongans in New Zealand have maintained their strong beliefs in the Christian faith. That, the church provides an important spiritual space for Tongans (Latukefu, 1967; Faeamani, 1995; Morton-Lee, 2003; Ka'ili, 2005; Daly, 2009), providing a sense of communalism, love, care and support (Morton-Lee, 2003). In addition, many social and cultural activities that Tongans engage in on a day-to-day basis are organised and supported

by the church. These include youth activities, *faikava* sessions, choir practices, Sunday school, Early Childhood Centres (ECE) and sporting tournaments.

Tongan community in New Zealand

Data from the New Zealand census held in March 2013 records a number of factors about the Tongan population in New Zealand which are of particular interest to this thesis. First, the Tongan population has increased by 19.5% in the intercensal period (2006-2013) and now stands at 60,366, the third largest Pacific group behind Samoa and the Cook Islands². Second, the Tongan population is youthful with a median age of 19 years old and over 27,000 or 59 per cent (almost 1 in 3) born in New Zealand. A high proportion of NZ-born Tongans are under the age of 15 years. Third, over 95 per cent reside in urban areas such as Auckland, Hamilton and Wellington with over 80 per cent of the Tongan population residing in the Auckland region alone – the focus area of this study. Fourth, a majority of the Tongan population live in an extended *kāinga* situation reporting that 39 per cent saying they lived with other relatives outside of the immediate *kāinga* (Statistics New Zealand, 2007).

As noted, the church/religion has an important place in the *anga fakatonga*. The 2006 New Zealand census reported that over 98 per cent of Tongans said they belonged to a Christian denomination with the Methodist religion making up 45 per cent of this group (Statistics New Zealand, 2007, p.12). The Methodist Church of New Zealand (MCNZ) for e.g., the *Vahefonua Tonga 'o Aotearoa* alone consists of over 20 Tongan Parishes around New Zealand, with 16 congregations in the Auckland/Manukau region (Heimuli & Finau, 2007).

Taufe'ulungaki (1992) has proposed that Tongans are proud to speak in the *lea fakatonga* which she states, proclaims their status in the Tongan community. The 2006 New Zealand census data highlights very strongly the importance of the *lea fakatonga*, which, as documented as an important value in maintaining the *anga fakatonga*. In 2006, approximately 57 per cent of the Tongan population reported they were able to carry an everyday conversation in the *lea*

² Statistics New Zealand. (2013). Ethnic group (total responses), NZ Census 2013-totals-by-topic-tables. Retrieved from Statistics New Zealand.

fakatonga. In comparison with the 1996 and 2001 census, the number of NZ-born Tongans who could do so had dropped by 3 per cent. Of the group who were able to carry on an everyday conversation, 40 per cent were NZ-born Tongans.

Fortunately, there are many places and spaces in New Zealand today, especially in education, where Tongans can learn, reinforce and maintain the *lea fakatonga*. For example, the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (2013) notes that Pacific Language weeks have been established to celebrate, reinforce and rejuvenate Pacific languages and help ensure the growth and maintenance of Pacific languages in New Zealand. Promoting the teaching and learning of the *lea fakatonga* in a multicultural country such as New Zealand strongly increases the awareness of the relationship between the *lea* and *anga fakatonga*.

Pa'anga – Economic Issues

As noted in the 2006 census, significant number of Pacific peoples in New Zealand, including Tongans are employed in low-skilled jobs. The number of unemployed Tongans was less than 7 per cent, a slight improvement on the 10 per cent of Tongans recorded as unemployed in the 2001 census. The median annual income of Tongans in the 2006 census was \$17,500, a significant increase from \$11,800 recorded in the 2001 census. However, it must be stated that where Tongans are earning less in comparison with the total New Zealand population, they are using this income to support the large extended family not only in New Zealand but also in the homeland. As it is well noted, family income is used to carry out family obligations to families back in the homeland and also in donations to their church as spirituality plays a significant role in the *anga fakatonga* (Addo, 2012).

Remittances are also as important, contributing towards the Tongan economy (Morton-Lee, 2003; 'Alatini, 2004; Addo, 2012). The different forms of remittances include the sending of goods and services, cash, livestock and other items. Maintaining the strong family ties with the *kāinga* in Tonga and the desire to support the struggling economies of Tongan families, are clear motivations for gift-giving by Tongans (Cowley, Paterson & Williams, 2004).

Ako – Education

The opportunity to participate and achieve in education has been an important motivating factor for Pacific families moving to New Zealand. As far back as 1974, Pitt and Macpherson noted that Pacific Island families' belief in socio-economic mobility through education was such that many were prepared to make great sacrifices to ensure their children receive a good education. The importance in which education is held today can be seen in the number of highly educated Tongans, e.g. a report released by the Government of Western Australia (2013) noted that Tongans have the most doctorates in the world per capita.

The 2006 census recorded over 64 per cent of adult Tongans in New Zealand holding a formal qualification in the field of education. Statistics New Zealand (2007) also noted a higher proportion of NZ-born Tongans receiving higher qualifications than those who are Tongan born. Also, that a greater number of Tongan females participate in tertiary education than Tongan males.

Culturally, the *anga fakatonga* is strongly reinforced in communities and schools today. For example, two of the most anticipated events in the Auckland city calendar are the Pasifika Festival held at Western Springs and the ASB Polynesian Festival (affectionately known as Polyfest). These events attract over 100,000 people each year and are an opportunity to showcase what makes Tongans unique and distinctive. Activities include Tongan food, beverages, arts and crafts such as *fala* and *ngatu*, dance, singing and clothing. Begun in 1976, Polyfest is a three-day competition (though it actually runs for five days) of cultural performances and oratory with participation by over 40 secondary schools from all around Auckland. Traditional dances such as the *lakalaka* and *kailao*, with compositions by Tongan poets such as the late Queen Salote Tupou III and Malukava, are performed by students, many of whom are NZ-born. Kornelly (2008, p. 7) found that the Polyfest participants viewed the annual festival as an opportunity for young Polynesians and non-Polynesian members to showcase and demonstrate their pride in their cultural identity and heritage. Early Childhood Centres (ECE) are another activity where the focus is on teaching the *anga fakatonga* and the *lea fakatonga*. In 2010, an annual ECE report identified sixteen ECE services established with four Tongan bilingual centres

(Ministry of Education, 2010). There has also been an increase in the numbers of *akoteu* or ECE centres in the South Auckland region.

Tongan Youth

There has been an increase in research on Pacific youth (Tale'ale'ausami, 2001; Tupuola, 2004, 2008; Henderson, 1999; Morton-Lee, 2003; Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2013) and, in particular, NZ-born Tongan youth (Hebert, 2008; Schoone, 2008; Faleolo, 2012). As noted, the Tongan population is youthful with the median age at 19 years, younger than the Pacific and New Zealand median age of 22 years. A key point underpinning this research is that NZ-born Tongans are facing difficult issues because the cultural values that are taught and learnt at home by parents and families and by church and youth leaders are at odds with the norms and practices of mainstream New Zealand society (Hansen, 2004; McIntyre, 2008; Fehoko, 2013).

In mainstream education for example, students are encouraged to question and critique what is taught to them by teachers whereas, in a Tongan family setting, they are told not to question elders as it is disrespectful in the *anga fakatonga* (Fusitu'a, 1992; Morton-Lee, 1998; Hansen, 2004). Among other examples, this issue undoubtedly creates conflict between elders and youth, and also is a contributing factor in Tongan youth engaging in at-risk behaviours. However, Schoone (2010) suggests that NZ-born Tongan youth who are considered to be at-risk still value the *anga fakatonga* and the importance of the family.

Intergenerational Conflict

Research indicates that there is a degree of intergenerational conflict especially between migrant parents and migrant-born Pacific Islanders (Foliaki, 1992; Paterson, Pryor & Field, 1994; Suaalii & Mavoa, 2001). Intergenerational conflict occurs when there is a lack of understanding and communication between older and younger people (Faleolo, 2012). Afeaki (2004) identified this issue as a 'generational gap' between the two conflicting worlds. In this scenario, the traditional cultural values and high expectations that Pacific cultures have, and which are passed on by migrant parents, clash with a greater English facility and greater exposure to mainstream values, attributes and attitudes which are experienced by NZ-born Pacific Island youth (Tiatia, 2012).

Hanifan (2010) argues that young NZ-born Tongan women especially are experiencing a conflict between the 'two worlds'. Charged with the domestic obligations of being in the kitchen, Tongan girls do not have the same opportunities as Tongan men. Hanifan further proposes that men and women should have equal rights in any type of role and job whether this be in the society, family, church and government (Hanifan, 2010, p. 28). Taumoefolau (2013) has drawn attention to the fear that is fact by Tongan parents that their NZ-born children could find themselves becoming neither full members of the traditional Tongan society nor full members of mainstream New Zealand society (Taumoefolau, 2013).

A review of the different experiences of migrant parents and NZ-born Tongan youth, identify some major issues, which as Schoone proposes, help explain why NZ-born Tongan youth are engaging in at-risk behaviours such as truancy, criminal activity, youth suicide, teenage pregnancy and excessive alcohol consumption (Schoone, 2010). As early as 1982, Finau, Stanhope and Prior noted that alcohol consumption was socially and culturally unacceptable in many Pacific cultures, especially in the *anga fakatonga*. However, how reports indicate that for Tongan youth, alcohol consumption acts to temporarily release them from social responsibilities in a confining feudal system. A qualitative study on *'The place of alcohol in the lives of Tongan people living in Aotearoa, New Zealand'* (ALAC, 1997) reported that young NZ-born Tongans also felt peer pressured into consuming alcohol. One participant said:

Sometimes when you don't feel like drinking you get pressured into it. Sometimes you go out just not to drink and you just want to go out. Other people who are drunk they go, "Come on, don't be a party-pooper, you're a piker". Then you'll just have one and then they'll pressure you into another one. You'll have heaps then you find that you got drunk. (ALAC, 1997, p. 9)

Issues such as alcohol use and youth gang affiliation, amongst others, have become major concerns to Pacific communities (Tunufa'i, 2013), especially the Tongan community ('Ofanoa, 2009, p. 209). The issue of youth gangs has especially become concerning for Pacific youth in the South Auckland region (Nakhid, 2009; 'Ofanoa, 2009; Nakhid, 2012; Tunufa'i, 2013). In the past five years, there has been a severe increase in the number of Tongan youth suicides, predominantly in the Auckland region.

Though it is difficult to determine the actual factors contributing leading to Tongan youth taking their own lives, it is certain that the Tongan community needs to react urgently to this matter. A report by the Ministry of Health (MoH) (2010) notes that in the OECD countries, New Zealand has the second highest youth suicide rate among males and the third highest youth suicide rate among females in the ages of 15-24 years old. The MoH also reported a total of 21 Pacific suicide deaths were recorded with 17 Pacific males and four Pacific females taking their own lives (Ministry of Health, 2010). Due to these increases, there have been urgent discussions between families, churches, community leaders and non-government organisations to search for initiatives to resolve these issues.

Reclaiming the anga fakatonga in New Zealand

Finau and Finau (2007) propose that everyone should have the freedom to practice one's culture without any fear. Helu-Thaman (1994) writes that cultural democracy is the ability for people to practice their cultures and languages with relative freedom. Finau (2008) proposes that cultural democracy is a substitute ideology to acculturation and assimilation and, is closely identified with multiculturalism.

Indigenous Pacific cultures must be viewed in New Zealand in the context of their cultural histories, and Pacificans be given the rights and opportunities to live, study, learn and practice important elements of their culture in New Zealand educational institutions, and be socialised to a cultural process whereby Pacificans of all ages learn to be members of their respective societies and communities, sharing with other cultures through the ability to read the cues of each other's culture through competencies in cultural and social literacy (Finau, 2008, p. 28).

Research has found that the *anga fakatonga* is enduring in New Zealand (Afeaki, 2004; Hanifan, 2010; Taufa, 2010). Most notably, Tongan values of *faka'apa'apa*, *mamahi'i me'a*, *anga fakatōkilalo*, *'ofa*, *tauhi vā* among others are important characteristics to maintaining the *anga fakatonga* (Faleolo, 2012).

However, in common with other Pacific cultures, the *anga fakatonga* continues to change and evolve with time and generation (Hansen, 2004). As earlier noted, Tongan migrants continue to emphasise the importance of teaching and revitalising Tongan values to their children, whether

they are born and raised in the islands or in New Zealand. In a paper presented on the '*Loss and the transformation of the Tongan culture in Utah, United States of America*', Hansen (2004) argued that there is a great deal of anxiety among Tongans in the diaspora with respect to the sustainability of the *anga fakatonga*. She claims that second and third generation Tongans born in the diaspora are at risk of losing their Tongan identity and, might instead adopt a Polynesian or pan-Pacific generic marker of self-identification (Hansen, 2004).

As a young NZ-born Tongan male of twenty-four years of age, I believe that Tongans in the diaspora specifically (and Pacific youth generally) are conforming to an identity mould that does not fit the ways they have been raised. As a result and as noted, there is huge importance in reclaiming, reinforcing and maintaining the *anga fakatonga* in New Zealand and other migrant communities (Fusitu'a, 1992; Morton-Lee, 1998; 2003; Hansen, 2004). In my view, the path of reclaiming and maintaining the *anga fakatonga* is by the use of the *lea fakatonga*. Taumoefolau notes:

[Tongan] Language is like a container – inside that container is a set of values, beliefs that make us what we are as Tongan peoples. 'Our behaviors, customs, traditions, our ways of thinking our *anga fakatonga* are all packed into this container called 'language'. We lose the container, we lose also the contents in the container; we lose the language; we also lose our distinctive ways that define us to ourselves and to the world (Taumoefolau, 2004, p. 64)

It is in the speaking of the *lea fakatonga* that the Tongan values and beliefs and ways of thinking are understood and valued.

Summary

This chapter has provided a brief insight into the experiences of Tongan people in the homelands and in New Zealand through socio-economic, cultural and youth perspectives. Along with the increase of NZ-born Tongans, there has been an increase in discussions about whether or not the *lea* and the *anga fakatonga* will be maintained and nurtured in New Zealand in the future. A number of initiatives by families, churches, communities and other organisations to maintain the *anga fakatonga* were described as places where the younger generations have the opportunity

to learn about and express their cultural identity in New Zealand. These activities have also been encountered the social challenges that NZ-born Tongans face today.

As noted in Chapter 1, in my view, a young NZ-born Tongan who is taught the *lea fakatonga* will gain knowledge and understand the *anga fakatonga* beliefs, customs and traditions which make them Tongan. Proverbs 22:6 illustrates the importance of teaching a child whilst they are still young; “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it”.

Chapter 3: Critical Review of Literature

“Hosea 4:6 – ‘Oku faka’auha hoku kakai’ ko e masiva poto’, he ko koe kuo ke fakatale’i ‘a e poto, ko ia te u fakatale’i koe mei ho’o taula’eiki kiate au,’ pea kuo ke fakangalongalo’i ‘a e lao ‘a ho ‘Otua fakangalongalo’i ‘e au foki ho’o fanau

“Hosea 4:6 – My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children” (New International Version)

Introduction

Many countries have certain beverages and activities that are unique and distinctive to that country, for example, Guinness for the Irish, Tequila for Mexicans and Whisky for the Scots and Ouzo for the Greeks (Patrinis & Perry, 2010, p.1). As such, one’s national beverage and activity can become a powerful expression of one’s loyalties and cultural identity. Early European voyagers reported that kava-drinking served social and ceremonial purposes in many Pacific nations including Fiji (Singh, 2004; Aporosa, 2011a), Samoa (Smith, 1920) and Vanuatu (Jowitt & Binihi, 2001) and that; the cultural practice of kava-drinking had become a major form of social engagement in the lives of these communities.

From a Tongan perspective, G.F Forester (1777) a botanist, reported when he had sailed in James Cook’s ship *Endeavour* on an exploratory voyage to the Pacific, he had an unpleasant experience of drinking kava. Forester noted that the drinkers described the taste of kava as ‘like mud’ or ‘earthy’. By the time Forester had registered ‘kava’ by its botanical name of *piper methysticum*, kava had been long recognised within the Pacific for its mythical, narcotic, spiritual, medicinal and cultural value. Whilst used primarily for cultural and ceremonial purposes in earlier times, today, this practice of kava-drinking has been modified and now includes its use as a social activity not only in Tonga but also in Tongan migrant communities.

Today, kava-drinking or, in the case of this study, the *faikava*, has become a commonplace in Tonga and in migrant communities. This chapter is presented in four parts, each having sub-themes relating to kava and its use. These are, value of kava, kava ceremonies and the practice of *faikava* in migrant communities such as New Zealand, Australia & United States

of America. The first three sub-themes focus on the kava plant and beverage. The value and the concept of the *faikava* as a cultural space and identity marker will also be reviewed. Finally, photographs at the end are used to help illustrate key points within this chapter.

The place and valuing of kava

This section outlines how kava has been valued historically, spiritually and medicinally in the Pacific and abroad. Furthermore, it critically identifies how kava drinking has moved from being valued for its sacred and mythical properties to a beverage that is valued for its medicinal purposes.

Historical Value

The origin of kava varies, with each Pacific island nation having its own myths and legends. According to the Tongan legend, Kava signifies the ultimate sacrifice made by two Tongan parents, Fevanga and Fefafa who came from the small island of 'Eueiki away from the mainland of Tongatapu, as a sign of respect and gratitude to their *Tu'i* Tonga. As recounted, an unexpected stopover in 'Eueiki by the *Tu'i* Tonga during his voyage around the isles caught the people of 'Eueiki by surprise. Fevanga and Fefafa decided that in respect to their *Tu'i* Tonga, they would contribute an offering for the grand feast that was being prepared for him.

During this time, Tonga was suffering from a shortage of food and crops due to a severe drought. However, when Fevanga went to pull out the last giant *kape* (taro) from his plantation, he saw to his horror that the *Tu'i* Tonga resting under the *kape*. Feeling upset and stressed, Fevanga and Fefafa decided their only solution was to sacrifice their leprous daughter whose name was Kava instead as an offering to show their respect, gratitude and love to their *Tu'i* Tonga. However, when the *Tu'i* Tonga heard about this sacrificial gifting of Kava, he decided to leave 'Eueiki and return to Tongatapu. Thus, the place of Kava became her resting ground. Years later, two plants arose from Kava's burial site: from the top of the burial site arose the sugarcane (see photograph 1) and from the bottom the kava plant (see photograph 2). One was sweet (sugarcane) the other bitter (kava). Hence the name, Kava.

Māhina, Māhina, Potauine & 'Alatini, (2009, p.16) summarise the story in the Tongan language as follows:

ʻOku seti ʻa e fananga ni ko ha faiva fakamamahi ʻi Tonga motuʻa. ʻOku ne fakaʻilonga ʻi ʻa e mahuʻinga ʻo e tauhi vā he vahaʻa ʻo e tuʻi, houʻeiki mo e kakaí. ʻOku ʻasi ʻeni he ʻenau fai mo fakafetongiaki honau ngaahi fatongia takitaha ʻo ʻuhinga ke ne fakatupu ʻa e vā lelei. ʻOku fakatāʻaki ʻeni ʻa e feilaulau ʻi ʻe he ongo mātuʻá hona ʻofefiné ke fakahokoʻaki hona fatongia ki he Tuʻi ʻo Tongá. ʻOku hoko ʻa e kona ʻa e ʻakau ko e kavá mo e melie ʻo e ʻakau ko e tō ko e heliaki ki he feilaulau lahi naʻe feia ʻe Fevanga mo Fefafá. Naʻe fakaola he ʻena feilaulau hono faʻu ʻo e taumafa kavá ko ha kupu tolonga fakasōsiale ʻoku matuʻaki mahu inga ki he fonuá

Māhina et.al provides an in-depth translation of the sacrifice of Kava as:

This legend is a tragedy set in ancient Tonga. It highlights the importance of keeping social relations between the kingly and other classes. This is reflected through the performance of their reciprocal social obligations to one another as a means of creating good relations. This is symbolised by the couple's sacrifice of their daughter Kava in fulfillment of their obligations to the King of Tonga. The bitterness of the kava and sweetness of the sugarcane plants are figurative of the huge sacrifice made by Fevanga and Fefafa. Their sacrifice resulted in the creation of the kava ceremony as a lasting social institution of immense value to Tongan society (Māhina et.al, 2009, p.16).

Singh (2004) proposes that kava is drunk to symbolise the spiritual connection of humans with Gods and the ancestral spirits. Ryle (2010) notes that Pacific theologians have related the kava ceremony to the Christian Eucharist. That, this signifies themes of self-sacrifice, leadership and service.

Spiritual Value

Reports affirm that the Tongan people had established a strong sense of spirituality long before the introduction of the Christian faith by European missionaries in the early 15th century (Kailahi, Personal Communication, October 4, 2013). Furthermore, kava-drinking had been a part of the Tongan culture long before the early contact of by Europeans sailors and traders and the arrival of the Wesleyan missionaries. Niumeitolu (2007) proposes that the use of kava as an introduction initative for missionaries, sailors and traders. As European settlers arrived in Tonga, they also brought with them alcohol beverages. Noted also is that missionaries enforced a law that only

settlers and Tongan ministers could consume alcohol (Personal Communication, Kailahi, October 4, 2013). Missionaries attempted to make the *faikava*, a way of turning Tongans away from the use of alcohol. However, this was not successful. In this way, early missionaries integrated the *anga fakatonga* that was already established into their new Christian faith and beliefs (Urbanowicz, 1975).

With the exception of some churches, kava has gained a place in church ceremonies and practices (Kailahi, Personal Communication, October 5, 2013). For example, the pulpit has been compared with the *olovaha* (part or side of a kava bowl) (Niumeitolu, 2007). In another example, Tongan nobles and talking chiefs, are seated on the right hand side of the church while the lay pastor and *faifekau* (Reverend) are seated on the left hand side in the *'ilo*³ or *taumafa* kava (Kailahi, Personal Communication, October 5, 2013). Today, certain churches such as the *Siasi Tonga Hou'eiki* are still incorporating and associating the traditional sacredness and solemnity of the *'ilo* kava and *taumafa* kava.

In the Free Wesleyan Church for example, the *faikava* has become a central part of the worship. Niumeitolu (2007) noted that every Sunday, some of the elders and young men gather around a *kumete* or kava bowl at the minister's house, church hall or nearby room at least an hour before the religious service begins to await the arrival of the preacher. Also known as the *faikava tali malanga*, this kava gathering has come to be seen as the first part of the religious service or a prescribed entry point. It is the *'uluaki pangai 'o e lotu* or the 'first *pangai* of worship' (Niumeitolu, 2007, p.199). In some *faikava tali malanga*, the elders and in many places the local *matāpule* critically watch the visiting preacher to see whether he knows when to enter and where to sit and how comfortable he is with the protocol of the ceremony. To summarise, Niumeitolu (2007) writes:

The conversations in the *faikava tali malanga* are led by the *'eiki* and his two *matāpule* and the preacher. The rest do not take part and it would be seen as disrespectful for one sitting at the bottom end to participate in the conversation except to answer questions: it is here that the young men learn the manners required in kava ceremony watching and learning twice each Sunday. The fact that the *faikava tali malanga* is an ideal "training school" is more the case with two indigenous churches the *Siasi 'o Tonga Tau'ataina* (Free Church of Tonga) and the *Siasi 'o Tonga Hou'eiki* (Church of Tonga). Where the *faikava*

³ *'ilo* kava is the kava ceremony that involves nobility, dignitaries and guests of high rank and status i.e. church ministers

tali malanga is more solemn, indeed, lacking a theological college of their own, attending the *faikava tali malanga* is a 'training school' where the experiences and wisdom of the elders are often shared and transmitted to the youth. (p. 202)

Today, Tongan churches in Tonga, New Zealand and abroad accept the *faikava* as this significant way of binding and interweaving faith and culture together. In particular the *Siasi Metotisi Tonga 'o Aotearoa*, *Siasi Uesiliana Tau'ataina 'o Tonga*, *Siasi Tonga Hou'eiki* and *Siasi Tauatāina 'o Tonga*.

Medicinal Value

Kava is a light anaesthetic with anti-fungal and mild antibiotic properties. It has been scientifically proven that kava has mild antibiotic attributes (Singh & Blumenthal, 2007) and antifungal properties (Piscopo, 2009). Historically, kava was viewed as a plant that had sacred powers and medicinal properties, and was regarded in some societies as 'the most important psychoactive plant in the Pacific' (Beyer, 2009; Piscopo, 2009; Aporosa, 2012). Kava has been a remedy which has been curatively used for illnesses such as menstrual problems, headaches, leprosy, insomnia, migraine and tuberculosis (Aalbersberg & Sotheeswaran, 1991; Singh & Blumenthal, 1997; Lebot, Merlin & Lindstrom; 1997; Piscopo, 2009; Aporosa, 2012).

Teschke, Schwarzenboeck and Akinci (2008) report that kava has been recognised as a viable and effective remedy for anxiety and depression. Most recently, a world-first clinical study by the University of Melbourne found that kava-drinking significantly reduces the symptoms of people suffering from anxiety. Sarris et.al. (2013) and his team from the University of Melbourne Department of Psychiatry found that kava could be an alternative treatment to pharmaceutical products for many Australians who suffer from Generalised Anxiety Disorders (GAD). In the 21st century, major pharmaceutical companies have been standardising kava root tablets, capsules and tinctures which have been introduced in the American and European markets (WHO Pharmaceuticals, 2003).

On the less positive side in, scientific research has found kava to be a potential cause of liver problems in countries such as Germany and other European nations (Malani, 2002), and

concerns have been raised about the misuse of kava. Lebot (2009) in a documentary on '*Kava Culture in Vanuatu*' has argued that the kava is not to blame, but rather the toxins and elements that are added to the kava extracts. Further, he states that Pacific peoples have been imbibing kava for centuries, yet there had not been a case of liver problems.

While European nations now value kava for its medicinal use, Pacific societies have had unique ways of understanding kava. For example, Aporosa (2012) notes that Pacific people's understood the medicinal use long before European nations knew about them. Although the medicinal use of kava has been developed in European nations, accreditation and ownership of this narcotic plant and beverage lies with the Pacific Islands (Aporosa, 2012).

Social and Cultural Value

As noted, kava is offered in ceremonies honouring dignitaries as heads of state, chiefs and important people as a sign of respect, as a sign of sociability, to seal an agreement parties between two partners or to make an agreement publicly binding. It is also used as a ritual sign of the sacred character of a place or an occasion (Newell, 1947; Davis & Brown, 1999). As documented by Shumway (2011), taking or sharing the kava is another way of ensuring your obligations to the land and to the people.

Early (2000) proposed that there are different types of kava-drinking in Tonga. McDonald and Jowitt (2000) argue that it is critically important to discuss the different classifications of kava-drinking because of the increasing negative stigmatization associated with this. An ethnographic study by Lemert (1967) described three types of kava drinking in Tongan society, namely, *faikava*, *'ilo lava* and the *taumafa* kava. Tongan philosopher Helu (1993) proposed that there were five types ranging from formal to informal kava ceremonies. These are *taumafa kava*, *kava fakasiasi*, *faikava eva*, *kalapu kava Tonga* and *tau fakalokua*.

These are outlined briefly below as they apply to this study. Before doing so, a number of points are noted. First, while the *faikava* is a male activity, the role of the *tou'a* (or the kava server) is the responsibility of a female (Feldman, 1980). Second that, traditionally, the *faikava* was a social event that was usually held in a private facility where participants brought their own

kava roots to prepare the beverage (Helu, 1993). Nowadays, participants take the pulverized kava in a powdered form to the *faikava* instead of the kava root. It is considered that taking kava roots to the *faikava* would be inappropriate because the process of preparing the root for drinking is time consuming, whereas the powdered kava makes consumption a much more straightforward process.

Taumafa Kava

The most formal kava ceremony is the *taumafa* kava. The term '*taumafa*' is a regal word which also describes the act of eating. "*Taumafa*" is a term that is only used for when referring to the king (Churchward, 1959, p.465) which originated during the reign of the first *Tu'i* Tonga. The late Professor Futa Helu (1993) viewed the *taumafa* kava as the centrepiece of Tongan culture and ritual system'. According to Urbanowicz (1975, p. 46), the "*taumafa* kava ceremony helps to maintain the *anga fakatonga*.

The *taumafa* kava usually requires that the nobles and their *matāpule* (talking chiefs) take part in the ceremony. For this ceremony, the King always sits at the head of the kava circle inside a purpose-built *fale* on a *me'a hina* or a fine Tongan mat (see photograph 3). The *fale* is of significance as it represents the high status that the *Tu'i* Tonga holds. When inside the *fale*, the *Tu'i* Tonga sits on pile of *ngatu* (*tapa*) and fine mats specially made for the occasion. The *taumafa kava* is often a large ceremony and there can sometimes be hundreds of people sitting in a large kava circle. Seating at the ceremony is based on the hierarchal status of nobles and talking chiefs.

Today, the *taumafa* kava is carried out by Tongans in the homeland and also in overseas communities such as New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America. Similar to the *taumafa* kava, the '*ilo* kava, which are kava ceremonies for the *hou'eiki* or chiefly people or the nobles kava and without the presence of the *tu'i*, are now often practised at important events such as twenty-first birthdays, graduation celebrations and marriages because of the significance of these occasions. For marriages, consuming the kava signifies the importance of the agreement between the bride and the groom that the two partners are officially together and, between the two families.

Kava Fakasiasi

Kava *fakasiasi* is also known to be the church or the Sunday Kava. As noted, first missionaries to Tonga realised that the assimilation of aspects of the local culture into church services would enhance the chances of Tongans converting to Christianity. Helu (1993) also noted that one of the customs adapted by the missionaries was kava-drinking. Therefore, it is no surprise that many Tongan churches have since gone against earlier attempts to forbid kava consumption to have incorporated kava into their ritual and symbolism (Aporosa, 2011b).

The kava *fakasiasi* enables older men in the church the opportunity before and often after church to *pakipaki* or break into many pieces (Churchward, 1959, p.398) the ideas and suggestions from the sermon and also from the Bible. This is usually carried out before the singing and other dialogue begins. As reported, elderly men tend to give very analytical feedback on the church service and their perspective on the Bible reading of the day. Nowadays, especially in diasporic communities in New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America, the *pakipaki* are usually carried out during the *faikava*. At the same time, in-depth discussions are carried out on other relevant topics such as social issues that Tongan youth are facing.

Faikava Eva

The *faikava eva* was regarded as a traditional method of dating in ancient Tonga, because this provided a place for courting young woman, who served the kava (Helu, 1993; Early, 2000). The *faikava eva* is a kava party for young men seeking the permission of the parents of a *tou'a* or a young girl to mix and serve the kava for them for the night. As noted, while mainly a male past time, the role of the *tou'a* is commonly carried out by a female. Feldman (1980, p.1) suggest that the role of the *tou'a* is important as she is the center of attention in the *faikava* circle. The interaction of the men with the *tou'a* is usually flirtatious (see photograph 4).

Kalapu Kava Tonga

Kalapu kava Tonga is considered to be an informal *faikava* but in a well-established setting (see photograph 5). Helu (1993) suggested that *kalapu kava* Tonga is a recent adaptation and in his

view is an adaptation to the monetisation of the economy and social customs. Participation of a *kalapu* kava Tonga is open to everyone, although women are rarely seen in the *kalapu* in Tonga. There is no locality, village or suburb without one or two *kalapu* kava Tonga (Helu, 1993). In the *kalapu* kava Tonga, the sharing of information, values and beliefs is reinforced through oratory, song, dance and chants.

Hiva kakala or fragrant song (Linkels, 1998) is the most popular musical genre among Tongan men in Tonga and in migrant Tongan communities participating in *kalapu* kava Tongas. Linkels (1998) suggests that the *hiva kakala* provides a medium for individual expression within the Tonga repertoires of song. *Hiva kakala* is poetry where metaphorical terms are heavily used. As Hau'ofa (1977) writes;

Our poems and songs have traditionally and naturally been used for imagery allusions to beautiful and evocative scenery, and to native plants, especially those subsumed under the term of *kakala* (Hau'ofa, 1997, p. 8)

In a good *hiva kakala* one never sings directly about a person nor does one address him or her directly (Linkels, 1998, p. 36). *Hiva kakala* has now become a current and popular phenomenon as Tongans born overseas are beginning to experiment with and modernise *hiva kakala* songs. A popular trend is evolving of blending traditional *hiva kakala* songs with reggae and hip hop beats.

For example, in the United States of America, young Tongan reggae artists like the 3RP in Portland, Oregon, United States of America (3RP Documentary, 2011) and Three Houses Down in New Zealand are combining traditional *hiva kakala* with reggae beats. Although maintaining *hiva kakala* through different music genres is a sign of the evolving ways of maintaining Tongan identity, there is a fear that the younger generation will not be able to reproduce the nature and beauty associated with writing *hiva kakala* songs in the old days. As Hau'ofa (1977) states:

Our contemporary songs appear to be increasingly lacking in references to the beauty of nature and are dealing directly with bare emotions, mostly pathetic songs about sad and broken hearts. Our elders complain that our youth are not as good composers as those of the recent past, citing as a main

shortcoming the fact that our contemporary composers are too direct. But I do not think that it is really their fault when there is less and less in our surrounding environment to inspire them into lyrical eloquence. (p. 8)

Tau Fakalokua

The *tau fakalokua* is a very informal kava-drinking session associated with fishermen's or farmers in rural areas. The term '*tau*' has many etymological definitions. Churchward (1959) has defined '*tau*' in seventeen different ways (Churchward, 1959, p. 461). In relation to this form of kava-drinking, '*tau*' is defined as 'to hang' (Churchward, 1959, p. 461), while '*faka*' is a prefix denoting likeness or causation (Churchward, 1959, p. 24). '*Lokua*' refers to a fish (Churchward, 1959, p. 298) or group of fish, or a group of any phenomenon.

Thus, the *tau fakalokua* can be used to describe an informal kava-drinking session carried out amongst farmers and fishermen. Helu (1993) noted that topics such as yam cultivation and techniques for fishing are discussed. Helu (1993) believed that the *tau fakalokua* was declining in recent times due to the amount of labor that fishermen and farmers are carrying out. As a result, Helu (1993) suggested that the *tau fakalokua* is only being practiced in some smaller outer islands. Photograph 6 portrays three men drinking kava after a day's work in the plantation. For this study, I use the definition of 'social' *faikava* clubs to distinguish this from Helu's definitions.

Faikava in migrant communities

As is well documented, high number of Tongans are migrating in search of better opportunities in employment and education. The priority to supporting families back in the homeland, has also been noted. Migration to a new home involves the transfer of cultural practices such as the *faikava*. This section will critically discuss writings on the *faikava* from studies carried out in New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America.

New Zealand

New Zealand is the destination that is regarded by many Pacific Islanders, including Tongans, to be the land of the milk and honey (Taylor, 2005). Anecdotal evidence I collected from local Tongan

elders in Grey Lynn, indicated that there had been only one *faikava* club in the 1970's during the Dawn Raid era. That, *faikava* club had been established to gather together Tongan youth who had migrated from Tonga to New Zealand for job opportunities. However, since the 1970s, the significant increase in Tongans migrating to New Zealand has been also seen a rapid increase in the number of *faikava* clubs in Auckland and other regions.

'Alatini (2004) found there were at least 10 kava clubs in the Otago region alone. 'Ofanoa (2009) reported that there were over 30 social *faikava* clubs in the suburb of Mangere, which interestingly has the largest population of Tongans in Auckland. Many *faikava* clubs are formed and named after their respective villages back in the ancestral homeland, for example, *Kalapu Ma'ufanga*, *Kalapu Va'epopua*, *Kalapu Fu'amotu* ('Ofanoa, 2009). Others are named after a church or old-boys associations. For example, *Kalapu Fungamanamou'i*, *Kalapu Toutai Tangata*, and *Kalapu Mosimosi Koula*. Interestingly, one of the main purposes of the *faikava* club is to respond to the local needs not only for Tongan families in New Zealand but to meet the financial needs of their respective village, church or old-boys association in Tonga ('Ofanoa, 2009, p. 59-60).

Nosa and 'Ofanoa (2009) carried out qualitative research on the social, cultural and medicinal use of kava, interviewing 12 Tongan males living in Auckland. They found that the importance of the *faikava* was deeply embedded in the *anga fakatonga* and was strongly linked to many of the ceremonial, social, and cultural obligations. Most of these males described their initial experiences of kava-drinking as beginning when they were teenagers, mainly between the ages of 17-20 years. Furthermore, participants stated the reason why they consumed kava at a young age was:

“because we did nothing else at the time aside from drinking kava ... at the same it was like a leisure time for me to attend the social kava-clubs” (Nosa & 'Ofanoa, 2009, p. 98).

With respect to alcohol, many of the participants in this study saw the *faikava* as a place that signified a 'peaceful society', togetherness, 'close bonding' of a society (Nosa & 'Ofanoa, 2009). Finau, Stanhope and Prior (1982) have argued that the introduction of 'kava clubs' in New

Zealand has resulted in Tongan youth being able to move around freely both in Tonga and in New Zealand because of the 'warm bonding' which has been generated between the elders and NZ-born Tongan youth.

Findings by Nosa and 'Ofanoa (2009, p. 99) were that some of the older men saw kava as a replacement or alternative to alcohol, especially given that alcohol consumption is socially and culturally unacceptable (Finau et.al, 1982, p. 41). Effects from drinking alcohol and kava are completely different. As one participant described;

Kava leads you to just laziness but alcohol will lead to death ... at the same time, when one compares alcohol and kava consumption kava to me is better because some parents fight a lot when the husband drink alcohol but for kava you feel lazy and you are very lazy to fight back to your wife if you slept a lot (Nosa & 'Ofanoa, 2009, p.99).

Australia

There has been extensive writing on the migration of Tongans to Australia (Morton-Lee, 1996, 1998; 2003). As noted, the main motivation has been the desire to seek better opportunities in employment and in education (Pyke, Francis & Ben-Moshe, 2012). As Tongans migrate to Australia, they also take with them the *anga fakatonga*, that is, the Tongan way of life and cultural practices. This signifies that they are still in contact with their Tongan identity (Pyke et.al, 2012). One example of cultural practices is the *faikava*. Commenting on '*Kava use in Australia*', Prescott (1990) found that among Tongans, Fijians and Samoans living in Australian cities kava drinking was still practiced (albeit in a more limited fashion) mainly as a means of social and cultural interaction.

Maneze, Speizer, Dalton and Dennis (2008) carried out an ethnographic study on the pattern of kava use amongst Tongan men living in the Macarthur area in Sydney so as to provide some insights into the social context of its use and the effects on those who use it (Maneze et.al, 2008). This descriptive study found that Tongan men consumed kava regularly and in large quantities. They recognised that further research to be carried and to explore the use of the *faikava* in other major cities in Australia where Tongans are concentrated.

Reports also indicate that kava has become a popular beverage in Australian aboriginal communities. Australia's Aboriginal communities were introduced to kava drinking by Tongan missionaries in the 1970s to 1980s. At first, kava drinking was recognised by both the Aboriginal communities and local governments as an alternative to alcohol (Cawte, 1986, Maneze et.al, 2008). However, reports of kava misuse amongst Aboriginal communities has led to this being classified as another 'alien poison' (Prescott, 1990; Lebot et.al, 1997) based on the principle that drugs used outside of their traditional, social and cultural contexts can be harmful.

United States of America

The United States of America (USA) is another destination valued by Tongans seeking greater opportunities for employment and education. Most recently, the Church of the Latter Day Saints (LDS) has been a significant focal point for Tongans migrating to the USA, especially to the state of Utah. In a newspaper article on kava use by Tongan men in Salt Lake City, Griffin (2007) highlighted evidence of conflict between the roles of the church and culture, with respect to kava-drinking. According to a Bishop of the LDS, Supi Ma'ilei, LDS members who participate in kava-drinking may not qualify for entrance to the temple. Ma'ilei and other LDS leaders believe that the recreational use of kava as an unfavourable and an unwise use of time. It is considered an affront to the integrity of good, wholesome and gospel-oriented family life (Griffin, 2007). As such mixing, kava and faith is perceived by many Mormons to destroy any chances of entering God's temple in the celestial Kingdom.

The LDS church and community leaders are now coming together to search for other markers that can assist to revitalise and rejuvenate Tongan identity amongst America-born Tongans especially through the younger generation. Hansen (2004) has found that there has been a loss of the *anga fakatonga* amongst Tongan American families in Utah. Further, that America-born Tongan youth are conforming to the pressure to participate in alcohol consumption and youth gangs. She notes that changes in family structures, the lack of respect between the youth and elders, and not achieving or advancing in the American educational system also contributes to the loss of the Tongan identity (Hansen, 2004).

Jacob Fitiseanu Jr's (2007) thesis on kava drinking at Westminster College, Utah, identified the 'perpetuation and adaptation of 'ava ceremonies in Salt Lake Country' was more positive. He argued that kava drinking was ensuring maintenance of culture in the Tongan communities which in his view was lacking in other Pacific communities in the United States of America.

Faikava as a cultural space

Research internationally has proposed the value of a cultural educational space where ethnic minorities can demonstrate, practice and reclaim their sense of cultural identity (Akom, 2007; Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Macfarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh & Bateman, 2007, Milne, 2013). In her PhD study, *'Colouring in the White Spaces: Reclaiming Cultural Identity in White Stream schools'*, Milne (2013) explored the curriculum of two schools, which both had a large group of Māori and Pacific Island students on the roll. She found that when spaces were created within the schools, a sense of cultural identity was felt for these students.

Participation in sports clubs and hosting major sports events are also ways of reaffirming and establishing a sense of cultural belonging and identity. Holmes (1994) found that in 1988, the victorious Irish Football team reinforced a sense of power and pride of being Irish. Since that time, there has been a rapid increase in participation and involvement in football associations and activities around the Republic of Ireland. Morton-Lee (2003) is in agreement. She notes that Tongans in Australia participated in Tongan sports clubs as a way of reclaiming their 'Tongan-ness'. To her participants, the use of the word 'Tongan', playing Tongan music, speaking Tongan and saying a prayer before and after a rugby game brought a huge sense of pride at being Tongan (Morton-Lee, 2003, p.172).

Singing (Hebert, 2008), dancing (Linkels, 1998) and spoken word poetry (Taylor, 2013), are other significant parts to highlighting and owning the distinctiveness of being Tongan. These are also an avenue for cultural identity, security, reinforcement, rejuvenation and maintenance. A recent New Zealand study found that the participation of NZ-born Pacific male youths in social activities which had a focus on cultural maintenance and enrichment, such as the Polynesian

(Poly) club rejuvenated their sense of cultural identity and belonging which was associated also in an increase in educational achievement (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2013). She explored the relationship between culture and educational outcomes as demonstrated in a Poly Club in an all-male secondary school in Wellington. The importance of self-esteem and cultural maintenance gained in the Poly Club were leading factors that ensured classroom achievement by the Poly Club members (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2013). The support and togetherness between students and staff were mentioned by a number of participants and one participant observed;

Poly is the only thing that keeps me coming to school ... and then when I come to school where I do my schoolwork ... go to classes. Just for me ... Poly is a big thing. It's the boys, the teacher, the brothers, just being together (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2013, p. 14)

Other research has found that introducing supplementary learning communities can support cultural maintenance and in turn, education achievement (Zhou & Kim, 2006; Siteine, 2010). Polynesian festivals occur on an annual basis in both Auckland and Wellington where Pacific Island nations are represented in a weekend of showcasing Pacific flavour and flare.

Hebert (2008) obtained similar findings in his study on Tongan youths who belonged to Auckland Tongan Youths Brass Bands (ATYBB). ATYBB is a non-profit group of young Tongan men and women from the ages of 8 to 20 years old drawn from the East and South Auckland regions (Hebert, 2008). The aims are:

To foster positive youth programs aimed at combating and avoiding young people from getting into gang-related activities – Initiate some positive attitudes into these youths by running brass evening practices, pō ako or homework evenings for its members – To nurture a closer relationship between these children and their families, the church, their schools and their communities – Encourage participation in community activities and to encourage involvement in other charitable activities (Hebert, 2008, p. 127).

The playing and singing of traditional songs especially, was a key factor in youth engagement in the brass band. As the band leader said, 'we still like our Tongan style, and we don't want to lose out on our style of music' (Hebert, 2008, p.174). In relation to this research, Hao'uli (see Campbell & Coxon, 2005) commented on how the late Professor Futa Helu, a Tongan

philosopher in Greek mythology and founder of the 'Atenisi Institute in Tonga, adapted the *faikava* from a venue that was devoted to simply drinking kava to a forum for exchanging ideas and debates. Hao'uli states:

Kava-drinking class in Nuku'alofa became known not just for the amount of kava that was shared but that they found in Futa a conversationalist who shared with them a glimpse of another world, the world that he had learned through his study of the classics ...more importantly for someone [Futa] who had been absent from Tonga, he also became equally knowledgeable about our [Tongan] language and our [Tongan] early history (see Campbell & Coxon, 2005, p. 4).

The use of the *faikava* as a forum for exchanging ideas and debates has also been witnessed at a tertiary institution in Auckland. Here, Pacific Island students, predominantly males of Samoan, Tongan and Fijian descent, gather to share and vent their stories based on their experiences (see photograph 7). The practice of the *faikava* in a tertiary institution again signifies the importance of cultural maintenance in the midst of a western and mainstream institution. For this group, the *faikava* has become an alternative, to the University bar, mainly because it is cheaper than alcohol. In '*The University without walls in the kalapu kava Tonga*, Perkins (2005) describes also how students of 'Atenisi attended *faikava* sessions with Helu during the end of year breaks, so as to benefit from the exchanging of knowledge that took place there. She discusses how Helu uses the *faikava* to inspire his staff and students to share knowledge and ideas.

The introduction of social and cultural space in educational institutions is supporting the resurgence of Pacific culture and knowledge, values and beliefs (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2013). Further research on social and cultural spaces in education and other institutions is needed to ensure the maintenance of Pacific culture in New Zealand.

Summary

This review of the literature has provided insights into the value of kava as a plant and beverage of the Pacific, and its potential as a critical component of cultural maintenance in migrant

communities. As noted, kava plays a unique role in the social life of many Pacific societies. Turner (1986) states that “when you drink kava, you drink the Pacific people, their land, and their culture ... kava is *mana* and the ancestors” is compelling (Tomlinson, 2006, p.174).

Photograph 1. Kava plant



Kava plant that is said to grow at the bottom of the burial site of Kava'onau (Photograph Retrieved April 30, 2014 from <http://www.eua-island-tonga.com/Kava-tonga.html>)

Photograph 2. Sugarcane plant



Sugarcane plant that is said to grow at the top of the burial site of Kava'onau (Photograph Retrieved April 30, 2014 from <http://www.eua-island-tonga.com/Kava-tonga.html>)

Photograph 3. Taumafa kava



A taumafa kava in Nuku'alofa, Tongatapu (Photograph Retrieved April 30, 2014 from <http://gpdhome.typepad.com/king-of-tonga-n.html>)

Photograph 4. Faikava eva



The faikava eva where the tou'a or the kava server becomes the centre of attention of the faikava session (Photograph Retrieved April 30, 2014 from <http://nesalini.blogspot.co.nz/2007/10/my-2nd-time-as-toua.html>)

Photograph 5. Kalapu kava Tonga



The kalapu kava Tonga where singing occurs [at times] all night long accompanied by musical and acoustic bands (Photograph Retrieved April 30, 2014 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozhxTncn8P4>)

Photograph 6. Tau Fakalokua



This is an example of a tau fakalokua where a group of men who have something in common come together around a kava bowl and drink in exchange of talanoa, experiences and ideas (Photograph Retrieved April 30, 2014 from <http://www.vavau.to/activities15.html>)

Photograph 7. Pacific Island boys drinking kava



A group of Pacific Island University students drinking kava at Albert Park located in the middle of Auckland CBD. (Photograph: Author)

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

“Palovepi 22:6 – ‘Atu ako ki ha tamasi’i o taau mo hono ‘alunga talaatu o ka ne ka motu’a ‘e ikai tene hiki mei ai”

“Proverbs 22:6 – Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (New International Version)

Introduction

Chapter 3 reviewed the literature on the *faikava* in Tonga and migrant communities such as New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America. However, there is still a gap in literature from a NZ-born Tongan male’s perspective on the *faikava* (Nosa & ‘Ofanoa, 2009). My thesis is to present the experiences and perceptions of NZ-born Tongan males participating in the social and cultural practice of the *faikava*. In this way, a different perspective is provided on the *faikava* from that presented by health professionals mentioned in Chapter 1. In addition, this study seeks to determine the place of the *faikava* and whether it has a similar meaning to homes and churches for young NZ-born Tongan males. Further, whether the *faikava* can become a preservation nest for the *anga fakatonga* today and potentially into the future.

This chapter is in two parts. First part outlines the methodological framework of phenomenology and the cultural research method of *talanoa* that is employed to capture the lived-experiences, meanings and understandings of NZ-born Tongan males about participating in the *faikava*. The second part outlines the research method and collection and analysis of the data. This chapter concludes with a number of reflections from the data collection.

Research Design

Qualitative

As the aim of this study is to explore the lived experiences and the perceptions of NZ-born Tongan males in respect to their participation and valuing of the *faikava*, I chose a qualitative approach for my research. Researchers and practitioners in fields as diverse as anthropology, education, nursing, psychology, sociology and marketing regularly use qualitative methods to address

questions about people's ways of organising, relating to, and interacting with the world (Neuman, 2011). Qualitative research does "not involve a verification of a pre-determined idea, but a discovery that leads to new insights" (Sherman & Webb, 1988, p. 5).

As proposed by Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative researchers do not just enter a location with a blank mind, and collect whatever data falls into their lap; rather, they bring to the research a whole raft of acknowledged assumptions, personal agendas, and ideas they have read about in their literature review. Seale, Gobo, Gubrium and Silverman (2004) suggest that qualitative research is very effective for obtaining culturally specific information about values, beliefs, emotions, opinions, behaviours, relationships, and the social contexts of individuals or particular groups. Qualitative researchers emphasise the socially constructed nature of reality where social experience is created and given meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It involves the investigation of real life experiences, face to face interviews, dialogues, and through asking questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; McIntyre, 2005; Neuman, 2011).

Phenomenology

In order to capture the lived experiences and perceptions of NZ-born Tongan males participating in the *faikava*, I decided to use the phenomenological approach to explore the participants' perceptions and lived-experiences of the phenomenon. According to Smith (2008), phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first person perspective. Phenomenology is best understood as a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophising; in which emphasis is placed on getting to the truth of matters in order to describe the phenomena under investigation (Moran, 2002, p.4). Finlay (2009) noted that phenomenology focusses on the phenomena which in this study is the participation in the *faikava*. Edmund Husserl, acknowledged as the 'founding father' of phenomenology, established this radically new way of doing philosophy (Zahavi, 2003). He stated that self-discovery of an uninfluenced consciousness is discoverable if the phenomena are looked at through the lenses of

phenomenology. That, phenomenology provides openings for deeper probing into individual experiences while discovering their true consciousness (Zahavi, 2003, p. 18).

Martin Heidegger, who was a student of Husserl in the 19th century, shaped the phenomenological project by departing from a philosophical discipline which focuses on consciousness and the essences of phenomena and elaborating two dimensions: existential and hermeneutic (Finlay, 2009; Vaioleti, 2013). Existential phenomenology is concerned with the experiences and actions of the individual, rather than conformity or behavior (Lavery, 2003). The phenomenological hermeneutical method is the un-covering interpretation of meaning that is not immediately given (Lavery, 2003).

For this study, I will be employing existential phenomenology. As noted, existential phenomenology describes and identifies subjective human experience as it reflects the values, purposes, ideals, intentions, emotions and relationships of the people and the phenomena. The focus is on the way things appear to the participants through experience or in their consciousness where the phenomenological researcher aims to provide a rich textured description of lived experience (Finlay, 2009).

Pacific Worldview

Because my study is with Tongans, I saw it as essential to apply a Pacific research design which encapsulates a Pacific worldview. Emeritus Professor Albert Wendt (see Creative Commons, 2012) proposed that:

We need to write, paint, sculpt, weave, dance, sing, and think ourselves into existence. For too long other people have done it for us – and they've usually stereotyped us, or created versions of us that embody their own hang-ups and beliefs and prejudices about us. So we have to write our own stories. (p. 1)

Whilst this study employs a specific worldview, there is some agreement on the relationship and balance between essential elements in a Pacific worldview. With this, the Samoan Head of State Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi (2007) in an inspirational speech proposed three elements that make up the Pacific worldview as:

... the environment, humans, the animate and inanimate (all natural life) as having its source in the sources in the same divine origin, imbued with the life force, interrelated and genealogically connected (p. 6)

Mila-Schaaf (2010) concurs with Tui Atua referring to the Pacific worldview as:

... The interrelationship between all things (between people, the land, sea, sky, rocks, plants, surroundings) is sacred and cosmologically determined. (p. 135)

Fairbairn-Dunlop (2013) argued that every Pacific community's behaviours and expectations, aims to ensure a balance and harmony between the dimensions mentioned above, have developed over time. Waldegrave, Tamasese, Tuhaka and Campbell (2003) argue that the aims of the Samoan worldview are to ensure relationships and networks are maintained between peoples, villages, the land and the spirit world. In '*A cultural framework for addressing violence in Fijian families in New Zealand*', noted that the Fijian worldview is considered to be shaped by the traditional Fijian social structures where roles are clearly prescribed according to a kinships group membership which is based on the traditional hierarchy (Tuwere, Ligalevu, McNicholas, Moala & Tuifagalele, 2012, p. 3). Ravuvu (1987) proposed that traditional Fijian ceremonies, which continues today are a model for life which reflected the Fijian worldview and defined the social and political structures, religious beliefs, values and practices which underpins Fijian communities in everyday life.

As the *faikava* is a Tongan practice, I believe the study of the *faikava* required the application of a Tongan lens – or Tongan values, beliefs and worldview.

Tongan Worldview

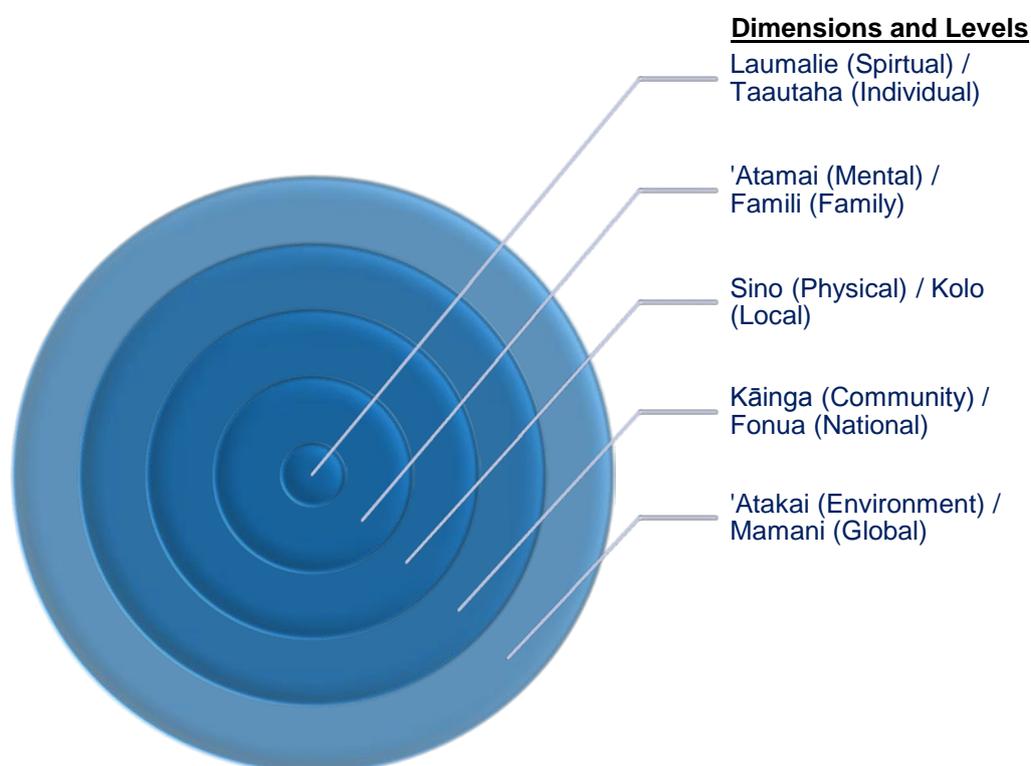
The Tongan worldview is captured in the Tongan notion of *fonua* which encapsulates the importance of spiritual, communal, relationships, balance, and harmony (Tu'itahi, 2007, 2009). According to Churchward (1959), *fonua* has two different aspects, each having its own unique and distinctive definition. Firstly, *fonua* can be defined as land, country, territory, and people of

the land. *Fonua* can also be defined as *faitoka* or grave. Secondly, *fonua* can be defined as the placenta or the afterbirth of a new-born. Tu'itahi (2005), who coined the *fonua* model defines *fonua* as the land and its people and their on-going relationships. Taufe'ulungaki (2004) suggested that the judgements, experiences and perceptions of Tongans are based on five significant dimensions which include; the *sino* (body), *atamai* (mental), *laumalie* (spiritual), *kāinga* (collective/community) and *ataakai* (built and natural environment) (see figure 2). This is summed up by Tu'itahi where he postulates that:

Maintaining a sustainable, harmonious and balanced relationship with nature and one's fellow human beings, both at the individual and collective levels, illustrates the spiritual dimension of *fonua*. Since the introduction of monotheistic religion, Tongans re-conceptualised the spiritual dimension of *fonua* to include God, the creator of the universe (Tu'itahi, 2009 p.14)

Figure 2.

Fonua model



Source. The *fonua* model by Tu'itahi (2007). *Fonua: A model for Pacific health promotion*. Symposium conducted at the meeting of the Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand. Retrieved on 13th March, 2014.

The five dimensions outlined in figure 2 form the Tongan worldview encapsulating the importance of each dimension and level. Because the phenomenon of this study is a Tongan cultural practice, a Tongan research method was important.

Talanoa

Talanoa is a favourite pastime of the Pacific, especially in Polynesia. The word is common to many Polynesian languages. *Talanoa* is a medium for informal, reciprocal exchange of information on: current events genealogy, rumours, gossip of the day and ideas and aspirations and plans. The flow of conversation in *talanoa* is spontaneous, continual and a free non-binding tit-for-tat (Preface by Professor Sitaleki Finau, see Havea, 2010)

Drawing on the Tongan worldview, I saw the *talanoa* as the most culturally appropriate method for this study. There is a considerable amount of research that has employed the concept of *talanoa* as either a qualitative research methodology or method or both (Vaioleti, 2006, 2011; Prescott, 2009; Latu, 2009). The term '*talanoa*' is defined as "to talk in an informal manner, to tell stories or related experiences" (Churchward, 1959, p. 447). Vaioleti (2006) notes that *talanoa* is an informal communication tool that is most common to Tongans, Samoans and Fijians.

Talanoa are a dynamic interaction and communication tool of story-telling, debating, reflecting, gossiping, joking, sharing, family connections, food and other necessities (Halapua, 2003; Vaioleti, 2006). *Talanoa* can also spur deep discussions, and build strong interpersonal relationships; the kind of relationships on the basis of which most Pacific activities are carried out (Morrison, Vaioleti & Vermeulen, 2002). Vaioleti (2006) has proposed that *talanoa* builds a better understanding and co-operation within and across groups. This supports Vaka'uta (2013) that:

In order for *talanoa* to be effective, some form of rapport (relationship) must be established necessitating more than one visit. In some instances, discussions on wide and varied topics of discussion needed to take place prior to more purposeful research discussions. (p. 143).

For Tongan peoples, *talanoa* create a sense of *maheni* (familiarity) and *fe'ilongaki* (knowing each other's identity and place). There are many levels of *talanoa*, for example, when Tongan people gather they usually engage in *talanoa fakatalanoa* (to encourage discussion when

they do not know each other), *pō talanoa* (when they already know each other), or *talatalanoa* (where they talk about selected topics or talk endlessly) (Manu'atu, 2002, p. 15).

A significant example of the practice of *talanoa* took place in 1996, when Dr Sitiveni Halapua carried out a national *talanoa* in the Cook Islands when the nation was facing an economic crisis. The Prime Minister at the time asked him for assistance on what could be done about the situation. Halapua (2007) recalls that he suggested they hold a *talanoa* with the main stakeholders:

...and I proceeded to organize the *talanoa* with various groups, outer islands, churches – they came together dismantled this [economic] model, then we reconstructed it, and they are still using it today because of that *talanoa*. (p.1).

As a Pacific research method, *talanoa* can be carried out in one-to-one *talanoa* or focus group-type discussions (McFall-McCaffery, 2010). Manu'atu (2002) argues that Tongan people come together to *talanoa* about their experiences, express their aspirations, voice their issues, and speak of their different perspectives in forums, meetings, *faikava*, seminars, and radio programs. From a research viewpoint, the use of *talanoa* assists, engages and builds relationships between a facilitator and the participants (Vaioleti, 2011). The nature, degree, direction, place and time of the *talanoa* are determined by the participants.

For my study, the use of *talanoa* is carried out in a manner consistent with the Tongan ethical view and communicating norms including the Tongan language, values and beliefs.

Research Method

It was initially proposed that this study be carried out in focus groups. However, as I thought more deeply about it, I could see that focus groups could be problematic in this study. Rabiee (2004) proposed that the use of focus groups is often difficult to manage, especially if one participant becomes dominant in the discussions. Furthermore, I could see also that participation in a group might be difficult for this group of NZ-born Tongan males who might have sensitive topics that they would want to raise.

Therefore, I decided to carry out individual *talanoa*. It was anticipated that the individual *talanoa* would provide the opportunity to build a positive rapport between the researcher and participants so ensuring a spontaneous, continual and free-flowing exchange of ideas and information. Similarly, DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) note that individual interviews allow the interviewer to delve deeply into social and personal matters. An interview schedule was designed and aimed at opening up discussion topics (see appendix 2). The interview schedule was pilot tested (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001) to see whether the questions were clear and understandable. Some small amendments were made based on the pilot test.

Sample

As this research is an exploratory study, I decided that a small size sample would provide in-depth information. Patton (2002) notes the value of selecting a small homogenous sample. A number of key factors were considered in the selection of participants: they must be NZ-born Tongan males who participate in a *faikava* on a regular basis. Although there is no given age to define youth in the Tongan culture, for this study, aims were that participants be under the age of 30 years. As the *faikava* is a cultural activity that is predominantly practiced by Tongan males, females were not included in this study.

Recruitment

I was fortunate to be affiliated to a *faikava* club in the West Auckland region. The *faikava* participants here informed me of other *faikava* clubs that had a good number of NZ-born Tongan males which I might approach. Drawing on this information, I was able to gain a fair understanding of where and when *faikava* were run. My recruitment process followed a number of steps.

Step 1:

Over a 10 week period, I visited 10 *faikava* clubs around Auckland including two *faikava* clubs in East Auckland, two in West Auckland, two in Central Auckland and four in South Auckland. The *faikava* clubs in the West and East Auckland region were affiliated to the MCNZ whilst Central and South *faikava* clubs were affiliated to the MCNZ, as well as village and community based

faikava clubs. The participants in these *faikava* sessions included Tongans of all ages and from various churches such as the MCNZ, LDS Church and Catholic churches.

A main reason for me participating in several *faikava* was to get a feel of how different *faikava* are carried out in Auckland. This was in line with Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) who suggest that the building of a rapport incorporates the ability to relate to others in a way that creates a level of trust and understanding. During these visits I did not talk about my study at all between myself and prospective participants.

In each *faikava*, I participated fully in the singing and the discussions that were taking place to show my *faka'apa'apa*, *fetoka'iaki* and *fetokoni'aki* towards others. I also contributed to the *faikava* by entering with a one kilogram or two kilogram bag of kava. This was to show my appreciation in them allowing an outsider into their *faikava*.

In my view, there appeared to be no power struggle relations in the *faikava* I visited. Participants were a mix of academics, scholars, people with high paid jobs along with high school students and those who were unemployed. Entering a *faikava*, I also learnt I had to be open to the prospect of criticisms and ridicule and be able to adapt to a different way of communication. These characteristics are in line with the Tongan proverb: "*Vaevae Melenga Kae Pikipiki Katea – Connecting the hulls and sharing the results*" (Māhina, 2004, p. 175)⁴

The notion of sharing or what is yours is mine, what is mine is yours overarches this proverb. In my experience all participants in a *faikava* felt a sense of belonging. In fact, one of the *faikava* I visited had the motto, '*lau pe 'a e ua ko e taha*' (two become one). Although I was new, the members of all Kava Clubs treated me as if I was one of them, that is. a regular attendee in the *faikava*.

Step 2:

When I got the feel of a number of *faikava* sessions taking place around the Auckland region, I approached one participant from one of the *faikava* clubs I participated in West Auckland, and

⁴ '*Oku 'uhinga ki ha kakai 'oku nau fakapotopoto'i ha'anau me'a 'i ha feitu'u ē ngali hoko ai ha faingata'a*' – When people take great care about something in a place full of potential risks.

asked if he was interested in participating in this study where he agreed. He then told me of other NZ-born Tongan males who might be interested and affiliated to *faikava* clubs in West and other parts of Auckland, and passed on my details to them so they could contact me. The second participant was snowballed from the first participant from West Auckland.

This process was followed until all 12 participants had been identified. Times and venues were then organised at the comfort of the participants. Nine out of the 12 participants asked that the *talanoa* sessions be carried out near the Universities where they were studying and one at a nearby café as it was closer to his workplace. Two requested that *talanoa* be carried out at their homes due to work, family commitments and rugby trainings’.

Table 1
Background of the 12 participants

Participant	Ages	Location	First Language	Church	Alcohol Consumption
K1	20s	West	Tongan	Methodist	X
K2	20s	East	Tongan	Methodist	√
K3	10s	West	Tongan	Methodist	√
K4	20s	South	Tongan	Methodist	√
K5	20s	Central	Tongan	Methodist	√
K6	20s	East	Tongan	Methodist	√
K7	20s	East	Tongan	Methodist	√
K8	20s	South	Tongan	Methodist	√
K10	20s	South	Tongan	Methodist	√
K11	20s	South	English	Methodist	√
K12	20s	Central	Tongan	Methodist	√

Table 1 sets out the background of the 12 participants. As noted, participants were allocated a number (K1, K2...), to ensure confidentiality, in line with AUTEK ethical procedures⁵. As noted in Table 1, all 12 participants were born and raised in New Zealand. The two that were NZ-born Tongan males had been raised and educated in Tonga before coming back to live in New Zealand (K6 & K8). All had attended a *faikava* on a regular basis for at least six months.

⁵ Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Nine participants attended a *faikava* on a weekly basis, whilst three participated on a fortnightly basis (K2, K4 & K7). Three were recruited from the same *faikava* club in West Auckland (K1, K3 & K9), three from one *faikava* club in East Auckland (K2, K6 & K7) and two from the same *faikava* club in Central Auckland (K5 & K12). For South Auckland, three were recruited from the same *faikava* club (K4, K8 & K10) and one was from another club (K11).

All participants had links to the Methodist Parishes under the *Vahefonua Tonga 'o Aotearoa* (Tongan Synod under the MCNZ). All but three participants were currently students at a tertiary institution in Auckland, while one was in his final year in high school. The final two were in the workforce. For all but one, their first language was Tongan, which indicated to me that although born and raised in New Zealand, their families had emphasised the importance of the *lea* and *anga fakatonga*. All but one said they had consumed alcohol. The one who said he hadn't said he was afraid of the consequences, especially on how his parents would react if he did so.

Although the number of cases is small, these 12 participants provided valuable insights into what the participation in the *faikava* meant to them.

Talanoa Faikava – Data Collection

As noted, all participants were asked to decide the times and venues for the *talanoa* to be carried out. Eight were carried out at an office at the university (K1, K3, K4, K6, K7, K8, K11, and K12). Each of these *talanoa* was an average of 40 minutes to 1 hour. After each *talanoa*, participants were given an option to select from a *mea'ofa* (gift) or a free lunch at McDonalds or Burger King. I elected to offer meals rather than petrol vouchers as the sharing of food plays a major role in *tauhi vā* with Tongans or in this case, with the participants who are also students. Each participant opted for the free lunch. Notably, this gift was humbly accepted by the participants for some of whom it was their first meal for that day. One participant asked to have his *talanoa* at a café (K2) because this was closer to his workplace. As with the *faikava*, coffee was purchased to begin the *talanoa*.

Three participants invited me to their homes. A free-flowing *talanoa* was carried out with K5 in his living room and there were few interruptions. The *talanoa* with K9 was carried out on his balcony. His brother was also present, as he had an interest in what the study was about. However, he did not interrupt the flow of the *talanoa*. The third interview was carried out at home (K10). This had minimal interruptions from his son, but this did not restrain K10 providing an analytical view on his experience of the *faikava* and his views on the future of the *faikava* in New Zealand. For the home interviews, food (pizzas and soft drinks) were offered as a *mea'ofa* for inviting me to their homes. At the same time, I said:

‘...ikai ma’u ha mea ia ko e ki’i mei mā pe ke tokoni ki he lunch ‘a e tamaiki – ‘I don’t have anything special, just some bread to help out with lunch for the kids’.

This statement illustrated my gratitude to them for giving me the time and for allowing me to enter their house and to *talanoa*. All *talanoa* were audio recorded with a voice recorder. I also took notes during all sessions and kept a journal of reflections. As the audio recorder captured the verbal discussion, the notes captured vital information that the audio recorder could not pick up such as the body language, gestures, feelings and emotions. These notes supported me to gain a fuller understanding of the participants’ views. According to Vaioleti (2013), participants feel their information is valued when they see notes are being taken during a *talanoa*. All *talanoa* were carried out in both the Tongan and English languages.

Ethical Considerations

The application for ethics approval for this research project was granted on the 13th February, 2013 (see appendix 1a). Ethics is a vital aspect of conducting research among any people, regardless of the location, ethnicity, age group and/or religious group (Denscombe, 2010). This study required ethical approval due to the direct engagement with human subjects (Neuman, 2011). Participant Information Sheets (see appendix 1b) and Consent forms (see appendix 1c) were explained before, during and after each *talanoa* session, especially the point that participants had the right to withdraw from the *talanoa* at any time. All participants were given a

copy of a consent form to sign to indicate their *’ofa* or love to participate in this study and a *femahino’aki* or an understanding of what the research is about and what is required of them during the research.

De Vaus (2004) proposed that one way participants could be harmed is the failure to honour the promises of confidentiality. Smith (1999) concurs that:

Consent is not so much given for a project or specific set of questions for a person for their credibility. Consent indicates trust and assumption is that the assumption is that the trust will not only be reciprocated but constantly negotiated. (p. 139).

As seen in Table 1, the research participants were protected by using pseudonyms. At the end of *talanoa* sessions, they were informed of this. A few asked whether they could have their *matāpule*⁶ name used. However, to be consistent and to protect the name, village and genealogy and the origin of the *matāpule*, I decided not to use *matāpule* names. Hence the universal use of pseudonyms. Hau’ofa (1994) has commented on the ways Pasifika peoples have been exploited by the western ideas to which they have been exposed, while at the same time trying to protect their ideas and their space within their oceanic world. Hau’ofa (1994) goes on to say in his insightful essay:

Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still; Oceania is us ... we are the sea, we are the ocean ... We must not allow anyone to belittle us again and take away our freedom. (p. 37)

Transcriptions

Knowledge of the local culture, beliefs, values and practices is essential, especially in relation to interpreting data (Latukeyu, 1968). Latukeyu goes on to say that the investigator who fails to correctly interpret the data may indirectly produce incorrect information. I made it a priority to transcribe all 12 *talanoa* myself. My understanding and language competency in both Tongan and English meant that I did not need an outside transcriber and, so in this way, I preserved

⁶ Churchward (1959) defined the term *’matāpule’* as a man of honourable rank and status or a talking chief. It is also defined as ‘a brother in-law or sister in-law’.

confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. As noted earlier, as I transcribed, I was also able to recall and record the body language, gestures and other forms of non-communication immediately after the *talanoa* in a journal.

Transcriptions for all participants were written in the languages that were used during the *talanoa*. Interviews were transcribed within 24 hours of the *talanoa* maintaining the ideas and understandings obtained from the *talanoa* sessions. Draft copies of their transcripts were emailed back to each participant for them to confirm that their content was accurate and complete. I also invited them to add anything else. Returning the transcripts also ensured participants was reassured that their perceptions and experiences from the *faikava* were valued. One asked for some minor changes to his transcript. Participants were informed that they would be contacted via text, call, email, or social media (Facebook) if further assistance from them was required.

Data Analysis – Thematic Analysis

Rubin and Rubin (1995) propose that analysis is an exciting process because ‘you discover themes and concepts embedded throughout your interviews’. I found this to be true. The qualitative analytical method of ‘thematic analysis’ was employed to identify the emerging and reoccurring themes from the *talanoa* sessions. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p.9), “thematic analysis reports the experiences, meanings and the reality of the participants”. The analysis of the data required becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching, reviewing and naming themes.

After transcribing the *talanoa*, step was to read and re-read the transcripts. During these readings, I made my own notes on the margins, using a colour coding system to identify potential themes. A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For this study, several themes were coherent, consistent and distinctive amongst all 12 individual *talanoa*.

After re-reading all transcripts, I would replay the audio recording of the *talanoa* to identify any further themes, ideas, experiences and perceptions of the participants.

Reflections on Data Collection

In summary, several comments were made by the participants for example:

- i. A number of participants recommended carrying out the *talanoa* in the *faikava* session where there would be more and rigorous information and a greater contribution from the kava circle.
- ii. For a majority of the participants, it was their first time sitting down expressing the experiences participating in the *faikava*. One participant believe that participating in the *faikava* was the norms of being Tongan.
- iii. A number of participants asked to replace the pseudonym with their *matāpule* name. It was said that the use of the *matāpule* name would have firstly, given their village or fathers chiefly name justice and secondly, reassured their Tongan identity by honouring their *matāpule* name.
- iv. It was said that there should be a comparison study between Tongan fathers and NZ-born Tongan males participating in the *faikava* as that would possibly initiate discussions on resolving intergenerational issues.

These valuable and valid comments were acknowledged. Furthermore, it was taken into consideration which enabled me to become a better researcher in the future. The phenomenological approach and the *talanoa* research method was used to identify the experiences of NZ-born Tongan males participating in the *faikava* and their perceptions in the maintenance of the *faikava* in the future in New Zealand which is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Findings: The valuing of the faikava

“Palovepi 1:7 – Ko e ‘apasia kia Sihová ko e ‘uluaki me’a ia ‘i he ‘ilo’; Ko e poto’ mo e ako’, ko e vale pē ‘oku ta’etoka’i ia”

“Proverbs 1:7 – The fear of the Lord, is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction” (New International Version)

Introduction

This chapter is divided into three sections, each addressing one of the research questions. Namely, what do NZ-born Tongan males value from participating in the *faikava*; can the *faikava* have a positive influence on social pressures that they may be facing and how do they perceive the future for the *faikava* in New Zealand. Participant comments from the *talanoa* are presented in the way they were shared – either in English or in Tongan followed by the English translation. I begin this section with a brief discussion of participants’ views of when and why they had joined the *faikava*.

Joining the Faikava

When asked when and why they had joined the *faikava*, five said they had first entered a *faikava* with their father or another father figure, whilst another five had entered a *faikava* with their peers, mainly the youth and boys from their church. The remaining two participants had joined the *faikava* with their fathers which were running in their garages every weekend. K5 had his first experience in the *faikava* when he was 15, entering with his father while K1 went with his grandfather when he was 10 years old. Comments made, highlighted very clearly the father-son (integrated) dynamics associated with and fostered by participation together in the *faikava*. They said:

“Got into the faikava buzz when I was 15 with the chief (father) at a family meeting” (K5)

“Na’a ku hū ki he faikavá ‘i he hoku ta’u hongofulu’, koau mo ‘eku kui,’ Na’e ‘omai ai ‘a ‘eku ipu kava keu inu, ka na’a’ ku sio fakamama’u ki he mata ‘eku

kui, ' He na'e 'osi 'ilo 'e au kapau 'e 'ikai teu inu ... mate kuo pau [kata]. Ka kiate au 'oku ou lata pē he 'alu ki he faikava ...' (K1)

"I entered the faikava at the age of 10 years old with my Grandfather and when I sat down I got a cup of kava to drink. When I got it, I tried to keep my distance so I don't have to drink it but I had a feeling that if I didn't drink it he would probably give me a beating [laugh]. But to me, I really enjoy going to the faikava" (K1).

"Ko e 'eku 'uluaki hū ki he faikava'i he 'eku ta'u tahafā' koe'uhi ko e fakatamaiki mo e tamaiki tangata' 'i he potungāue talavou 'i ho mau siasī' 'i he uēsite tokoua..." (K9)

"I first entered the faikava at the age of 14 years because the youth boys at church out west were always going to it" (K9)

"Yea toks, I pretty much grew up at a household that ran faikava sessions every weekend" (K12)

Both K12 and K11 said their fathers had taken them to the *faikava* because they wanted to help them connect with the Tongan language and, to learn how to socialise in the Tongan way:

"... My Dad wanted me to drink kava instead of drinking alcohol, because he shared with me how alcohol had affected his life, when he was young. That's why he wanted me to drink kava because he didn't want me to go through the same path..." (K11)

"... It was out of nowhere toks when my Dad told me to sit next to him in the faikava koniseti (concert) at church. Bro I didn't do anything just sat there and drank and listened to a different side of my Dad. It was like my Dad jokes after all you know, no more Mister macho man like he is at home with me and the brothers .. After the koniseti, on our way home, it was like 3 o'clock in the morning, he told me like how he wants me to learn the Tongan language and culture and the faikava sessions because it will help me improve on my Tongan..." (K12)

K12 also added that he thought it was a real 'Tongan thing' to go to drink kava;

"I just thought it was a Tongan thing to drink kava because most Tongans do it [drink kava]. So yea thought I was just following tradition and culture, maybe yes maybe no (Laugh)" (K12)

K9 who had also been taken to the *faikava* sessions by his father from an early age, said his father's reasons were that he wanted to keep his son away from social pressures that Tongan

youth today are facing. Three participants said they attended a *faikava* session on a fortnightly basis:

“I just go every two weeks when I can especially if there is family or church stuff is happening toks, but yeah toks, every two weeks, don’t want to get to addicted aye” (K7)

“If I’m free like if all my responsibilities are done, then I’ll go and drink kava and chill with the boys, if not, stay home and keep warm and watch rugby all night” (K4)

The other nine said they usually participated on a weekly basis. For K3, Friday night was the time he liked to sit in the *faikava* - not to drink but to chill with the boys, after the long week’s work:

“I go every Friday night after work just to kick back with the boys. Don’t go to the *faikava* because of the kava because that’s straight nasty but the socialising with the boys and the old men, sing songs and just chill” (K3)

“the *faikava* to me is very therapeutic, just go after a long week at work and just chill with the men, sing songs, talanoa, laugh at some funny stories... to me, it is better than going to the pub, drinking alcohol you know... just go to the *faikava* every Friday or Saturday night and just relax” (K10)

With regard to the length of time this group spent at the *faikava*, all participants said that they had on more than one occasion stayed in a *faikava* for more than five hours.

The valuing of the Faikava

Responses to the first research question, reaffirmed that the *faikava* was a space where the Tongan language and culture were reaffirmed and, connections and reconnections made with the local Tongan communities. These responses are set in two parts; cultural space and resources.

Pukepuke Fonua (Holding of the Land)

When asked ‘why do you go to the *faikava*?’ six responded by using the term ‘*pukepuke fonua*’. This term encapsulates the ideal of preserving the Tongan land, people, and culture. ‘*Pukepuke*

fonua was so often said, that I decided to ask each participant what they understood by the term and what this meant to them. While there were some variations, they all said the term gave them a sense of their Tongan identity. They said the term *fonua* signified more than just the land:

“I go to the faikava to pukepuke the fonua” (K1)

“Ko hono mo’oni, koe fo’i lea ko e pukepuke fonua, ko e fo’i lea ia ‘oku ngāue’aki ‘e he mātua I he ilo kava tau tefito ki he taimi ‘oku fai ai ha talitali malanga...” (K4)

“To be honest, the phrase ‘pukepuke fonua, is a phrase that is used by the elderly men in the kava ceremony especially during the Sunday kava...” (K4)

Four of the six participants that used the term had a fair understanding of its meaning. K4 made reference to the late Professor ‘Eveli Hau’ofa (1994) who argued that the *fonua*, like the *faikava* meant connection to his Tongan identity. He said:

“Pukepuke fonua is more than land you know ... but to me as a NZ-born Tongan it means a lot more than land ... Pukepuke fonua means holding on to our cultural values and traditions ... holding that piece of Tonga, culture and identity ... You know ‘kava is the connection between me and my Tongan culture” (K4)

K2 summed up the notion of *pukepuke fonua* applying what I saw to be an in-depth and spiritual and cultural perspective as follows:

“Kiate au mo ‘eku fakakaukau’, ko e pukepuke fonua’, ko e tauhi ‘etau me’a fakafonua..., ko e tangata Tonga’ kiate au, ‘oku hangē ko e ngaahi lea ‘iloa ‘i he sila ‘o Tonga’, “Ko e ‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku tofi’a”, pea kiate au mo ‘eku fakakaukau’, ‘oku ‘uluaki ‘a e ‘Otua’, ua hotau tofi’a’ pea toki hoko ki ai hotau fonua’. Kiate au ko e toki kakato hoto Tonga’ ‘o kapau ‘oku ‘te fakaongoongo ki he tokotaha na’e foaki ki ai hotau fonua’ ‘a ia ko e ‘Otua’. Ko ‘etau kau mo e ‘Otua’, pea ‘oku tala ai hotau Tonga’. Neongo na’e fanau’i au ‘i Nu’usila’ni, ka ‘oku ou polepole ‘i hoku Tonga’ kiate au ko e faikava, pē ‘a e feitu’u ‘oku ou pehē ‘oku lava ketau pukepuke ai hotau ‘ulungaanga’ mo ‘etau lea’ pea tala ai hotau Tonga’...” (K2)

“To me and my understanding, pukepuke fonua is to preserve what is our Tongan culture. A Tongan person to me is similar to the words in the Tongan coat of arms, ‘God and Tonga is my inheritance’, so to me and my understanding, God is always first, second to that is our inheritance which is our land, our Tongan people and culture ... and when we preserve our Tongan culture, then our inheritance is complete ... Personally, when we preserve our Tongan culture, like the Tongan culture we are then blessed by

our Almighty God ... To me, even though I am born and raised in New Zealand, I am still proud to call myself a Tongan. I am not a Kiwi. The only difference is the environment that we are in, but overall, to me, in relation to his talanoa, the faikava is the only place that I believe that we can preserve and maintain our Tongan values, language and beliefs..." (K2)

Throughout the *talanoa* sessions, the term '*fonua*' was often used in conjunction with the term *anga fakatonga*'. Each participant mentioned different aspects of the *anga fakatonga* and how this was shown. These included the *faa'i kavei koula* of *faka'apa'apa* (respect), *mamahi'i me'a* (willing heart), *tauhi vaha'a* (maintaining good relations) and *loto tō* (humility) which were linked by the late HRH Queen Salote Tupou III to the Christian principles of *'ofa* (love) and *fetokoni'aki* (reciprocity). However, one participant said that there was a change in the *anga fakatonga* within Tongans born in New Zealand and in the homeland:

"Mo'oni 'a e lau 'a Māhina 'oku pehē, to'ukai mo hono lohu. 'Oku hangē pē ko 'etau anga fakatonga' 'oku liliu pē 'i he taimi kotoa, mahalo pē 'e sai ki ha taha kae kovi ia ki ha ni'ihī ..." (K5)

"I agree with Māhina (Dr 'Okusitino Māhina, 2004) where he stated (in his book Tongan Proverbs) that nothing is static, everything changes within time. Similar to our *anga fakatonga*, everything is changing all the time; it may be good for one person whilst not good for others ..." (K5).

"... but others as you know, don't care or don't bother you know like passing on that Tongan culture ... it is important ... because if you lose that, then you have lost a lot ... we have a beautiful culture, tradition, language that needs to be preserved through any cultural practice like the faikava and other social gatherings" (K4)

"... Ko e mamani ko'eni' 'oku tu'u mo liliu ma'u pē. Ko e faka'amu' ke 'oua 'e pehē mo hotau anga fakatonga' koe'uhi 'e faka'ofa 'a 'etau fanau mo 'enau fānau ..." (K9)

"...The *anga fakatonga* is consistently changing overtime. The hope is to make sure our *anga fakatonga* is not changing because the children and grandchildren would not be able to recognise how important their being Tongan is" (K9)

Lea Fakatonga (Tongan Language)

As noted in Chapters 2 and 3, there is a real concern amongst the Tongan community that the speaking and the understanding of the Tongan language in New Zealand is at risk. The fear is that if there is no emphasis on language maintenance, then English will become the dominant

language for Tongan peoples. K5 said a main reason he joined the *faikava* was to keep learning and speaking the Tongan language:

“... Since I started toks you know like I will slowly pick up some Tongan words from the talanoa between the men and the songs and just slowly use the words in a conversation ... and yea since then I have just been speaking Tongan not only in the *faikava* but also at home, school, church...” (K5)

“... English was my first language toks – wasn’t until I got to hang out with other Tongans where I slowly picked up the language. My Dad always had his *faikava* sessions at his garage so every weekend I will go and just sit and chill. From there onwards, I can speak not fluent Tongan but it is good enough to pull a sentence together ... It is important toks like for me that is what tells our Tongan” (K11)

All participants were adamant that participation in the *faikava* had helped them reinforce and maintain the Tongan language. As noted in Table 1, Tongan was the first language for all but one of the participants. One referred to the use of metaphors (*heliaki*) in the Tongan communication style as rather difficult to come to grips with. However, all agreed that understanding the use of metaphors had been another way of learning and reinforcing their Tongan language skills. As noted in Chapter 3, Kaeppler (2003, p.157) defines *heliaki* as an aesthetic concept that can be translated as “not going straight” or “to say one thing but mean another”. The use of *heliaki* is conceptualised by never going straight to the point by alluding to points indirectly through the unfolding of metaphors and allusions (Kaeppler, 2003, p.157). On this point K10 said:

“... the beauty of going to the *faikava* (is) because the old men can tell a story not needing foul language because the men can make you laugh or cry and even vomit in a *faikava* session using *heliaki* or metaphors toks...”

Cultural Classroom

Five likened the *faikava* to a cultural classroom where they learnt social, educational, political and cultural matters and discussed current issues. Institutionally, it can be said, that the *faikava* had become a cultural classroom outside of mainstream education, and outside of home and church also:

“Oku ou pehē ‘oku hangē ‘a e faikava’ ko ha loki ako’, ‘oku ‘ikai ko e ‘alu ki he lautohi ka ‘oku hangē pe ko e loki ako’ koe’uhi ke ako ‘a e ngaahi me’a lalahi mei ai. Ka ko ‘eku sio ‘a’aku’, ‘oku ‘i ai ‘a e ngaahi me’a ‘i he faikava’ ‘oku ‘ikai ke lava ia ‘o ako’i ‘i ‘api, pe ko e siasi’, pē ko ‘apiako...’ (K6)

“I likened the faikava to a classroom, not in a going to school type classroom, but it is still a place of learning, to me the faikava is a classroom setting where you would learn new and different things which you will not learn from any other institutions like home, church and school...” (K6)

For all, the *faikava* was the place where Tongan knowledge, values, and the Tongan language were passed on by the elders to the younger Tongan generations. K9 said that he always learnt something new at the *faikava* whether it was new Tongan words, Tongan metaphors, Tongan songs or views on social, political and economic matters:

“I think it is solid toks to have the mātu’a (elderly Tongan men) at the faikava because the young guys learn from the old men and listen to the stories that the old men tell and they should be able to click to see which stories are good to share and tell to the other boys you know ...”(K9)

To this group, the *faikava* was a place where Tongans shared knowledge in what they termed unique ‘which only Tongan men know how to do’. It was clear that the *faikava* fostered the ‘Tongan art of socialising’ and the ‘Tongan art of witting’. For example, K3 said:

“There will always be a man in a faikava session who will either help you or mock you in a good way meaning he will help you improve your vocab and understand the words you say ... they would teach you what to say and what not to say in a faikava. The faikava to me is what makes me and the brothers born in New Zealand Tongans you know ... but they make it mālie (enjoyable) and mafana (warmth) for you to believe and to take interest and if you don’t take interest they will tend to take the mickey out of you...” (K3)

In K9’s view:

“... Meimei ki he fanau Tonga’ ‘oku nau ‘alu ‘o inukava pe tenau sio ai ki he to’onga ‘a e mātu’a’, te nau poto ai ‘i he feohi mo e kamata’i ha talanoa ‘oku mālie ... ko e faikava’ ‘oku lava ia ke ako’i ha tamasi’i ke poto he feohi mo e fakatamaiki ‘o lava ia ke nau maheni mo ha tamaiki mei ‘uta mo e ngaahi feitu’u kehekehe ... hangē kapau te ke ‘alu ki ha kakai te nau fakakata atu pē teke fakakata mai ...’ (K9)

“... It is believed that the Tongan children who attend the faikava and sit there talk, drink and interact with the elderly men can get a sense of feeling Tongan when I socialise by talking and instigating talanoa like it is interesting... The faikava can nurture a person in becoming a very sociable person and a person that can socially interact with any person whether they are from Tonga or in New Zealand” (K9)

K10 highlighted the significance of oral traditions in knowledge exchange with tradition.

He noted how the elderly incorporated traditional methods of communication into the *faikava*:

“... But that’s the main reason why I likened the concept of the faikava to a place of learning, sharing and caring. You know we see it with education they are starting to become interested in oral traditions; it is not always about the written word, now they are looking at the traditional kind of stuff to become more incorporated into the education system...” (K10)

Knowledge and information was shared in many ways and forms in the *faikava*, through for example, art and music, comedy and acting, *pakipaki* (critical discussion) and *talanoa fakalielia* (indecent discussion) each of which is desired.

Art of Music – Comedy – Oratory

Music plays a pivotal role in the *anga fakatonga* and in the *faikava*. Not surprisingly, these participants said the addition of *hiva kakala* and acoustic and electrical instruments had been a significant contribution to the learning as well as the entertainment they had engaged in the *faikava*. Churchward (1959, p.225) defines the *hiva kakala* as a love song and in a number of love songs, the *kakala* refers to the beautiful and natural smell that certain fragrant flowers have such as Frangipani and Gardenia.

As noted in Chapter 3, the *faikava* was an establishment where numerous musical reggae bands were found in New Zealand and the United States of America. One participant played a musical instrument, and had joined in the entertainment but the others said they were content to listen and sing the traditional and contemporary songs:

“... Toks sometimes when I try sing along to the hiva that the men sing and how leo ua [out of tune] I am, I still try to sing or just make up my own lyrics to the song like that ... Katinia song ... ouaaa ifo [too good] buzz...” (K12)

“... We just you know play music, drink kava, talanoa about a lot of things, but because none of us could play any instruments, we just play old school Tongan music on the stereo...” (K11)

“Listening, singing and learning these traditional songs toks was another way of learning the Tongan language. Like when you listen to the songs by Queen Salote like the Otumotu and Hala Kuo Papa poems, you hear some old words that is not used in everyday conversation – only in the faikava is when you hear the use of old, metaphoric words and terms” (K1)

Several participants noted that the *mātu’a* became comedians, telling jokes and stories that had never been heard before:

“... the feohi (socialising) in the faikava is tika (awesome) with the mātu’a, especially when hear some out of jokes and stories toks...” (K2)

Another two participants said:

“...some of the mātu’a will just take the mickey out of someone in the faikava while everyone just sits back and laugh about it ... so yea don’t get the mātu’a started because they can make you laugh but tear you apart at the same time [laugh]” ... (K1)

“... if there was no laughter at the faikava toks then it would be straight up boring toks” (K7)

Pakipaki (Critical Discussion)

The *faikava* also featured *pakipaki* referred to a kava session predominantly carried out by elderly men who come together and debate a particular topic or current issue. These subjects range from Bible scriptures and youth suicide through to sporting events. *Pakipaki* involves in-depth *talanoa* where the use of metaphors to express the views and ideas abound. K4 said he had attended one *pakipaki* and had been fascinated by the various ways and techniques members used to get a point across:

“... The pakipaki for me is usually where I go to listen and understand. I learn more in the pakipaki even if it is good or bad meanings because the men have different perspectives on it. You know people are surprised on the amount of

knowledge of what the men have when they come together and pakipaki on what the malanga is on about ... you know for me, I like the pakipaki ... “basically the pakipaki is my church and classroom” that’s when I go to church and learn ...” (K4)

K5 said that the *faikava* that he is affiliated with, the *mātu’a* usually engaged in a *pakipaki* before the music and the entertainment begins and how the lighter discussions and entertainment will carry on for the rest of the night. K5 remarked strongly on the support and encouragement that the *mātu’a* had given him to participate in the *pakipaki*:

“...it’s good because there is me and this other NZ-born Tongan at the kalapu as well ... I try to paki aye ... like the men encourages me to say what it means to me and yea” (K5)

K2 regarded the *pakipaki* as an opportunity for young Tongans to listen and enjoy the sharing of stories and the life-experiences of the *mātu’a*:

“the ‘pakipaki’ you know when you get involved in that, for me, it is a place where I can sit down and listen, I love to listen ... you know listening to the sharing and the opening up of the men and their personal experiences and how God has come across and helped them in certain situations... that for me I find is one of my favourite ones...” (K2)

Talanoa Fakalielia (Indecent Discussion)

A number agreed that some ways of *talanoa* were inappropriate or, in *faikava* terminology, *talanoa fakalielia*⁷. One believed the *talanoa fakalielia* made the *faikava* that much more exciting:

“... Some of the *faikava* are those ones the *mātu’a* just pull something out of your arse and talk about it - but there are some stuff in the normal *faikava* that are true and there are some stuff that you can tell that are straight lies and just go with the flow...mainly to keep the *talanoa* and feohi (socialise) mālie and mafana...” (K3).

“Yea some of the men that come to the *faikava*, they tell jokes and that but for me that’s how you learn the art of comedy, ko ‘enau fakaoli pe a nautolu [referring to the elderly men being funny] though it is not on purpose what they do, they are like the crowd pleasers, one of the main reasons why I wanted to

⁷ Churchward (1959, p.62) defined *fakalielia* as ‘abominable, abhorrent, vile, disgusting, nauseating or indecent.

go faikava is to learn the anga fakatonga and learn the responsibilities that I am supposed to do as a young Tongan man ...” (K6)

Four said that it was clear that in most *faikava* sessions that they have participated in, specific *mātu’a* had a role as instigating *talanoa fakalielia*. From a *faikava* perspective, *talanoa fakalielia* is a form of Tongan speech where the *mātu’a heliaki’i* expresses their views using metaphorical speech towards the *tou’a*. As noted in the literature review, the role of the *tou’a* (kava server) is most usually a female. Helu (1993) describes the *faikava* as a method of dating because it provides the opportunity for a couple to talk while being accompanied by kava drinkers:

“...the beauty of going to the faikava is because the old men can tell a story not needing foul language because the men can make you laugh or cry and even vomit in a faikava session using heliaki or metaphors toks...” (K10)

Participants were asked if they had any knowledge of the meaning of the term of ‘*heliaki*’ and if they had attempted to utilise or *heliaki’i* a *talanoa* in the *faikava*. One said he liked to sit in the *faikava* and listen to the men *heliaki’i* a *talanoa mālie* towards the *tou’a*. The use of *heliaki* and the *talanoa fakalielia* towards a *tou’a* can be constructed as flirting. However, going overboard with the *talanoa fakalielia* can lead to severe problems such as sexual harassment.

I asked the participants whether the presence of the *tou’a* was a reason for them participating. Four were undecided on this point, while one said that when he gets an opportunity he uses pick-up lines to the *tou’a*, as a means of being flirtatious:

“... Yea bro, the *tou’a* is like a piece of eye-candy in the faikava toks [Laugh] and it just sparks the faikava you know makes it alive ... you know those fakalielia lines that the *mātu’a* use to try get the attention of the *tou’a* ... like I’ll pick up on it and use it the faikava sessions where there is a *tou’a* ouah! [Laugh]...” (K5)

Reconnecting

A number described how they had made new friendships in the *faikava*, especially with other NZ-born Tongans and Tongan-born men. One said he had reconnected with his Uncle and cousins:

“... it is funny especially when I went back home and told my Mum if she knew a man called Siale⁸ and Mum is like yes we second cousins and it is like what the hell [Laugh] no wonder why he always picks on me...” (K3)

Another laughing, recounted how one day when he was stranded in the middle of nowhere when his car ran out of gas, the driver who had stopped to help him and taken him home was one of the boys from the *faikava*:

“I was *faikava* in the bushes (referring to a village far away from town) and I took my parents van and I knew the *utu* (gas) was all goods to make to and back from the *faikava* ... When I was driving back home, the gas was finished but lucky I knew and saw one of the brothers in the *faikava* we were at so I texted to come and give me a hand in finding some gas so I can get back home ... I was scared because I thought I wouldn't thought I'll be able to get home in time for church before my parents finds out. Man the van died at Hoi so we pushed it from Hoi to Lapaha and Lapaha is known for the place for a fight with new people. Like I hardly knew him but because the *faikava* was a place where we got to know each other, he helped get some gas and got me home in time for church [Laugh] ...” (K8)

Each also described how they believed the *faikava* had reaffirmed their place in the New Zealand Tongan community and reconnected them to the homeland, for as the majority of *faikava* sessions today also include small fundraising activities for individuals, families, churches, communities, scholarships and charities to name a few. Reports are that *kalapu kava* Tonga have funded educational scholarships for Tongan students to New Zealand, ranging from \$500-\$2000.

All participants said they contributed financially to these fundraisers and, also to paying the *tou'a* for her time. On this point, three strongly believed in the concept of 'what goes around comes around':

“For me, I would rather spend up to \$40 to \$50 in the *faikava* if it is for a *feinga pa'anga* (Fundraising) or for the *tou'a*. Like the *palangi* (European) saying *toks*, what goes comes around and to me that's my way of showing my 'ofa and my *faka'apa'apa* (respect) for someone that is in need because when I will be in need, then they [*faikava* men] would *tokoni* (support) to me as well ...” (K8)

“New Zealand is the land of milk and honey like if all the men contribute to a person that comes from Tonga looking for financial needs for his family, and that person goes back and changes that money to *pa'anga* (Tongan

⁸ Siale is a pseudonym due to ethical considerations

currency)... it does a lot for him and his village. Like with my kalapu we can contribute \$2000 per person to help him and his family and village, church ...” (K4)

However, not all comments were positive. A small number of negative comments were raised:

“like the kalapu will put a lot of money more than they should for their families you know ... and spending all their time and money in that kalapu kava Tonga while their kids are at home starving and being faka’ofa (pitiful)... no food on the table so yea that’s my only disadvantage...” (K4)

Whilst further research is warranted, the *faikava* was valued by all participants as a means of cultural reinforcement, rejuvenation, maintenance, identity and security.

Faikava as a Positive Influence on Social Pressures

Mostly, answers to question two support literature and anecdotal evidence that joining the *faikava* could and had played a positive role in helping Tongan youth deal with social pressures such as alcohol consumption and affiliation to youth gangs.

Diversion to Alcohol

As noted in Table 1, 11 of this group had consumed alcohol on more than one occasion. The one who had not consumed alcohol said that it was the way that he had been raised. He did not drink alcohol out of respect for his father and grandfather and what they had gone through during their lifetime. All participants believed that the *faikava* was and could be an alternative to drinking alcohol. In most cases, fathers had had an influential role in deterring these participants from alcohol consumption, which is a significant finding:

“.. Yeah, Dad is the one that takes me around everywhere to drink kava, anywhere he drinks kava, and I’ll be there. He told me that it is good because same reasons, it keeps me away from alcohol ... he told me that he does not

want me to go down the same path as he did when he drank alcohol instead of kava ... at my age drinking alcohol the one day and you could die the next day ...” (K9)

“Personally, I see drinking kava better than drinking alcohol ... I think it is safer, whereas drinking alcohol excessively is fun at times but when it gets crazy, you don’t know what could happen, you could be dead. As for the faikava, you have fun, get drunk but at the same time, you are safe because you get drunk at the same place, whereas alcohol you go from there to there and you don’t remember how you got home and yea... That’s why I think the faikava is too good ... safe! Like you’re with the men at the church hall and you know from the communities and with the boys so yea nothing wrong tends to happen because it is a safe environment ...” (K7)

“... So yea for me, the faikava slowly and steadily kind of prevented me from drinking alcohol ...” (K5)

“Faikava is way better because you don’t get intoxicated like you do with alcohol” (K8)

Notably, all participants stated very firmly that they wanted to *tauhi vā lelei* (maintain good relations) between themselves and the *mātu’a*. In their view, this group knew that they could make their families happy if they drank kava and avoided alcohol:

“...faikava is safer you know, like you know, when you drink kava there will be no regrets on anything. But when I drank alcohol I wake up every morning with a lot of regrets and a massive hangover...” (K11)

It was interesting that three participants said that often when they fell into trouble or difficulties from being too intoxicated from alcohol, these were the times they reflected back to the Tongan culture.

“I been in trouble quite a few times because of getting too intoxicated with alcohol at town with the boys, but now it’s different especially with kava, more sleep town and empty stomachs the next morning [laugh]” (K2)

“Like I know for me and some of the boys, when we drink with the boys, everything is all goods, it is only when we get into trouble with the law is the only time we think back home to our culture, family, values” (K9)

“Yea bro, not good when you’re alcohol drunk because I should know that if drinking alcohol, the consequences is not going to be pretty” (K4)

The majority drew a clear distinction between and had a very good understanding of the differences in socialising with those who drank alcohol and those who drank kava. K4 said:

“There is no horsing buzz in the faikava toks ... when I drink alcohol I tend to get all hyper and getting into the buzz where I am all macho and have that mentality that I am toughest guy out there, but the buzz you get from the faikava surroundings you kind of relax buzz like you just want to chill and kick back with the brothers, fathers and uncles from the church and the community with the music and stories ... I used to drink a lot of alcohol but now it is different because I am a bit older you know like we drank alcohol as an excuse to do anything really you know like I thought I was unstoppable you know do that, do this, start-up fights, that’s what most youth gangs do really, use alcohol as an excuse to get crazy, be unstoppable ...” (K4)

Youth Gangs

In common with the alcohol sub-theme, all participants believed that the *faikava* could be used as an initiative that could prevent Tongan youth from getting involved in delinquent activities. Four acknowledged that they had been affiliated to youth gang(s) earlier. K11 reflected on the positive outcomes he had experienced since leaving “his old ways”.

“... I was in a youth gang toks but now I don’t associate with those people anymore. When you drink kava, you just mellow and yea you are just away from the alcohol, so yea kava will help them, most of the boys that I use to kick it within the gangs, most of them have changed you know, don’t have anything to do with alcohol and the gangs anymore so yea. It is just with any gangster that want to drink kava, they won’t want to be a gangster you know they would definitely want to change because the socialisation in the faikava is different, especially in America, where the Tongan men are gathering the youth out from the street to come to drink kava and I told my cousins that kava is all good because it has changed me and will change you, you know you don’t have to drink kava but just sit in in the faikava. 80% of the boys that I use to drink alcohol with are now drinking kava, and there’s no more problems with the boys where there used to be a lot of chaos and havoc while drinking alcohol” (K11)

K4 was in agreement. He said he had been initiated into youth gangs because at that time it was the only way he knew how to have fun. Attending the *faikava* had helped him realise some of the consequences of becoming involved in delinquent activities and how this impacts on his family and also the families of the victims. He said the *faikava* had helped him change his ways:

“The faikava changed my attitude from a little shit on the roads in Mangere to becoming more culturally active at home and church and in education - it actually changed my mind-frame of thinking, like when I was in a youth gang, hurting someone was the prize you know, but when I am hurting someone, the hurting does not end there but carries on not through that person but through that person’s family like if that person ends up on hospital, the time taken out on that person’s family is precious you know ... like the mother and father might be struggling financially, yet they have to take time off to stay with their son in hospital you know ...” (K4)

Another participant concluded that:

“... Ko e fu’u ‘apiako hia neu ‘alu ki ai, na’e ‘i ai pe ‘a e tamaiki tangata ai ne nau lue takai ‘i loto ‘apiako ‘o nau fakahia takai hangē ‘oku nau kau ‘i ha kengi’ koe’uhi ‘oku ‘ikai nau ‘ilo ‘enautolu ha toe me’a ke fai ke ma’u ai ‘enau fiefia’. Ka ko ‘eku sio ‘a’aku mei he tafaki fakatonga’, ko e fiefia tatau ai pe ‘oku ou ma’u mei he faikava... ” (K2)

“... at a notorious school like the school that I went to, it was bound to be a lot of the boys that will walk around thinking that they are in a gang because it was the only way they knew to have fun, but I guess from a cultural perspective, that is the same sort of fun that I can get in the faikava ...” (K2)

Binge kava-drinking

As anticipated, not all information shared about the *faikava* was positive. As with any alcoholic or narcotic beverage, kava could be consumed excessively. All participants said they had attended *faikava* sessions until the early hours of the morning – much to the anger and annoyance of their families. Seven said they enjoyed drinking kava till the early hours in the morning because this kept them in a lethargic state. However, all 12 stated that they had experienced minor and/or major consequences due to excessive kava consumption.

“... I think if you drink too much and don’t look after your body, it can have a problem but to me there is one thing I use kava for is when I am sick or can’t sleep so I’ll go to the garage where there will be kava so yea, have a few and then have a tika az sleep...” (K12)

“Yea I think the kava is being abused with the drinking all night. It is already at a point where the all-nighters at the faikava can lead to problems and challenges at home, especially if it is a regular point - you know at home, if the father ‘ahoia [referring to someone or a group or drink kava all night] they will sleep for a long time to re-gain that energy back; that’s why it is important to get their main priorities out of the way first like do the chores at home and

also the church commitments are met and then I go faikava; so many priorities with home, church and school and then faikava..."(K6)

Four said their excessive consumption of kava on a weekly basis had resulted in them attending church 'hung-over'. On this point, two participants stated very strongly that it is up to the individual to leave when they know they have had enough, especially because every person has different *fatongia* (duties) to perform the next day (K1, K10). K10 observed that every father and older brothers who are *faikava* drinkers have a sense of *fatongia ke fua* (duties to be carried out) for their children, wife, church and community. For example:

"It is really up to the faikava person toks, everyone has priorities and those priorities should be carried out first" (K1).

"I guess they are putting their faikava properties first over their families ... One can only assume on what impact it has on one's family. You know the men are more into the faikava than taking their kids to a rugby game, you know because when I take my kid to his rugby game, you see the white people's family come with the parents and grandparents to support their child. You know we see men drinking kava on a day-to-day basis where after work, home has a feed, shower then drink kava, then sleep, feed, shower then kava ... so yeah I guess once or twice a week is alright..." (K10).

Whilst warranting further research, this group acknowledged the *faikava* as being a positive influence, which could turn lives away from youth gangs and alcohol consumption. The effect of 'time' spent at the kava was not discussed in-depth and again warrants further research.

Does faikava have a future in New Zealand?

The third research question on the future of the *faikava* in New Zealand generated considerable discussion including a weighing up of the pros and cons. All 12 confidently believed the *faikava* did have a future in New Zealand. However, factors which would influence this included questions about who could pass on the knowledge, the role of the church in promoting the *faikava*, whether kava would be replaced by alcohol and, the financial related costs.

Passing on the knowledge

As noted by Latukefu (1968), traditions and knowledge are transmitted orally through story-telling, and the *faikava* is an exemplary venue for sharing music and story-telling, knowledge and genealogies. Furthermore, it is the *mātu'a* who have shared this knowledge:

Three expressed anxiety about what might happen in the future once their fathers (and other elders) passed on. Who would have the knowledge? Would kava drinking persist (K3)? Or would it be replaced by alcohol? (K7).

“I think it is important to have the elderly men in the *faikava* because they have knowledge of the Tongan culture that we would like to know and pass on to our younger generation. But I am fearful that once the elderly men have passed on this world, then what? ...” (K12)

One even said that he only attends the *faikava* because of the *feohi* (socialising) with the *mātu'a*:

“The older men kind of keep control and harmony in the *faikava* hence why I enjoy the company with *mātu'a*...” (K10)

“...like some *faikava* have *mātu'a* there it makes it not only entertaining but also *fakalata* (feel at home) and you know because of that, it just makes you want to keep going to the *faikava*...but you got to remember you only *tufi a e mea oku lelei* (take what is good – Laugh)...” (K3)

Four said that, realistically, the *faikava* might not survive as a cultural practice:

“I have a real fear that we will lose a lot of our traditional stuff, maybe the *faikava* might stay but I mean the *talanoa* that occurs in the *faikava*, we see it already that the *faikava* are not talking as much due to the fact that after each song, drink, song, drink, and so on and so on ... so yeah, I guess the way the males communicate and *talanoa* could change, maybe, maybe not, time will tell but I have experienced it ... *talanoa* being the medium of the *faikava*, hence why I enjoy going to the church one, because even though there is *tā me'a* (acoustic band) but there is a time where *talanoa* does take place, but you can see the change when the young ones from Tonga come to the *faikava*, they are not interested in the oral traditions, history and yeah, I am bit wary about it in the *faikava* you know, it could be like the boys just go for a piss up you know it won't be as meaningful as it is supposed to be so yeah ... it won't be like the classroom setting, it will be like a kava bar so yeah I guess it could be very sad in the future, that's just my impression of younger Tongans from Tonga who are not interested

in the oral traditions but more interested in the economic development and trying to make Tonga more financially stable but nothing about the fonua” (K10)

One summed up the issue with the words it’s now ‘up to us’ and how it was now his responsibility to teach and pass on the Tongan culture and language to his kids and grandchildren:

“... Umm guess that would depend on me and you bro, like for me bro, if I am able to see and get what is good out of the faikava, imagine what we can do to our children and grandchildren and the future generation and you know for me the faikava I will do what my Dad did to me and just keep nagging to speak Tongan and take him [son and grandchildren] to the faikava and hopefully he would be able to pick up some good stuff, what you reckon?...” (K9).

K12 agreed with these words:

“By teaching our young ones on the importance of the faikava and how important it is, at the same time ... let them know about the mālie and mafana of the faikava ...like knowledge I gain from my fathers, church men, kalapu kava Tonga we are expected to pass that on to our younger generation - you just don’t hold it to yourself, we pass it on, they pass it on, so on and so forth ...” (K12).

Impact of the Church

All participants said that the church (in this study the Siasi Metotisi Tonga ‘o Aotearoa)⁹ would have a significant impact on where and how, and if, the *faikava* was practiced in the future:

“The church is the place where all Tongans go to and I guess we see it now that everything we do as Tongans like with our language, culture, values and traditions are all practiced at the church so yea, I believe that the church will have an important role to play in the maintenance of the faikava in the future” (K1)

“Kiate au mo ‘eku fakakaukau’, ka faifaiange’ pea mole meiate kitautolu ‘etau mātu’a’, mahalo ‘e ‘ikai ketau toe inukava ‘o hangē ko ‘etau inukava he aho’ni’ ka kiate au, ko ‘eku fakakaukau’ kapau ‘e tokoni mai ‘a e ngaahi siasi’ ke fepoupouaki mo e to’utupu’ ‘i hono pukepuke hotau anga fakafonua’ ‘i he founga ‘o e faikava’. Pea ‘oku ou tui fakapapau ko e kaha’u lelei tetau hoko atu ki ai’. ‘Oku tonu foki ke kau mai ‘a e ngaahi mātu’a’ ‘i he ‘aho’ni’ ‘i hono

⁹ NZ Methodist Church – Tongan Synod

fakahoko ha ngaahi fatongia, ke tala ai hotau 'ulungaanga' mo hotau Tonga' ketau laukau'aki..." (K4).

"To me and my understanding, if one day there will be fathers to transmit the knowledge, probably we will not faikava like we are faikava today. But to me, I strongly believe that if the church is able to preserve the Tongan culture through the faikava all will be good. However, there is a need to teach our young ones as soon as possible to ensure they are able to carry out the roles, duties and obligations in the future..." (K4)

As the church is undoubtedly the hub for Tongans where it provides a sense of community, one participant referred to the MCNZ playing an integral part in not only the maintenance and reinforcement of the *faikava* but also the *anga fakatonga*.

"...the church is pretty much where all Tongans go to even if it's not for the lotu [referring to the church], maybe even just to inukava (drink kava) and chill so it is like our second home ay toks. So yea, if we continue what we are doing now and make the church the hub for Tongans to socialise and lotu, and then I am sure that the faikava will be good in the future..." (K3)

"Yea toks, our [MCNZ] church will be strong in maintaining the faikava in the future especially for our younger generation... for example, like the 'apitanga's (church camps) toks the Easter and Labour weekends where we all go to inukava and chill and relax in the long weekends" (K7)

K6 drew attention to the fact that not all denominations supported the use of kava or the *faikava*. The Catholic Church and the LDS Church have spoken against this quite forcefully. He said:

"The church plays a big role in the future of the faikava, if you realise, Mormon and Catholic churches do not faikava as much as us Meto (Methodists) and you can see the effects it has on the youth you know they do not see themselves as Tongans ... so yea the churches will play a big part of the faikava in the future ... Kava will hold back our youth from drinking alcohol and youth crime..." (K6)

Kava or Alcohol

As already discussed, modern influences including easy access to alcohol consumption could have a negative impact on the maintenance of the *faikava* in the future even though, as noted,

some young men said participation in the *faikava* was a way of resisting these and other risk behaviours. K4 noted how accessible alcohol is now for Tongan youth especially in South Auckland:

“Like alcohol is easily accessible to buy and get, see coming from Mangere and Southside, there is a liquor store in every corner especially in Otara, also they look at social media like American gangs, American rap, they see and follow that hip hop culture, but the problem is that the youth are not knowing what their own culture is you know, they are just following what the media portrays and they conform to it ... stink buzz” (K4)

K1 believed it all came down to how well the elderly Tongan males succeeded in creating a welcoming *faikava* a culture-friendly environment (T. Moa, Personal Communication, May 17, 2013) which would attract NZ-born Tongan males to this safe and controlled environment.

“I guess time will tell on whether we are still going to drink kava or to conform to the palangi setting of the pub... and also whether our younger generation will even come to the *faikava*, they might become westernised to the American-wannabe gang-life so yea for me, it is vital and it should be a priority to preserve and maintain the *faikava* because we boys are lucky to have a third place to go to learn our Tongan identity in comparison to the girls...” (K1)

Cost of Kava

Several participants said that the cost of buying kava would determine future participation:

“Yea toks I think this would determine whether drinking kava or drinking alcohol is for our young ones you know ... like for me, we know a box of beers is expensive and it might be even worse in the future especially if they drink until the early hours in the morning toks ... it finishes on the night with some bad consequences you know where kava is like \$20 or \$30 for kg bag that can last the night with a mean buzz and you’ll be safe” (K7)

On this point, one highlighted the need to research how the importation of kava could be made easier.

“... Bro I think the *faikava* will always be around but we got to start thinking and talking about easier methods on bringing kava to New Zealand ... but we’ll see what they [government] would say about after I heard on the radio

about these new bills that classify kava under substances that makes you high [Laugh] ke loi (You kidding me)..." (K12)

Whilst further research is needed, this group expressed the hope that the *faikava* be practiced in the future although this might be in a changed form.

Summary

The lived-experiences and perceptions of the *faikava* expressed by this group of NZ-born Tongan males reinforces that this cultural practice has become an accepted activity and identity marker in New Zealand today and is a culturally and socially safe space for NZ-born Tongan males to gather and socialise together with Tongan elders. Views were that the *faikava* had increased in popularity in recent years.

These participants saw the *faikava* as a place where the *lea* and *anga fakatonga* were embedded in every word, song, and action. Moreover, the *faikava* was clearly a negotiating space where Tongan elders and NZ-born Tongan males achieved a degree of intergenerational harmony as they socialised together. As coined by one, the *faikava* was a cultural classroom or an educational space where the Tongan language and culture was learnt, reinforced and rejuvenated. It was also the avenue by which these participants connected and reconnect to the wider Tongan community and back to the homeland and *pukepuke fonua*. As noted, their participation in fundraising activities in the *faikava* also reinforced the importance of Tongan values and beliefs including *fetokoni'aki* and *faka'apa'apa*.

Another main finding was that for these NZ-born Tongan males in the *faikava* has served as a deterrence to alcohol consumption and youth gang affiliation. For this study, the role of the church was highly evident in fostering and mentoring the *faikava* as integral to church life. While all participants valued the *faikava* experience, they raised a number of factors which would influence its continuation to the future. Finally, all participants welcomed this opportunity to share their experiences and perceptions. Comments included the role of the church and fathering will play an integral part in the maintenance of the *faikava* in the future. Furthermore, government policies was said to may have an impact in the preservation of kava and the practice of the *faikava*.

The following chapter analytically discuss the key findings in this study with literature to answer the three research questions.

Chapter 6: Discussion of the Findings

“*Selemaia 33:6 – Ko au e te u fakakili mai ia, ‘o ‘ai hono faito’o, pea te u fakamo’ui kinautolu: pea te u tatala kinautolu ha fu’ufu’unga fakatu’umālie mo fakaai*”

“*Jeremiah 33:6 – Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth*”

Introduction

This discussion reviews the participants’ responses to the three questions of; what do NZ-born Tongan males value from participating in the *faikava*, can the *faikava* have a positive influence on social pressures that they may be facing, how do they perceive the future for the *faikava* in New Zealand. Their responses are set against literature and anecdotal evidence from Chapters 2 and 3. Tongan proverbs are used to capture and signify the fullest meanings derived from the participants’ responses.

The meaning of the *faikava* in New Zealand

The spirit and meaning of the *faikava* to these participants is seen in the Tongan proverb, *Vaevae Melenga kae Pikipiki Katea*. *Vaevae* refers to the notion of sharing, *melenga* means to share your riches, *pikipiki* means to connect and *katea* is the canoe. In the participants’ views, this proverb incorporates the essence of a *faikava*. The *faikava* brings everyone together from near and far and together they construct a sense of *maheni* and belonging. This proverb points to the *faikava* as a possible method for the (re)resolution of social issues that the Tongan community in New Zealand are facing today and may face in the future. All 12 NZ-born Tongan male participants valued the *faikava* as an identity marker, and as a site where the nurturing, rejuvenating and the maintenance of the *anga fakatonga* in New Zealand can take place.

To this group, the *faikava* stood for the ideals of *pukepuke fonua* – the notion of land, people and Tongan culture as defined by Tu’itahi (2005). Six said they participate in the *faikava* to honour and *pukepuke fonua*. The concept of *pukepuke fonua* resonates with the ethnographic

experience described by Turner (1986) that when people imbibe kava, they also imbibe the Tongan land, Tongan people and their culture. In addition, participants likened the *faikava* as a site where they come together around the *kumete* to exchange debates and ideas in relation to social, political, financial, sporting events and learn and practice the Tongan art of music, oratory and comedy.

For these males, the *faikava* rejuvenated, reinforced and encapsulated the importance of the Tongan culture. This concurs with Fairbairn-Dunlop's (2013) findings that Pacific youth members of a Poly club said this culturally secure space helped teach and reinforce and maintain their cultural knowledge and identity. As with the home and churches, the *faikava* was likened and valued as a cultural classroom. The *faikava* was where these males reinforced and maintained the *lea* and *anga fakatonga*. This supports 'Alatini (2004, p. 94) who describes the "*faikava* as a cultural classroom, where Tongan men learn about tradition and its protocols and engage in discussing issues of concern to Tongan people today". Perkins (2005) says the same was true in Tongan where she observed students of 'Atenisi attending *faikava* sessions in the local village where the transmission of knowledge took place. She proposed also how Helu (as cited in Perkins, 2005) inspired his staff and students to share knowledge and ideas in the *faikava* and stimulate debate and dialogue.

In addition to being a New Zealand based cultural space, the *faikava* has also built and reinforced participants connections with the home church and the homelands, through the practice of fundraising and remittances. In contrast with findings from a Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs *fono* (meeting) in 2005, Pacific youth saw that the most negative aspect of Pacific culture to be giving of money to the church and other Pacific events such as funerals and weddings. Although there is a dearth of empirical research on the effects of financial contributions from the *faikava*, this study found participants valued their contribution as being in the spirit of *fetokoni'aki* or reciprocity and 'ofa. Reciprocity and love were described in terms of 'what goes around comes around'.

These acts of reciprocity flowed across the generation gaps of the participating groups (Pasikale & George, 1995; Evans, 2001). As noted, several *faikava* clubs linked to the church in

New Zealand have provided scholarships for Tongan students, so offering them the opportunity to be educated in New Zealand (Feldman, 1980; 'Alatini, 2004; 'Ofanoa, 2009). Reports indicate that although the *faikava* have become classified as a NGO (for example the *Kalapu Fofu'anga* as an incorporated society), it so enables them to support back to families, churches or communities who are in financial difficulties both in Tonga and abroad (see Feldman, 1980; Linkels, 1998; Helu, 1993).

Clearly, participation in the *faikava* had begun at an early age for this group as it was regarded to be a part of the Tongan way of life. As noted, 10 of the 12 participants said that their initial participation in a *faikava* was under the age of 18 years old, with the other two participating whilst at University. The *faikava* also fostered and reinforced intergenerational harmony amongst the participants. All participants described the brotherhood, male social bonding and comradeship in the *faikava*. Whilst warranting further research, many mentioned how the *faikava* had been a gateway to breaking social and cultural barriers of instigating democratic discussions with the *mātu'a*. Ethnographic observations also support this claim noting that the egalitarian way of communicating usually practiced in the *faikava* breaks social and cultural barriers, settles interpersonal and intergenerational conflicts and enhances social ties among Tongan men (see Lebot et.al, 1997; Davis & Brown, 1999).

This is a contrast to an ethnographic study in Niuaotapu in the northern islands of Tonga which found intergenerational conflict between fathers and sons in the *faikava*, where the son would leave when the father walked into a *faikava* (Rogers, 1977). In my study, Tongan elders encouraged their sons to participate in the *faikava*, so they will be able to talk and socialise using the *lea fakatonga*. McIntyre (2008) notes that Tongan mothers would encourage their sons to participate in cultural activities, such as the *faikava*, so they are able to learn and practice the *lea* and *anga fakatonga*.

From another point of view, Aoyagi (1966) found that the *talanoa* between the Tongan elders and the youth in the *faikava* can be regarded to be a step forward from the traditional Tongan hierarchal system of power and authority to a more democratic way of communicating. In my study, one participant said his relationship with his father had improved because they

participated in the same *faikava* on a regular basis. Furthermore, his father took him to the *faikava* so he can drive him home and also to stay in contact with the Tongan culture. From this point of view, the *faikava* could be regarded as a negotiated space between generations where relationships are built. Mila-Schaaf and Hudson (2009, p.116) describes this space as:

...a place that allows and provides room for engagement and knowledge exchange and a terrain of intersection where both commonalities and differences can be explored and provides a reprieve from an explicitly political relationship – a negotiated space model opens up the confined quarters of the ‘caught-between’ model of intercultural clash.

I have been constantly questioned by colleagues, family members, conferences and formal and informal meetings why I specifically focus on NZ-born Tongan males.

With respect to NZ-born Tongan males, Tongan female participation and relationship in the *faikava* was not included in this study. Research on the experiences and perceptions of *tou’a* participating in the *faikava*, as well as the perspectives of Tongan wives and mothers of kava-drinkers, would be a very useful extension of this study. Anecdotal reports indicate that there is a rise of Tongan women in Australia running *faikava* sessions for the purpose of maintaining the *anga fakatonga* for young Tongan women born and raised in Australia (S. Lafitani, Personal Communication, April 23, 2013). Finau (1996) noted that there is an increasing fear that young NZ-born Tongan females may engage in excessive alcohol consumption, teenage pregnancy and youth suicide. As the *faikava* is said to be an identity marker for NZ-born Tongan males, there may be a need to establish a similar culturally safe and secure space for NZ-born Tongan females.

Faikava as a positive Influence against social pressures

The Tongan proverb, *Inu tī inu kota* resonates with the idea that people are continually shifting between two ways of living life, which to my mind describes the status of feelings of NZ-born Tongan males in my study. The ‘*tī*’ represents a foreign beverage and *kota* refers to the squeezed scraped coconut flesh after the cream has been extracted. To put it into the context of this study,

this proverb contrasts Tongan *fiēpalangi*, (wanting to be *palangi*), as symbolised by the foreign imported *tī*, with the *anga fakatonga* as symbolised by the coconut flesh.

The majority of the participants have drunk alcohol. They said that when they consume alcohol, they then feel out of place because they know the outcomes and consequences of being intoxicated. Yet, in most cases, they still continue to drink excessively. Participants in this study said participating in the *faikava* has reduced alcohol consumption and youth gang affiliation. This concurs with literature suggesting that kava-drinking can be an alternative to alcohol (see Finau, 1996; Nosa & 'Ofanoa, 2009). Majority said they enjoyed drinking kava rather than alcohol because kava has a different intoxication effect than alcohol. The *faikava* environment was much safer place than a pub environment, or drinking with the boys at a park where it was easy to become heavily intoxicated with alcohol. He described how one bottle of beer often lead to another and that by the end of the night, anything can go wrong including delinquent activities, hospital, prison or even death.

Lemert (1967) has argued that while alcohol tends to release aggressive impulses, kava inhibits these. Aporosa (2012, p. 79) noted that kava intoxication essentially generates a 'warm, pleasant and cheerful, but lazy feeling, making people sociable without hilarity or interference with reasoning'. This aligns with Singh's (2004, p. 5) finding that when kava is consumed, drinkers feel a sense of sociability, peace, harmony, brotherhood, reduced anxiety and stress and a sense of sedation. Davis and Brown (1999) concur;

When people get intoxicated by kava the feel happy, they like to talk or to sing the traditional songs. They do not want to fight or chase after women. They just sit down and when they have drunk enough they go off to sleep. (p. 8)

Tongan-born males claimed that kava leads to laziness but alcohol will lead to death (Nosa & 'Ofanoa, 2009, p. 99). In that study, one participant said:

"It is also a cultural drink for Tongans ... to me beer is for Palangi's but kava is for Tongans" (Nosa & 'Ofanoa, 2009, p. 99)

With an increase in social activities in New Zealand, the *faikava* is said to be more of a socially and culturally safe activity than in any other social activity that involves consuming alcohol

as it keeps them safe from trouble and intact with the *anga fakatonga*. While it cannot be said that the *faikava* has stopped these participants from drinking alcohol completely, this study has shown the participation in the *faikava* acted as a diversion from alcohol consumption.

Similarly, the four who had been members of a youth gang said participation in the *faikava* had helped reduce their affiliation to their particular youth gang. One participant expressed how the *faikava* had encouraged him to focus on his Christian faith and his education. Speaking very emotionally, he recounted how in his earlier days, he would drink alcohol and hang with 'the boys' with the one goal in mind; to get drunk and to hurt someone. This fits Nosa and 'Ofanoa's (2009) findings that Tongan-born males continued the consumption of kava in New Zealand continued because of the lack of range of social activities in which they could take part. Nightclubs and pubs might become more popular social venues for NZ-born Tongan males in the future, which might result in the loss of the cultural practice of the *faikava* (Linkels, 1998).

On the less positive side, it was not established in this study how long these participants were spending in a *faikava* session and the quantity of kava they were consuming. Tomlinson (2006, p.13-14) notes that:

Kava is a potent symbol of peace and tranquility ... it is also a means of competition in which men vigorously try to outdrink each other in sessions that last many hours

Participants said that they have witnessed younger kava consumers competing with one another to see who can outlast the other kava consumers. Further, that this group are now witnessing and experiencing a new wave of kava-binge drinkers. In this point, Nosa and 'Ofanoa's (2009) study found that one participant would drink from 9:00pm till 10:00am the following day. It was also argued by the participants that binge kava-drinking can result in serious financial and family disruptions. However, participants in this study said it is an individual's responsibility to know one's own boundaries, limits and obligations. One participant shared how he would carry out his obligations at home, spend time with his family and then partake in the *faikava*.

The future of the faikava in New Zealand

Generally speaking, the Tongan community is challenged by a concern that the *anga fakatonga* will be lost in New Zealand. What is clear today is that Tongans are constantly experiencing and witnessing drastic changes and developments within the Tongan culture, Tongan values, beliefs and practices. The Tongan proverb, *To'ukai mo hono lohu* states that nothing is static, that everything changes over time. As noted, the *faikava* has also undergone significant changes over the past century from the ceremonial and traditional practice to a social and recreational activity. These participants said the foundations of the *lea* and *anga fakatonga* need to be established today in order for to be nurtured in the future. Taumoefolau (2004) notes that if we lose our [Tongan] language, we lose our own unique ways of life.

These participants saw the *faikava* as a key strategy in maintaining the *anga fakatonga* in New Zealand, but realistically noted that there might be changes. These questions required the participants to think analytically and critically, their perceptions instigated in-depth and valuable *talanoa* sessions. It was later acknowledged by a number of participants that these discussions ensured that they [participants] will have a role in maintaining the *faikava* in the future for the next generation of NZ-born Tongans.

As noted these participants identified several ways in which the practice of the *faikava* could be preserved in the future.

Faikava and the Church

All 12 participants saw a role for the church and the MCNZ especially in preserving the *faikava* in New Zealand. Further, the church was said to be one way in which the *faikava* can be preserved in New Zealand. As noted, over 98 per cent of Tongans are affiliated to a Christian denomination. Noted also is how the church is a place where it is now engaging and incorporating spiritual needs with social and cultural activities. Furthermore, Tongan churches and more specifically the MCNZ are initiating ways to tackle issues that Tongan youth are facing today, for example, Easter and

Labour weekend camps is an opportunity for Tongan males to socialise whilst drinking kava and playing acoustic, acapella, traditional and contemporary Tongan songs.

Also referred as the *kava fakasiasi* (Helu, 1993), the *faikava talitali malanga* was considered to exercise an important role in the maintenance of the *faikava* in the future in New Zealand. Associated with *kava fakasiasi*, the *faikava talitali malanga* was said by these males to play an integral part in the maintenance of the *faikava* in the future. One participant said how he likens the *faikava talitali malanga* to a place similar to church, where he is able to learn and understand the message of God. However, Lilo (2010) argued that:

If this narcotic beverage is consumed before a Sunday service begins, then what message are we sending the younger generation? That it is fine to sedate you with kava then climb up and enjoy the service? (p. 49).

Three noted that other churches did not practice kava-drinking. Aporosa (2011a) supports this view noting that the Church of Latter Day Saints, which has strict regulations on the use of alcohol and drugs, states that 'kava use is permitted for medicinal and cultural purpose' (p. 158). However, a Tongan *kalapu* has been coordinated by a Tongan Bishop from the LDS church in Hamilton was established for the purpose of *pukepuke fonua* (S. Aporosa, Personal Communication, October, 14, 2013).

Policies on Kava

Whilst warranting further research, participants also said that the Tongan and Pacific communities and NGOs need to identify the value and impact the *faikava* can have in preventing and engaging our young Tongans in social pressures in the future. As noted, (see Nosa and 'Ofanoa, 2009, p.100) kava is cheaper than alcohol, which is why Tongan males prefer drinking kava to alcohol. However, they also found that though kava is cheap, it can become expensive, especially when fundraising activities occur. However, this group noted how their participation in fundraising activities is their reconnection to Tonga as it illustrates the importance of the Tongan values of

'*ofa* and *fetokoni'aki* as noted above. Further, the cost of kava and government policies were said to be a significant factor in the preservation of the *faikava* in the future.

As noted, the Australia government has placed restrictions on the importation of kava due to kava misuse and the powerful pro-alcohol lobby (Prescott, 1990; Finau, 1996; Clough et.al, 2003; Clough, 2006; Singh 2004). The restrictions on kava in Australia were due to misuse and the mix of kava and alcohol in aboriginal communities (Prescott, 1990). However, kava experts have argued that the mixture of alcohol and kava will remove the whole purpose of male social bonding, comradeship, brotherhood and reciprocal respect to name a few functions (Lebot et.al, 1997; Aporosa, 2011a, 2011b, 2012).

The popularity of kava use among aboriginal communities caused the decrease of alcohol sales and profits hence the pro-alcohol lobby (Lafitani, 2011a, 2011b). Kava expert and researcher in Vanuatu, Dr. Vincent Lebot, urged in a kava symposium in Fiji that better quality controls must be put on kava being exported, or the product could be banned from countries like the United States of America as it was in the European Union (Lebot, 2014).

Traditional vs. Contemporary

These participants were very aware that the *faikava* as practiced might be different from the traditional way of carrying out kava-drinking in the future. As noted, Helu (1993) identified five different kava ceremonies ranging from formal to informal. Excluding the *taumafa* kava, all 12 participants were identified as having taken part in the other three kava ceremonies (*kava fakasiasi, kalapu kava Tonga & faikava eva*).

Most obvious is the extinction of the *tau fakalokua*. Helu (1993, p.189) notes that with the increasing change into the money economy, cash cropping and commercial fishing, it has resulted in the *tau fakalokua* becoming rare even in rural areas and the outer islands in Tonga, where it is still hanging on precariously.

In contrast, the *tau fakalokua* does not seem to have been practiced in New Zealand. Like the *tau fakalokua*, the *faikava eva* was seen as another kava ceremony that is also on the

decline. As noted, the *faikava eva* was a traditional method of courting where it involves a kava party for young men seeking the permission of the parents of a *tou'a* or a young girl to mix and serve the kava for them for the night. In New Zealand, the *faikava eva* has been somewhat substituted by nightclubs, social media and online dating. Although these are more convenient and efficient than rallying up a group of friends, going to a young girl's house and asking her parents for permission, Tongans in New Zealand are then exposed to social pressures such as binge alcohol drinking, drug abuse and teenage pregnancy to name a few. Nevertheless, the traditional method of courtship will eventually be non-existent.

It was also said from their experiences that they have all participated in an *'ilo kava*, *kava fakasiasi* and *kalapu kava* Tonga. *Kava fakasiasi* is carried out on a regular basis every Sunday morning in churches including the FWC and MCNZ. One participant said that his experience in a *kava fakasiasi* was equivalent to him sitting in the church service. The discussion in the *kava fakasiasi* was said to be more of a *pakipaki* or a critical discussion. As noted, this involves critical thinking and analysing of the scriptures on the Sunday.

The *kalapu kava* Tonga was also said to have elements of the *faikava eva* where there was also, in most cases, a presence of a *tou'a*. Used for ceremonial purposes, the *taumafa kava* does not seem to be threatened. Helu (1993, p.190) argued that as the *taumafa kava* is very strong, it is an indication that the social structure and communicative patterns which link the different parts of society do not show signs of immediate change. This research reveals that the place of the *faikava* with village based and church kava clubs in New Zealand (see 'Ofanoa, 2009) has allowed Tongans to come together to exchange ideas and debates around the *kumete* imbibing the land, culture and people, and will continue to be practiced in the future.

Similar to British ladies organising a tea party; academics or students catching up over a 'long black' coffee or a mochaccino, what these social gatherings all have in common is that the attendees do not [all] come for the beverage, but the socialisation and bonding that takes place in these gatherings. The consuming of a beverage instigates discussion.

Today, we see the importance of kava being expressed in more contemporary forms where kava bars are being established, especially in Hawaii (Lebot et.al, 1997). Aporosa (2012) notes that kava adds to the symbols of indigenous identity.

Summary

My study has confirmed that the place of the *faikava* in New Zealand is a cultural identity marker where the Tongan language, values, beliefs, practices and culture are learnt, reinforced, rejuvenated and maintained in several ways which are in line with the *anga fakatonga*, including singing, talking, dancing, financially contributing and performing. The *faikava* is also a place where intergenerational harmony can be achieved with the support of fathers as elders and youth socialise and share ideas together.

Although further research is needed on whether the *faikava* has completely stopped the consumption of alcohol, this cultural practice is influencing the consumption of alcohol and the participation in youth gangs which these participants claimed. At the same time, literature and anecdotal evidence support the idea that kava consumption was seen as an alternative to alcohol. The role of the church and the support of fathers was discussed as playing an important part in the maintenance of the *faikava* in the future in New Zealand. Though several participants were unsure of the place of the *faikava* in the future due to the cost of kava and government policies banning kava importation to New Zealand, they ensured that they had a role to play in the future to ensure that *faikava* continues to be practiced. This study supports Helu (1993) on the observation of several kava ceremonies no longer being practiced in Tonga and in New Zealand, including the *tau fakalokua* and *faikava eva*. However, to this group, the spirit and the meaning continue today and into the future.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

“1 Timote 4:12 – Oua na’a tuku ke fakasikaka’i koe e ha taha ko ho’o talavou kae kehe ke ke hoko koe tokotaha ke fa’ifa’itaki ki ai ‘e he kakai lotu, ‘i he lea, ‘i he ulungaanga, ‘i he ‘ofa, ‘i he tui, ‘i he angama’a”

“1 Timothy 4:12 – Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity” (New International Version)

Introduction

This study has shown the place of the *faikava* in New Zealand where the Tongan language and culture is learnt, reinforced, rejuvenated and maintained amongst NZ-born Tongan males. Furthermore, it demonstrates how this cultural practice has reportedly helped in diverting young NZ-born Tongan males from alcohol consumption and youth gang affiliation. Lastly, the future of the *faikava* in New Zealand is also discussed, proposing that the role of the church and family members, such as fathers, will play an important part in the maintenance of the *faikava* in New Zealand.

This final chapter begins with a review of the key points and influences leading to the current research. This is followed by a summary of the aims of this study as they relate to the core overarching research questions. Contributions to the literature are then presented. Finally, the chapter finishes with suggested areas for future research followed by concluding statements of the study.

Faikava is an identity marker in New Zealand

This research has shown that while the *faikava* has often been viewed as a place where Tongan males go to gossip and as a waste of time and money, to these NZ-born Tongan males, the *faikava* was the place where they reinforced their knowledge and understanding of the Tongan language, values, beliefs, customs, traditions, and practices, thus reaffirming their Tongan identity. They revelled in the singing and exchanging of ideas and debates over social issues, as well as learning the Tongan language. They were also delighted in the comradeship with elders

and with their own Tongan fathers and family. A majority of the participants were also able to establish and re-affirm relationships with other *faikava* participants.

In addition, and in contrast with the literature, participation in fundraising activities for the homeland which were associated with participation in the *faikava* were regarded by these participants as another way of reinforcing and maintaining the *anga fakatonga* in New Zealand. Whilst the home and church are key socialising aspects in the *anga fakatonga* in New Zealand, this study shows the *faikava* has contributed significantly to the cultural learning, reinforcing and rejuvenating of Tongan values, beliefs and identity. In sum, the Tongan concept of *pukepuke fonua* was said to be a significant reason why these participants attended *faikava* sessions. Reinforcing the point, this research confirmed that the *faikava* experience can solidify a sense of Tongan identity for NZ-born Tongan males acting as a buffer against perceived threats to the *anga fakatonga* from westernisation, urbanisation and modernity.

One clear theme that was clarified in the literature review was how the participation in the *faikava* stands in opposition to alcohol consumption. Although it is unclear whether the *faikava* completely stops the consumption of alcohol for this group, it was said that the *faikava* had become a diversion from alcohol consumption. This was also said in relation to youth gang affiliation. Whether and how the identity security of these youth achieved through participation in the *faikava* impacted on other factors of their lives warrants further study.

The role of the church in integrating and sustaining the cultural practice of the *faikava* is very evident. Although, some dissenting voices on this point are also heard, the relationship between the church and culture in this way warrants further review, especially given the narcotic effects of this cultural drink.

In line with this, my study focused directly on the participants' perspective of *faikava* as a form of cultural enrichment. This meaning now needs to be set alongside further research on the use of kava to gain the fullest understanding of the place of the *faikava* in New Zealand. For example, it could include the health research of the practice of kava-drinking, as well as the social and economic impacts on the family's quality of life. Given the time males reportedly spend in

faikava and whether or not the practice of the *faikava* impacts on gender, these important issues could not be a part of the current study.

Contributions to the Literature

This study contributes to the literature on the *faikava* in Tongan overseas communities or in this study, New Zealand and how *pukepuke fonua* is generated. The study also contributes to the international literature on the role and use of kava and other indigenous substances in identity formation for migrant communities.

The current research gives voice to NZ-born Tongan males who participate in the *faikava* and through this validates their lived experiences and perceptions of this important Tongan practice. The interest showed by the participants in discussing their lived-experiences and perceptions in participating in the *faikava* was significant as they have not shared or discussed their participation before. The appropriateness of the *talanoa* research method in relation to exploring, investigating and elaborating on Tongan beliefs, values and cultural practices is also seen. This is reinforced by the fact that the *talanoa* was the social medium for the *faikava*

Research Limitations of this study

A number of limitations are highlighted. As this is an exploratory study, I acknowledge that the sample size of 12 does not sufficiently represent the total population of NZ-born Tongan males in Auckland and who participate in *faikava* sessions. In addition, this study is an Auckland based study, which has a large Pacific and Tongan population. The results may not be the same in other major cities in New Zealand. As noted, there has been no previous research into the experiences and perceptions of NZ-born Tongan males participating in the *faikava*.

Suggestions for further research

A number of points for further research are noted. As this is a NZ-born Tongan male perspective on the *faikava*, an exploratory study on migrant-born Tongan males in other communities such as Australia and the United States of America and their experiences in participating in this cultural practice would also be useful.

Whether or not the practice of the *faikava* influences our attitudes to the fact that the only presence of a female in the *faikava* is to serve the kava, further research would be a very useful extension to this study. Moreover, research on the perceptions of NZ-born Tongan females and Tongan wives/mothers on the *faikava* needs to be explored further.

Further comparative study explaining the relationship between NZ-born Tongan males and Tongan fathers is needed. To my mind, this would identify the true extent of how this cultural practice can have an impact on relationships between Tongan elders and youth.

Finally, as expressed in Chapter 5, further research is warranted on the effects of kava binge-drinking on NZ-born Tongan males. This could be explored further by public health programmes in New Zealand, together with in-depth discussions on the health related impacts on heavy kava use in New Zealand.

Concluding statement

I was participating at a *faikava* at a local church with the youth boys and the *mātu'a* drinking, talking and singing away when one of the boys said to me,

“So what now Master [referring to the degree for this study] how is the *faikava* going to earn you a living?”

Before taking the cup of kava, I held it in one hand, and replied back to the boys,

“This is what we are and this is what makes us different from everyone else. Kava has, is and if we continue doing this in the future, will continue to define us as Tongans. If we swap our cup of our culture and ancestors with a bottle of Steinlager or Lion Red, we are nothing. If we swap the *faikava*, a place

where we can act, talk, sing, perform, cry and dance Tongan for the local pub, we are nothing”.

The boys hesitated to but made no comment so we continued drinking, singing and talking the night. Suddenly, from across the room, a 15 year old confidently said:

“Shot toks for that, I’ll make sure that the kava and the faikava will never die in New Zealand for our people, culture, language, Mum, Dad, and for our future generation”.

“Kava is our culture, Our Culture is Kava”

‘Ofa atu moe lotu,
Siuatama-Fakaola-mei-Aotearoa

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Personal Communications

APOROSA, S.Apo Dr.

KAILAHI, Vaivaifolau (Cultural Advisor).

KAVA, Semisi.

LAFITANI, Siosiu Dr.

MOA, Tupou.

TUPOU, Tauataina.

1a). Ethical Approval

S E C R E T A R I A T

13 February 2013

Teena Brown-Pulu
Te Ara Poutama

Dear Teena

Re Ethics Application: **13/07 Nurturing identities and honouring tradition: Maintaining the 'anga fakatonga for New Zealand born Tongan males with cultural practice of the Faikava.**

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

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 12 February 2016.

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

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 12 February 2016;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 12 February 2016 or on completion of the project.

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

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

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

All the very best with your research,



Dr Rosemary Godbold
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

1b). Participant Information Sheet



Date Information Sheet Produced:

19/12/2012

Project Title

Nurturing Identities and Honouring Tradition: An exploratory study on the faikava as a possible identity marker for New Zealand-born Tongan males in Auckland, New Zealand

An Invitation

First and foremost, I acknowledge God the heavenly father, the son of God and the Holy Ghost. I also acknowledge those Tongan researchers who have gone before me by thanking them for creating a pathway for me to follow with my research. I am grateful to the Otu Ha'apai (Taufatofu'a, Kava Mo'unga'one and Fanua Lofanga) from which I am descended. Malo e lelei, my name is Edmond Fehoko and I am inviting you to participate in my Master of Arts research by sharing your experience of the Faikava in Auckland, New Zealand.

My thesis research explores the experiences of New Zealand-Born Tongan within the Faikava setting. It asks how this experience nurtures the cultural identity of being New Zealand-Born Tongan men.

Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time during the research.

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

Your attendance at the Faikava sessions was how I identified you as a potential participant for this research. You were identified because you are a New Zealand-Born Tongan male between the age of 18 and 30 years old residing in Auckland, New Zealand. This is the group I am wanting to conduct research with.

What will happen in this research?

The focus group interview will take approximately one hour of your time at a Faikava gathering. You will be given a consent form to read prior to the interview and your verbal consent to participate in the research will be recorded on audio-tape. A Faikava session will be organised for the focus group interview of yourself and up to 2 other participants at a time and date convenient to you. In total, 3 New Zealand-born Tongan men will participate in a focus group interview. The interview questions will be given to you to read.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There is a risk that your identity may be revealed because of the small number of participants taking part in the research. In total, 10 to 15 New Zealand-Born Tongan men will form the basis of the study. Risks will be managed in the actual writing up of the study by not using your personal details such as your name and any social groups you belong to like the church you attend or the *kāinga* (family/clan) you associate with.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Due to the sensitive nature of the research in talking about your personal experience and understanding of the Faikava in relation to your own New Zealand-Born Tongan male identity, there is a chance you may feel uncomfortable with some of the questions. If during the interview

you feel uncomfortable with answering any question, there is no problem with you declining to answer the question/s or withdrawing from the interview at any time.

I will also refrain from casual conversation during the focus group interview and make sure the Faikava gathering understands that the interview conversation is between the researcher and the focus group of 3 participants. I will make sure that we are given the required space within the Faikava gathering to conduct a focus group interview that is not overheard or repeated by others.

What are the benefits?

This research will contribute to broadening our understanding of what the Faikava means to New Zealand-born Tongan men, especially the younger generation aged between 18-30 years old. The research will open up new possibilities of exploring and making sense of how participation in the Faikava for New Zealand-born Tongan men is a way of honouring cultural tradition and nurturing identity.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your privacy will be protected by excluding your name and any association with church, family/clan, or social groups from this research. I will not engage in casual conversation while conducting the focus group interview and will ensure that the interview conversations are not overheard or repeated by others.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The cost of your participation in this research will be one hour of your time at a Faikava gathering. I will organise a date and time for the Faikava gathering in which we can conduct a focus group interview which is convenient to you.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Once you receive the participant information sheet at the first Faikava gathering to discuss the research process in an open forum, I will contact you in a week's time at the next Faikava gathering to confirm if you agree to participate in the research.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you agree to participate in the research, a date and time will be organised for a Faikava gathering in which we can conduct a focus group interview. You will then be given a participant information form and a consent form to read before the interview, and your verbal consent to participate in the research will be recorded on audio-tape.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You will be given a transcript of the focus group interview for your approval, and the summary findings will be given to you after the research data has been collected and summarised. The summary of findings will be given to you at the final Faikava gathering in which you will be given the opportunity to comment on the findings.

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

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Teena Brown Pulu at (09) 921 9999 ext. 5227, email at Teena.Brown@aut.ac.nz. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Dr Rosemary Godbold at (09) 921 9999 ext 6902, email at rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Edmond Fehoko
P: (09) 921 9999 ext. 8460
M: 021 026 47008
E: edmond.fehoko@aut.ac.nz

Project Supervisor's Contact Details:

Dr Teena Brown Pulu
AUT University
Private Bag 92006
Auckland 1142, New Zealand
Tel: (09) 921 9999 ext. 5227
Email:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 13/02/2013,
AUTEK Reference number 13/07**

1c). Consent Form



Project title: Nurturing Identities and Honouring Tradition: **An exploratory study on the faikava as a possible identity marker for New Zealand-born Tongan males in Auckland, New Zealand**

Project Supervisor: Dr Teena Brown Pulu

Project Advisor: Professor Richard Bedford

Researcher: Edmond Fehoko

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that my identity and that of my fellow participants in 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 I may withdraw from the study or withdraw any information that I have provided for this study at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that while it may not be possible to destroy all records of the focus group discussion of which I was part, the relevant information about myself including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will not be used.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes No

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

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.....

Date: Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on **13/02/2013** AUTEK Reference number **13/07**

Interview Schedule



“Nurturing Identities by Honoring Tradition: An exploratory study on the faikava as a possible identity marker for New Zealand-born Tongan males in Auckland, New Zealand

Interview Schedule:

How old were you when you attended your first ‘faikava’ session?

Why did you decide to participate in the faikava?

What does anga fakatonga mean to you?

Would you know why our Tongan people in New Zealand carry out the faikava on a weekly basis?

What do you do in the faikava?

What does participating in the faikava mean to you?

What does participating in the faikava mean to your father?

Is alcohol better than kava or vice versa?

Do you believe the social bonding within the faikava is a good way of maintaining your Tongan identity?

Where do you see the faikava in the future?

What are you going to do to ensure that the faikava is maintained in the future?

APPENDIX THREE: List of Conferences and Presentations during Masters' Journey

Publication:

- Fehoko, E. (2013). *From Kava to Coffee: Tongan young people in Auckland, New Zealand*. In F, Te Momo., L, George., & T, Brown-Pulu. (Eds). *Mana Ngakau: Community Compassion – Māori and Pasifika 'Volunteer' work*. Massey University: Auckland.

Awards:

- Prime Ministers Pacific Youth Award Recipient (Inspiration Award), 2013

Conferences:

- Paper '*Pukepuke Fonua: An exploratory study on the faikava as an identity marker for NZ-born Tongan males in Auckland, New Zealand*' presented at the 8th Global Conference on Multiculturalism, Conflict and Belonging, Oxford University, United Kingdom, September 13th, 2014.
- Paper '*Nurturing Identities by Honouring Tradition: An exploratory study on the faikava for NZ-born Tongan males in Auckland, New Zealand*' presented at the BRCSS Talanoa, AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand. March 17th, 2014
- Paper '*Faikava as a cultural classroom*' presented at the 11th Conference of the Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA), University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia, 2013. November 26th, 2014.
- Paper '*Nurturing Identities by Honouring Tradition: Maintaining the 'anga fakatonga for NZ-born Tongan males in Auckland, New Zealand*' presented at the 7th Annual AUT Postgraduate Symposium, AUT University, Auckland. New Zealand, August, 23rd, 2013.
- Paper '*Nurturing Identities by Honouring Tradition: Maintaining the 'anga fakatonga for NZ-born Tongan males in Auckland, New Zealand*' presented at the 12th Pacific Science Inter-Congress, University of the South Pacific, Suva, Republic of Fiji Islands. July 8th, 2013
- Paper '*Nurturing Identities by Honouring Tradition: Maintaining the 'anga fakatonga for NZ-born Tongan males in Auckland, New Zealand*' presented at the AUT University and University of the South Pacific Collaboration, AUT University, Manukau Campus, Auckland, New Zealand, 2013.

Guest Presentations

- Guest Marker at the Te Kaupapa Motuhake: Empowerment: Year 3 Bachelor of Applied Social Work Symposium at Manukau Institute of Technology, 24th June, 2014.

- Guest Speaker at the AUT Chancellors Dinner, Sir Paul Reeves Building, AUT University, 28th February, 2014
- Guest presentation at Tautai: Research Methodologies Pasifika perspective paper, *'Nurturing Identities by Honouring Tradition: Maintaining the 'anga fakatonga for NZ-born Tongan males in Auckland, New Zealand'* Faculty of Culture and Society, School of Education, Dr Tafili Utumapu-McBride, 3rd April, 2014
- Guest Lecturer at Manukau Institute of Technology, Aulola Lino, 22nd October, 2013. *'Nurturing Identities by Honouring Tradition: Maintaining the 'anga fakatonga for NZ-born Tongan males in Auckland, New Zealand'*.
- Guest Speaker at the 'Māori and Pasifika High Achieving Students Event' AND 'Stair-casing into Postgraduate Studies", Faculty of Culture and Society, School of Tourism and Hospitality on the 21st October, 2013
- Guest presentation at Introduction to New Zealand Society paper, Faculty of Culture and Society, School of Te Ara Poutama, Dr Teena Brown-Pulu, 30th July, 2013
- Guest presentation at Fonua II paper, Faculty of Culture and Society, School of Education, Sala Faasaulala Tagoilelagi-Leota, 30th July, 2013
- Guest presentation at Aotearoa and Pacific Studies paper, Faculty of Culture and Society, School of Te Ara Poutama, Dr Teena Brown- Pulu, 27th July, 2013
- Guest Speaker at the "Awesome Authors: Why and How Pasifika Write" at 'The Pacific Studies Programme in Va'aoamanu Pasifika II - 2013, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand, 20th March, 2013.

