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**PACIFIC PEOPLES AND TERTIARY EDUCATION:
ISSUES OF PARTICIPATION**

FINAL REPORT

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Faafetai, faafetai, faafetai tele lava.

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OVERVIEW

The Brief

The Government's *Pasifika Education Plan* for tertiary education nominates as its focus 'increasing participation and achievement, improving retention and encouraging higher levels of study'. The research study reported on here addresses this focus.

As stated in the Ministry's brief for the research, the recognition of the need for a research study of this nature arose from the considerable evidence available about the 'gap' in participation and achievement of Pacific peoples in tertiary education. While Pacific peoples' participation has increased over the last decade it is still lower than that of the general population, and there is a lack of understanding about why the 'gap' persists. As noted, in order for appropriate Pacific-focussed policy responses it is crucial that the specific barriers to Pacific participation and achievement in tertiary education be identified.

The purpose of this research study was, therefore, to gather qualitative information on the actual and perceived barriers to participation in tertiary education and training for Pacific peoples. The study had a particular mission to develop an understanding of the experiences and perceptions of Pacific communities, in order to inform future policies aimed at addressing barriers to Pacific people's participation in tertiary education and training.

Specific areas for the project to investigate included:

- current participation patterns and steps taken in different tertiary education institutions to identify and remove barriers;
- the views of Pacific peoples who have participated successfully in tertiary education, those who have participated but not completed their studies, and those who have not participated in tertiary education; and
- the views of a range of Pacific community members, including the families of potential students as to why some have succeeded and the barriers to students' participation.

The following assumptions were made in designing the research:

- that 'tertiary education' includes universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and private training establishments (PTEs);
- that Pacific peoples can enter tertiary education both as school-leavers and as mature-age adults, and that the research needs to address these groups as taking different routes with different accompanying issues;
- that the term 'Pacific peoples' contains considerable cultural and historical diversity which will need to be addressed in appropriate ways by the researchers; and
- that there are already in existence successful programmes and strategies in this area and that it is important to document and analyse these success stories as part of this project.

Research Methodology

The research questions established by the Ministry were addressed by a range of research activities utilising both qualitative and quantitative data sources:

- Identification and analysis of previous research and writing on the topic of Pacific students access to, participation in and experiences of tertiary education.
- Analysis of present participation patterns nationally and in a selection of key tertiary institutions. The quantitative data collated has been analysed for total distributions and for statistical significance nationally, across and within institutions. Results from this data analysis is presented in graph form.
- Survey of tertiary institutions' present policies, programmes and strategies aimed at recruiting and retaining Pacific students.
- Interviews with key informants in selected TEIs and PTEs, with experience in recruiting, supporting and retaining Pacific students.
- Interviews with Pacific students who have participated in tertiary programmes and who did complete their studies.
- Interviews with Pacific students who have participated in tertiary programmes, but did not complete their studies.
- Interviews with non-participants.
- Interviews with Pacific community members (including families of potential students).

All data from individual and group interviews was recorded, transcribed and analysed using conventional qualitative data analysis and the NUDIST software package. All individuals were given acronyms and full confidentiality was assured. This was stipulated in the ethics approval for the project provided by the University of Auckland Human Subjects Research Committee.

The final draft report was circulated for comments to all key persons (16) from Part B, and individual interviewees (30) from Part C, and comments noted before the report was finalised.

Pacific Research Protocols

The research team was committed to ensuring that appropriate 'Pacific' cultural protocols and processes were embedded in the research design, implementation, analysis, report writing and dissemination. It was determined that the team would:

- uphold Pacific 'ownership' of the objectives and processes of the research.
- seek and utilise Pacific input at all stages of the research and use consultative and participatory processes.
- proceed in a manner appropriate to the cultural contexts concerned and ensure that language is not a barrier to participation.
- ensure that the Papalagi members in the research team acknowledged their cultural limitations, and affirmed their commitment to working in culturally safe ways.
- ensure that all aspects of the research were monitored closely for safety and relevance, both by our Pacific Senior researchers, and community-based interviewers.
- ensure that Senior Pacific Researchers managed and had overall responsibility for research interfaces with Pacific participants.

The Report

The research findings are presented in four parts. Part A, *Context and Patterns*, includes two chapters: the literature review and the data on tertiary participation patterns of Pacific students. A list of references is provided at the end.

Part B, *Tertiary Provider Views*, also includes two chapters: one detailing the providers' views on Pacific students' access to tertiary education and the other their views on retention of, and success for, Pacific students.

In the four chapters comprising Part C, *Pacific Voices*, the information shared through focus group interviews is presented with one chapter for each group entitled as follows: successful students, partial achievers, non-participants and community perspectives.

Part D, *Navigating Futures*, includes a chapter which highlights the key issues arising from the research, and a final chapter which makes recommendations.

PART A

CONTEXT AND PATTERNS

Introduction

Research on elementary and secondary education has largely ignored the topic of participation and in the higher education arena it has seldom been considered of major importance. Yet participation is central to the theory and practice of educating adults because the great majority of adults are voluntary learners. (Darkenwald and Merriam: 1982).

Even where admissions criteria are (relatively) open, the doors to higher education may still remain closed in practice to large sections of the population. (Schuetze and Slowey: 2000).

Terminology

The concept of participation has a range of meanings in the context of this study. These meanings are probably best thought of in terms of levels or degrees of participation. The first level covers *enrolment* in the various tertiary programmes (and can include analysis of these enrolments across categories such as arts, medicine etc.); the second level of participation covers the *completion/non-completion* of programmes; while the third level analyses *performance* (usually in terms of type of qualification from entry level certificates through to doctoral degrees or an assessment grade format)¹. This project refers to all three levels of participation, as each is important in its own way and has implications for effective strategies in this area. We also believe that it is important to distinguish between students who have come to tertiary education straight from school vs. mature-age students who may have been out of school for some years.²

Participation in tertiary education

Interest in patterns of participation in tertiary forms of provision has grown internationally over recent years with renewed interest in making *lifelong learning* a reality in the transition to a *knowledge society* and its educational

¹ A possible fourth level would be to consider long-term destinations of students, but this is not considered in this report.

counterpart, the *learning society* (OECD: 1996; Ranson: 1998; Tuijnman et al: 1999). In New Zealand these calls have been voiced by politicians (Maharey, April, 2000) and the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC: 2000; TEAC: 2001). Central to all this debate is the need to both increase the total numbers of participants in tertiary education and extend the make-up of the participants beyond the élite patterns of the past (Knapper and Cropley: 2000). With the steady decrease in numbers of un-skilled and semi-skilled jobs and the increased demands of jobs at all levels (Benseman: 2000), few doubt the need for education and training in order to make New Zealand an economically viable and socially integrated society.

In this context, it has become especially important to increase the participation from social groups that have been under-represented historically in educational provision beyond school. As the recent TEAC report (2001:20) states:

Their (Pacific Peoples) current social position in New Zealand, however, presents the tertiary education system with major challenges. Across the major social and economic indices, Pacific peoples are facing disproportionate levels of negative outcomes. The strengths that exist within Pacific communities cannot be sustained if their educational aspirations are not met and the opportunities for their participation in society are not radically improved. These are challenges that confront the tertiary system – firstly, in relation to informing our identity as a Pacific nation and, secondly, in being informed by the contributions of the Pacific people. It is, therefore, equally important that the tertiary system recognise the contribution, and fosters the participation, of Pacific peoples and their cultures. The tertiary education system must enable effective engagement with Pacific communities and seek ways to ensure it is responsive to the needs of Pacific peoples.

Models of participation

Analyses of who participates in education have probably been studied most closely in adult and community education where there are minimal degrees of compulsion (learners ‘vote with their feet’) and there are often strong motivations to involve non-traditional learners as a counter to the inequalities generated by the formal educational sectors (Benseman: 1996). Consequently, there is a considerable body of research literature analysing who participates,

² The most common definition of ‘mature-age students’ is over 25 years of age.

who doesn't and the reasons behind these patterns of behaviour. In a comprehensive review of this literature, Courtney (1992) categorises the research into two broad camps – those using psychological constructs to understand why adults want to learn (and therefore participate) and those that study the issue from a sociological perspective, where participation is seen as a form of voluntary association and the analyses centre on understanding why there are strong patterns of social inequality reflected in participation data.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Pacific peoples attitudes towards education

There is consistently strong evidence of the great importance that Pacific families place on education generally and, increasingly, on tertiary education in particular. Furneaux's interviews of university students in 1969 reported that most (82.5%) of the students reported 'a great deal of interest' shown by their family in their university work (ibid: 46).

As part of a thesis on the interaction between Tongan culture and education, Fusitu'a (1992) rates the importance of education in Tongan culture, where it is often integral to the motivation to migrate to places like New Zealand and the desire for social mobility and to "find a better life" (1992: 52). Included in the thesis is some data gathered from interviews with Tongan parents whose children attended a homework centre (all were Tongan-born and with minimal qualifications). The comments reflect the strong interest in education as a means of social mobility, especially in New Zealand, which is seen as less rigid socially than Tonga.

... in Tonga ... you know who is wealthy and who is poor – our differences were really obvious. Here it is different. And here it is possible to get what you need to lift your status if you go back.

We came to New Zealand to educate them because in Tonga, only those with power and authority are able to send their children to school overseas.

The importance attached to education is reflected in the willingness to make financial sacrifices in order to fund their children's education.

... if they go to university and need a lot of money, I will have to sacrifice many things and leave that money aside for their fees, because I want them to succeed – that was my reason for coming here.

The ultimate aspiration lies beyond education in being able to avoid the type of work they have had to endure in plantations in Tonga or dirty factories in New

Zealand (even if the long-term hopes are modest enough of *ngaue ma'a* or *ngaue 'ofisi'* - clean or office jobs) and to "help our people".

We don't want them to follow in our footsteps. We want them to see the sufferings of getting up at 5 or 6 in the morning, in the cold and limping to work. That's because of no education. We want them to hate that way of living. Schooling back in the Islands was hard, walked for miles to go to school with only one meal a day. With the opportunities that these children have today there is no excuse for them to go through the hardships that we're going through.

Anae (1998; see also Anae 2001) in her study of New Zealand-born Samoan identity journeys also notes the importance of formal education, especially a University education, to Samoan migrant parents living in inner-city Auckland.

Most New Zealand-borns in the group studied managed to obtain School Certificate (92% for females, 45% for males), did at least one 6th form year; 35% for females, 36% for males passed UE, although 21% for females, 9% for males passed Bursary; and about a third went on to University. All New Zealand-borns in the group understood clearly and noted the primary importance that parents and *'aiga* (family) placed on going to university, and how Samoan parents equated doing well at school with a university education. Those who did not go to University rationalised reasons as not being "brainy enough", or being forced to get a job to "support the family". Others tried going to university but then "bombed out". Those who had no formal educational qualifications--7% for females, 36% for males, managed to find other avenues to obtaining employment. However evidence of stringent enforcement by parents is absent from the data which suggests that parents were not taking disciplinary measures in order to get their children to attend university.

I didn't actually enjoy my college years. I think mostly because I had this notion in my head that I wanted to do music and not really having anyone to sort of...that knew music at that time, who could direct me as to what I could do job-wise where music was concerned. It was pretty hard and so, more or less I went to school just for the sake of going to school, and bombed out. Did a fifth form year, I got English and Art School Cert. and then went to sixth form, bombed out of sixth form, and then, I think it was less than a year, then I found a job, and then just started working. It was a job at a warehouse.

Then, only [my brother] and my dad was working, and I really wanted a job, and my sister got expelled. But she was working at a factory, and I knew that I wasn't going to get UE even if I tried, and mum wanted me to get UE, but I said no, I wanted to work, but I'd actually wanted to sew. I wanted to be a fashion designer, but mum and dad wanted me to be a typist. They wanted me to be in an office, so I took clothing right up to 5th form, got it in School C. Then mum and dad told me to drop it, that they didn't want to see me in a factory...they didn't understand that factory and designing were two different things. But so I'm still in an office 'cause that's what my parents wanted in my life.

The experiences of those who did go on to university reflect the immense parental pressure exerted on them to succeed. Many comment that they didn't want to go, and when they did they often weren't allowed to take what they wanted, but degree courses that their parents wanted them to take. For these members this resulted in some of them doing conjoint degrees or double majors in order to obey their parents, and to please themselves at the same time.

[My daughter] was fortunate. She obeyed our wish to go to university. Although she didn't study what I hoped she would do, she studied a BA in English. I said, That's not enough, you can never get a job with that. And then she went and got a MA in English again because she wanted to be a journalist. In those days there was the Herald and the Auckland Star going, by the time she finished she was wanting to get a diploma in journalism, but the Star went out of circulation. She's teaching now. I said, Why don't you get a diploma in teaching? But she went to Carrington and AIT and got a diploma in Adult Education. Perhaps she didn't like to teach kids.

AT AGGS I went right through to 7th form, got School C, no UE at that time...6th Form Certificate, Bursary in five subjects...I personally think it's my parents. They were really supportive and understanding. Yes I always have [wanted to be a doctor], but I want to be a missionary ultimately. I want to be a missionary first and then a doctor, with useful skills that I'd be able to take onto the mission field.

The above narratives are interesting not only because they illustrate the desire of the parents for their children to go to university, but also because they show how for most New Zealand-borns in this group, the enforced choice made by their parents was the right one. None of them expressed the view that going to university was a wrong move or negative career choice; rather most acknowledged that it gave them a chance to evaluate and work out where they wanted to end up. Another significant point is the willingness of their parents to negotiate with their children, and make compromises. This strategy allowed

members to fulfil their parents' desires to go to University, and at the same time, allowed them to carve out a career path for themselves that they could pursue, either concurrently, or at a later date. That is, for these members it was more important that they fulfil their parent's wishes. Their own desires to take other courses or degrees thus took second place. More importantly, these members had found a way to balance and maximise both priorities without compromising the cultural aspects inherent in the parent/child relationship in the *fa'aSamoa*.

Another finding from this study is that the females in this group were more highly qualified than the males - two more females than males passed Bursary, more females passed UE and even a larger proportion of females than males passed School Certificate. This can be explained by females being encouraged by their parents to do well at school. Females are also pressured into staying on and doing well at school, going to university, being responsible for the domestic chores in the home, looking after aged parents and grandparents and teaching/leadership responsibilities within the Church. Young males on the other hand are pressured into leaving school to help with financial obligations if necessary, and/or to become ministers or *faife'au*.

Overall, the university experiences of this group in terms of successful outcomes and for others not so successful outcomes is perceived as a combination of *intense 'aiga* pressure, and immense *'aiga* support. Parents are generally very supportive of their children's education but educational considerations (time/space for school work) are often relegated in importance when the aiga participates in aiga and/or church *fa'alavelave* (usually a ceremonial occasion requiring the exchange of gifts; day-to-day practice and ritual occasions of *fa'asamoa*).

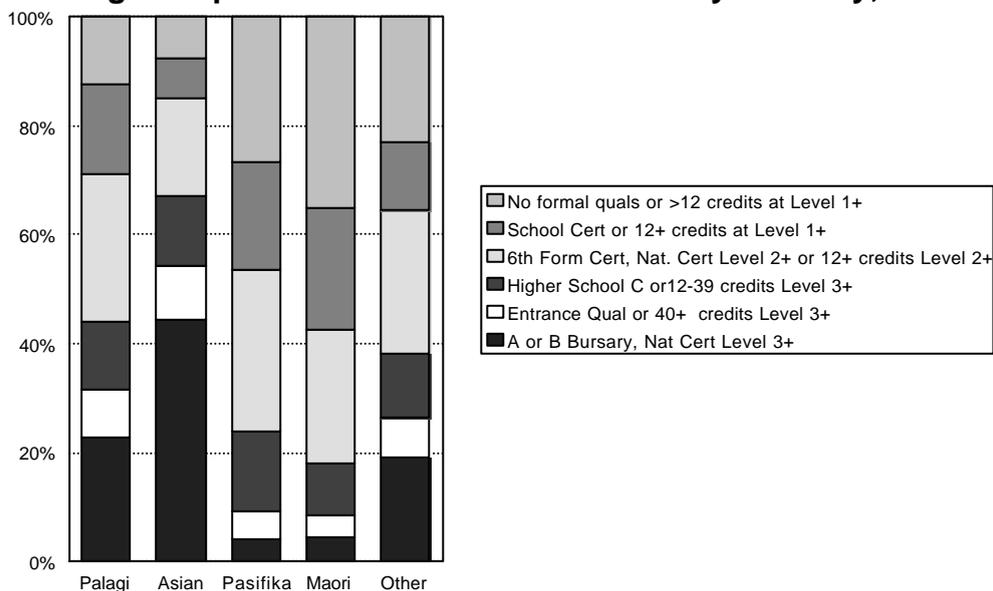
Another 'insider' account of New Zealand-Samoan family's attitudes to education is that provided by Utumapu (1992). This includes five family case studies based on a series of interviews with Samoan parents and their daughters. The aim of the study is stated as to give Samoan people a voice – the chance to reflect on their perceptions of 'the migrant experience' generally, and on their perceptions and experiences of education in particular.

1.2 The transition from school to tertiary education

Macpherson, Spoonley and Anae (2001:59-60) report that Pacific adults have only about one-quarter the rate of higher academic qualifications as do the adult population of New Zealand as a whole. MOE statistics tell us that enrolment of Pacific students in tertiary education in 2000 was 4.5% of all enrolments. Also that, whereas for total enrolments 51% were in degree or postgraduate studies for Pacific it was only 37%. Only 7% of Pacific school-leavers go onto university compared to 21% of all school leavers (Pasikale and Yaw (1998).

A key problem for Pacific people accessing tertiary education is that a far higher proportion leave school without minimum entry qualifications (Pasikale, 1996). Figure 2 shows the highest leaving qualification of all school leavers (by ethnicity) in 1999. Pacific (and Maori) school-leavers clearly potentially start their tertiary education at a distinct disadvantage in comparison to their Palagi and Asian counterparts. The low level of qualifications held not only bars their entry into many programmes, but also restricts the level of programme into which they can gain entry.

Figure 1: Highest qualifications of school-leavers by ethnicity, 1999



The implications of socio-economic background for tertiary participation are explored in The University of Auckland's *Report of the Taskforce for Improving Participation in Tertiary Education* (1999). This report investigated the

secondary schools attended by first year university students for the years 1994-1997.

In a study using data from the Christchurch Health and Development longitudinal study, Maani, (2000), carried out an econometric analysis of participation patterns of a cohort of 694 individuals at 18 years of age. The analysis in this study incorporated the test of the effect of academic ability and academic performance, as well as household economic conditions and school and peer effects. While the study does not refer to Pacific respondents specifically³, (the sample has under-represented numbers of non-Palagi), the findings still have relevance to the discussion of Pacific participation in tertiary education⁴. Maani found that while females' leaving school early was significantly influenced by parental income and their mothers' school qualifications, this was not true for males. The report concluded (ibid: 21),

Individuals who have higher academic ability, with a willingness to forego current earned income or leisure for higher potential lifetime earnings, are more likely to invest in higher education. The students base these decisions on tastes, and information available through their family, school and peer networks. In this transition from school to further study, work or unemployment, the student's academic performance is an important channel through which personal ability and economic factors exert their influence. From a group with the same academic abilities, there is greater tertiary education participation from those with the potential to finance their education.

Using a human capital framework for the study's analysis (where the individual's decision to 'invest' in education is influenced by the calculation of the likely financial return that the individual receives), Maani (ibid: 22) concludes that:

... the study further supports the hypothesis that students sort themselves into tertiary study or labour market choices based on the expected returns of these choices, their tastes, and information available to them through their family, school and peer networks. In this transition from school to further study, work or unemployment, the student's academic performance is an important channel through which personal ability and economic performance exert their influence ... the analysis provides strong support for the hypothesis that personal

³ Although it is pointed out that when personal, socio-economic and environmental characteristics are controlled for, Maori youth did not have a statistically higher probability of dropping out of school, which points to these factors being more influential than ethnicity in influencing this behaviour.

⁴ Because Pacific Island people are disproportionately over-represented in lower socio-economic groups, the findings for these groups have considerable relevance for Pacific groups.

ability, socio-economic background and household income continue to exert an influence on the decisions of the type of institution attended, while the choices are significantly influenced through the academic performance of the young adult.

Fergusson and Woodward's study of the same longitudinal data (2000: 25) found similar patterns

...even after taking into account the effects of socio-demographic factors, cognitive ability and educational achievement, young people from professional/managerial family backgrounds continued to have a rate of university participation that was more than 1.5 times the rate of their peers from unskilled/semiskilled family backgrounds. The difference in university participation was explained by a tendency for young people from unskilled/semiskilled socio-economic status families to gain fewer school leaving qualifications than their higher socio-economic status peers of similar cognitive and educational ability.

The wastage of educational opportunity even when students are academically capable was the motivation for setting up a programme specifically aimed at facilitating Pacific secondary students into tertiary study. In 1993 the Pacific Islands Economic and Social Development (PIESD) Advisory Board responded to the concerns expressed from within Pacific communities, about the loss from the education system of capable Pacific students. In consultation with communities they designed a project aimed at providing the assistance needed to increase Pacific students' access to tertiary education/training, to ensure their successful completion of the courses enrolled in and promote their entry into career- based employment.

'Project Achievement' was initiated under the management of the Operations Division of the Ministry of Pacific Islands Affairs, based at Otahuhu in South Auckland. Three years later, in 1996 it had expanded from three schools and 81 school-leavers to nine schools and 419 student participants. An evaluation study (Coxon et al 1997) aimed to assess the effectiveness of Project Achievement in relation to its objective and specified outcomes. The evaluation research was multifaceted incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

Although findings were generally positive in terms of student perceptions and outcomes, it was strongly supported by the schools involved, and all were keen

to see it continue and consolidate, shortly after the evaluation the Operations Division ceased to exist as a consequence of government restructuring and so did Project Achievement.

A study by AC Nielsen (1997) looked at perceived barriers to participation in post-compulsory education and training by interviewing 40 respondents who have contact with non-participants and a total of five young people who had left school but were not in post-compulsory education or training. The authors identified three broad layers of barriers to participation. There was considerable consistency among both primary and secondary sources on the data. All respondents saw low motivation as the main barrier and that if individuals overcome it, “ other issues or difficulties they face are hurdles or obstacles in comparison” (ibid: 8). The other barriers they identified were ‘attitudes, values and life experiences’ (which they treated as separate from motivation) and external factors such as course fees, student loans and allowance. The report specified (ibid: 20-21) the following barriers as specific to Pacific Islands people:

- high cost of PCET
- unrealistic cultural demands from families
- little or no access to private study areas or private study opportunities in extended families
- English literacy
- lack of assertion by some cultures
- lack of culturally familiar courses
- lack of role models and mentors (ibid: 27).

Other factors identified in individuals who once experienced barriers and overcame them to enter further education and training included:

- sharing goals and having the support of family, work colleagues and friends
- having mentors who believe in their abilities
- a desire to be role models for others - for example, for their children
- being expected by others to enter PCET
- having enthusiasm and a positive attitude
- being adaptable and able to accept disappointments.

Suggested strategies for minimising these barriers included goal setting, self-confidence courses, improved career development advice and planning in secondary schools at 3rd and 4th form levels, reducing costs, encouraging schools to take more responsibility for promoting further education and training

and providing more comprehensive and accurate information about what students are entitled to receive and how they can access assistance (ibid: 43-44).

The authors report (ibid: 41) that when asked why they think some people who experience barriers overcome them, the respondents felt that “where people defined goals early in life, have confidence in their abilities, have personal drive and an ambition and have a desire to up-skill to improve their situations, they are then able to overcome barriers to participation”.

1.3 Educational strategies to recruit Pacific peoples⁵

Bridging programmes are one of the strategies that educational institutions have developed as mechanisms for recruiting under-represented groups such as Pacific peoples. Most of the programmes have developed in individual institutions, rather than as a result of national policy and subsequently vary significantly from location to location (Benseman and Russ: 2001).

Bell's small study (Bell, 1998) looked at the *Stepping Stones* programme at The University of Auckland, which aims to help Maori and Pacific peoples to enter university to pursue degree programmes. The study involved interviews with eight Stepping Stones students (three Samoan men, three Samoan women, one Niuean woman and one Cook Is. woman). The study recounts the respondents' experiences of entering and experiencing the programme and its overall value for people who find little that is familiar or welcoming in the academic environment, but offers few insights beyond these general points. Issues raised earlier in the dissertation, such as the financial demands made on the students (ibid: 18) and the use of a 'buddy' system to support students (ibid: 19) are not pursued in the main analysis.

⁵ While it is clear that the recruitment (and retention) of mature-age Pacific students involves quite different experiences and strategies, no studies have been found on this group. It is worth noting that there is growing interest overseas in trying to 'track adult learning routes' in order to understand how mature-age adults go about the process of re-entering the educational arena, especially when the adults concerned usually have little or no information about the process and it involves a number of stages (McGivney, 1992).

In a piece of research based on case studies of five Private Training Establishments (PTEs) with a Pacific focus, Pasikale, Yaw and Apa (Pasikale, Yaw, and Apa, 1998) point out the value of these providers in offering a culturally welcoming environment for learners, many of whom have had predominantly negative experiences in schools. The five PTEs were chosen because of their successful histories and therefore probably represent 'best practice' qualities, rather than being representative of PTEs generally or of Pacific-focussed PTEs specifically.

1.4 Experiences of Pacific people in tertiary education

There have been a number of studies that have looked at the experiences of Pacific students when studying in tertiary education. The studies have been predominantly about studying at university, which reflects not only the research role of these institutions' staff members, but also the emerging role of Pacific researchers completing their studies for their post-graduate degrees in universities. However, more recent studies explore issues for Pacific students in teacher education and those enrolled in PTEs. No research on the experiences of Pacific students at polytechnics was located.

University

Although rather dated, Furneaux's exploratory study (1973) provides an historical perspective on the issues around Pacific students' adaptation to academic environments. The study looked at "the problems of learning and adjustment of undergraduates from Tonga, the Cook Islands and Western Samoa who were studying at The University of Auckland in 1969" (p. i), using a survey and interviews of 40 students. The study had a 100% response rate; most of whom were Tongan and male; about one-third of the students had been born in New Zealand; and most (90%) had been taught in English for more than six years, although a similar percentage (85%) came from homes where English was never spoken.

The three most commonly identified problems the students encountered in their studies were 'talking in English and having my actions misunderstood', 'academic work' and 'getting used to the pace of living' (1973: 37). Two-thirds of

the group identified 'insufficient preparation'⁶ as the reason why their academic performance had not been as good as expected (1973: 43).

The author concluded that the major difficulties for the respondents were the "needs and requirements for personal adaptation, especially the type of accommodation (predominantly hostels), the course of study and finance" and that satisfaction vs. dissatisfaction with these factors affected their academic learning and adjustment (1973: ii). Language difficulties emerged only during the initial years of study, and not surprisingly, were related to previous experience in using English (all of whom had been born outside New Zealand).

In a follow-up study of the group's performance, 60% failed all units, 27.5% passed one or two units and only 12.5% passed all their units (1973: 66). By the end of 1971 none had completed their degrees in the minimum time; of the six who had graduated only one completed it in four years and the rest took more than five years. Thirteen had their studies terminated because of unsatisfactory progress and had been sent home (as scholarship holders), five had changed their courses (and institutions) and the remainder were either still studying or were unable to be traced.

Tofi, Flett, and Timutimu-Thorpe (1996) examined problems faced by a non-random sample of 61 Pacific students (all born outside New Zealand) attending university in New Zealand and the relations between these problems and social support, academic performance and psychological well-being. The authors point out that the study was non-randomised and was small for statistical purposes, limiting the extent to which the results can be generalised beyond the study group. The most common problems they identified were 'worrying about your courses', 'high workloads' and 'feelings of stress', although the authors felt that the mean level of reporting these problems was relatively low. The problems were significantly associated with academic performance and psychological well-being, which "...highlights the fact that these problems are important

⁶ Furneaux recommended (p. 70) a minimum stay of two years in a New Zealand secondary school prior

On the other hand, they found that there was a significant relationship between social support and psychological well-being, but not academic performance, which they report is consistent with studies in other contexts. The authors concluded that providing pre-arrival and initial campus orientation programmes is important, as well as on-going exchange activities and orientation programmes. In reviewing their study, the authors recommended that future studies consider a qualitative approach, as they felt that "...the rating scale methodology employed in the present study tends to strip away much meaningful context. This may be a particularly limitation when engaged in research in Pacific Island cultures with a rich history of oral traditions" (1996: 57).

Beaver and Tuck's study (1998) of overseas students at a tertiary institution is predominantly about Palagi and Asian students, but it does include a number of Polynesian students in the sample (13 of the 104 total). Similar to the other studies quoted above, Beaver and Tuck identified students' ratings of sources of anxiety. The four most common sources of anxiety for the Pacific students were 'studying', 'money', 'questions in class' and 'career choice' – all of which were rated higher than for their Palagi and Asian counterparts (except 'career choice' for the Asian students). The Pacific students rated their three top competences as 'using the library', 'understanding lectures' and 'spelling' and their three lowest competences as 'applying theory to practice', 'expressing ideas clearly' and 'writing grammatically' (all of which are higher than the Asian students' ratings and below most of the Palagi students' ratings). Finally, the Pacific students top three ratings of strategies to achieve personal learning goals were 'extra study assistance', 'simplify assignment instructions' and 'facilitate social interaction' and they rated 'classes with similar work experience', 'classes with similar language skill' and 'classes with similar ability' as the least useful strategies. Most of the authors' discussion on their findings focuses on the Asian students, with limited reference to the Pacific students.

Similar findings along these lines have been reported in Ashdown's study of international students at the University of Waikato (Ashdown, 1994).

to attending university to overcome this difficulty, rather than any programme run at the university itself.

Anae and Suaalii's study (1996) of Pacific students' use of student services (University Pacific Island Liaison Office, Student Learning Centre, Fale Pacific, Departmental libraries, General Library, Departmental Pacific liaison tutors (pastoral), academic tutors, and Departmental student representatives) at the University of Auckland addresses issues of funding, management, organisation, and structure within and across Pacific services where appropriate for the better academic achievement of Pacific students on campus.

In response to rising concerns within the University regarding low Pacific student academic achievement levels overall and low attendance of various tutoring and liaison services, the survey was devised to gauge whether and how often these services were utilised by Pacific students.

The results of the survey highlighted three major points:

- that the existing services for Pacific students were fragmented and needed to be integrated and consolidated to become more effective;
- the four most-used services by students (General library, Student Learning Centre, Departmental Pacific tutors/liaison tutors, need to be enhanced and extended; and
- the existing structure/programmes of the four other remaining services (Pacific Island Liaison office, Fale Pacific, Departmental Pacific liaison tutors, and Departmental student representatives), needed to be reviewed and restructured for more effective use by students.

Among the recommendations (1996:21) was the call for more content-based workshops within the Student Learning Centre and Fale Pacific, and that all Departments with large Pacific student rolls be encouraged to provide Departmental Pacific tutors/tutorials and liaison tutors.

A further exploration of Pacific students experiences of university is Worth's 1989 study into Pacific women students at University of Auckland. She disaggregated data from a larger study of women at the university, and compared her sample of 329 with the total sample to establish whether the demographic and motivational characteristics of Pacific women resembled those of non-Pacific women. Her findings were interesting: the Pacific women

students were younger and more likely to be studying science. Their parents had significantly lower academic qualifications and occupational status. Many more of them enrolled because of family expectation compared to non-Pacific women and far more of them depended on their families for financial support. What characterised this comparison was dissimilarity on almost every variable.

Colleges of Education

Two research studies (Dickie, 2000; Mara et al, 1996) undertaken by researchers from within colleges of education explored Pacific students experiences of their primary pre-service programmes. Both aimed to identify the barriers to Pacific student teacher achievement and, despite different geographic locations and having been undertaken four years apart, they produced similar findings. Barriers to learning and successful learning outcomes were measured in terms of student's success in completing the course and achieving the qualification. In general terms, the factors that impacted on these were:

- *Home or community based:* the competing demands on time, energy and resources from family, church, part-time work commitments; the extent of family support; the hidden costs of the course e.g. transportation, texts and resources; basic financial pressures and concerns.
- *Institution based:* the availability of specific learning support services; the pedagogical practices employed by tutors and lecturers; class composition; the way tutors interact with students and the nature of the relationships that they develop with Pacific students; the location of Pacific knowledge and experience within courses; Pacific staff- as lecturers and liaison personnel; the facilitation of a feeling of belonging, of place; preparation of students for future professional opportunities which may draw on aspects of their culture in the future e.g. working within bilingual classes.
- *The impact of wider policies:* government policies in the past which reduced training period for primary teaching qualifications from four years to three; student loan schemes; the TEAC Report; competition between teacher education providers and other institutions.

In the Auckland study, Mara et al (1996) reported that on the whole, the primary pre-service Pacific student teachers that participated in their study were generally content and satisfied with their courses, and utilised the support services that were available to them. In terms of support for Pacific students teachers, it was stated that:

We believe that at this time, ACE as an institution, has put in place a range of structures, personnel and learning opportunities for Pacific Islands students (1996:71).

The writers also noted that Pacific students were becoming more assertive, but did not discuss or account in detail how and why this was so. It can be inferred that this is possibly a consequence of the varied opportunities to socialise, be affirmed and involved and hence achieve, as Pacific students at this institution. On the other hand, in the WCE study, the Pacific primary student teachers who participated suggested that the College could support their studies through such things as: learning support workshops based on their needs; grouping Pacific students together in classes; the appointment of a Pacific Liaison person; a physical Pacific meeting space; and the development of a Samoan language class, so that interested students could have the option of teaching in bilingual classes.

In terms of non-institutional based barriers to achievement, Dickie makes a range of recommendations for tutors. First, that tutors ought to take the additional commitments and pressures of Pacific students into account when students seek extensions on assignments. He suggests that tutors need to be aware that for many Pacific students, there are significant culturally based constraints on the ways they engage and participate in tutorial or class situations. The learning styles of Pacific students differ from that of many Pakeha. The generalisation is made that for many Pakeha or Palagi students, educational processes focus on individual effort and achievement. Learning is ultimately an independent activity. This is why it is important for tutors to structure class based activities in different ways, including group work and cooperative learning strategies. By doing this, tutors would be meeting the need 'to provide opportunities for all to contribute' (Dickie, 2000:13).

At some stage in both institutions under study, a compulsory study of Pacific Education issues and concerns is made. The overall aim of such courses is to introduce student teachers to the diversities of Pacific peoples in this country and examine strategies for teaching Pacific children. The added advantage for Pacific students, of having such courses, is that, 'This makes links into their cultural capital, thus creating a support for their own learning' (Dickie 2000: 14).

The student teacher participants in one study were divided in their views on whether or not their institution made effective use of the cultural capital they brought with them. That is:

... whether college has capitalised on the cultural and linguistic background of Pacific Islands students bring to their courses; or whether, in their college courses, these outside experiences are ignored or rarely acknowledged (Mara et al, 1996:73).

Although limited in scope – the studies sampled only 20 and 21 participants - these studies were considered highly relevant to the individual providers concerned. The information generated by the studies was of assistance to future programme planning and development, and hence the ability of the providers concerned to better meet the identified needs of their Pacific students.

Private Training Establishments

Significantly higher proportions of Pacific students enrol in courses at PTEs compared to the general population. For example, whereas 23% of Pacific tertiary students go into Training Opportunity Programmes (TOPs), only 7% of those from other groups do. However, Pacific students achieve better, by moving into employment or continuing their education, than other students.

There are also a number of Pacific PTEs. Pasikale and Yaw (1998) assert that the Ministry of Education's desire to increase participation and performance of Pacific learners they saw encouraging Pacific people to become training providers as a positive way of increasing Pacific participation in the public education system. Assistance in the form of grants was provided and a number were established. In 1998, 4% of the total number of PTEs had a Pacific focus (32 out of 780) (1998:14).

Two research projects sponsored by the Education and Training Support Agency (now Skill New Zealand), have investigated various aspects of Pacific experiences with PTEs. *Seen, but Not Heard: Voices of Pacific Learners* (Pasikale, 1996) explores the educational experiences of 80 Pacific tops learners. *Weaving the Way* (Pasikale and Yaw, 1998) studies the effectiveness of Pacific PTEs.

The driving factor in the former study was the need for more in-depth information about Pacific learners. As Pasikale puts it:

... the aims of the research were: to make visible the stories behind the statistics; to provide information to improve policy and practice impacting on Pacific Islands education; and to address gaps in research based knowledge (1996:16).

The monograph provides clear information about methodology, selection of participants and the research process. An overview of the participants is provided in terms of location, gender, ethnicity, age, income, marital status, employment status, educational background. Discussion and analyses of such things as 'learning experiences', 'Pacific Island Learning Styles', 'Gender Differences in Learning Behaviour' intersperse comment by research participants and theoretical discussion drawing on the writings of researchers and commentators. This is a very valuable teaching resource for tertiary level courses in Pacific education.

In the second monograph, based on case studies of five PTEs with a Pacific focus, Pasikale and Yaw (1998) point out the value of these providers in offering a culturally welcoming environment for learners, many of whom have had predominantly negative experiences in schools. The five PTEs were chosen because of their successful histories and therefore probably represent 'best practice' qualities, rather than being representative of PTEs generally or of Pacific-focused PTEs specifically. However, this is another excellent resource for modelling the qualitative research process. It also demonstrates educational effectiveness in an area of our education system which is not well known, and probably far too easily dismissed by mainstream providers.

CHAPTER TWO

PARTICIPATION PATTERNS

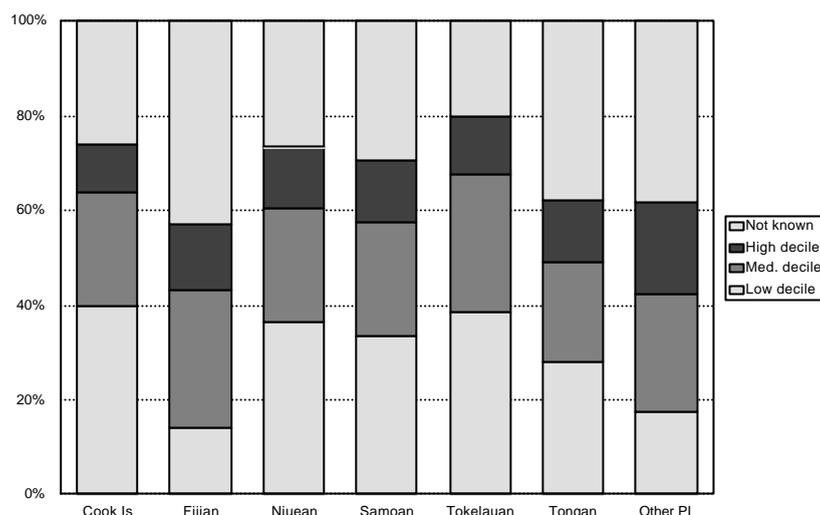
This chapter reviews statistical data on patterns of participation of Pacific students in New Zealand tertiary education. All data reviewed are from the Ministry of Education, unless stated otherwise. Data are available by individual students, enrolments and Equivalent Full-Time (EFTs), but because the emphasis in this report is on individual participation, most of the following figures refer to individual student data. The degree of participation is reflected in the data on part-time vs. full-time attendance. There is currently a dearth of data available on Private Training Establishments (PTEs). Where data on PTEs is available, it has been included, but most of the data in this report refer to the four categories of Tertiary Educational Institutions (TEIs) – universities (9)⁷, polytechnics (38), colleges of education (4) and *whare wananga* (3).

2.1 School ‘origins’ of Pacific tertiary students

Figure 2 below shows the decile categories of the schools that TEI Pacific students last attended. A normal distribution across these four groupings would usually fall approximately into equal groups (assuming that ‘not known’ is reasonably constant). There is considerable consistency across all of the Pacific groups with the exception of Fijians and to a lesser extent, ‘other PI’. The graph clearly shows that small numbers of Pacific students come from high decile schools, a larger percentage come from medium decile schools and the great majority come from low decile schools. On average (excluding the ‘not knowns’) about half of all Pacific students are from low decile schools.

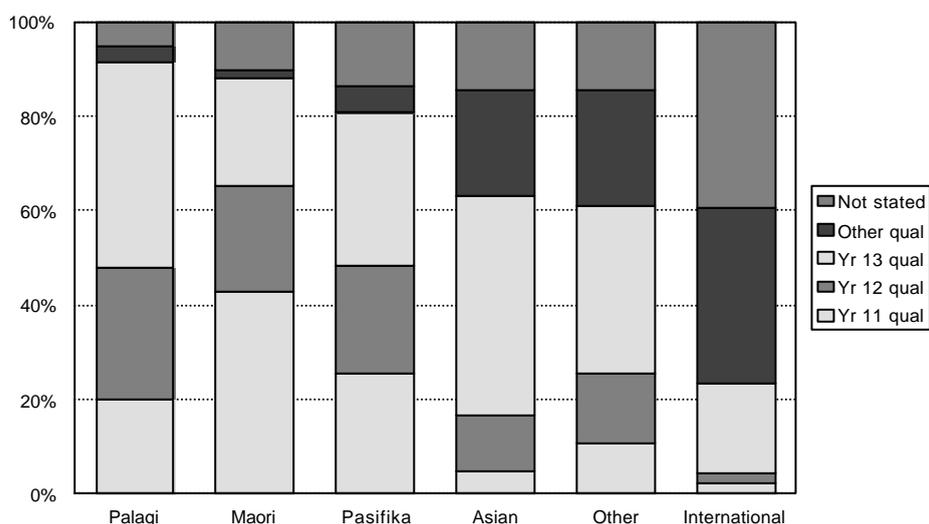
⁷ This figure includes the former Auckland Institute of Technology, now the Auckland University of Technology. Most of AUT’s data comes under polytechnics however, as it was only granted university status in 2001.

Figure 2: Decile school origins of Pacific TEI students, 2000



Similarly, Pacific students enter tertiary education with much lower entry qualifications than their Palagi counterparts (Figure 3), particularly in terms of Year 13 qualifications. This distribution of entry qualifications means that many Pacific students are only eligible for entry into lower level qualifications, which is confirmed in other data presented in this report.

Figure 3: Entry qualifications of TEI students by ethnicity, 2000



2.2 Overall rates of participation

New Zealand's overall participation in tertiary education has increased steadily over recent years and is now among the highest in the OECD (OECD, 2000).

Figure 4 below shows the distribution of all tertiary students among the four main categories of providers in 2000, with universities accounting for nearly half (46.4%) of all students and polytechnics a third (33.1%); between them these two categories account for nearly four out of every five students.

Figure 4: Distribution of TEI students by provider type, 2000

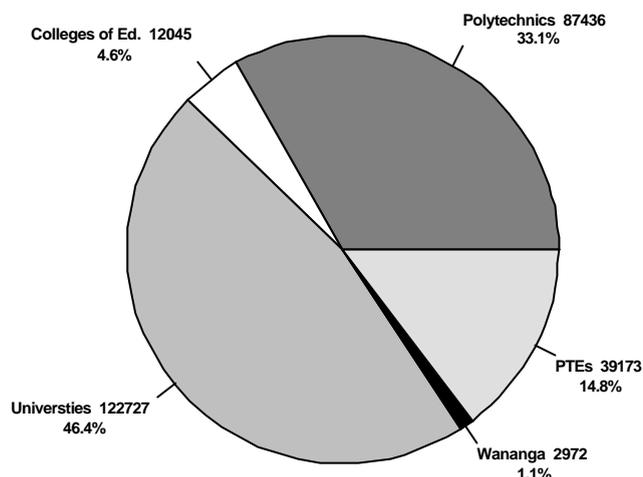
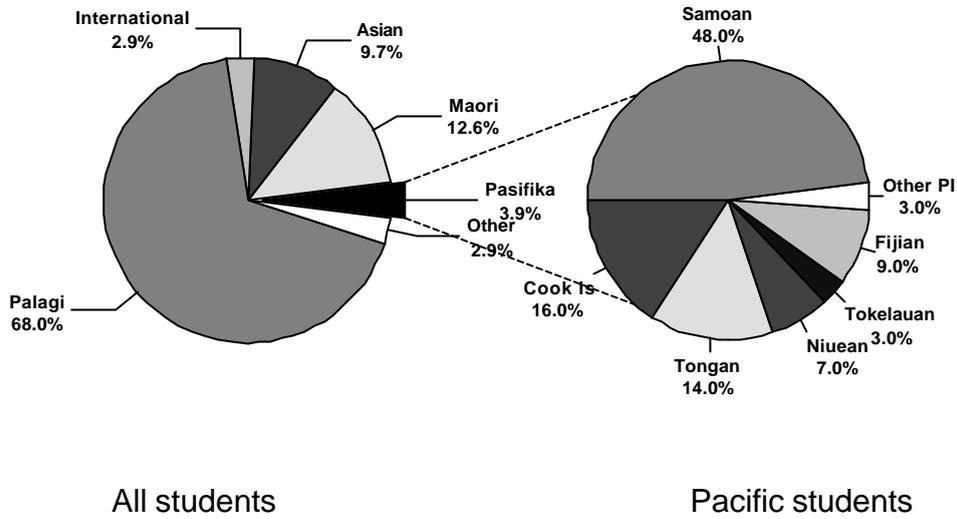


Figure 5 shows the ethnicity of all tertiary students in 2000. Pacific students make up nearly 4% of the total or one in every 25 students. The graph on the right provides a breakdown of the Pacific students into the various Pacific Nations groupings; here Samoans make up nearly half (48%) of the total, followed by Cook Island (16%), Tongan (14%), Fijian⁸ (9%), Niuean (7%) and Tokelauan (3%).

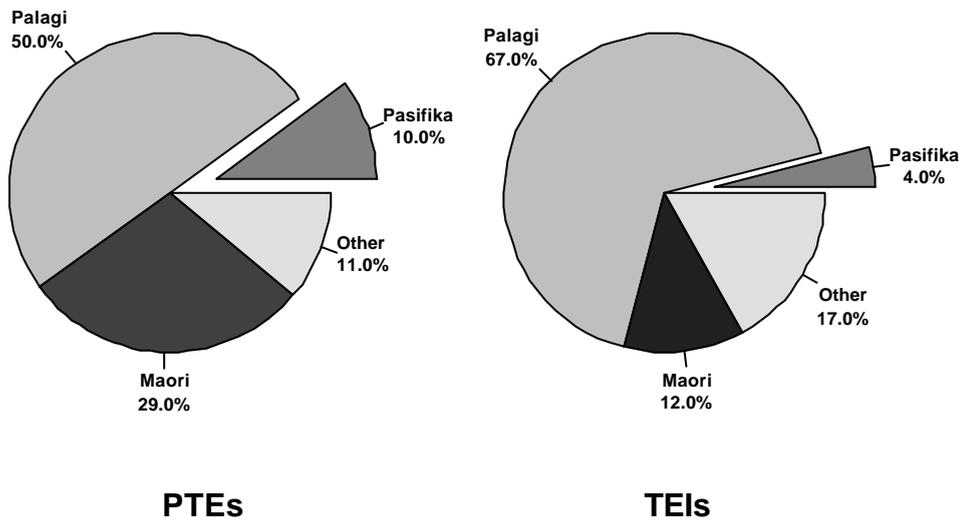
⁸ 'Fijian' does not include Indo-Fijians in Ministry of Education data.

Figure 5: Distribution of students enrolled at TEIs by ethnicity, 1999



The graph below (Figure 6) compares the ethnicity of TEI with PTE students. PTEs clearly cater for a higher proportion of Pacific students (10%) than TEIs (4%).

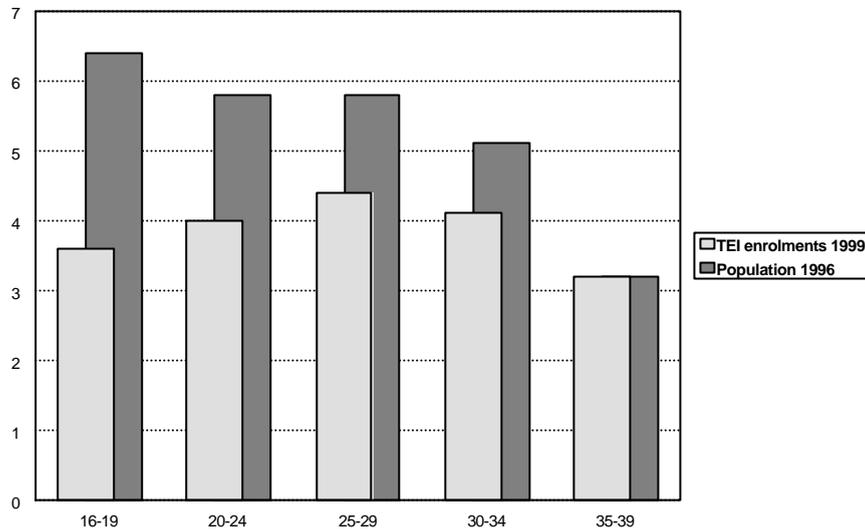
Figure 6: Distribution of PTE and TEI students by ethnicity, 1999



The next graph (Figure 7) shows the percentage distribution of Pacific students at TEIs compared with their overall distribution in the general population across five age groupings. The under-representation of Pacific students in relation to their distribution in the overall population is greatest in the younger age groups where they make up 3.5% of TEI enrolments compared with nearly 6.5% in the

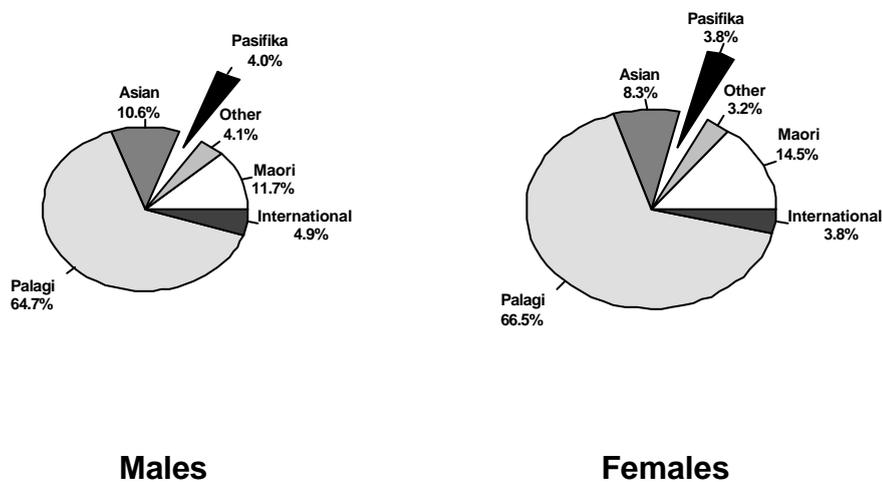
overall population. This discrepancy gradually disappears with each successive age grouping.

Figure 7: Distribution of 1999 TEI enrolments and 1996 Census Pacific Population 1996



The total numbers of students enrolled at public tertiary education institutions in the middle of 2000 is shown in Figure 8. Each of the graphs is proportional to the total number of students, reflecting the higher numbers of females (127,974; 56%) to males (97,206; 44%). This proportion is the same with Pacific students (56% vs. 44%).

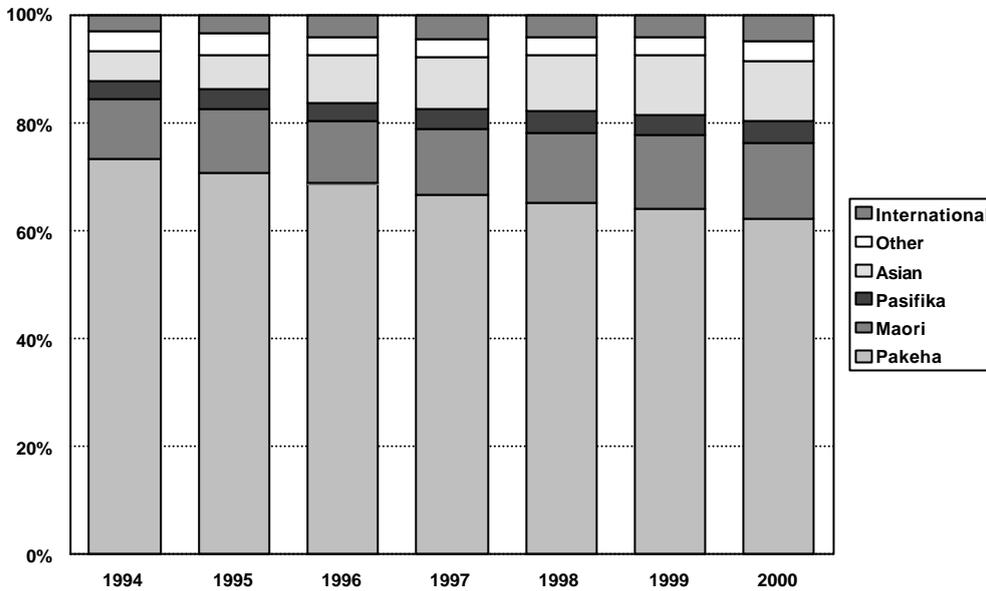
Figure 8: Total number of students enrolled at TEIs by gender (proportional), July 2000



The changing ethnic distribution of New Zealand tertiary students from 1994 through to 2000 can be seen in Figure 10. That the proportion of Palagi

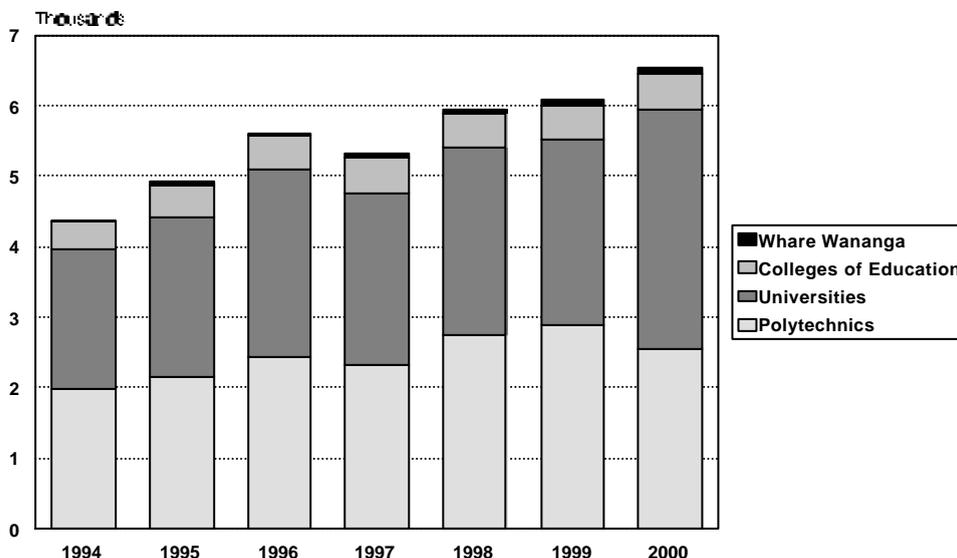
students has been steadily decreasing, is primarily due to the increasing proportions of Asian, Maori and International students, with a slower rate of change in the proportion of Pacific students over this period.

Figure 9: Distribution of TEI students by ethnicity, 1994-2000



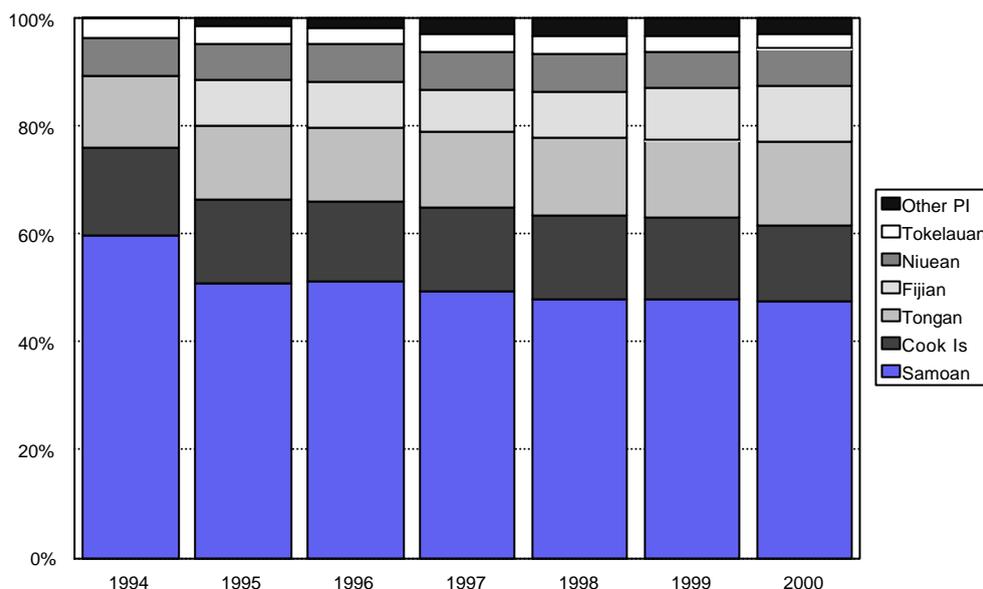
While the proportions of Pacific students have not been changing significantly, the amount of participation has been increasing steadily, which is reflected in the graph below (Figure 10) showing the increases in the numbers of Pacific EFTs from 1994 to 2000. The graph also indicates the increases in attendance at universities and the fall-off at polytechnics.

Figure 10: Number of Pacific EFTs in TEIs, 1994-2000



Although Samoans still make up approximately half of all Pacific students (Figure 11), their overall proportion has been slowly decreasing since 1994. The greatest increases have occurred with the Fijian and Other Pacific Island categories, with most of the other groups remaining reasonably constant over this period.

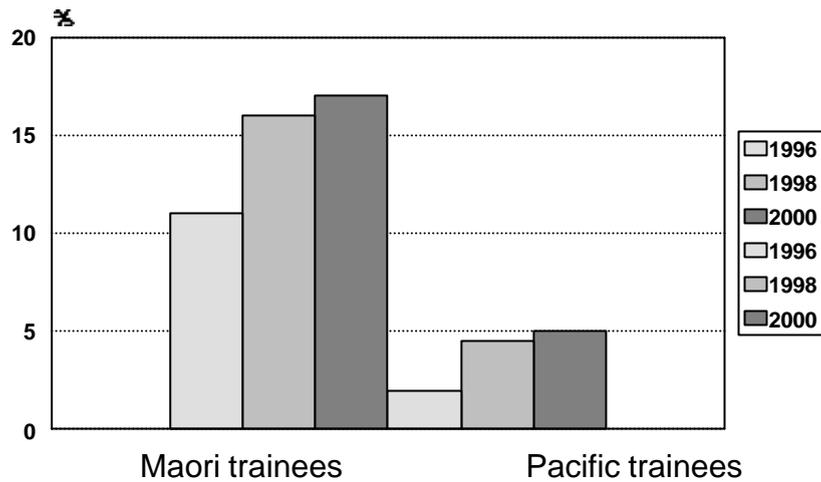
Figure 11: Distribution of Pacific students by ethnic groups, 2000



2.3 Industry training participation

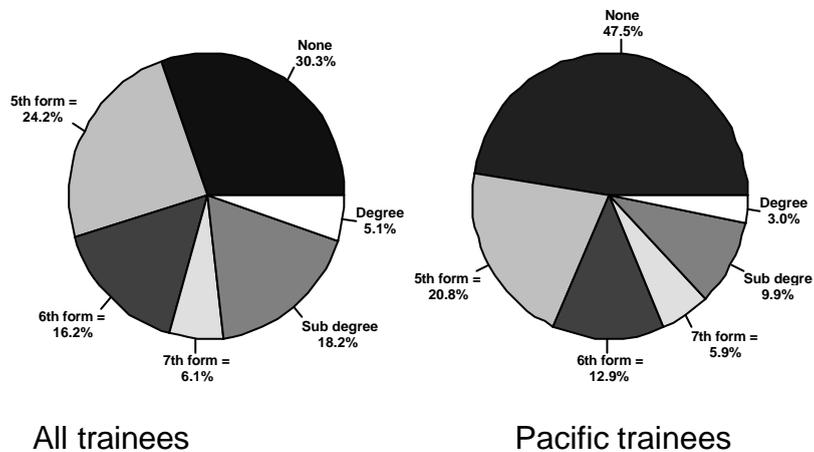
A considerable amount of training now takes place in workplace settings. In 2000 a total of 81,343 trainees participated in industry training, up 11% on the previous year (Skill NZ, 2001). The proportion of Pacific people participating in this form of training has risen since 1996 (Figure 12), although the increase from 1998 to 2000 was smaller than for 1996 to 1998, a pattern also found with Maori participants.

Figure 12: Proportion of Maori and Pacific industry trainees, 2000



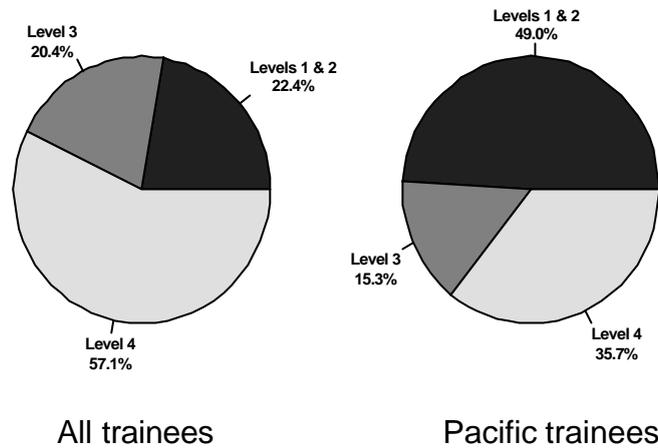
As with tertiary education generally, Pacific industry trainees have lower levels of previous qualifications (Figure 13). The greatest difference lies in the 'no qualifications' category (48% of Pacific vs 30% of all trainees).

Figure 13: Previous highest qualification of industry trainees by ethnicity, 2000



Nearly half (49%) of Pacific participation in this type of training is at Level one on the Qualifications Framework, compared with 22.4% of the total group (Figure 14). On the other hand, just over a third (35.7%) of Pacific trainees achieve Level four certificates, compared with over half (57.1%) of the total group.

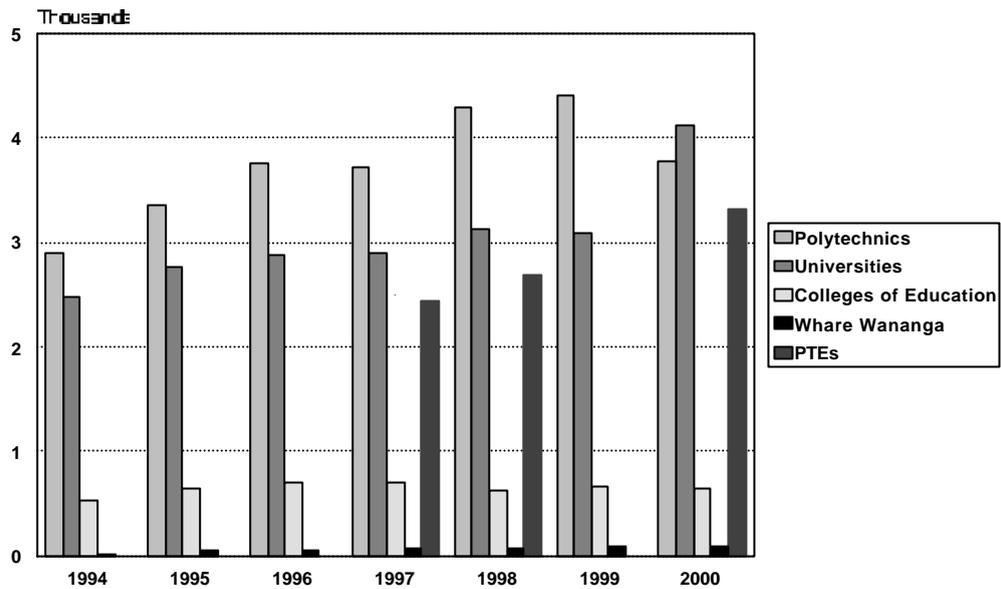
Figure 14: National certificate achievement of industry trainees by ethnicity, 2000



2.4 Participation by type of TEI institution

Until very recently, the majority of Pacific students have been in polytechnics (Figure 15). The data for 2000 suggest a significant swing away from polytechnics to universities and a constant increase in the numbers of Pacific students attending PTEs (data for PTEs was not available for 1994-96 and 1999). Numbers attending colleges of education have been fairly constant and a small number are in whare wananga.

Figure 15: Total numbers of Pacific students in TEIs and PTEs, 1994-2000



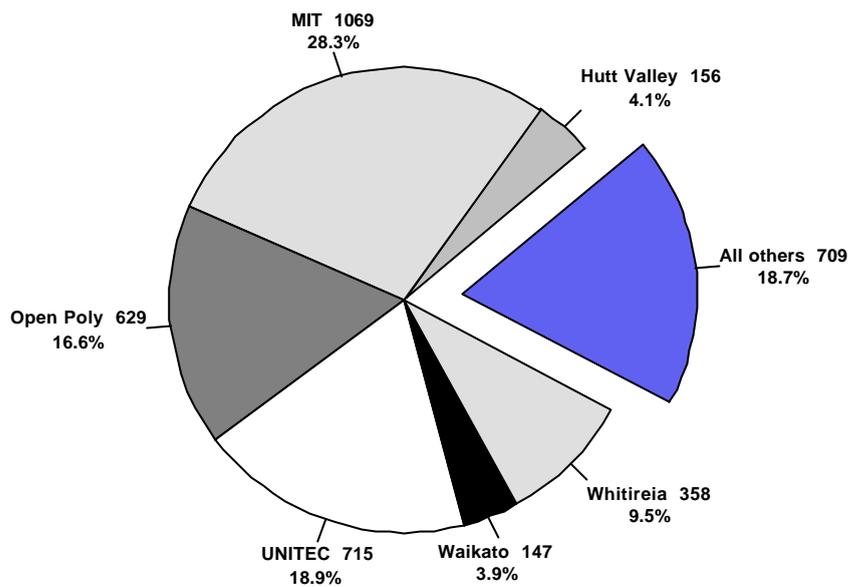
Note: Data for PTEs only available for 1997, 1998 and 2000

2.5 Participation by individual institutions

The next three figures look at the specific polytechnics and universities⁹ that Pacific students attend. Figure 17 below shows that over 80% of all Pacific students can be found in six polytechnics and of these, Manukau Institute of Technology, UNITEC and the Open Polytechnic account for nearly two-thirds (63.8%) of the total.

⁹ Colleges of Education and whare wananga have not been included in this section due to their low numbers.

Figure 16: Distribution of Pacific students in selected polytechnics, 2000



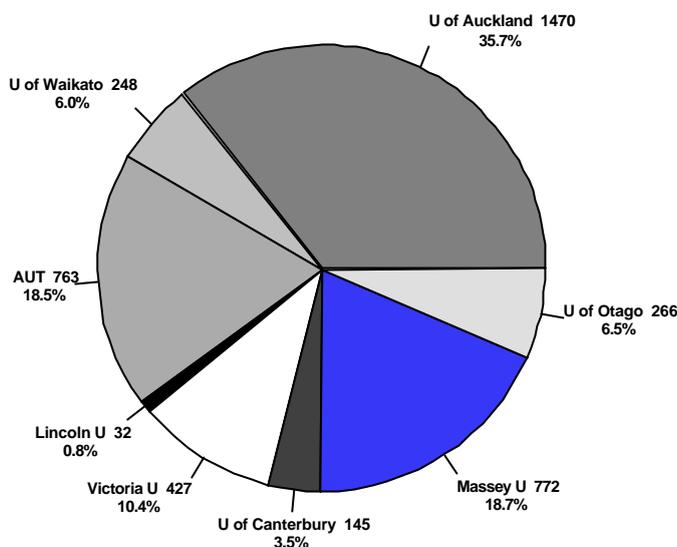
A more detailed breakdown by individual polytechnics and specific Pacific groups is provided in the table below (Figure 17). The unexpectedly high number of Pacific students attending the small Tai Poutini Polytechnic is probably due to their programme being located in Auckland.

Figure 17: Distribution of Pacific students in all polytechnics, 2000

| | Cook Is | Fijian | Niuean | Samoan | Tokelauan | Tongan | Other PI | Total |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Aoraki | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| Bayof Plenty | 9 | 4 | 4 | 18 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 45 |
| CIT | 13 | 7 | 1 | 38 | 3 | 10 | 2 | 74 |
| Christchurch | 11 | 11 | 7 | 42 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 72 |
| EIT | 11 | 3 | 2 | 22 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 41 |
| Hutt Valley | 19 | 14 | 5 | 87 | 12 | 12 | 7 | 156 |
| UniColl | 19 | 5 | 2 | 38 | 4 | 22 | 1 | 91 |
| Manukau | 215 | 58 | 89 | 503 | 9 | 180 | 15 | 1069 |
| Nelson | 7 | 10 | 3 | 9 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 32 |
| Northland | 7 | 10 | 3 | 9 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 32 |
| Open | 148 | 72 | 64 | 250 | 12 | 62 | 21 | 629 |
| Otago | 12 | 3 | 4 | 24 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 64 |
| Southland | 11 | 1 | 1 | 16 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 37 |
| Tai Poutini | 18 | 5 | 1 | 30 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 56 |
| Tairāwhiti | 3 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 15 |
| Taranaki | 5 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 25 |
| Telford | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| UNITEC | 72 | 102 | 57 | 311 | 13 | 138 | 22 | 715 |
| Wairariki | 41 | 4 | 2 | 14 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 75 |
| Waikato | 37 | 35 | 8 | 43 | 1 | 18 | 5 | 147 |
| Wairarapa | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 11 |
| Wanganui | 9 | 11 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 33 |
| Whitireia | 60 | 13 | 4 | 218 | 50 | 9 | 4 | 358 |
| TOTAL | 723 | 370 | 258 | 1697 | 124 | 500 | 111 | 3783 |

Figure 18 (below) shows the distribution of Pacific students among the eight universities. Again, the Auckland location of AUT, The University of Auckland and Massey University (and probably even some of the other universities' Auckland-based programmes) is reflected in the high proportion (72.9%) of the total being located in these three institutions. Only one in ten (10.8%) is located in the three South Island universities.

Figure 18: Distribution of Pacific students in universities, 2000



Nearly five of every six Pacific students studying at a college of education was in Auckland in 2000 (Figure 19). The table also shows the dominance of Samoans in this sector.

Figure 19: Distribution of Pacific students in colleges of education, 2000

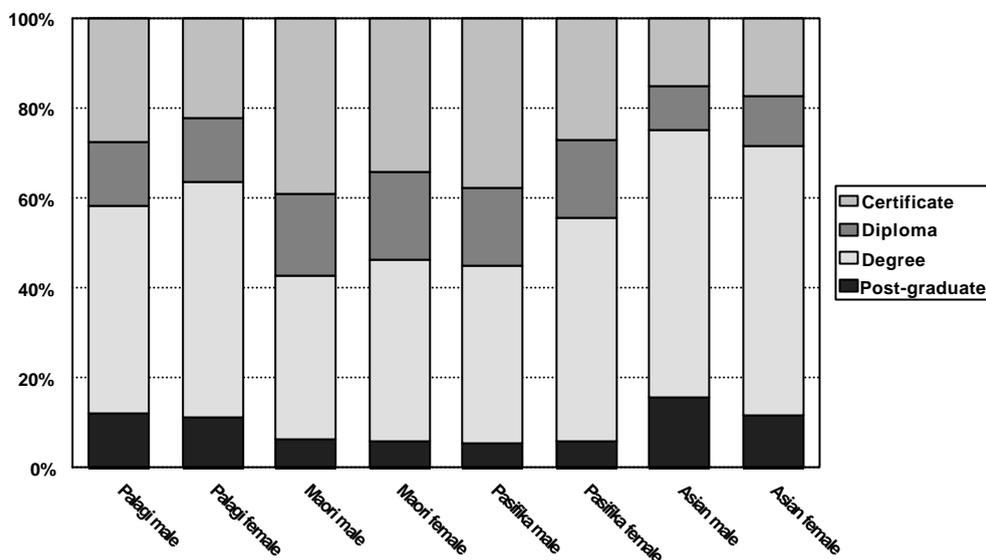
| | Cook Is | Fijian | Niuean | Samoan | Tokelauan | Tongan | Other PI | Total |
|------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|--------|----------|-------|
| Auckland | 74 | 34 | 61 | 258 | 6 | 62 | 4 | 499 |
| Wellington | 3 | 3 | 3 | 34 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 53 |
| Christchurch | 8 | 3 | 2 | 30 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 54 |
| Dunedin | 10 | 0 | 11 | 23 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 48 |
| Total Colleges of Ed. | 95 | 40 | 77 | 345 | 12 | 73 | 12 | 654 |

2.6 Level of participation

While enrolment in various educational institutions is one measure of participation, it is also important to review the nature of the participation. Figure 20 below shows the academic level of TEI students' participation by gender and their level of programme. Both Palagi and Asian students have higher proportions studying at degree and postgraduate levels than their Maori and Pacific counterparts. Conversely, higher proportions of Maori and Pacific students are studying at Certificate level. Pacific males have a higher proportion studying for Certificates, while a higher proportion of Pacific females are

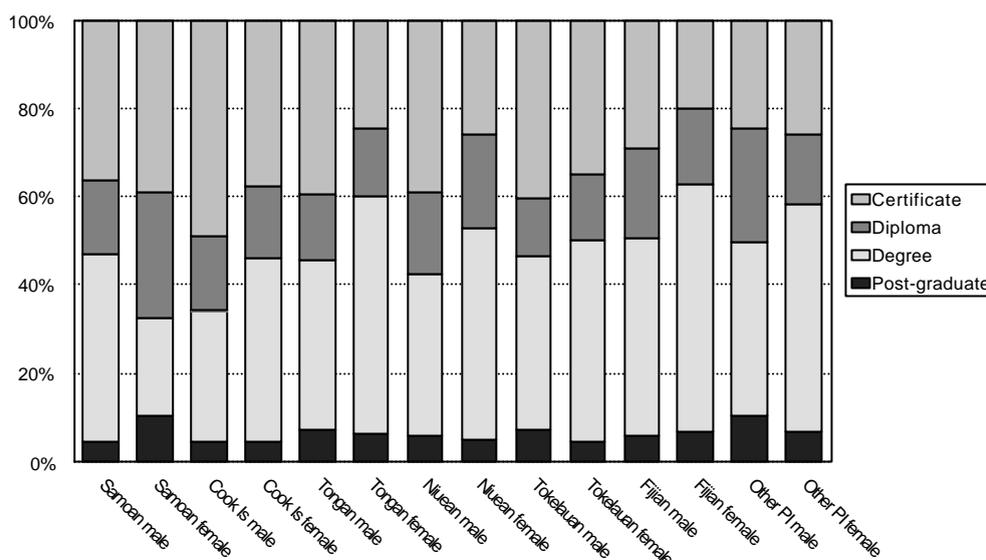
studying for degrees (the proportions for Diplomas and Postgraduate study are similar for both genders).

Figure 20: TEI students by ethnicity, gender and level of qualification, July 2000



The following graph then looks at levels of participation across all the Pacific groups by gender. There are some considerable variations across the groups. For example, about half of all Cook Is. males are studying at Certificate level and very few at postgraduate level. This pattern is true also (although to a lesser degree) of Tongan and Tokelauan males. On the other hand, a low proportion of Tongan, Niuean and Fijian females are enrolled in Certificates; Samoan females and 'Other PI' have the highest proportion at Post-graduate level.

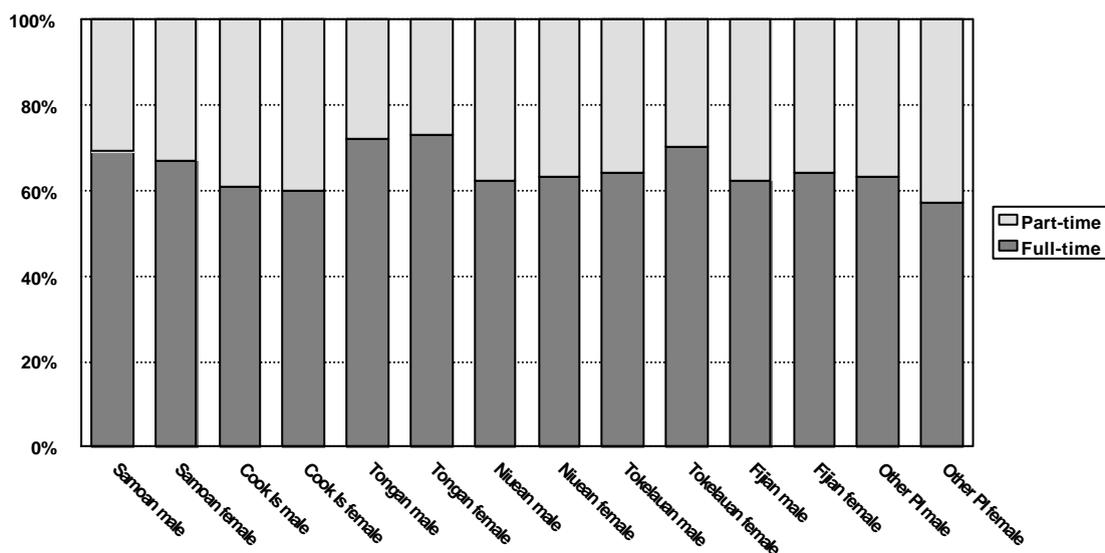
Figure 21: Distribution of Pacific students by programme level, 2000



2.7 Part-time vs. full-time participation

Figure 22 shows the patterns of attendance by specific Pacific group and gender. On average, about two-thirds of Pacific students attend TEIs on a full-time basis. Cook Is., Niuean and 'Other PI' have slightly higher rates of part-time attendance, while Tongans have the highest rates of full-time attendance. There is little variation across the genders in this area.

Figure 22: Distribution of Pacific students by pattern of attendance and gender, 2000



2.8 Characteristics of participants

Pacific students are younger than their non-Pacific counterparts (Figure 23). Older Pacific males have a higher proportion in the 20-24 year cohort than Pacific females, but then have a lower proportion in the age groups over 35 years. Even though Pacific students are generally younger, just under half are aged over 25 years, which reflects the growing numbers of mature age students in tertiary education.

Figure 23: Age group distribution of Pacific TEI students 2000

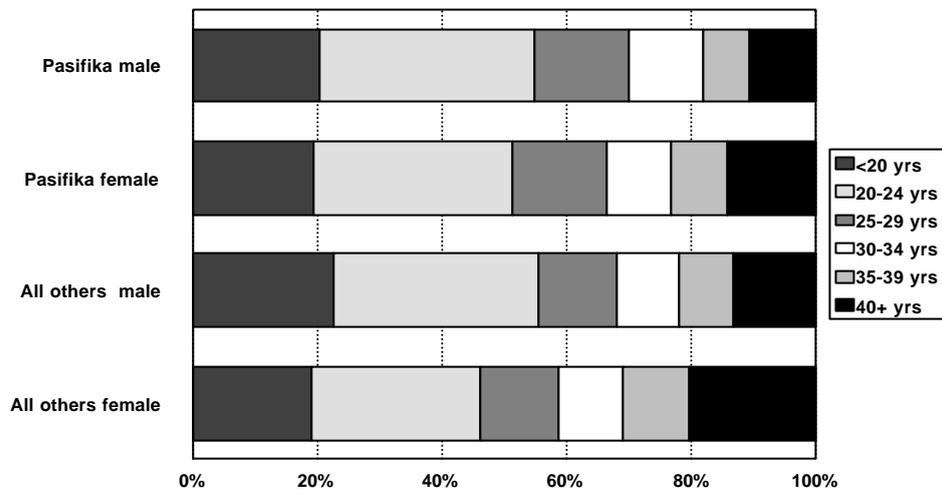
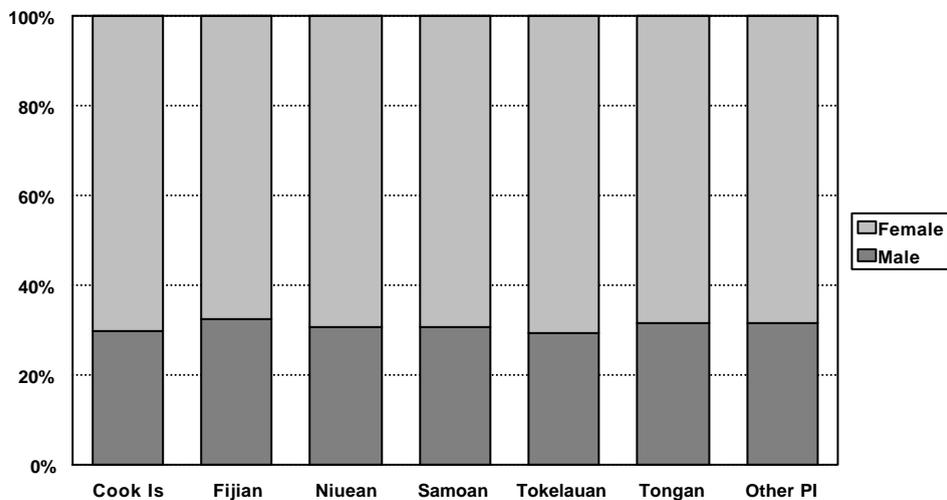


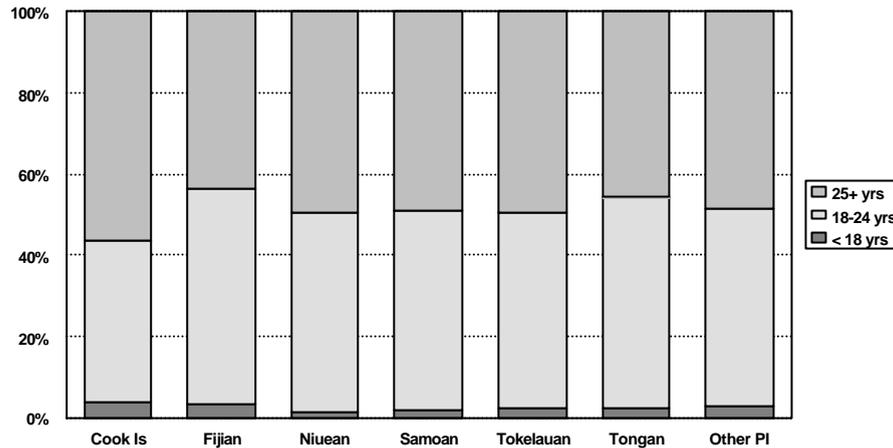
Figure 24 shows the gender distribution of Pacific TEI students. On average, only one third are male and this is consistent across the specific groups.

Figure 24: Gender distribution of Pacific TEI students, 2000



The next graph (Figure 25) shows a three-way split of Pacific students by age. While this grouping is somewhat crude, it is useful in showing the high proportion of students who are 'mature age' (i.e. over 25 years) – on average, approximately half of the total number.

Figure 25: Age distribution of Pacific TEI students, 2000



2.9 Subjects studied

The table below details the broad categories of subjects studied by Pacific students in 1999. The most popular subjects are Commercial and Business, Humanities and Education; areas of lower representation include Mathematics, Computing, Agriculture, Horticulture Fishing and Forestry, Transport and Communication and Para-professional occupations.

Figure 26: Number of students* enrolled in formal programmes of study at public tertiary institutions, July 1999

| Subject | Samoa | Cook Is | Tongan | Niuean | Tokelauan | Fijian | Other PI |
|---------------------------------|-------|------------|--------|--------|-----------|--------|-------------|
| General | 71 | 18 | 35 | 11 | 14 | 13 | 10 |
| Literacy and numeracy | 59 | 8 | 10 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| Education | 518 | 151 | 116 | 80 | 29 | 78 | 19 |
| Art, music, handcraft | 116 | 50 | 22 | 11 | 9 | 19 | 9 |
| Humanities | 598 | 136 | 182 | 56 | 34 | 86 | 34 |
| Religion and theology | 22 | 5 | 15 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Social, behav. and comm. Skills | 233 | 95 | 76 | 40 | 18 | 34 | 11 |
| Commercial and business | 896 | 316 | 254 | 116 | 36 | 231 | 75 |
| Law | 183 | 32 | 35 | 26 | 8 | 29 | 6 |
| Natural and applied sciences | 200 | 65 | 82 | 35 | 5 | 67 | 27 |
| Mathematics | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Computing | 137 | 34 | 23 | 16 | 16 | 33 | 10 |
| Medical and health | 173 | 40 | 72 | 43 | 22 | 60 | 13 |
| Industrial trades and crafts | 285 | 122 | 101 | 39 | 17 | 67 | 13 |
| Engineering | 103 | 52 | 46 | 27 | 12 | 50 | 17 |
| Arch and town planning | 51 | 16 | 10 | 8 | 0 | 10 | 5 |
| Ag hort. forestry and fishing | 25 | 24 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 11 |
| Transport and communication | 13 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Service trades | 180 | 82 | 57 | 36 | 14 | 33 | 11 |
| Mass communication | 28 | 10 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 11 | 3 |
| Para-professional Occupations | 15 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Sport and recreation | 86 | 33 | 12 | 13 | 6 | 7 | 5 |
| General foundation programmes | 72 | 27 | 38 | 17 | 3 | 12 | 2 |
| Other progs. n.e.c. | 19 | 14 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 1 |

* includes multiple enrolments

2.10 Graduation data

This final section reviews data on the characteristics of Pacific graduates and the programmes they have studied.

Characteristics of graduates

As with the enrolment data, a clear majority of Pacific graduates are female and the greatest number overall are Samoan (Figure 27).

Figure 27: Gender of Pacific graduates, 2000

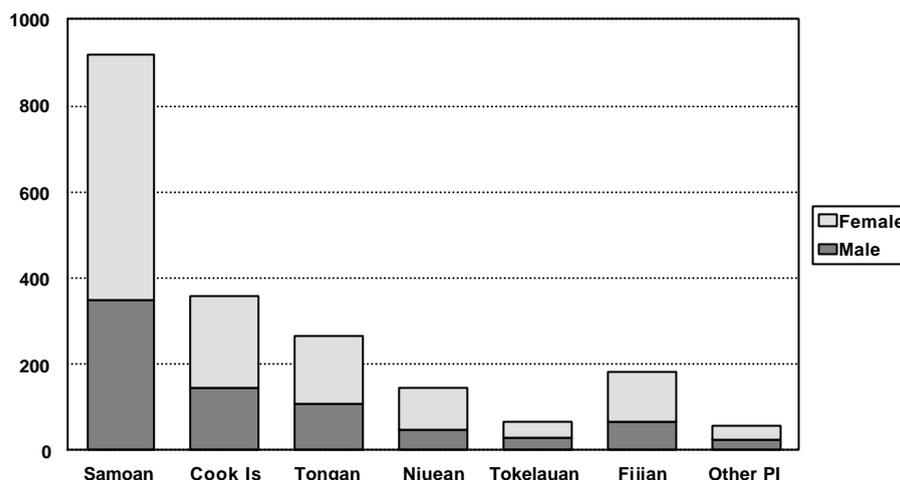
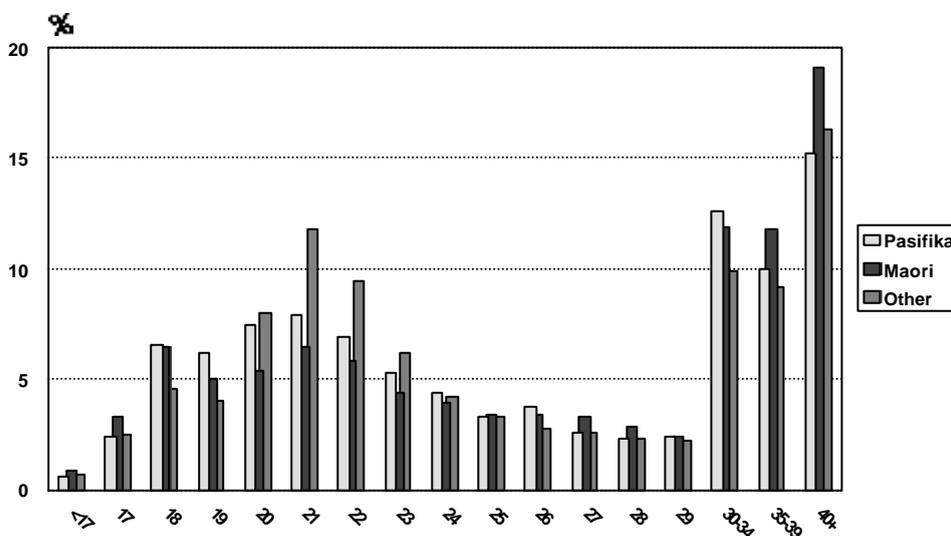


Figure 28 shows the ages of Pacific, Maori and other graduates, with a peak of graduation numbers in their early 20s, but also significant numbers of graduates over 30 years.

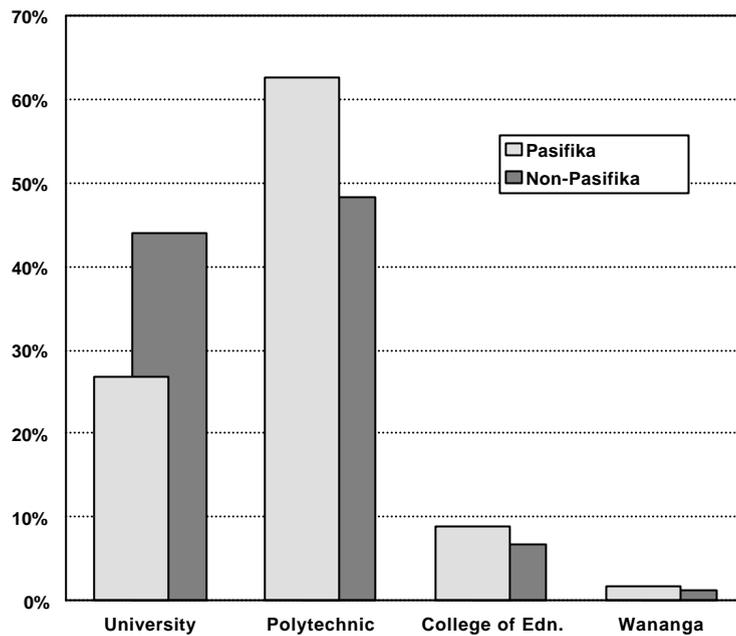
Figure 28: Pacific, Maori and other TEI graduates by age, 1999



Types of TEI

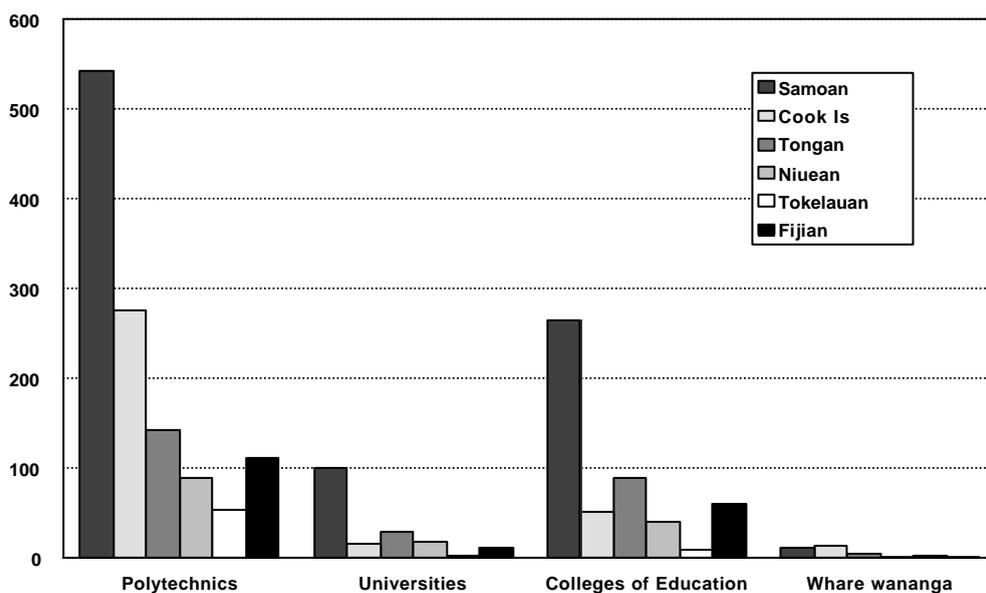
Figure 29 shows that nearly two-thirds of Pacific students graduate from polytechnics, about one quarter from universities and less than a tenth from colleges of education.

Figure 29: Distribution of Pacific and non-Pacific TEI graduates by type of provider, 1999



The next graph shows the specific Pacific groups of graduates by the type of TEI (Figure 30). Again, the large number of Samoan graduates is evident, especially at polytechnics and colleges of education. There is a clear under-representation of Cook Islands, Niuean and Tokelauan graduates from universities in comparison with polytechnics and colleges of education.

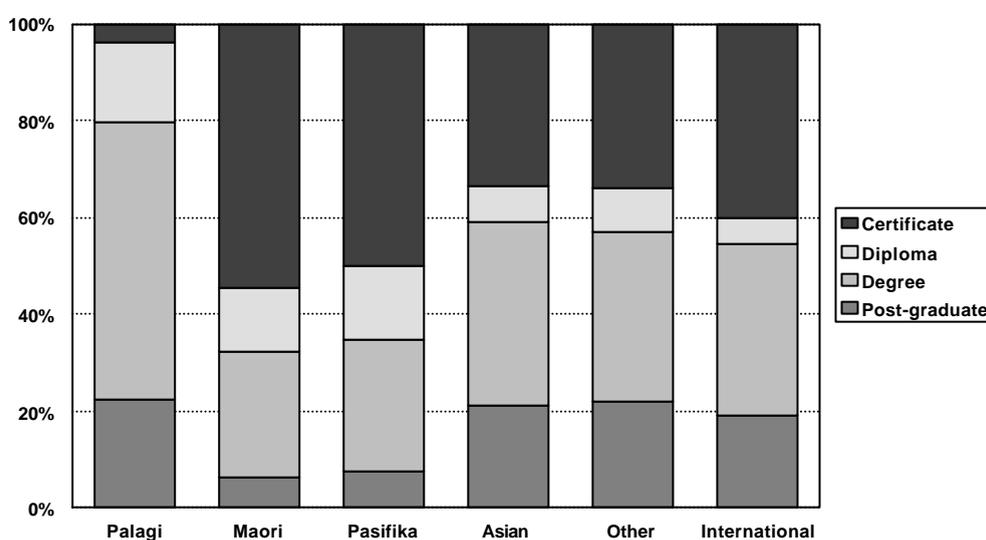
Figure 30: Total number of Pacific graduates by provider type, 2000



Level of graduate qualification

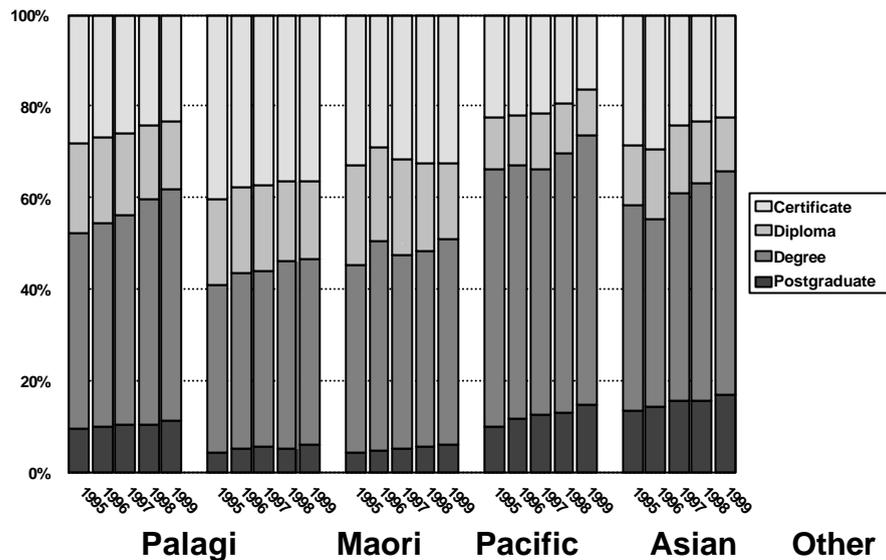
As with the data on enrolments, there is considerable variation among the different ethnic groups when analysed in terms of qualification level (Figure 31). About half of both Pacific and Maori graduates achieve Certificate qualifications, while their Pacific counterparts are much more weighted towards the higher level qualifications. At the other end of the spectrum, fewer than one in ten Pacific students graduate at the post-graduate level and approximately one in three achieve a degree level qualification.

Figure 31: Distribution of TEI graduates by ethnicity and programme level, 2000



Finally, Figure 32 shows the pattern of types of qualifications achieved by the different ethnic groups from 1995 to 1999. These show a small increase in the proportion of Pacific students achieving a post-graduate qualification and slight reductions in the proportions graduating with Certificates and Diplomas, but the amount of change is not great overall, especially in comparison with the changes occurring with the other ethnic groups towards higher level qualifications.

Figure 32: TEI graduates' level of qualification by ethnicity, 1995-1999



Summary

From the information available about Pacific peoples experiences of tertiary education in New Zealand, we know that:

- The majority of Pacific tertiary students have attended low decile secondary schools
- In general, Pacific students enter tertiary education with lower entry qualifications than their Palagi and other counterparts
- A higher proportion of Pacific students are enrolled in lower level qualifications (certificate) than for the overall tertiary student population, and a lower proportion in degree and postgraduate programmes
- A significantly higher proportion of PTE enrolments are Pacific (10%) than are TEI enrolments (4%)
- The proportion of Pacific people participating in industry training has increased but lower entry levels mean lower levels of participation and outcome
- While actual numbers of Pacific students in TEIs have increased over recent years, the proportion relative to total enrolments has not
- Recent data show increased proportions of Pacific tertiary students in universities and PTEs, and a reduced proportion in polytechnics. College of Education enrolments are constant
- The great majority (70-80%) of Pacific polytechnic, university and college of education students are enrolled in Auckland institutions
- Approximately two-thirds of Pacific tertiary students are female and Pacific women are more likely to be studying at degree and post-graduate levels than Pacific men
- A higher proportion of Pacific students are mature-age than for the overall population

- About one-third of Pacific students graduate at degree level and one-tenth at post-graduate level
- Although there have been small increases in the proportion of Pacific post-graduates and small reductions in proportions graduating at sub-degree level, these changes are not as marked as for the overall population

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PART B

TERTIARY PROVIDER VIEWS

Present policies, programmes and strategies for recruiting, supporting and retaining Pacific students in New Zealand tertiary study

Introduction

The previous section of this report maps the representation in New Zealand tertiary study of Pacific students. This current section considers the present policies, programmes and strategies for recruiting, supporting and retaining Pacific students in New Zealand tertiary study from the perspective of the tertiary providers. The focus is on identifying the barriers which contribute to low representation of Pacific students across the tertiary sector and on locating successes which signal potential for change.

This section is introduced with a note on methods and an overview of policy. The body of this section is then divided into two chapters. Chapter 3 considers those themes identified by the respondents as important in the process of Pacific students deciding on tertiary study as their choice of pathway. Chapter 4 considers the retention and success of those Pacific students who have chosen tertiary study. While it is acknowledged that many of these themes overlap and intersect, this process of separation has been selected to facilitate clarity and to do justice to the complexity of the themes.

Method:

Sixteen key persons from three Universities, two Polytechnics, one College of Education, six Private Training Establishments and from Skill New Zealand were interviewed.

All interview data were recorded, transcribed and analysed using conventional qualitative data analysis and N4 software package.

Confidentiality of respondents and their institutions has been protected as required by the University of Auckland Human Subjects Ethics Committee

Overview of Provider Documents and Advisory Processes

All respondents were able to identify charters, policies or vision statements which articulated some commitment to equity for Pacific students. Frequent mention was made of EEO (Equal Employment Opportunities) policies or plans, E Ed O (Equal Educational Opportunities) policies or plans, or combined Equity policies which provided statements of principle and intent. Charters and Vision statements were also put forward as provider's guiding documents. There was considerable variation in the perceptions of these documents by respondents. For some, these documents were integral to the planning of action and used on a daily basis to direct and evaluate provider practice. For others, these documents were seen as "wallpaper", disconnected from daily activity and only referred to on an ad hoc basis to support or contradict activity initiated for purposes other than to progress the goals of equity.

Respondents discussed how providers sought advice from a variety of sources in the development of documents and activity. Pacific Advisory Committees and Advisory Boards were identified as were less formal sources of advice among community and church leaders. The use of Pacific staff members networks was also noted as a source of advice and links into the provider's community. Advice was sought at the level of the Institution's leadership as well as in relation to specific programmes and services.

As with documents, the process of seeking advice was an integral part of development for some providers. For other providers, interaction with advisors was limited, patchy or ritualised.

The active life of documents and advisory activities was noted as being limited where there were no provider or funder requirements to link with outcomes in terms of participation, retention and success.

For Ministry funded providers much of the discussion around documents and advice was infused with interpretations about the effects of the new policy strategy announced by Hon. Steve Maharey in late 2000. Specifically, the Supplementary Funding Grant to be spent on support services for Maori and

Pacific students, and the new regulatory reporting requirements for Maori and Pacific students for 2002.

It was anticipated that there would be changes within providers to meet closer scrutiny of outcomes. Predictions regarding the effects of the changes were hedged by most saying it was too early to comment.

CHAPTER 3

ACCESS

"...exposing them to tertiary, so they're not seeing as, it's so far away, it's only designed for scholars and brain surgeons. Just being in the know, and in the understanding of what it is." (Key Person TEI).

3.1 Recruitment/ Liaison

3.1.1 Participation Rates

Respondents generally agreed that participation rates of Pacific students in TEIs were too low and that participation rates in PTEs was much higher.

3.1.2 Appointments

All the tertiary providers in the study had one or more full or partial appointments to the role of recruitment/liaison person with responsibility for Pacific students. The job descriptions variously include responsibility for a range of recruitment activities aimed at encouraging Pacific students to take courses and in some cases the person also had some responsibility for student support and retention (discussed below 2.1). These appointments vary from full time work in recruitment and liaison for larger providers to additional responsibilities for administrators or academics with smaller providers. Most respondents identified the role as having greater complexity than the job description acknowledged. The respondents indicated that working with Pacific students implied a much wider set of community responsibilities than just working directly with potential students.

I suppose one of the things I must do is that my job is not only internal, I'm also working with the families and community, so I create partnerships with the community and establish relationships with people out in the community.... (Key Person, TEI).

3.1.3 Information

Respondents from larger providers indicated that they found the mainstream recruitment strategies in their institutions were not effective as means to provide information about programmes to potential Pacific students. A variety of other strategies had been employed to reach these students including the use of Pacific and young people's radio stations, advertising and placing success stories in community newspapers, visiting schools, community groups and churches and inviting Pacific secondary school students and their families into their institutions. Many of these strategies were also employed by providers whose primary focus is Pacific students (PTEs). There have also been some highly innovative strategies used to highlight the Pacific presence in TEIs.

I think you have to make yourself known in the community to attract them, and that's a really hard game to play.
(Key person TEI).

All respondents with a recruitment/liaison function stated that the most effective means of recruitment is through word of mouth networks. They saw this as having the benefit of attracting Pacific student to successful programmes. It also generated the problem of perpetuating the negatives about tertiary study from those who have not enjoyed their experience.

For students, for Pacific students? I think most of the research confirms that the word of mouth approach is the most successful, that's how they get people to come on their course, someone's experienced it and has passed it on and that's why they're there, and it's worked for them. (Key Person, PTE).

A lot of this training is actually recruited through our community networks, and one of the things that is very strong in New Zealand are links particularly with not only the church community but also our staff are involved in quite a lot of community groups, sporting organisations, and our social Pacific Island agencies. Also particularly with the arts community here as well in Central Auckland. Very strong. But recruiting, we generally use Pacific Island radio stations. For the youth training Mai FM is quite a popular form of recruiting. We also use the Pacific Island newspapers, and the local suburban newspapers so....
(Key Person, PTE).

Several respondents mentioned the role of secondary school careers advisors. Most stated that working directly with students was more effective and one

noted that there was an absence of training available in minority group careers issues.

... but the career advisors in schools are actually teachers. So careers may not be a priority in the school. So if you're a geography teacher and you're spending all your time teaching and you've only got half an hour a day to see students from third to seventh, you're not going to be able to do what I want them to do. And it's just a disservice to the students and for the poor careers teacher as well, you know? (Key Person, TEI).

3.1.4 Advising v Recruiting

The majority of respondents with a recruitment/liaison function identified competition between institutions as a barrier. They noted that families, community groups and schools were suspicious of and resistant to recruitment/liaison people who overtly promoted their institutions.

I think schools are quite cynical sometimes and quite sceptical about what our agenda is in going down to the school. I mean, initially when I was doing it they'd say what are you coming in for... and that's cool, I don't want to rock the boat from that end... what's made it successful I think is the way we've pitched to schools, sort of saying hey, listen, I think it's really important, because there's not a lot of Pacific kids who are doing full bursary courses, there's not a lot of Pacific kids who have the grades to the diploma or degree level. I see my role as walking into a school and making them aware of what their options are, not just at [] but across the board as well. So I'm pitching it at a more generic level, and I think schools have really cottoned onto that, instead of saying well, he's going to come in and take as many students as possible, he's really coming in and talking about tertiary, and the whole culture of tertiary education... which for a lot of Pacific students, they just don't understand. (Key Person, TEI).

Some institutions had begun co-operative strategies to overcome this. Some found themselves acting in an advisory role providing information about suitable programmes in a variety of institutions and not just their own. The difficulty with this was locating easily accessible information particularly on lower level courses and identifying the steps into higher-level programmes frequently occurring across more than one institution.

I found that people were ringing me up wanting to do courses at [] but they didn't know where to go (laugh) and I would say well this

person was out there so contact her. They wanted to do a mechanics course because (inaudible) and I asked him what course he would like to do and he said that he is really in to fixing cars and I've got lots of cars at my house, so that's the kind of course he wants to do and I'm thinking and said, 'oh, we don't have that here but I will find out for you and we looked through the phone book and, we drove off to [] and I left him but I don't know whether he's doing the course or not. It's a bit of a dilemma that I get sometimes and even though I'm [], yeah so even though I am employed by []. (Key Person, TEI).

3.1.5 Resourcing of Recruitment

All respondents in recruitment positions remarked on the time intensive nature of the recruitment process when it involved working with families and community as well as individual students. All suggested that they did not have enough time to meet needs.

3.2 Family/Community/School Support

3.2.1 Expectations

The respondent's views were mixed on whether school, community and family expectations prompted access to tertiary education or were a barrier. Some saw family/community/school attitudes as supporting the work of tertiary institutions to facilitate access. They described experiences of potential students receiving significant encouragement to join a tertiary programme. This was identified as occurring when other members of families and communities had attended and succeeded in tertiary study, when families had come to New Zealand with the express intent of making greater opportunities available to their children and when individual teachers in schools had held high expectations for young Pacific students.

And have a good mentor, someone who is there for you, to care for your progress, and who believes in you, is the most crucial thing for me, I think for any student coming through. I can look back on my student days in secondary and know, I can name at least two teachers who said to me, you have the ability to go a long way, [], but you have to focus. And you know, those were the teachers that inspired me, those were the teachers that had

faith in me, who could see that I had the ability and potential to do well, and it was those teachers that inspired me to do what I'm doing now. (Key Person TEI).

The contrary experiences were also reported. Families and communities actively discouraging progression to tertiary study either because of the need for wage earners to assist families and contribute to community activity or because of lack of confidence that tertiary education would deliver for their children.

...we used to provide a training benefit but a several years ago the policy changed and those under 18 couldn't get that and that had a marked effect because the training benefit was not just for the student but it was another economic resource for the family, so now that's gone, it makes it harder for students to stay on the course when they need not only to have financial resources themselves but they are contributing to the family financial resources. (Key Person PTE).

Yes, school is one. And the fact that parents, the difference between those two schools, top decile and low decile schools, also can be seen in parents who don't aspire, or actually don't even recognise the horizons of ability and opportunity for their students. The inspirations that students are given is to get a job rather than going on and getting on to higher things. (Key Person TEI).

Several respondents commented on the failure of secondary schools to expect and encourage Pacific students in their senior years to aspire to tertiary study.

In contrast, several schools were commented on as having senior school programmes which acted as bridges into tertiary studies. It was also noted that these programmes were limited to lower level vocational pathways and were not effective at encouraging University study.

3.2.2 Experience

The importance of direct experience of successful tertiary study by a family member, relation or close acquaintance of potential students in converting an interest in tertiary study into enrolment was mentioned by most of the respondents. The respondents saw this access to experience within the social environs of the student as a vital support to the potential student's belief in their fitness for tertiary study and more influential than recruitment drives.

... her Mum has also done a little bit of part time study. So she's got that kind of support where family are familiar with what she's doing, and they understand that she needs a place to study, why she needs to go to the library, all those sorts of things. For her, I think that the contribution from her family, and I think for a lot of our other young people they may not have that support at home, because parents are not familiar with studies (Key Person, TEI).

3.3 Preparation for Tertiary Study

3.3.1 Secondary School

The lack of preparedness (qualifications, study skills, confidence) for tertiary study of Pacific students was a consistent theme among the respondents and seen as one of the most significant barriers to access. Failure to achieve the necessary qualifications for entry to tertiary programmes is an obvious barrier. Underlying lack of preparedness is poor expectations by the schools of their Pacific students (see 1.2.1 above), inadequate careers advising (see 3.1.3 above) and a mismatch in many schools between the academic processes and standards of tertiary education and those found in upper senior classes (see 4.4 below). Whereas many tertiary institutions may be able to learn from secondary schools with regard to pastoral care there may be much for secondary schools to learn from their tertiary neighbours about academic learning.

Yeah, cause I think that I should start off by saying that a lot of our work in this sector is because either the school hasn't delivered or the mainstream institution, tertiary institution is not seen as an option, so we're sort of like in the gap, filling the gaps and...students actually come to us because they have no skills and no qualifications. So

whatever the thirteen years they've spent in the compulsory education sector they have very little to show for it. (Key Person PTE).

3.3.2 Pathways/Bridging

Bridging programmes provided by TEIs were identified by TEI respondents as providing a significantly successful method of access to TEIs for Pacific students with most reporting high representation and success rates. However, it was noted by two respondents that it required some effort to then persuade students and their families that having completed a foundation or bridging programme that there were more steps to be taken, further fees to be paid and another stretch of time when the student would not be earning.

The *** programme is great, feeds students on to mainstream programmes, excellent teachers ... not just about Pacific students ... works for everyone ... a mix of being demanding academically and plenty of pastoral care. I mean, its not just about Pacific teachers, its about good teaching, whoever delivers.... (Key Person, TEI).

Most of the respondents acknowledged the importance of the PTEs in providing an opportunity for Pacific students to prepare for mainstream tertiary study where they have left school without sufficient qualifications or skills. The environment of some PTEs was noted as being more conducive to success for Pacific students: small classes, cultural match between lecturers and students, location, focus on learner, lecturer relationships. PTEs as an accessible source of training for workplace participation was also noted.

I do. I think that PTEs play a very important role for Pacific Island students, mainly because I think that there's a gap with transition between secondary schools and tertiary institutes and for a lot of our students who are not succeeding successfully in secondary schools, (it's an old story about all that), there seems to be a gap which I can't fulfil, which a lot of them come through and come straight into tertiary and the retention rates for them, from my observation, is that it's not successful. They're not prepared, they're not ready, they're not at that level, and so the PTEs help me.... (Key Person TEI).

The variable quality of PTEs was also noted.

If the mainstream institutions continue and they struggle for all sorts of reasons to service the PI tertiary needs, the other end you've got all these little tin pot outfits with ten EFTS and twenty EFTS. And if you look at most of them they're grotty, they're just reinforcing what's happening in the homes and the schools. They're grotty little, and the quality is suspect for some of them, a lot of them. (Key Person, PTE).

3.4 Decision Making

3.4.1 Fees

All respondents noted the influence of fees on the decision making of Pacific students. The level of fees required for Ministry funded programmes was seen as a deterrent to enrolment. Respondents saw the size of fees as producing a level of debt that was outside the zone of acceptability for Pacific students and their families where incomes were low. As students were frequently beginning their tertiary studies in low level programmes the potential for debt if the student were to continue to undergraduate or post graduate study was enormous.

The absence of fees on Skill New Zealand funded programmes attracts significant numbers of Pacific students. It was noted, however, that these programmes were at the lowest levels of the NZQA Framework and therefore limited fee free access for these students to low level courses with low paying employment outcomes.

The thing is with Pacific people, a lot of them came here to benefit their children from schools. Education is really important, but other than schooling they don't know all of the other things related to that, like support and how you're going to get your child there. And how you not working is going to affect them, because they're not actually going to want to come to tertiary if there's any way they can get a job and help you out. Because I've met quite a few at the WINZ where I look and see oh, they've got bursary or they've got fifth form, did quite well, and they could be here, but, you know, they've got to help out the family as well. Anyway, they have to get a student loan, and that's on top of that, so that hasn't helped. (Key Person TEI).

3.4.2 Scholarships

Although most respondents supported scholarships as a strategy to overcome fees resistance, they also noted that it was difficult to get Pacific students to apply for them. The most common reason offered was that it was difficult to get Pacific students to believe they might receive a scholarship based on prior experience of the education system. Where scholarships have been received they were seen as a significant factor in the student's choice to enrol.

3.4.3 WINZ

The role of WINZ in the encouragement of Pacific people to consider tertiary education received extensive comment from one respondent and was alluded to by several others. The recurrent comment was that WINZ was committed to short-term work outcomes and was not encouraging people to see tertiary study as a real option with the potential to lead to more robust employment outcomes in the longer term.

And because that's what WINZ is, and employment targets and that's it... I was there this morning, talking with people there, looking at some training programs, and they say I can't go on to a training program, why, because I have to get a job, they want me to get a job, I can't blah blahblah. So that was quite sad. (Key Person TEI).

CHAPTER 4

RETENTION AND SUCCESS

"...succeeding because that ability has been grown in them by their environment, by their families, by everyone..." (Key Person, TEI).

4.1 Staff

4.1.1 Appointments to support Pacific students in their studies

Respondents from most providers identified an existing position that included support for Pacific students during their studies aside from the academic staff, frequently as part of recruitment and liaison or located in Learning Centres. It was also noted that the role of support for Pacific students fell automatically to all Pacific staff members and occurred as a significant extra workload which was frequently unreasonable.

4.1.2 Academic Appointments

Most respondents from TEIs commented on the value of Pacific academics as role models, mentors and support for Pacific students and expressed concern about the low numbers. The workload (see 2.1.1) was cited as one reason TEIs fail to attract Pacific staff and noted the more congenial conditions although lower salaries in some PTEs as competition for Pacific teaching staff.

PTE respondents saw their process of employing staff qualified in required disciplines and providing opportunities to gain teaching qualifications on the job as a significant recruitment strategy.

... he's probably typical of a lot of our staff cause they're quite passionate about what they do. All my staff members could be, could have jobs in mainstream tertiary organisations and get paid twice as much as what they're getting now, but I think, and the reason why we haven't had a high turnover. (Key Person, PTE).

4.1.3 Allied/General Staff

Respondents from TEIs noted that Pacific peoples were under-represented on their staff and the highest numbers were in lower paid allied or general positions.

Where these staff are in frontline positions they were able to represent a Pacific presence and support Pacific students to deal with administrative issues

... now we've got a Pacific person on the inquiries desk, can't overestimate how much difference that makes to students coming in here (Key Person, TEI).

4.2 Programmes

4.2.1 Pass rates

There was consensus among the TEI respondents that many programmes of study in their institutions did not produce acceptable pass rates for Pacific students. It was also noted that failure was not inevitable and that there were pockets of success (see 4.2.2 below). PTE respondents noted that they were working in a funding environment where success was essential to the retention of their Skill New Zealand contracts and they were thus developing strategies to ensure that Pacific students achieved. The generally low level of these programmes was acknowledged but respondents indicated that the smaller environment with personal attention to students, a significant peer group of Pacific students, larger number of Pacific staff members and an expectation that students can succeed were contributing factors to success.

... but see because we're accountable to organisations like that in terms of with our contracts I think their frustration comes because they don't understand a Pacific Island context. We've been successful but how do you present the results and outcomes to an organisation that's got you know benchmarks and things that are more appropriate to a, dare I say it ... a palagi organisation because it's a bureaucratic set up so we're having to deal with that on one hand in terms of having to justify or explain our own systems which have been already approved in terms of compliance. We've actually fulfilled the criteria for a lot of those organisations and yet we feel that we have to explain ourselves

again in terms of our processes (inaudible...) there's very little understanding in how we go about doing things, so in the end, the end result is the same. We achieve our outcomes but how we got there is sometimes quite difficult to explain to organisations, they want the data and so forth. I mean we'll give them the data but it's going to be a lot difficult from the way they know, it's not logged down in a computer statistical report, but you know we can show them photos and provide evidence of the work that we're doing. (Key Person PTE).

4.2.2 Successful TEI programmes

Examples of programmes which generated outcomes, which were not differential by ethnicity were described by respondents. These included Foundation/Bridging programmes which provide academic development of generic skills particularly mathematics, communication skills and computing; programmes which have particular relevance to issues in Pacific/New Zealand society e.g. health, early childhood education; and discipline based programmes which have attracted high levels of Pacific participation. The common features among these programmes are as follows:

- Teaching which is student centred;
- Teaching which ensures academic and social engagement between learners and lecturers;
- Commitment to high achievement standards and the expectation that all students can achieve;
- Active willingness to make those standards accessible through academic support processes e.g. academic tutorials and individual assistance including goal setting;
- Access to resources e.g. developing familiarity with libraries, assistance with access to texts, fostering use of computers;
- Accessible pastoral care;
- Functioning within a staircasing environment which provides links from one level of qualification up to the next.

... if you have a relationship like you know a learner and a tutor, a relationship that is really good and supported and all that, and there is actually a relationship there, they can really achieve a lot. But if it's not there, they know they you

know don't care, it actually affects their learning first. (Key Person, TEI).

4.2.3 Language

The place of Pacific languages in tertiary study was discussed by several respondents. It was seen as a significant contributor to success, especially with older, fluent speakers.

It really shows and also proves what we have been arguing about teaching and learning in the languages of the students because we can see it. We can see it happening here when we give the chance to the Samoans to express themselves in Samoan vocabulary and also in their written form and they just come out with A's, because it's easier to express themselves. (Key Person).

The emphasis on first language work was also challenged as being a soft option.

I think learn English proficiently because you need it. It's the language of the workplace, and I know a lot of people push for second language or first language development as a prerequisite to learning but there's no point in being fluent in Tongan if you can't

... whereas Pacific Island think that if I'm going to be in a tertiary institution, then I want to be able to sort of stand on the same playing field. So for tertiaries it's not only providing opportunities but making it a reality that you're coming here as a student. We validate who you are but you're here to succeed to the institutions standards...half measure what my children used to call a cabbage course so that it just gives you validity but you're not actually learning what you need to, to survive...

... If you take on Pacific Island students then you should account for their success as architects, lawyers, doctors not as Pacific Island people... and I guess a lot of approaches tend to try and address the flavour of the month. (Key Person, PTE).

4.2.4 Differential Participation

Section I of this report notes that Pacific Students participate differentially in the disciplines offered in the tertiary sector. This is also noted in institutions but the pattern from one institution to the next appears to vary.

The applied skills area. So you're looking at carpentry, building, automotive, all those skills, so that area is quite strong. The second area would probably be business. A lot of our students who graduate do business admin. Another track which is quite strong is the Bachelor of Social Practice, and also the Bachelor of Communications, which is starting to get a higher, a good number of Pacific students coming through. (Key Person, TEI).

Primarily in Foundation programmes and in Health Sciences, low in Engineering and Technology and low in Business. (Key Person, TEI).

Ohh, mostly in Faculty of Arts, very few anywhere else. (Key Person, TEI).

4.3 Students

4.3.1 Personal barriers

Most respondents talked about individual students they had worked with. Many of these stories identified specific instances of personal hardships which acted as barriers to achievement.

There are also family pressures that build up I mean a lot of them are actually it's quite sad because we're actually putting them on a pathway to further training and a lot of them do end up moving on into the tertiary training, but because of the financial hardship a lot (inaudible...) so the imperatives for jobs and employment are much stronger, so they'll pull them out of the program (Key Person, PTE).

Health is a big issue too. Some of our students aren't in good housing, they're in crowded homes where [] my brother's room is in the lounge, and the TV's on, and my family came over in the evening, and so I have nowhere to go, you've heard those stories before. It's hard. There's a lot in the family, and there's overcrowding, and that person's not well, and the housing issue comes into play and they can't get to school... All those things impact on a student's ability to succeed. (Key Person TEI).

4.3.2 Institutional barriers

Most respondents commented on the absence of familiar faces, lack of engagement with lecturers and the unfamiliarity of the academic work as key institutional barriers to student success.

Some of the comments from students was, I poked my head into the classroom and when I see that I'm the only brown face there I turn around and walk out. And it's that sense of, it's daunting enough being in a huge institute like this and being a Pacifica student, and then going into a classroom in which you have to go in day in and day out for the rest of your course, and finding that you are the only brown person in there. (Key Person TEI).

... it's absolutely crucial to build a relationship with your students outside of just being a teacher. Once again, it was this focus on the effect you made, on the feelings and the thoughts of our students, and that internal/external relationship thing, and time and time again the students talked about this, they talked about not just wanting a teacher who stands in front of the classroom and teachers, but somebody who they feel cares about them. (Key Person TEI).

4.3.3 Mature students

Mature students were identified as being more motivated to succeed than school leavers. It was suggested that mature students were more able to find a successful place in tertiary study because they had greater focus and motivation. They were able to have an impact on their communities immediately because they already had status. It was noted, however, that mature students need faster tracks and the ability to study and return to work with ongoing study opportunities rather than commit to lengthy full time study. This would make study more economically realistic and increase the impact of these students on their workplaces, families and communities.

.... they need to work, they need to get a job they necessarily can't commit to 3 years of, you know 3-4 years of tertiary study. So there needs to be a system that allows them to I think go in and out rather than commit them 3-4 years of full time study. (Key Person, TEI).

4.4 Institutional knowledge

The importance of accurate understanding regarding the forms, patterns, expectations and participation norms of tertiary study was identified by most respondents as being an important element in success. First generation tertiary students lacked this "institutional knowledge" as do students who come from Decile 1 and 2 schools. These schools did not always hold expectations that

their students would go on to tertiary study. The lack of congruence between student expectations and the reality of the tertiary experience was seen as a significant barrier to success in tertiary study for Pacific students.

... one of the things I guess it is too is that a lot of our students come from families and come from communities where there isn't anyone from tertiary education, even from full secondary education, and I know for myself, being a first generation New Zealander, that my dad went to secondary school at form three and four back in Samoa. So we're talking about young people, children, coming from communities where there's very little understanding of what secondary education is, let alone tertiary. (Key Person TEI).

4.5 Pacific Presence

4.5.1 Pacific Spaces

There was mixed experience among the respondents of their providers dedicating space to Pacific students as a physical expression of commitment to the cultural identity of Pacific students. Response varied from no identifiable place through a labelled group of offices, study centres and in the case of PTEs who saw their role as primarily with Pacific students the classrooms and administrative centres were set up with Pacific themes. Some respondents saw the provision of a dedicated space as important, others suggest that all facilities should be accessible and welcoming to Pacific students.

4.5.2 Pacific Events and Associations

Respondents reported Pacific events and associations as an effective way to profile the Pacific presence in tertiary institutions and a method of providing a peer group for students who may be feeling isolated. The effectiveness of these activities depended on the leadership skills of individual students and the time commitments of recruitment and liaison staff.

4.5.3 Pacific Support Services and Programmes

As well as the staffing identified in 4.1.1 above some Key Persons identified services and programmes designed specifically to support Pacific students.

These activities were currently in place or in the process of development; some were linked to the new Supplementary Funding Grant (see Part B Policy and Advice above). These activities included mentoring programmes, leadership programmes, targeted tutorials and family based programmes. Many of these initiatives have been described in full in the Ministry of Education's June 2001 publication *Fakahoa Te Utuga*. This publication was released for the purpose of sharing effective practice in the support of Pacific students in tertiary education. Respondents stated that the success of such initiatives depends on how well they have been designed to meet actual need, ongoing financial commitment and the strength of their evaluation processes.

4.6 Institutional Statistics and Research.

4.6.1 Data collection

Providers varied in the data they collected on student characteristics and progress. Accessibility of data was also noted as an issue. PTEs contracted to Skill New Zealand collected data to meet the requirements of Skill New Zealand for accountability for attendance, progress, outcomes and 2 month destinations. TEIs with less stringent requirements attached to Ministry funding varied in the data they collected and its availability. Aside from the Single Data Return requirements institutions varied in their approach to data collection. This is, however, a moment of change as the introduction of the Supplementary Funding Grant for Maori and Pacific students for the 2001 year has prompted a rethink in many institutions as accountability requirements are projected to become outcome based.

Detailed statistics on entry, progress and completion by department by ethnicity was available in two TEIs. In others, data was less comprehensive. Destinations data was limited to the work of particular programmes and/or broad based, low return graduate surveys. Retention and dropout data was limited again to specific programmes with pass rate data by ethnicity being more common.

Respondents working with programmes where comprehensive data was collected commented on the importance of such data for the process of

evaluating the effectiveness of the programme and for informing programme development. At the programme level change had been identified e.g. increased provision of academic tutorials, adjustment of teaching methods and resources, addition of courses to meet skill needs, increase the level of responsiveness to student concerns. At the institution level, however, it was noted by one respondent that the comprehensive institution wide data collected provided a baseline and evidence to pressure for change, but that change in participation and success rates was yet to come.

With this grant that's come in, the supplementary grant, the Institute has thought my gosh, they're thinking Pacific too, and that is the first step that this place, that the government has taken. But I'd like to take them even further and say, with this grant, which is wonderful, how many students have you got on board, let's look at attendance rates and see what you've achieved with the students. (Key Person, TEI).

4.6.2 Research

Interest in conducting research into barriers to participation for Pacific students was expressed by PTEs and TEIs and particular potential were discussed. The usefulness of action research was noted by one respondent and one respondent offered a completed research report which was used to inform change.

Summary

There are many success stories in the participation of Pacific students in the tertiary sector. However, these are frequently stories of individual or programme endeavour. Their lessons have not been applied to the sector as a whole in any systematic way so the barriers remain in failure to:

- Have high expectations of students in Decile I and II schools.
- Provide thorough and effective preparation for tertiary study for students in Decile I and II schools.
- Make the pathways into tertiary education via PTEs and Bridging programmes overt and accessible.
- Co-ordinate effort among providers to establish an optimum, student centred recruiting environment.
- Mandate effective training in tertiary pedagogy for lecturers.
- Acknowledge the scale of socio-economic issues among low-income families and make provision for economic and personal support for affected students.

- Establish academic support services which are accountable for support provided to Pacific students
- Establish funding based accountability requirements across the sector in relation to participation and success.
- Routinely celebrate cultural difference.
- Foster research into all of the above.

PART C

PACIFIC VOICES

INTRODUCTION

Part C contains the voices of Pacific peoples and consists of:

- The views of *successful students* - Pacific peoples who have participated in tertiary education and have completed their studies.
- The views of *partial achievers* - Pacific peoples who have participated in tertiary education and have not completed their studies.
- The views of *non-participants* - Pacific peoples who have left part way through tertiary study.
- The views of a range of Pacific *community perspectives*, including the families of potential students as to why some have succeeded and the barriers to students' participation.

Methodology:

1. Individual face-to-face interviews with 15 Pacific students who have participated in tertiary programmes, and who completed their studies (obtained degrees and diplomas) and 15 Pacific students who did not complete their studies were held. Participants included both young students and mature-age.
2. Focus group interviews with 8 groups (56 individuals) of non-participants were carried out – 6 groups from Auckland and 2 from Wellington - using semi-structured focus group interview format. These interviews focused on specific Pacific ethnic groups including Samoans, Tongans, Cook Islanders and Niueans. They also covered 7th Formers who were not planning to enrol in tertiary education and mature-age adults who have not participated in tertiary education, but could reasonably be expected to. Because of the difficulty in recruiting school leavers from school records, the sample was recruited from community focus group participants, and researchers and community contacts in both Auckland and Wellington.
3. Focus group interviews with 8 groups of Pacific community members (including families of potential students) – 6 in Auckland and 2 in Wellington were held.

In each of the above groupings, the common areas of concern incorporated into the thematic analyses are:

- Parental expectations
- Secondary School experiences
- Pathways into tertiary study
- Tertiary experiences

All data from individual and group interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed using conventional qualitative data analysis and NUDIST software package. All individuals were assured full confidentiality in the project report (this was stipulated in the ethics application for the project to the University of Auckland Human Subjects Research Committee).

This thematic analysis is based on the preliminary findings of fifteen participants – thirteen who have completed their tertiary education studies from a range of tertiary institutions, and two participants who are currently undertaking undergraduate courses of study at the University of Auckland.

Demographics

Fifteen participants who have completed their tertiary studies and attained degrees were interviewed. Four participants have attained their degrees from the University of Auckland, two participants from Massey University, two participants from Manukau Institute of Technology, two participants from Auckland University of Technology, one participant has attained her degree from Unitec, and four participants have attained PTE qualifications. Two participants are currently undertaking undergraduate study at the University of Auckland.

Of the fifteen participants, six were male and nine were female and consisted of both school leavers and mature students with ages ranging from 20-60 years old.

The ethnic groupings included six Samoan participants, five Tongan participants, two Cook Islands participants, one Niuean participant, and one Fijian participant.

Themes

Most participants placed a high value on education. For the most part, participants felt that attaining tertiary qualifications would give them more of an opportunity to get a good job to support themselves and their family. Education was seen as the key to a secure future. As a result of this, all participants

reported that they would encourage their children to pursue tertiary education in the hope of gaining qualifications which would allow them to secure good jobs:

...nowadays you can't get anywhere without a degree...no one's gonna let your foot in the door without having a degree... [Samoan female age 25-30].

This view was reinforced by participants' families while they were growing up and was the main push factor towards their entering tertiary education. A few participants also reported that they had migrated to New Zealand to pursue a higher education.

In general, participants reported the importance of having adequate support systems and networks for Pacific students both at tertiary level, and also secondary level. In particular, the senior years of secondary school. Many of the participants attributed their academic success to having good support groups which they could go to for help and guidance in their studies. For the most part, participants reported that their success was due primarily to having supportive families (in particular their parents), friends, and role models. The role models the participants referred to were predominantly their teachers at secondary school or senior students at tertiary level. The support which various groups could offer included encouragement to keep up their studies and motivation, companionship to combat feelings of alienation which most participants reported they felt in their first year of study, and being able to access relevant information and help which would assist them in their schoolwork.

Participants also reported that these main sources of support could also provide the biggest barriers to attaining their goals in tertiary education. Among the possible barriers included; meeting their family and church obligations and commitments, negative pressure or influences from their peers which took participants away from their studies.

Other barriers discussed by participants included; lack of relevant information for secondary school students on career options and tertiary education in general, financial barriers, lack of specific Pacific support services and

programmes at university, language barriers, motivational issues and structural problems.

Family

Most of the participants reported that they received great support from their families, primarily their parents throughout their schooling experience. Furthermore, participants attributed a great deal of their success to their families' support. Support could take the form of encouragement in their study and by acting as gatekeepers to ensure that they were doing their study, taking an interest in their study which many felt validated their efforts, buying materials and resources which would assist in their study, giving the opportunity or time to devote to study or making the home environment more conducive for studying. There was a general feeling amongst participants that successful students are those who have supportive and encouraging parents:

...don't you notice there's a trend with people that are successful...support and encouragement from parents.... [Samoa female, age 25-30].

Although a few participants reported that their parents placed expectations on them to go into a certain field of study, for the most part, participants were encouraged by their parents only to try their best in anything they set out to do.

All of the participants had family members who had completed tertiary study and that this was a contributing factor in their decision to pursue tertiary education. A few participants reported that seeing their family go through tertiary education provided motivation, and instilled within them the belief that attaining a tertiary qualification was possible and within their abilities;

We had a family reunion a couple of years before and there was a mention of these members of family pride to the family and I said to myself if they can make it then maybe I can make it.... [Cook Islands Male, age 30-35].

Many participants reported that sometimes their parents can impose family obligations and expectations on their children and that this can sometimes be a barrier to achieving academic success. Some of the expectations that were

reported included, looking after sick family members and attending church and family activities:

...its really hard I think dad...dad especially expects a lot from us and he wants us to be at church and church functions...take a lot of time but sometimes we have to study longer for exams and then church on Sundays...there's sometimes on Sundays people start at about 9.30 and finish at about 6 o'clock at night and just have like a break or lunch but when its during exam times my parents still have expectations. [Samoan female, age 25-30].

...to became educated in a sense to earn more money and help support them [parents]. [Tongan male, age 20-25].

Role Models

Many of the participants reported the huge amount of support and mentoring that they received from teachers. In fact, most participants recalled that their role models at school would often be teachers whom they thought were supportive and encouraging of their academic efforts. For many participants, it was "a teacher" that was most influential in their decision to pursue tertiary education. Participants recalled the large amount of encouragement that they received from teachers telling them that they could achieve in anything they did. Many reported that this influence fueled their interest and motivation to pursue tertiary education.

Participants also reported that they were very receptive to the support and information offered by their teachers as they felt that because they had come through the system they would be in the best position to offer advice. A few participants also reported that it was their teachers who helped them realize where their potential lay in terms of what their strongest subjects were. With the help of their teachers, participants were able to develop their skills and succeed in these areas. Most participants also reported that it was their teachers that they went to for tertiary education options and getting the relevant information in career planning as there was no other service available to them.

The positive influences and experiences that participants spoke of in terms of their secondary school teachers changed dramatically when they reached university. A few participants reported that lecturers did not influence them

greatly as they were just a number on the board, and that the relationship between student and lecturer is very impersonal.

Many participants also saw their parents or older siblings/cousins as their role models, and talked about how much pride and joy their parents felt when they graduated from their courses. There was a sense that their achievements were not individual accomplishments but family ones. Others saw mentors or “older

...talking to older students...about five years ahead of you was good...and talk to them like they're at your level. Pretty much wanting to be where they're at in three years time. [Samoan female, age 25-30].

Peers

In general, participants reported that their friends were positive influences in their schooling and academic lives. Participants reported that their friends provided emotional support when the pressures of schoolwork became too great, provided good natured competition in their schoolwork which encouraged and motivated them to do better, study group environment, help and support with their schoolwork when needed and combating feelings of isolation especially in their first year of tertiary education. Peers were therefore important for participants in terms of providing the motivation and mutual support to achieve well in their studies:

...the other thing were the friends that I had, were around me at the time, they were all very good close friends and support me and share and discuss things...I think it really pays for students to interact with people and friends, really good friends who can stand by you and support you and share your struggling with and people without have the same kind of thoughts and ideas about what you want to achieve in the future. [Tongan male, age 30-40].

I didn't give in to peer pressure even though I'm a brainy box...I liked learning things, finding out what's happening, and I had friends that I could study with and get on well. [Cook Islands female, age 25-30].

Most of the participants reported that they associated with peers that had the same goal and motivation as themselves to succeed in education and that generally, they stayed away from negative groups of peers whom they felt

would take them away from their objectives. For the most part, negative influences and pressures included “wagging” school and “mucking around” and not doing their study. The participants who reported that they had experienced negative peer pressure reported that as they grew up, they became less involved with the negative teens as they became more focused on achieving academic success.

A few participants reported that the major reason they stayed away from negative peer groups was because they were scared of their parents:

I've always been scared of my parents...but I used to hang out with kids who would like were sexually promiscuous at an early age, like 5th form and [they] were into drugs and stuff like that and here was good little [name] hanging out with them....And they would wag, and I would like...not go [with them] and it's easy to say “no” when you love your parents...and when you're taught from an early age that some things just aren't worth the price....I didn't have a problem with peer pressure...[cause] I honestly was petrified of my parents, especially my father...I didn't want to do anything to upset my father and to make him unhappy so I did what I had to do.... [Samoan female, age 30-35].

Information

Many participants reported that lack of information regarding tertiary education can be a barrier to Pacific students entering tertiary education. For the most part, participants reported that growing up, such information was not available for themselves. Very few participants reported that they enlisted the help of their guidance counselors or career advisors from their schools. Those who did seek assistance did not find them at all helpful. As aforementioned, participants generally obtained information regarding career options and tertiary education was mainly obtained through their teachers.

Many participants reported that it is important for Pacific tertiary students to develop some sort of mentoring programme or information service for secondary school students. Participants emphasized that it is the tertiary students which must facilitate such a service as they could provide the most assistance. Services would include going into schools and offering advice and encouragement. Participants felt that by going and speaking to Pacific students

while they are in secondary schools would be beneficial for Pacific students both in terms of getting the information out there and also as a motivational tool for young Pacific students. Most participants reported that because this was not available to them when they were going through secondary school many of them entered university feeling isolated and having no idea of what was required of them to succeed;

It's just overwhelming, you know the amount of freedom that you had but then at the same time it was like, kind of confusing 'cause I didn't know what to expect. [Samoan female, age 25-30].

A few participants also reported that young Pacific students would be more receptive of information about tertiary education if the information was delivered by their peers. Programmes such as these would facilitate and nurture young Pacific students' interest and also encourage them to pursue tertiary study:

I thought about it more in seventh form...but what I think...would have helped...changed if someone from university like a student would have come over to talk about it...this is what I'm doing now...that's what I've experienced 'cause when I went through fourth and fifth year of med school we had school trips to sort of South Auckland schools...there was one particular school we went to and basically told Island students coming and there was about university fifteen of us in number and we all walked in there dressed casually and just looked from the street and if I had seen that in sixth form seventh form I could do this then that would have helped...I think its different coming from teachers as [Cook Islands male, age 25-30].

A service like this would also inform Pacific students about what tertiary education about the possible downfalls that student life can present. Many participants reported that when they entered university they were not accustomed to the freedom and undisciplined nature of study. Another problem was the university social life. A few participants mentioned how easy it was to fail in this environment as everything required independent discipline and motivation:

...a really difficult time for me not just cause I didn't have my parents but I lost a lot of motivation but...in college years I was really motivated where teachers always saying you have to do the work whereas in university no one pushes you...if you don't do it then that's your own problem...you fail. [Samoan female, age 25-30].

Services

Many participants reported that Pacific students' success depends largely on the amount of support they can get from services offered by their institution:

They need a lot of support...from not only their parents...they need role models from certain people...what they need to be told or to be encouraged to go to class you don't miss...encouraged to take part in mentoring programme...having people you know...there's always a need you know are you going to classes is there anything you want to discuss but people that they really trust so it has to be something that starts right from year one...oh this is for somebody to encourage them to ask for help be motivated 'cause there's another thing...I've gone through exams so stressed and I've been quite depressed and feeling really unmotivated and you never know who to turn to...even when I was at that science thing I was hoping you know Pacific students in their older years that could of helped out with us.... [Samoan female, age 25-30].

Most of the participants reported that there was little or no support networks for Pacific students at university and tech. However, in general, participants reported positive experiences with support services that were available but that there needed to be more services which catered solely for Pacific students. A few mentioned that the networks that were available such as learning centers catered for everybody and that there was no specific Pacific learning center. Many felt support services were important especially for new entrants into tertiary education because it is an experience that many are not equipped for and need guidance and motivation from Pacific role models or people who know the system. Support services are important because they can be used to guide students in through their first year:

...there's hardly any people to help you...where to go...to invite you...oh this is what you need to do...this is where you have to go...you have to go...and ask around for people to tell you where to go and because being...as a new person to the institution...I did not know so I had to do my own work around and asking people where to go and what to do. [Cook Islands male, age 30-35].

Some reported having no knowledge of some of the support networks within specific institutions, e.g., Fale Pasefika and Student Learning Centre (University of Auckland). They felt that there was nobody whom they could turn to for information, or help with their course of study such as study techniques and essay writing.

When I first arrive, I didn't know what assignment means...all I thought was an essay just write as a high school essay, and you know I cry on my first year because of not knowing...what I did, I made a few friends after a break and I said to them look...I don't know how to write an assignment...I don't know where to get my ideas from...I don't know how to go to the library and look for books.... [Samoan female, age 40-45].

A few participants mentioned that many Pacific people are too shy or reserved to seek help especially if it is from a Palagi support network. The need for specific Pacific networks is important because Pacific students may be more willing to approach them for help:

...not specifically for the Pacific Island students...basically the university was offering what AU were offering is the support learning center thing...as you know a lot of us Islanders are either shy to ask questions in front of other students or just don't feel like saying [Tongan male, age 30-40].

Other services which were discussed in detail included having more Pacific tutorials as participants felt that this was a more comfortable environment to study in. Another major theme that came through was the need for more Pacific lecturers and tutors. For the most part, participants felt that Pacific lecturers and tutors they would identify more with Pacific students' needs and concerns.

Financial considerations

All participants reported that money and financial pressures can sometimes be the biggest barrier to entering university or to completing studies. Many reported that some Pacific students may feel obligated to provide financially for the family:

I will go and find a job and help out the family, and you know, because money was the main object of many family here...so I started working in a factory...a shoe factory for about five months.... [Samoan female, age 40-45].

A few participants commented on the importance of having financial support in terms of scholarships offered by the government and communities:

...supports not only from home parents but financial support...not only from the government but I think there should be leaders among the Island community to establish some form of uh foundation you know

where they dish out some money for students to thrive on...because there's a lot of pressure for them at university to work and...there is a lot of financial support that need to be given to students so that they can spend more time to do their study.... [Tongan male, age 50-60].

Attitudes

A few participants reported that one of the biggest barriers that students face is their own personal attitudes towards learning. Participants reported that many Pacific students do not try their best at tertiary education level because they have the mindset that the system is out to fail them because it fails to take into account the cultural differences. However some participants reported that Pacific students' cultural knowledges can be validated once the palagi system is mastered:

People say that this system is the problem but I would have to say that in my experience the system was not the problem, it was me, I had a problem with working in the system...I expected the system to change and suit me but that's not the point here...its not to change the system the point is to transfer different skills from your way of thinking so I had to take my skill learnt in my Pacific Island heritage and transfer them to this system here which is basically the Palagi system.... [Samoan female, age 30-35].

Participants reported that this mindset was one of the major barriers to Pacific students doing well at tertiary level.

A few participants also reported that Pacific need to be more assertive and join in class discussions or approach teachers when they have difficulty with their schoolwork. Participants reported that most Pacific students are generally very quiet even when they don't understand what is going on and that this would hinder their academic progress:

...they would have night classes, extra hour for anybody that was having difficulties...it was for everybody not just for Pacific Island students...but it was mainly pacific students that went there and asked for help...European or Chinese they are all scholars but us PI go in there and we are too shy to speak out during lectures so we find that time since its just us Pl's and we are all scared to make a mistake and we find that time helpful for us to go in there and ask...that's the time to ask questions cos there are no European or Chinese 'cause they are [Tongan female, age 20-25].

Other barriers that were mentioned by participants enrolling in courses that they knew nothing about or had any interest in, lack of motivation and focus on what they wanted to achieve and problems with time management and prioritizing interests and study time.

The differences between PTEs and University

Those participants who attended PTEs and then went on to complete courses at University/Polytech all talk about the positive experiences they enjoyed. One mature woman talks about how having small classes was a plus and how the innovative and effective teaching styles of the tutors has made a huge impact on her and her classmates' attitudes to learning and on their lives. Many of them were at low ebbs in their lives – one mother of three on a DPB, depressed with no aim in life – suddenly enrolls in a PTE social workers course and four years later graduates from a Polytech with a Social Work Practice Degree, and she still cannot believe it:

I knew I wanted to do something but I had no idea, like I said because I was at a really funny stage in my life and being at my age didn't see the big picture. If you told me then that I was going to study for the next four years I would have laughed in your face. And look at me now. Yeah so to me it was really a matter of timing...The idea of a one year course...I thought "Oh I won't last long I'll just do it until I get a job" But when I got into it I thought just as well. It was good timing in my life and when I look back now I realize that [PTE] could have made me or not. Because I was on an emotional roller coaster at that time, so it was a turning point in my life. [Samoan female, age 35-40].

What successful students point out about PTE courses is that the focus on raising self-esteem, moving them out of their comfort zones and instilling their cultural identity then became a spring-board for learning for them:

Especially to those PI people that don't believe in themselves. I reckon [PTE] will be the first, just to get them into the door, but it really falls down to them...People think that at Varsity it's hard. You don't get the help you need. But here...like if you don't know what's happening they want you to know, to understand what's there and why it's like that. [Niuean female, age 40-45].

...that's the first time I wandered out of my comfort zone, everything I did was in my safety zone and I'd never question why or why things happen or who the hell are they to tell us this. I just went along with it. So that was a real eye opener....It's the safety to do something out of

the ordinary...To be able to express yourself in a safe environment...that's one of the biggest things. [Samoan female, age 30-35].

Summary

The perceived barriers to these successful students are much the same as those outlined by the partial achievers and non-participants in Chapters six and seven respectively and center around personal motivation, family obligations, financial constraints, and peer pressure. But why have these students successfully overcome these barriers?

What their narratives reveal is that these students have succeeded because:

- One or both parents have an educational qualification
- All participants place a high value on education
- All have had supportive family environments in which a balance has been struck with regard to family obligations and commitments
- Most participants had positive role models (either teacher, parent, family member, older student/mentor)
- Those that knew about support groups available to them, actively sought their assistance and necessary information
- Some participants found that they could work within the institutional system despite its mono-cultural nature
- Their peers or friends were ones who were supportive of them and their working towards successful outcomes
- They understand and value any kind of mentoring system/programme available
- They acknowledge the importance of the first year of study
- They completed the course even though it took longer for some (e.g. four-year BAs)
- Some had had the benefit of attending PI tutorials and/or had Pacific liaison tutors in their Departments
- They all had positive attitudes towards learning
- They had come to develop knowledge of and understanding of the 'system' they studied in

One of the most significant findings from this group of participants is the different kind of learning experiences available through PTEs. It is interesting to note that many participants felt that the benefits of PTE learning lay in their focus on raising self-esteem and self-confidence levels as a basis for ongoing academic/practical learning. So that many of the PTE students went on to complete courses at Universities and Polytechnics. This highlights the need for some kind of bridging course or foundation year before tertiary study to

establish student self-confidence and to move them out of their “comfort zones” in order to “learn about new things in a safe environment”.

CHAPTER SIX

PARTIAL ACHIEVERS

“I need help to complete my studies...the lifestyle here is too relaxed...I got

This thematic analysis is based on the preliminary findings of fifteen participants who have entered tertiary education and who have attended Auckland University, Polytechnics and PTEs but who have abandoned their studies before completion.

Demographics

Fifteen participants who have not completed their tertiary studies were interviewed in total. Of these fifteen participants, eight were female and seven were male ranging from 20-35 years of age. The cultural makeup consisted of eight Samoan students, three Cook Islands students, one Tongan student, one Niuean student, one student of mixed Niuean and Samoan ethnicity, and one Fijian student. Six participants attended the University of Auckland, one from Massey University, two participants attended AUT, two participants attended Manukau Institute of Technology, two students attended a PTE and two participants attended UNITEC. Two participants became young mothers while still in secondary school and had entered University after motherhood and many years of being in the workforce. One participant entered University after a short time in the workforce. Another participant reported leaving secondary school and going into a bridging course for a year before entering Tech. The remaining participants advanced directly to tertiary education after completion of seventh form.

Themes

All of the participants reported the value and importance of getting a good education. Participants commented on their own experiences and how difficult it was to get a good job without qualifications and stressed that they would encourage their own children to pursue tertiary studies as they felt that education was the pathway to a secure future:

I believe that is the only way for them to get ahead...look at me I can't move from a nurse aide to a proper nurse unless I get papers so I am stuck but for my children I want them to get ahead and I will support them. [Samoan/Niuean female, age 25-30].

Many of the participants commented on their own difficult experiences trying to secure good jobs without qualifications and that they did not want the same problems for their children:

I think we all know that its important to be educated, because if you don't have education or you don't have the qualifications there...then you just won't go that extra step or you won't be promoted in working...I know a lot of people now they have good jobs but its the qualifications that won't take them extra you know like they won't get that manager sort of role or team leader sort of role...like with myself...even though I've been educated and everything but its that piece of people...like a lot of people are saying oh yeah you should go for it you should go for the team leader but I know that a lot of people that come from outside that have just graduated they come into the workplace not knowing much about the job, but they get it because of that piece of paper...that piece of paper is a good idea.... [Samoan female, age 25-30].

The major barriers reported included lack of personal motivation, peer pressure, teachers and guidance counsellors, family obligations and financial necessity to leave school/studies and work to support the family, and lack of support services.

Barriers

Lack of Personal Motivation

Lack of personal motivation was a commonly reported major barrier. The freedom of the relaxed, undisciplined nature of the student lifestyle was new to them and they lacked the discipline to keep up with their studies:

...tertiary education?...I just loved the student life style...its just chose classes when and time you want to do them not having to go to them if you want to and it was just a really relaxed lifestyle which...I shouldn't have been but I go into the student lifestyle...sort of put my studies aside and it was just all I'd strive for every year was just to pass enough just to get back in next year I know I could of done better if I applied myself, but I got lazy.... [Cook Islands female, age 20-25].

It was a really difficult time for me, 'cause I didn't have my Parents....
[Tongan male, age 30-35].

Peer pressure

Most participants reported positive school experiences while growing up. School was seen as a place for meeting friends, playing sport and having a bit of fun. Participants spoke of the enjoyable friendships and relationships with

their peers who for some were reported as being the most influential people in participant's lives. Many felt that they were easily drawn into the negative activities that their peer group would partake in. The negative influences which were reported included; wagging school, smoking, drinking alcohol, and going out and partying. Participants reported that they took part in these activities because they wanted to have some fun and it was just a part of growing up:

I had a group and they were always looking for fun so I got in trouble sometimes from my mother cause they wanted to go out a lot in the weekend or just hang out in K road after school instead of going home...positive cause they made my life fun...home was not so great at times...my friends were good at making me laugh...oh yes that is how come I got pregnant early I went out too much and had to leave school in fifth form.... [Niuean female, age 25-30].

Many of the participants reported that the relaxed, fun activities that they had with friends would often result in their loss of focus and motivation with their schoolwork:

Well I mucked around quite a bit aye...pretty lazy...I'd give up easily...I can't really sit for too long...I enjoyed going to school...seeing the crowd play sports.... [Samoan male, age 25-30].

Another major barrier was the freedom and student lifestyle that they became a part of once they entered tertiary education. Many reported that they lost motivation as they became caught up with the relaxed, undisciplined nature of the student lifestyle, and gradually began to disregard their studies.

Teachers and Guidance Counsellors

Only a few participants reported having a supportive role model who was a teacher in secondary school. One describes how her teacher tried to encourage her to fulfill her dream of becoming a netball player and air hostess. This participant reported that she lost her motivation and just wanted to hang out with her friends. Another reported that she was inspired by a supportive teacher who told her that she could do anything she wanted to if she put her mind to it.

Regarding attitudes to learning another participant states:

It depends who the teacher is...Like if I had a really good teacher, I was always interested in the subject. [Samoan female, age 20-25].

Other participants talk about how they felt that some of their teachers discriminated against them which impacted on their desire to learn and stay on at school. One participant states that her teacher “who was against Islanders or anybody black”, and who accused Islanders of being “slack”. This participant retaliated by not attending classes and becoming a truant.

Most participants never saw the guidance counsellor, either because they did not know one existed, were too shy, or simply “didn’t bother”. Only two participants reported that they went to the guidance counsellors at their secondary schools. One of the participants reported that she had a negative experience because her guidance counsellor was ill equipped for the job and didn’t really offer her anything. The other participant reported that his guidance counsellor was good but that he didn’t take his advice because he didn’t feel comfortable with what the guidance counsellor offered him.

When I approached her to say I wanted to go to Uni, she advised me to go to Tech and do a course and that put me right off.... [Niuean male, age 25-30].

Family obligations

Many participants stressed the importance of support networks for students primarily from parents and family. Although many reported that their parents wanted them to try their best at school, and do the “best they could”, there was the perception among many participants that their parents never really expected them to succeed in anything:. Many felt that they did not have the support of their families and that education was never a priority with their families.

Okay expectation, my father and mother didn’t expect much of me...I remember when I was young, my dad and mum would always say...just do my best in school and no pressure...they didn’t ask a lot [Cook Islands female, age 25-30].

Many participants expressed that there was an expectation to go into tertiary education, but there was no real support or encouragement from them in their studies:

They just wanted me to do well in school they wanted me to go to university status and I reached that and after a while they wanted me to quit school and get a job.... [Samoan female, age 20-25].

Many participants reported that there were expectations placed on them by their parents to attend church and family activities as well as study. For the most part, they would be worn out from trying to fulfil all their obligations and as a result, their studies would suffer:

I've been lazy with homework mainly and being all worn out by church stuff and family things so it was all like um...tied with having a lot of activities I was involved in as well as having to go to school and holding a part time job as well there in the end. [Samoan female, age 20-25].

A few participants reported that one of the barriers that they faced was looking after sick family members and because this was time consuming, often they would not be able to juggle both the task of looking after them and studying. Participants reported that their obligation to their family would be more important and therefore would have to abandon their studies.

A few participants reported that growing up their parents applied so much pressure on them to go into certain areas of study that it impacted negatively on their motivation to study. Parental expectations were often at odds with what their children wanted to do or become and this often created barriers, although most participants recognised their obligations to their parents.

On the other hand for other participants, being away from family and family support meant that they couldn't cope with their studies, and lack of family support became a real barrier for them:

Those who live in hostels, those who work...need their family to put pressure on them to perform...Like my dad who rings me up all the time to make sure I'm on track....[Samoan female, age 25-30].

Financial necessity

Many of the participants reported that another major barrier which prevented them from finishing their tertiary education was their financial situation at home. Most of the participants reported that they had to leave their studies and find a job so that they had commitments to provide financially for their family:

...financially I think was the biggest barrier in my schooling...I was working part time even when I was at Uni I was working part time...father decided to go back to Uni and then it just left mum being the only working person in my family...I felt quite obligated that being like how old was I ...I was about 25 at that time...I felt like I had to put my career on hold just to help look after my mother...well my parents and also my son who was going on to like primary school...so I had to really think about them...I mean I was okay because I'm half way so yeah...it was the big thing was financial reasons.... [Samoan female, age 25-30]

I didn't finish my studies, 'cause I had a daughter...I started working part-time, but when I went back I got As and Bs, but I couldn't cope and left Varsity 'cause I needed money. So in four years I passed 10-15 papers. Having baby wasn't the barrier, but I needed to be in the right frame of mind and be ready to study, 'cause I'd be wasting my need...When I know... I'm not going to piss around. [Cook Islands female, age 20-25].

A few participants reported that the financial situation at home could sometimes be so bad that the only expectation that their parents had of them was to leave school and find a job.

Most of the participants reported that they had to work part-time while studying which they felt impeded their ability to do well in their studies. Missed lectures and tutorials compounded by often feeling too tired to think, let alone write essays and swot for tests and exams lead to not completing courses and "failing".

At the same time many participants are somewhat bitter that they have been forced to take out Student Loans to get them through, and this is aggravated by the fact that they will still owe money even when they do not complete their courses.

Lack of support services

Many students report the lack of knowledge about what support services are available, where they are, and how to access them (also refer Anae and Sua'ali'i 1997). They also talk about their absence in their particular Departments and their feelings of alienation, and how they really need support at many levels:

Students need lots of support...They need role models and be told...encouraged...to go to class by someone they can trust ...

PI students need a support group to encourage them to continue doing the work...Because I see a lot of them just sitting around playing cards [Cook Islands male, 30-35].

For some participants what they felt they needed was a mentor-type person who would help them get their work done and to help them with time-management and “being on their back”.

I like mentoring younger students and helping them, 'cause they weren't there for me when I needed them....[Samoan female, age 25-30].

It's tough having to discipline yourself...force myself to read books....[Cook Islands male, age 30-35].

We need Pacific tutors to identify with...through our own peers. Palagis won't understand us....[Samoan female, age 25-30].

We need help to complete our studies...we go just as much through as many problems as you know...all others. [Tongan male, age 30-35].

This mentoring support is crucial during the first year of tertiary life:

The first year was a struggle, 'cause I hadn't been back to school to study...It was a big struggle...The second year was much better, I was more open, I went to look for help, I thought I couldn't do it on my own the first year, and I found I couldn't...So I left. [Samoan female, age 20-25].

Language

Another major barrier which was reported primarily by six participants who were Island-born was the difficulties with the English language. These problems greatly affected their school experience and many commented about the difficulties they had understanding the school work, what the teacher was

saying and even while socializing with their peers. Many felt that the language barrier hindered their progress with their academic studies. A few participants reported that they were very shy and had no confidence in school. Because of this, they felt that they were at a disadvantage with their English speaking peers whom they thought were able to ask questions and have them answered by the teacher which advanced their own knowledge of the schoolwork or topic being studied:

...reserved...that didn't help...I didn't realize in the classroom in New Zealand that you need to discuss and speak up when you have problems.... [Tongan male, age 30-35].

Another barrier was the perceived ambivalence of participants who were unsure as to what they wanted to do or to be, and who tended to focus on what they enjoyed or were “good at”, rather than a goal-oriented programme or plan of action for career development. Often their tertiary journey was an ad hoc process punctuated by periods of opting out of courses/institutions or just having “time-outs”.

Another important barrier for some was the very mobile nature of Pacific families. Most participants said that they had moved house at least three times in the past five years for various reasons, and this proved very unsettling for many.

Did business course at Vic then came up and went to AIT...Back then when I was studying I was thinking...far out, what am I studying, why am I doing this. But now when I look back, I think it was good to learn that...all that time management and how to organise yourself, and things like that....[Fijian male, age 25-30].

I moved out of home when I was 18 and stayed with a relative...then I had to move back home 'cause I got sick and only mum could look after me...I moved to my own place after I had my baby. [Cook Islands female, age 20-25].

Tertiary experiences at University and Polytechnic contrasted to the experiences of those participants in PTEs. While University systems and curriculum seemed overly rigid, stringent and “too hard” to many participants, those enrolled at PTE courses boast about the relative flexibility and inspirational learning styles, that they had become immersed in. More

importantly what these participants found particularly rewarding was the self-confidence and raised self-esteem that these experiences provided for them:

Mum's friends were doing business and I thought I may as well go and do business, but my heart wasn't fully into that, I was just doing it because everyone else was doing it. And after about one and a half years I said. "Oh man this is not really me" So I was still searching. I went to work and did stuff working. I think the main thing was, my career wise choice was when I went to [PTE]... which was a good stepping stone for me. I went in to do community and social work and they said bring in your guitar and I said I could only sing and they said by the end of this course you'll be a rapper and you'll be writing poetry and I thought cool....[Fijian male, age 25-30].

[PTE] built up heaps of self-esteem and confidence. These things were there already but they really made me discover, really made me look at myself. All this is consciously knowing instead of before like subconsciously knowing....[Samoan female, age 25-30].

But despite the supportive learning environment and creative teaching/learning styles, barriers experiences by cohorts at University and Polytechs are shared by PTE students also.

Once my music is on the road I'll go back to University and try and do a few more papers. Because I'm into learning and I understand that even if its theory or practical so I'm more of a practical person so I learn more when I do practical things....[Fijian male, age 25-30].

Another significant barrier inherited from Secondary school experiences is the perceived need to learn about "practical" things or to gain "practical" experience, rather than the focus on academic learning.

Summary:

Perceived barriers to completing their studies for this group of partial achievers, in their own words are:

- Never saw a guidance counsellor
- Peers and the pressure to smoke and drink and party hard
- I left because I got sick of it
- Living in a hostel away from family...I felt isolated
- Not aware of support services around me
- Lecturers are impersonal
- Relationships are hard...Need supportive partners
- Love student life-style too much

- Got pregnant and had to leave
- I left Varsity 'cause I needed money
- I wasn't in the right frame or mind to work hard
- Need Pacific tutors/mentors
- Lack of personal motivation
- Found it hard to adjust to tertiary
- Too much freedom and carefree life-style
- Lost motivation in secondary school
- Family pressures
- I feel alienated here
- I want a practical-based education. University too theory-based
- Money's a barrier...textbooks are quite expensive...had to take a student loan out
- Don't know about scholarships
- My English not good enough
- Too shy to ask for anything...find out about anything

For partial achievers, there are a myriad of factors and combinations thereof which lead to them not passing their courses. For some lack of personal motivation and negative experiences inherited from their secondary school experiences are exacerbated by their tertiary experiences. These combined with the relatively easy-going tertiary lifestyles, where there is no pressure to attend lectures and tutorials, place these students at risk. The narratives reveal also that it is the first year of tertiary life which is the crucial one in which the student either “makes it” or “fails”, and that it is in this year of transition where most support is needed.

Even though it is clear from the narratives that external pressures such as family obligations and commitments, and lack of financial resources indeed pose problems for these students, there is the sense that personal motivation and “feeling right” about “being here” is more important in terms of adjustment to tertiary life, and the possibilities of passing courses.

Most significantly, it is clear that there is a need to:

- Ensure that there is in place in the Secondary schools clear pathways into tertiary education (beginning in Year 9). These should not necessarily be via guidance counsellors, but could work through senior students/mentors/tertiary graduates. Information regarding these pathways should be disseminated widely to school and Pacific communities and ensure ‘buy-in’ from all stakeholders.

- Link these pathways into career choices, with individual goal-setting and achievement development plans.
- Ensure that information regarding access to scholarships and student loans are disseminated widely at secondary schools.
- Disseminate widely information about the variety and specific nature of all Pacific support networks in the tertiary institutions to students and communities.
- Ensure that a mentor system/programme especially for first year tertiary students is in place in the tertiary institution. Such a programme must also incorporate working with parents and communities as part of its parameters.
- Develop a programme/series of workshops with students, parents and communities about “What to expect at tertiary level and how to cope with

CHAPTER SEVEN

NON-PARTICIPANT VIEWS

“All the kids who don’t do well, never get anywhere”

Demographics

This thematic analysis is based on the preliminary findings of eight focus group interviews – 6 in Auckland and 2 in Wellington - conducted with participants who did not pursue tertiary education. Ethnic groupings included one Niuean focus group, one Tongan focus group, one Samoan focus group, one Cook Islands focus group and four mixed Pacific focus groups.

The two Wellington focus groups consisted of mainly school leavers aged between 16 and 18. Roughly 50/50 split between males and females, and groups consisted of an ethnic mix between Cook Islanders, Tongan, and Samoans. The Auckland focus groups were made up of a combination of school leavers (17-19 year olds) and mature participants (20-30 year olds) and covered Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islands and Niuean ethnic groups.

Themes:

A strong and common theme across all narratives concerned on the one hand, family pressures, and on the other, strong family support. The concomitant theme of lack of financial resources for younger participants and the need to provide financially for young families for older participants was also present. Other perceived barriers included; lack of relevant information available concerning tertiary education, lack of support services at secondary school and tertiary education level, peer pressure, personal motivation and cultural concerns.

Family ‘pressures’ and family ‘support’

Most participants reported that their families, primarily their parents, imposed great expectations on them to enter tertiary education. Many reported that they were expected to go into the “professional” areas of study to become doctors or lawyers. As a result of these expectations many participants reported that their

parents dictated their school subjects and pressured them to keep up with their studies.

This was reported as being one of the barriers as participants reported that they were doing subjects that they had no interest in or were not particularly good at and this was reflected in their failure to do well in them.

Many participants also reported that their parents did not support them financially or give them the time to try and live up to their expectations:

...my dad would always get us to go to bed early and he was really strict on us like we couldn't understand...he wants you to do well at school but he doesn't actually give you the time to or the resources...when we needed money for the materials you have your pencil and ruler...to him that was the basic things we needed.... [Pacific Group 2].

On the other hand, many participants also talked about immense family support and that they would not have been able to survive if it weren't for their parents and families.

Participants reported that success at school was due primarily to having supportive families:

It's alright if you have parents that support you in the school...then you've got a chance...like me I didn't have that chance because there was nobody there for me...there was no mother and father...I wish that there was somebody for me to support me through school...you can talk about studies but you've got to have that person you know that back person helping you because you won't make it there without anyone's support.... [Cook Islands Group].

Younger members of this group have diverse understandings about the importance of family, and cultural obligations attached to family life. Many find the need to obey their parents as either youngest members of the family (especially girls) as particularly stressful, and many girls note the double standards and relative freedom of their brothers in this regard. Nevertheless, the pressures to obey their parents is evident in their narratives and the cause of differing outcomes regarding career paths and actual experiences.

Older, more mature participants, who reflect on their past experiences are able to understand and reconcile some of this parental pressure, but still are adamant that they will not and do not exert the same pressure on their own children.

Others felt that their families didn't expect them to go to University, but did encourage them to do whatever made them happy, which was for most and still is, to get a job.

Parents were happy they were doing some form of study as it meant they were off the street and out of trouble. Overall, encouragement from home was very good.

However, many participants reported that financial problems at home can be a major barrier for Pacific students wishing to pursue tertiary education. A few participants reported that they did not proceed to tertiary study because there was an expectation from their parents to go and find work to help their family survive:

I think another barrier as well is that my parents expected me to just work for the family...and the expectation that my mother really wanted me to go to university but my father said straight up "I'd rather have you go and get a job and start helping to support the family than go on to tertiary. [Pacific Group].

Many participants reported that although there was great expectation for them to achieve academic success growing up, there was no real support from home in terms of help or encouragement with their studies:

... they tell you all their expectations but [they don't] ask you where you're at...or follow you up...[with] a support system in the...home. I mean, I found that all they did was say "I want you to do well", and "I expect you to pass your School C", and "I expect you to pass this and that"....they don't ask you..."So what do you think you are gonna do [in the future]? and "How's your schoolwork going?". [Samoan Group].

There was very little support or encouragement for these participants from parents to take up further studies after secondary school and many reported that their parents pushed them into the workforce:

...and also cause it was just mum and dad big family so sort of get out and get a job help our with the others and being the oldest girl in the family there was a lot there you know to do so I know cause I left when I did second year fifth and then I didn't go on anymore [Niuean group].

Information

Many participants reported that lack of relevant information about options available to students can be a major barrier for Pacific students wishing to attend tertiary institutions. Information would be attained by accident either through "individual research" or through "word of mouth":

...when I did decide to go back to study I had to do my own research, but then it was by word by mouth...I didn't know there were bridging courses out there...there was a lack of information to tell us it was there...I mean you had to do your own research, seriously...And then you would find them. But as for advertising...nah...I don't think there was much of it. [Samoan Group].

Participants reported that information must be easily accessible as lots of people do not know where to seek help:

...the thing with kids today is that they don't know how to get into tertiary education...there are steps to get into tertiary education...like now, I can mentor some of my families to get somewhere and to get a job and into university....It's not knowing how...it's not just the [lack of] money because there are scholarships out there that people don't know about. But there is a lack of communication. It's not given out to them in their community and it's not knowing where to go to seek help...It's the knowing how and where to look...that our people need to help themselves....I'm sure it's just knowing where to get the resources that's needed.... [Cook Islands Group].

A few participants reported that it would be useful if the Pacific communities formed some sort of information service for Pacific students interested in pursuing tertiary education:

I think if the community have an office and information office for our Polynesian kids so that they can go and ask questions there...cos if they don't know where to ask then no one will help them. [Cook Islands Group].

If such information was freely available and properly disseminated to students, families and communities, there is the perception that more informed and timely

decisions could have been made with regard to career choices and tertiary pathways:

I took six months off after leaving school because the transition from high school to tertiary was too hard for me to comprehend, so I didn't want to, and wanted a break. It's a big shock to go to University isn't it? [Niuean group].

Secondary School experiences

Most participants had positive experiences at Secondary school:

It was awesome...I got to drive mum's car to school...In my 3rd form year up to 6th form it was really good. [Niuean group].

An overwhelming response of "getting a job" was the group's main short term goal. On the issue of long term goals and ambitions, no-one had any idea of what they wanted to do or be in the long term with the exception of a few who had specific career goals. One participant commented that he didn't feel he needed to go to university because he was already on his way to becoming a mechanic. Another participant expressed a keen interest in art but was not aware of what, if any opportunities were available to him. He didn't like art that much at school because they "had to draw fruit and shoes all the time".

For many of the participants secondary school was an opportunity for new experiences, and many had a fair idea of what their goals and aspirations were. Others had no idea and just "drifted along" rather aimlessly. One participant wanted to be a legal executive and hoped to attend Auckland University to complete a course in that field. She looked to her mum as a role model and who worked in the legal profession. Another wanted to work in the furniture removal industry because he had heard from friends that it was an easygoing job earning good money, although he had thought about joining the army. Others wanted to be police officers, or to pursue careers in the performing arts. A few were still unsure of what they wanted to do or be.

I had too many goals...One was to leave school to go to University 'cause mum was always on my back. [Niuean group].

My goal was to look for a good job...but didn't get a good qualification. [Cook Islands group].

I wanted to be a nurse...just to get out of the house...but my father didn't want me to..[he] thought nursing was a bad occupation. [Tongan group].

I wanted to be a minister and wanted to work as a preacher, but I got so involved in sport and that was it. [Tongan group].

Many negative experiences of secondary school focused on teachers. Many said that they had left school because it was boring, and would've liked teachers to take more notice of "PI students".

...teachers weren't too good...Always growled, loud-mouthed. I don't like teachers who tell you if you don't do it right the first time, they'll pull you aside and teach you on the side...it's quite embarrassing when she put me in front of the class.... [Niuean group].

Teachers needed to listen and pay more attention to what they wanted and maybe adapt their teaching style accordingly [Tongan group].

The narratives also reveal that being a minority group amongst the dominant palagi classes for some was a barrier, for others a positive experience:

I was in a class with too many pakehas...only three or four PI...I found it quite hard, a real challenge. [Niuean group].

I really enjoyed being in a palagi class because it was a real challenge for me to go in to be at the same level as them and that their class is just the same as everybody else's. [Niuean group].

Support Services

A few participants mentioned that as they were growing up there were no support services available to them at school which would have helped them cope with any difficulties they had with their schoolwork:

When I look back at then I don't...I went to an all Catholic school all girls and culture was a big thing but when it came to the academic side there was nothing there to support Maori or Pacific students as in if they were having problems and I'm talking about back in the eighties. [Pacific Group].

A few participants recalled that there was encouragement but not in the academic field:

I also went to an all girls school that was predominantly white and um...only time we really got support was during the Polynesian Festival and for Volleyball, because they needed Islanders...so that was pretty much it...now academically there was like no support at all...they didn't provide any tutorials for us or anything. [Pacific Group].

Many participants in the Niuean and Tongan Focus Group interviews reported that a major perceived barrier and struggle for Pacific students at tertiary level is not having sufficient support services whom they could approach about problems they have with their studies or basic information about their courses. Many are "put off" by the negative experiences of other family members and friends. One participant states that her friend told her:

Sometimes it's the lack of the support system. Also when she first came to AU she was so scared and they weren't willing to give out more information, like...where your room is and how you are going to go to the library and use the stuff there...They expected her to come in and enter uni then [somehow] know everything...Even the papers she was offered...For one of her papers the lecturer goes on and on they don't give the opportunity for the lecturer to come to the tutorial in person so that he could explain to the class...That's one reason why there's a big drop out of our students because there is a very low supportive system in a way that they would direct people to where they can go.... [Pacific Group].

Participants commented on the need and importance for such services to also be available at secondary school:

I reckon career advice needs to be introduced right from third form because they can guide you to what path of life you want to choose so you can choose your subjects relevantly...because if I could rewind and do my other five years again I would do it again. [Samoan Group].

Financial Considerations

Many participants reported that financial problems can be a barrier to entering and completing tertiary education. As aforementioned, many participants reported that Pacific students sometimes have the burden of providing financially for their parents. Other problems which were reported included the high fees, student loans and access to money for their own personal use:

...you know the other barrier to tertiary education is financial, its hard and again income has limited opportunities and the loans with interest gives you a heart attack...for those other people they have their

families to look after and other things they want to achieve after they come to school and having to go through a lawyer...others have the ability and the motivation to go back to school but can't be bothered going through the system of asking for financial support.... [Pacific Group 2].

If you love your parents, you go to work. I didn't have the opportunity to go further. [Tongan group].

I think I could have gone straight to tertiary straight after school, if there wasn't too much pressure at home. That is to go out and get a job for our big family...'Cause I left second year fifth...I was the oldest girl in the family. [Niuean group].

A few participants mentioned that after spending some time in the workforce and earning money, sometimes it can be difficult to make the decision to return to being a poor student and that this can sometimes be a barrier for Pacific students to return to or undertake tertiary education:

for myself as soon as I got a job the thing that stopped me from further education as soon as I got a job...money in one hand that was like wow...if I could get more of this money why should I need to go back in to being a poor student and stuff like that...that's the one thing that really encouraged me to stay at work is the money aspect of it... [Samoan Group].

Peers

Many participants reported that a major barrier can be negative peer pressure such as wagging school. Many participants reported that hanging with their peers would often result in their loss of motivation and failure to do well in their studies:

...caught up with the wrong crowd...that's possibly one of the issues I think a lot of kids find themselves...they hang around the wrong friends whether you have, if you hang around the wrong crowd, the ones who are eager to do a lot of study they will do well but there are the ones who will get carried away and start smoking...those are the signs that will put the kids out of action...I did caught up with the wrong crowd...friends they always get me to do stuff like they say to quit school today and go on for the rest of the day. [Cook Islands Group].

Furthermore, participants reported that they were easily influenced by their friends either because they did not want to be left out or because they weren't serious about their schoolwork and just wanted to have a little fun:

I went through school just following what my friends were doing and um not really thinking academically but more what are my friends doing...so I'll just go follow their path and then trying to find something that I was actually good at...my school depended on what my friends were doing and how I was doing with test results and stuff so it changed all the time.... [Samoan Group].

The possibility of going to University:

When asked whether they would ever consider going to University, most replied to a varying degree that they never thought about going on to tertiary study, mainly because they thought it would be too hard and that you needed “brains” to attend. One participant pointed out that her mother has been encouraging her to do extra courses to help her get into Law School at Auckland University. For many of them, leaving school and getting a job was more important. There was the perception amongst many of them that varsity was not an option for them given their track record. For those who had experienced PTEs, all but one said that they preferred PTEs than school because they all liked the teaching style, being more flexible and tutors being more approachable, as well as Pacific.

One participant stated that she did not want to go to University despite her parents wanting her to. She did the opposite to what her parents advised despite the support that her parents provided her in terms of a being part of a close family, where she was well-provided for.

When asked if the opportunity arose and the possibility of going to University, most expressed a willingness to give it a go, and may have even considered trying harder at school had there been more encouragement from teachers. This was reinforced by their wanting to give it a go should there exist some kind of bridging course between secondary and tertiary. Some had responded that had they had a good experience at school they might have considered the option to go to University. Most expressed a keen interest, the rest still believed they didn't have the “brain cells” to go to Varsity. Many responded that they didn't feel that they could keep up with the work required at university level.

Personal motivation

Some participants stated that it was their own lack of personal motivation that led them to “failing “ at school. Many of these participants had all the encouragement and support from their parents to do well but somehow became disinterested in succeeding at school.

I mucked around at school...I just went to school to eat my lunch and see my friends (laughs). I was useless academically, but good at sports....I just couldn't handle school. I mean just due to the fact that I wagged so many times, and I'd never done well. I went on to nothing really and that's when it hit me...like what am I going to do now? How am I going to get a job...and how was I going to survive in the real world, because I had wasted four years...five years in school doing nothing but sport...and that's all I knew.... [Samoan group].

I went through school just following what my friends were doing...So I just followed their path. [Samoan group].

But when you reach 7th form, it becomes lack of motivation...unsure of what you want to get into...I reckon career advice should be introduced right from the third form because they can guide you to what path in life you want to choose so you can choose our subjects relevantly. [Samoan group].

Cultural concerns

A few participants in the Niuean group report that education offers take second place to economic and cultural concerns:

My parents they were from Niue so they don't understand that much English...properly...Don't understand education...I mean to them it was just work and bringing in the money and food on the table. [Niuean group].

...it was just mum and dad...big family...so sort of get out and get a job and help out with the others, being the oldest girl in the family.... I probably could have gone on.... [Niuean group].

A few participants in the Tongan Focus Group also discussed the difficulties that students may experience with the language barrier:

There's a few people in up there that I don't think they speak in Tongan at all 'cause I been to the workshop in 98 but they run it in English...but I think we entitled being the Pacifica to have some course in our language just...they assume they have it in language they have it in internal English but we have our own language [as per XI]...its really hard to continue that like to go home and come to school and I just find

myself in the computer lab you know I tell myself I want someone to explain it to me my way. [Tongan group].

More culturally specific services were also discussed by Tongan participants:

...and apart from culture space another thing 'cause...um...in the faculty of art we should have like um the Tongan room cause we just you know share the room which is the Maori room...we feel that we need another room for P.I. [Tongan group].

Summary

In summary some of the main perceived barriers to participants in this group in their own words are:

- Family pressures
- Financial problems
- Socializing
- Peer pressure
- Cultural considerations and obligations
- Just to get your act together
- Not aware of any bridging courses to University
- Pacific parents and children need to look for some encouragement through schools and radio programmes
- Computer courses are better because they'll be running the world in future
- Student loans – “We spend the rest of our lives paying back this money”
- Our parents can't afford to send us to Uni
- Language is a big barrier especially for Island-born students
- Information technology another
- Looking up books in the Library
- Finding my way around Varsity
- Need our own room and space at University

The idea of going to University or Polytech has never really been an option for the participants in this group, however, with more understanding of what it would be like to go on to tertiary study they may be more inclined to consider it as a long term goal – after they get a job!

Most preferred an institute that would cater for students at a secondary school level and in an environment similar to PTE. Some commented that that they never really thought about meeting up with Pacific who have been through tertiary education system and finding out what their experiences were, and all responded positively to this idea.

Most significantly, what these narratives have pointed out is the:

- Need to reconcile/balance parental expectations with individual abilities and motivation
- Need for a better flow of information from school to student to parents to community and vice versa re community needs to ensure that students are able to make informed decisions about career paths
- Need for monitored short and long term goals and career plans to be implemented from 3rd form onwards as pathways into tertiary
- Need for dynamic, innovative/creative Pacific teachers and others who do not buy into the perceived stereotyping of Pacific students as “underachievers”.
- Need for support services at secondary and tertiary to be functional and clearly delineated and information disseminated to Pacific students at all levels, such as bridging courses to tertiary institutions. Support services such as Pacific mentoring programmes at both secondary and tertiary levels
- Identification of ESL barrier for Island-born Pacific students, and support networks put in place to address these issues at all levels. Also the possibility of cultural-specific services for large groups of Pacific students
- Recognition that financial resources the major barrier for Pacific students entering tertiary education
- Need to be aware that peer pressure is another barrier and positive role models/mentor system should be implemented to address this.

CHAPTER EIGHT

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

“It’s the School’s job to educate our kids”

This thematic analysis is based on the preliminary findings of eight focus group interviews with community groups. Ethnic community groups consisted of mixed age and gender groups of Tongan, Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Niue, Tokelau, Samoan, and mixed Pacific groups.

Themes

The major themes that came across in the data mainly concerned the need for support networks and services primarily from within the family, negative peer pressure, structural, cultural and financial barriers.

Family

Participants reported the importance of having a supportive family network to succeed academically. Although many reported that their parents had high expectations in relation to them advancing onto tertiary education and securing good jobs, there was very little support in helping them achieve this:

I recall from that time is you don’t get support...I mean we do get support from our parents but when it comes to school work we don’t get that support helping out in the homework and something like that so its more like you have to do your own work without any help [Samoan group].

Most of the participants recognized that students need family support and encouragement to succeed. First and foremost, participants reported that there needs to be good family backing or family support to enhance and encourage children’s skills and abilities:

Parents’ support is often lacking...evident in the Mt Roskill po ako for Tongan students...the number that attend is very small compared to the roll of Tongan students at the school...I wonder sometimes whether those parents do value the education of their children...other things may be more important such as drinking kava...going to choir practice and various other things...having said that it doesn’t mean they aren’t important but those are not the priority...therefore there is not enough support from the parents [as per OK]... child does not feel there is

support from home...often home there is no space provided for study...a space which is quiet and peaceful and often study is interrupted by other members watching TV or visitors to the home...so at the end of all that the child is tired and resorts to bed without anything done...such an environment discourages the child from studying....[Tongan group].

A few participants also mentioned that a child's success or failure is largely dependent on the positive or negative influences and guidance of their parents:

If mum and dad don't put them on the right track...it starts from home that's where it starts from...if you start from home at four because they are the first education of the Samoan kid...that's why he went to school and he mingled with the bad influence...he got suspended from school for smoking and drinking...its not their fault its from mum and dad.... [Samoan group].

Participants also reported that children's attitudes and barriers to learning is because of the great pressure and expectation placed on them to take subjects that their parents force them to take and to do well in them:

I think that's why students don't enjoy going to school because of the pressure...they are told what to do [Tuvaluan group].

A child's upbringing is perceived by many parents to be vital for success in the education system. Parents realise that University is different from any other tertiary institution. Some believe that it is hard for Pacific people and that maturity is needed. Some are of the view that life skills may be needed before a student embarks into tertiary and that maybe it would give the students a taste of reality by making them work to pay for their fees.

Another sub-theme regarding family situations, was the inability of parents to "spend quality time" with their children because of their work commitments. Often this was framed in terms of time constraints, i.e., one or both parents having to rotate shifts, or "having to work nights".

...to pursue that line of study, the support at home wasn't all that good because I had a lot of other children myself...that was the main problem...not having enough time to share...as well even with my wife...she had to look after the children and ...earn the rent so to

Parental expectations from the parents' perspectives ranged from being quite explicit about what they wanted their children to achieve to the more liberal idea of allowing children to make their own choices:

Well...my expectations on my kids I think at times I get reminded about that because they know that I often can't...the cliché...you know... if so [and so's] child can do it, then you can do it because you are my child. And I think that's a common thing, I know that my oldest son has always wanted to go to the navy, I don't know why...So it feels...you know they look smart and they look smart in their uniform. But apart from that I have no idea of why he wants to go, but I know that having done that interview with the people from the achievers magazine, his long term goal was to travel and he thought that, that would be the best place to do that. And I know that my daughter wanted to travel overseas, ah..instead of coming here after doing her bursary. And they both achieved those two goals, umm...I know my son wants to, his first choice was to do medicine and maybe....medicine is still an idea but yeah [Samoa group].

...my expectations of my son is the same as his dad, but he was younger. (laughs). He mixed with the wrong group or whatever, and because of the peer pressure on him, put on him by his friends he um...didn't he was one of the low achievers at school. He was only interested in sports, but um....he is ...I tested him as part of my education when I did education when I was young like reading and all that, and I knew that he has the potential to do better at school. So those are some of the barriers for him...in his position....and , but um...hes doing better now with his travel course, travel and tourism to what he's trying to achieve. But behind my mind at times like any other parent um...wants their kids to perform well at school...academically [Samoa group].

I don't know what else to expect. (laughs). Umm sohe's doing better now with his tertiary education, so I push him. I didn't really want to push him or else he might...or else he was going to leave to go to Australia, because there was umm, to go somewhere else. And the other part of the question about tertiary education is going to church...career wise is opportunities. He said to me that he learnt more Samoa when he was at school because some of the fluent speakers went to that school, you know they spoke Samoan. But at home his mum sort of speaks goes from Samoan to English. And you know what happens but he's a fluent speaker of Samoan. He identifies himself as a Samoa, and he enjoys wearing his *lavalava* (sarong) to the flea market, but when he was in Australia he was amazed that they are shy of being Samoan. You know their identity is quite different from being over here [Samoa group].

Peers

Most participants reported positive school experiences while growing up. Participants spoke of the enjoyable friendships and relationships with their peers. Successful students talked about having supportive friends who were interested in school, whereas others talked about being influenced by their peers to “wag school”:

...the peer pressure depending on who you mix with and I would say your achievements and level of achievements is totally dependent on who you mix with.... [Niuean group].

Many participants spoke of the negative influences that peers can have on students primarily in regards to their focus on schoolwork and attitudes towards learning:

I was a good boy and then I was influenced by the bad ones...but I still go to school...sometimes I skip and my mum and dad reckon ‘oh he's at school’ but I wasn't...then when I go to school I wasn't really focused until now...I thought damn I wish I had...you know.... [Pacific group].

Language

For recent arrivals and ESL speakers, most often-quoted barriers were perceived as language, and making the transition from the “Islands” to life in Auckland.

...um it was difficult in the beginning because I could hardly speak English when I came here and um I found that they hard to get along...we had different backgrounds and they more like um hang around with their own kind of people and I was the only Tokelau person and the...Secondary school...so...But I managed to hang around with Samoans and the Island group so I slowly made my way through.... [Tokelau group].

...one of the problems with the kids' education is the English language...English is their second language and one just arrived from Tonga so he is still learning to speak English...However they have special classes they are given to do but especially to do with writing and reading...It's getting better because he can speak English now and talk to

I am looking after...5 boys and 2 girls...one at intermediate and the rest at High School...all came from Tonga at different times...Problem they face is the transition from Tonga to here...Tongan language is not an option in their choice of papers basically because it is not consistently taught here

accept at few institutions...It's a problem with our children now because of the de-valued status of our languages...educating of Pacific students should include their culture.... [Tongan group].

Services

Many participants reported that there were not enough support services and networks which Pacific students can go to for assistance in either their studies, or information on the options available to them. Many reported that the services which need to be established must be culturally specific. Many reported that whereas the Pacific networks in place at the moment are good, a few reported that there needs to be different networks for different cultures. Among the services reported were information on career planning, academic workshops and support networks where students can go to for any sort of help. A few participants also reported that students must be targeted while they are in secondary school. Offering services to these students by way of schemes such as Community educators, mentoring programmes would assist students in looking at tertiary study as an option. Services such as mentoring programmes were viewed as being positive for ensuring success for Pacific students both at secondary school and tertiary education level.

Support networks are also important because it avoids the student from feelings of isolation especially at tertiary level where the environment can be quite "scary" for newcomers.

Participants in the Samoan focus group interview mentioned the need for support services for parents to try and get them involved and interested in their children's academic efforts:

Something for the parents some form of...to educate our parents...its really hard to entice some of the parents to school at interview night and it only happens twice a year in some schools...some of the parents never ever know what is happening or how their kids are doing in school...reading and writing.... [Samoan group].

...and if that school doesn't have a PI teacher with that PI heart and saying that I mean...when you see the parents out there, you don't wait for them to come to you, you run out to them and pull them in. And if there is no PI teacher at that Primary school our parents would just be outside the gate and they would only see the school when they drop their kids and pick

them up. Some of the parents never ever know what is happening or how their kids are doing in school...reading and writing...so unless you have a good people person Principle and staff, I am reluctant to support the idea at tertiary level. When we instil good habits at a young age, it's like...the longer we learn it the better we learn it and when we learn young come the following year, we know exactly what to do and I believe the same applies. Why wait until tertiary level? The kids will not come to education. [Samoan group].

A few participants also supported the establishment of more homework centers either to be funded by the government or by churches to provide the opportunity for those who want to enter tertiary education.

Culture

Samoan participants acknowledged that *fa'asamoa* can be a barrier in terms of the obligations that children have imposed on them especially with *feau* and *faalavelave*. A few participants also reported that the *fa'asamoa* obligation of giving money for *faalavelave* affects how much can be spent on the children's education and also the imminent obligation of the child to enter the workforce and can therefore be a barrier:

...me as a parent I should try and help out and work ways to make this happen for our children...culturally we should at least try and cut down some...there are some parents in New Zealand that really want to be *fia iloa* and *fia tagata* and they overdo the culture so they should at least know how to budget and work ways to lessen that.... [Samoan group].

Many participants reported that the language barrier can also make academic success difficult to attain. Drawing on personal experiences, participants reported how hard it was to understand the curriculum and literature in schools:

I found difficult when I was teachers college was that literature, the curriculum way big hard work to go through especially in my first year I was like keeping and honestly ever second word would be [laughs] because I didn't really understand and um but I was lucky because college like there's support group there so I just went what happened motivational for me and I was lucky that I had that support group where I could go and ask all these really Palagi dumb question. [Tuvaluan group].

- house chores. And many parents talk about how they make sacrifices to accommodate their kids' needs e.g. Tidying up or cooking, in order to give her kids time to study.

Some parents talk about how cultural gender distinctions affect students e.g. Typically in families it is the mother who seeks further education. It is the mother who is more sympathetic towards children's concerns at school, whereas the husband typically wasn't as involved and just had high expectations and demanded results. Many parents also mentioned the double standards in some families where a family was more sympathetic towards the son and not the daughter e.g. a brother praised for his efforts, even though he received mediocre results and the sister would receive little praise for better results.

There was a fair bit of debate around the positives and negatives of 'culture' and its impact on their children's learning. Some parents thought that culture was a barrier, others argued that it was individual attitudes and not culture which produced negative outcomes for their children. However all agreed that Pacific teachers would enhance their children's attitudes to learning because their children would be able to relate to a Pacific teacher.

I have three kids at school. Two in primary and one at college...I think it's not cultural...you know...Like it's just [attitudes] towards the school and their attitudes to learning. It's not to do with where we've come from...It's just that attitude to learning. [Tuvaluan group].

...it's very hard to teach success...how you teach your own children to be so hungry for it they can almost taste what will go after it...like one of those engines that is so hard to teach it has to start with us. We really need to be together as a Niue people because I think if we don't unite the danger would be losing more from the other home groups like the Tongan, the Samoan. I think we're in danger of that. We need to have just to give ourselves well...a very basic checklist of how to teach our children how to be hungry [for] knowledge so that we don't only have the ten out of the hundred going in at third form and through to seventh form.... [Niuean group].

A few parents voiced their concerns about how Pacific peoples were always considered “failures” in New Zealand society, especially in the education system. One parent talked about how there are many “success stories” and that pathways to Pacific success were not necessarily only through educational achievement:

I want to add that that often the government and researchers on Pacific People often think because we have a high failure rate therefore we are at the bottom of heap...but I think that what they are not aware of is that we have a lot of people who are not educated but yet they live a good life...I will use the word successful...there are different types of successful which tertiary education excludes and the whole education process...I think it

should be recognized...a lot of our people don't think that reaching the peak of education is getting to the top...sometimes people are not educated but they fulfill their obligations and to Tongans it still can be success and that is success which are outside the education system measures of success.... [Tongan group].

Many parents talked about a “balancing act” between Pacific cultural knowledges and behaviour and a palagi education. Others reflect on their experiences in terms of parents inability in realising that “success” in the palagi education system is often at the expense of their own Pacific cultures. Language is a case in point:

...they have wanted us to become...so successful, but they don't quite realize that success is really about ah having a bit of that stuff you know rejecting what is not good and having a lot of the Niue stuff...Stay staunch...It's a balancing act but they don't quite realize that in ourselves we still struggle with it every day to not become this bullshit loudmouth Niuean who doesn't respect what meaning comes from...What they don't ...want [to know]...is that we are the ones that lost our language but they forget that we are exactly the results of what they wanted us to be back in the seventies. [Niuean group].

One participant talked about how her father was against his daughter “learning” Pacific cultures at school as he thought it would hinder his child's ability to learn palagi knowledge:

It's a good point because um my dad my dad really hated...us all joining the Niue culture group at high school. He hated us doing anything like that....He was taught...at high school high school and intermediate...you know...Don't speak our language and so he thought if you're gonna be successful, don't speak the language...um...He now sees how far apart we are. He had a close relationship with his parents and he wasn't able to have a talk in English with us and things like...but we're still close in the family but we're really distant in the fact he has something that we don't...sort of thing...yea.... [Niuean group].

Most parents agreed that Church was central to their lives and hoped that their children would also come to realise this importance. Although coupled with this, was the realisation that with this came church obligations and commitments in terms of service, money and time.

If you have asked me this question five years ago, even two years ago [laughs] even two years ago, I would of said black and blue that...church is nothing...[that] the church...is...ignorant rather than a help...but um as

I've matured, I've come to realize that the church does have a place...an important organization...Important for Pacific Islanders and because...that's where a lot of the family values are and installed in people um...It's an extension...of your extended family yea family then your extended family then your church and its all part of the faith... Now that um I have a greater spiritual understanding I think of the bible I have I have a stronger spirituality of myself and I understand more what they're saying and I am more open-minded and I see the good things that it does for um the church for our community in that they have the youth groups where the kids get together and they're all the same and when they go back to school it helps of somehow [being] different from the other kids...And it's good to be part of a group like that...yea I think that church is important and should be still maintained as important. [Niuean group].

Gender differences

Participants expressed the need for some kind of system in place to teach Pacific students how to deal with failure, especially boys. It was acknowledged that boys learn differently. Often families/parents have very high expectations of their children, and it adds a lot of pressure. But parents reinforced the idea that a child is never isolated, and are surrounded by people that love them. However, it is how a child deals with these expectations that is crucial and the making or breaking point for them, of motivation for, and/or attitudes to learning.

Structural

Many participants reported that a major barrier was the undermining of Pacific students by the school system. A few of the participants also reported that when they were going through secondary school, Pacific students were being pushed into technical and practical fields rather than academic studies.

Another theme which came across was the mismatch between the academic institution and cultural norms of the participants. As a result of this, participants reported the importance of having Pacific lecturers who understand the differences between Palagi and the different Pacific cultures. Many participants reported the disadvantages that failing to take into account the cultural backgrounds and experiences of our Pacific children has on a student struggling to adapt to the new educational environment.

Financial

Many participants reported that one of the major barriers for Pacific students is their financial situation. Participants reported that the opportunity to go to university depended on whether or not they were financially stable at home:

Education is not a priority but an option...the priority would be getting a job...sometimes you have to get a job instead of concentration on your education. [Tongan group].

Some participants reported that they have had to work and study at the same time, and that having to work and study can be very difficult.

As aforementioned, the *fa'asamoa* obligation to give money for *faalavelave* and so forth can also be a barrier as some students may be forced to enter the workforce.

Parents acknowledge that there is a need for more scholarships to support Pacific kids. These can also be an incentive for secondary students to pursue tertiary education. According to these parents many do not apply as there is a perception that only “brainy kids” need to apply. Often these misconceptions are due to their ignorance and lack of information about these things. Therefore they ask for more education and information about fees and scholarships.

One parent talks about the “culture of success” that is only present at private schools and how state-funded schools promoted “inequality”, especially for Pacific parents and their children who could not afford such high school fees. Despite the financial barrier, one parent who used to send her child to a private school reflects on the lack of specific cultural content for her child at such schools:

I'm glad I pulled her out because there was no way I was going to sustain two-thousand dollars a term...but from that I actually learnt the inequalities between a state funded school and what was up state private um and funded private school um that was why other children actually forged ahead of our own. Not only is the homework quite intense but also the culture is about success and success is happening through sports and in a culture music and choir and stuff as well as your home work....Now why can't we transport that kind of belief into our mainstream schools and the

culture needs to be replaced with our culture and then you still have your homework and you still have your sport as you learn as a child um I don't know why we cant repeat those same things but um I know that for her what I'm missing a the moment is the Niue language for her. The most that she gets is the culture festival and that only happens once a term and only you know at the top half of the year it disappears um I want more then that for her 'cause I want the things that are at home reflected in the classroom and it's not quite cheap um so that for me is what is missing they still don't know how to quite teach our children....

Summary:

Not surprisingly the views offered by community participants reinforced some of the perceived barriers concerning family, culture, language, teacher factors and structural and financial constraints mentioned by student participants in the previous sections. However the perspective was slightly different as the notion of cultural relationships between parent/child, adult/youth, were played out in children obeying their parents and being "good" children and the blind expectations by some parents that their children leave school when legally allowed to get a job to help support the family.

Parent Case studies:

One mother of three grown up children went back to Secondary school to complete 6 form certificate as an adult student because firstly she wanted to satisfy her own curiosity and secondly, because it offered her insight as to what her children are going through. It also made her appreciate her children's efforts. She felt it made a difference.

Another female wanted to reflect on education in a holistic way. She was brought up in a strong 'aiga network, and felt that whereas the transition from early childhood to primary school was an easy process, that this was not so when going from Secondary school to University. She remembers the positives, the community networks and support systems that existed. These systems provided her with a foundation and stability when in University. These mechanisms taught her how to interact, about values, to have a strong ethnic identity and how to be your own person. She acknowledges that these things a University cannot teach. But would like to know how these can be reinforced in

her own children. University challenges things you know in your heart, are good or bad, and this according to this mother is and can be a good thing.

Another male parent made the observation that where there is strong Pacific parental involvement within the school setting, that this correlated to good results for Pacific students, and asks the question how is this to be fostered in schools?

Another person dropped out of school after sixth form. She felt it was the institute/system which made her drop out. Not wanting to go back scrubbing floors motivated her to return to education and gain qualifications.

The “teacher factor”

Teachers became another bone of contention amongst community participants. They were adamant that many Secondary schools do not cater for specific needs of Pacific students. In some schools the streaming system is very damaging where low streams are ‘abused’ by teachers and stereotyped in negative ways. Some parents talked about their experiences of reacting to such teachers.

When child is put down by teacher, the parent will speak to teacher. More often than not however, the child’s options must change because of this teacher factor. This is not good for the child.

Most parents realise that they have high expectations of their children. They know and want to be role models for their children. They push their children hard but only because they want them to succeed and do well.

Some parents talked about the conflicting attitudes of teachers and parents. One example given which manifested these are the parent-teacher interviews. One parent became tired of teachers continuously saying that her child was easy to teach, but when it came to harder subjects her child “wasn’t” as committed. This parent challenged the teacher asking him to tell her how they [the school] was going to help. Again the perception among parents that most palagi teachers have low expectations of Pacific kids resurfaced and many saw this as the main barrier to their children’s learning.

Another parent states that she always confronts the teachers when this happens. Otherwise the child will just “give up”.

I mean most of them don't realize that half of those kids can't do homework at home simply because they're expected to do their chores when visitors call in...They're the ones who provide the cup of tea and of course the Samoan household where at six o'clock on the dot without fail you have lotu [church] and lotu goes out at all. We're not just talking really simple...you know...hello...pray. We're talking about a...um...lifestyle and that is like really [not] appreciated by the mainstream system....There are all these other culture beliefs that could in fact work in very nicely with according to be extreme system you need to reach your space in time, where they have an appreciation of us, our culture, and being successful. We have the instinct that it can happen...they haven't allowed for that yet. [Niuean group].

All participants acknowledged that palagi teachers need to undergo cultural enlightenment at secondary school. For example 'culture' is perceived to be recognised by palagi teachers and schools as Pacific songs and dances at cultural performances and not in the classroom. One parent stated “We can do

...but its actually the stuff that could save a whole lot of children because that is how their parents speak to them...in the biblical terms. In every household it's still the case, and they understand it quite well 'cause if they could only have the same understanding as those text books....But then that's the imagery. We haven't yet got teachers who actually latch into the right imagery that could actually translate into real knowledge that's explicable to that child. [Niuean group].

Speak about how to move into success...Topics...I mean there were evenings where teachers out there [would] display...topics...what it would lead onto. I wish um that there would be other Pacific teachers that would re-explain to the parents as to what the topics are. I mean you can all look at the topics... you have no idea what they would lead up to, I mean a lot of people do know, but the rest don't know what the topics are and there a lot of things that that stops our kids from being successful at what they do...mainly the support that's required of them... somebody you lean onto. [Niuean group].

Also, many parents claimed that the perceived stereotypes such as “Pacific Islanders can only be gifted sports people and not academically gifted” is a stigma that must also be removed. A reason offered for this was that there are no Pacific role models in terms of academic feats and achievements. There is a need to illustrate that it is achievable to excel academically.

Retention in tertiary

Parents also recognise that mentoring is a vital component, Mentors within the university are needed. But mentors who are also prepared to work with the families so that there is an open flow of communication. It was expressed that a balance was needed and mutual understanding in student's peer social circle that "you can party hard as long as you pass exams!"

Another parent feels strongly that colleges need to develop a mentoring programme to assist Pacific students achieve academically. She is angry that Pacific students aren't pushed to excel.

Parents see their job as providing for their family and children and some pay high fees (especially Catholics) in the hope that their children will come out with some qualification. All agreed that it was "the schools' job to educate the kids". Some of the parent's views regarding this point were as follows:

- At primary school level parents more closely involved with the school community and classroom learning/activities of their children, but that at secondary school, there was a sense that parents felt "inadequate" to "help their children with homework" because they did not "have the skills" nor comprehend the more sophisticated secondary school curriculum content and processes. Therefore it was left to the school and teachers to "teach" their children.
- Some parents stated that "They send their children to school to learn
- Many parents were more pragmatically concerned with providing for their families "keeping a roof over their heads and food on the table...", rather than participating in the formal education of their children.
- Often parents stated that they apart from not being equipped with the necessary skills they often had "no time" to sit down with their children, as both parents were working, with "mum working night shift", or, in

single parent scenarios, the parent often was “too tired” after a hard day’s work and attending to family needs to spend time helping children with homework.

It is therefore anticipated that for many Pacific parents, the centrality of the financial, social and cultural provision of resources for their children coupled with the lack of ability, skills, time or energy to assist their children with schoolwork is intensified if and as their children progress from secondary schools into the tertiary sectors.

PART D

NAVIGATING FUTURES

Part D begins with Chapter 9 identifying the issues which recur throughout this report. The literature review and quantitative data provided in Part A signal persistent patterns of inequitable participation in tertiary education for Pacific peoples. Sections B and C provide qualitative exploration of these issues bringing the face of Pacific participation into rich focus. The final chapter (10) makes recommendations for discussion based on the narratives of access and exclusion provided by this research.

CHAPTER 9

KEY ISSUES

9.1 Personal Issues and Images

Many of the respondents in this study described their ability to succeed as students in very negative terms and had adopted significant self blame attitudes. Although there are many inspiring role models of Pacific people who have succeeded in tertiary study and their value was acknowledged by respondents, their prominence and accessibility is limited. It is a particular challenge to bring the positive image to the fore to counter personal issues of motivation, persistence and self belief.

9.2 Socio-Economic Factors

Socio-economic issues related to poverty including unemployment, overcrowded housing, health issues and access to income support are a common theme among the respondents. These factors impact disproportionately on Pacific peoples. They act in a "Catch 22" process to strengthen the barriers to tertiary study and to access to the higher incomes associated with tertiary qualifications. Student debts and the shorter term loss of work income do not balance favourably with immediate income earnings when individuals and families have severely limited economic resources.

9.3 Family, Community and Ethnic Groups

Stories of extraordinary support for students from family and community are balanced in this study by stories of pressure to find work to contribute income to the family. Differences in attitudes to study based on gender were reported as well as instances of excessive pressure to succeed in fields of study chosen by family rather than the student. However, the strongest agreement was on the importance of family support which was based on experience of tertiary education by parents or siblings. The importance of this factor puts first generation tertiary students at a significant disadvantage. This may be offset by positive and informed support from a teacher or mentor.

Factors related to ethnicity were found to be both inhibitive and supportive. Issues related to language and the framing of settling systems for Island born students, interaction between schools and ethnic communities and the distinctions between New Zealand and Island born students were seen as issues for attention.

9.4 Secondary Schools

Secondary schools were equally praised and blamed for their work in preparing students for tertiary education. Issues of level of expectation of Pacific students achievement, the quality of careers guidance, teacher attitudes to Pacific students, emphasis on sporting achievement and the quality of academic provisions were identified. The performance of secondary schools as facilitators of achievement or as barriers to progress was a key issue for all respondents.

9.5 Pathways into Tertiary Education

PTEs and Bridging Programmes in TEs received much favourable comment as pathways into tertiary study for under-prepared students. Pacific students are well represented in these provisions. At issue is the accessibility of information about these provisions. This information has been captured by the competitive environment of tertiary education which interferes with the non partisan provision of academic advice. This approach limits the matching of student learning needs with the appropriate programme regardless of provider marketing.

9.6 Tertiary Experiences

Tertiary providers have student centred processes in place to promote success and some of these processes have a Pacific focus. Excellent teaching which ensures academic and social engagement was identified as critical to success. Respondents also identified Pacific presence as a key factor in assisting them to develop a degree of comfortable participation in tertiary education. The effects of these factors is to counter some of the alienation which is felt by a minority group in a mainstream social institution. The many stories of success are countered by those of students not completing their studies or never

starting. This speaks to the failure of the tertiary sector to address the issues of Pacific participation systematically and effectively.

CHAPTER 10

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISCUSSION

This final chapter makes recommendations for discussion based on the narratives of access and exclusion provided by this research. These recommendations are the views of the research team and represent possible ways forward for discussion in the development of government mechanisms and policies. Instances of some of these initiatives can be found in the tertiary sector and a range of Government policies and changes to operational systems are underway that may begin to address the issues identified in this report.

10.1 Information

Develop non partisan, integrated information about tertiary sector programming which is delivered systematically to Pacific senior secondary students in an interactive programme which ensures the engagement of students and includes family and community.

10.2 Economic Support

Acknowledge the level of economic hardship which impacts on participation in tertiary education for Pacific students by providing fee free access to tertiary study for the first year of study for income tested students in tandem with the student allowance.

Extend the provision of scholarships available to Pacific students and promote them through Pacific networks, communities and churches and in conjunction with 10.1 above.

10.3 First Generation Students

Develop and fund a network of mentors for Pacific secondary students who have no family role models of tertiary participation. Mentors to be paid and trained. Mentoring to persist into tertiary study.

10.4 Tertiary Institutions

10.4.1 Recruitment

Regulate co-operation between tertiary institutions in the recruitment of Pacific students.

10.4.2 First Year Experience

Mandate the provision of credit bearing "First Year Experience" programmes for all tertiary providers. These programmes to provide orientation, mentoring, a cohort ethos and parallel study support for other papers in progress.

Identify co-operation with contributing schools in the transition from school into First Year Experience Programmes as a funding eligibility requirement.

10.4.3 Ongoing Support

Work towards establishing Pacific student's equitable access, retention and success as an outcomes based regulatory goal for all tertiary providers.

CONCLUSION

This study has investigated the issues of participation in tertiary study for Pacific peoples. The findings of this study cover ground which has in part been noted in previous studies and it also offers new insights. The report provides a systematic review of previous work and integrates new findings to present "thick" description of Pacific peoples in tertiary education. The complexity of the issues is represented by embedding the quantitative data in comprehensive, qualitative description. This work highlights the continuation of inequity of participation in tertiary education and the urgent need to address the issues and recommendations presented in this report.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

MODELS OF SUCCESS

Following from the recommendations outlined in Chapter ten, the research team would like to acknowledge that there are some programmes already in practice which are working extremely well for our Pacific students in the tertiary sector. Some of these models of success are presented here as case studies. They are the MALAGA programme, Faculty of Arts, University of Auckland; the Foundation Education Programme, Manukau Institute of Technology, Auckland; and the programme offered by Best Training Ltd, an Auckland Private Training Establishment.

Case Study 1:

***MALAGA – THE JOURNEY* FACULTY OF ARTS UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND**

Those 10,000 people who witnessed the Auckland Town Hall sell-out shows, “MALAGA: ‘The Journeys of Pacific Peoples’” –University of Auckland, in February 2001, will attest to its huge impact on the show-casing of our Pacific youth’s artistic, musical and creative abilities. MALAGA was a choreographed choral celebration featuring a cast of over 300 Pacific youth —an epic production dramatising the voyages of Pacific people to Aotearoa, New Zealand. The diverse music and dance traditions of Polynesia were woven together with contemporary styles of hip hop, rap, and gospel to form a vibrant tapestry of movement and sound.

Few of them, though, realised what went on ‘behind the scenes’ in the individual ‘journeys’ of the 300 young participants, during which they learnt about their Pacific histories, issues confronting the Pacific diaspora in Aotearoa, learnt about and ‘did’ Pacific traditional arts and dance, developed their career paths

and 'discovered' their own individual self-identities. How was this done and who did it?

MALAGA is undoubtedly an innovative and creative model of learning, teaching and mentoring which not only provides a unique pathway for Pacific youth to bridge the gap between secondary and tertiary education but which also allows them to explore and analyse dialogues and intersections of Pacific knowledges, identities and scholarship; gender issues; inter/intra-ethnicities; tensions between old/young, traditional/modern, island-born/NZ-born, church/other lifeways. More importantly the journey, which straddles the performance/academic/mentoring streams of MALAGA focuses on the exploration and celebration of their Pacific heritage and identities.

Participants were involved in an academic programme which explored the journeys of their Pacific ancestors and the ways in which their articulation of the influences of Christianity, colonization, migration, globalisation have shaped current Pacific identities in New Zealand, and in a Pacific music and dance programme. This was coupled with a MALAGA mentoring programme designed to provide participants with the necessary skills to achieve balance amongst the various social, academic, work and cultural commitments they face in today's demanding world. They were 'mentored' by twenty dynamic Pacific University graduates who gave them assistance with career planning and study skills activities, public speaking exercises, gender and sexuality sessions, a Pacific arts and identity programme, as well as sports and recreational activities, and who ensured participants got to classes and rehearsals. Mentors also visited and communicated with many participants' parents who rang and visited

MALAGA consists of a 7 week summer school programme for Pacific school-leavers and others, and consists of three streams:

MALAGA – the performance: 4 public performances held at the end of the programme:

Objectives:

- A choreographed choral celebration depicting the journey of a people from Hawaiki to Aotearoa
- Pays homage to our Atua, our God, the navigating traditions of our forbears, and later the tenacity and resourcefulness of our parents who with mindful purpose strove to reach their goals in the new lands
- To fuse many elements from classical, pop, gospel, choral and traditional
- To be entertaining and conducive to the listening ears of young people participating and the hearing of our elders and vice versa
- To empower young people to make wise decisions, finding courage to enact those decisions, and having strength to battle on

MALAGA - the academic programme: 5 weeks of daily lectures covering Pacific histories and identities; Pacific musics and dance

Objectives:

- To give participants a deeper insight into Pacific history and culture
- To explore the worlds of traditional and contemporary Pacific music and dance
- Not only to prepare students practically for MALAGA the performance, but allow them to explore how performance styles and preferences of young Pacific artists reflect complex changes and choices affected by colonisation, identity and globalisation
- Introduction to tertiary education
- A taster of university life and lectures
 - lectures covering Pacific origin myths, navigation, migration, evolving identities of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa
 - discussions of writings and creative productions of indigenous writers, artists, academics and commentators and ministers and community leaders
 - survey of ethnomusicological approaches to Pacific musics

- debate presence and roles of Pop musics, e.g., hip hop, for Pacific peoples
- in addition to lectures, a series of practical workshops introducing participants to various Pacific dance styles such as capoeira, contemporary and break-dance styles
- Singing and drama tutorials also incorporated, preparing students for their performance experiences

MALAGA-mentoring stream: Mentoring: Pacific leadership and success

The rationale for the MALAGA mentoring stream is based on the successful 'Project Achievement' Scheme operated by the Ministry of Pacific Islands Affairs Operational Division, Auckland 1995-96. The documented success factor for the scheme (see Coxon, et al., 1997) was the Pacific-oriented rationales, protocols and processes, and the utilisation as mentors of young dynamic Pacific university graduates. During MALAGA, each mentor (20 in total) was allocated 15-20 participants each. These groups participated in all activities and streams as cohort groups for the duration of the MALAGA programme.

Objectives:

- To provide participants with the necessary skills to achieve balance amongst the various social, academic, work and cultural commitments they face in today's changing world
 - hands-on mentoring
 - group career planning
 - study skills activities
 - public speaking exercises (debates)
 - sports and recreational activities
 - life and study-skills workshops
 - traditional/contemporary weaving, painting, stitching, art
 - motivational career programme inviting speakers to come in and talk to participants

Summary:

What makes MALAGA specifically Pacific is the incorporation and implementation of Pacific values and processes at all levels of operation and in the relationships between various stakeholder groups. Some of these values can be identified as:

- respect, i.e. *fa'aaloalo*
- consensus
- reciprocity
- communalism
- collective responsibility based on *aiga* – family considerations
- gerontocracy
- humility
- love, i.e. *alofa*
- service, i.e. *tautua*
- spirituality
- warmth, i.e. *mafana*
- discipline, i.e. *usita'i*
- special covenants between groups, i.e. *feagaiga*
- to look after and foster special relationships between specific groups, i.e. *teu le va* (esp. *va fealoaloai* - the relationships of mutual respect in socio-political and spiritual arrangements, and *va tapuia*-the sacred relationships in the socio-political and spiritual arrangements)
- *tuakana/teina* principles

However it should be recognised that these values may be practised differently amongst the different Pacific groups, as well as within respective Pacific groups also.

MALAGA represents for Pacific peoples:

- a goodwill project
- a creative work of merit
- enhancement of cross cultural understandings
- a gateway to University and/or tertiary education
- positive leadership
- a 'bridging the gap' initiative
- empowerment for participants
- assertiveness and confidence for all stakeholders
- demystification of the University and tertiary sector
- career planning and development
- networking
- unpacking of generational and intra-youth issues
- a bridging of socio-geographic differences among participants
- the intersection of class and cross-cultural issues
- demystification of western knowledge
- capacity-building for Pacific peoples
- community outreach

MALAGA has opened a new pathway to Auckland University and other tertiary institutions, one founded on performance, culture, and academic support, and has provided the participants with an insight into how University can enable them to realize their full potential. Many have chosen to take advantage of programmes offered by the University, and/or other tertiary institutions or have begun planning to enrol on completing their secondary school studies.

MALAGA is again being offered at the University of Auckland for the second time in 2002 and is planned to become an annual event. Anecdotal evidence suggests that approximately 60% of MALAGA 2001 participants have continued with tertiary studies, with many enrolling in foundation courses at the University of Auckland and in Bachelor degree courses elsewhere. Many others have enrolled in other tertiary institutions offering performing arts courses.

The University of Auckland has initiated a formal evaluation of MALAGA 2002 which will include a destination study for the original 300 MALAGA 2001 participants. This will provide significant data for assessing the ongoing success and value of such a programme. Moreover, the Centre for Pacific Studies is co-ordinating (under MOE Supplementary Grant Scheme) a MALAGA mentor based at the CPS who will provide necessary ongoing academic and pastoral support for the MALAGA 2001 and 2002 'graduate' cohort group enrolled at the University of Auckland to assist them with their studies.

Case Study 2:

THE FOUNDATION EDUCATION PROGRAMME MANUKAU INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Foundation Education is a comprehensive bridging programme that enables under qualified students to gain qualifications to enter tertiary courses and the work force.

AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

Foundation Education aims to assist students by providing:

- i) a thorough academic grounding in the subject content.

- ii) an emphasis on the development of the academic study skills and personal management skills that lead to successful study at tertiary level and/or employment.

- iii) a supportive environment that promotes independence and confidence in students.

The specific objectives of the programme are:

1. To provide a wide range of subjects at varying levels so that students can do each of the following:
 - i) begin their studies at a level where they feel confident.
 - ii) choose subject options that are appropriate to their future career goals.
 - iii) learn to study effectively.
 - iv) make considered career choices.

2. To maintain high quality teaching:
 - i) by employing well-qualified lecturers who are dedicated to student achievement.
 - ii) by implementing an on-going process of staff evaluation and development.

3. To provide a culturally sensitive environment so that all students can achieve at optimum levels.

4. To conduct applied research in the field of bridging education and student learning to ensure that the programme is dynamic and continues to meet the needs of students.

5. To promote social equity through education.

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

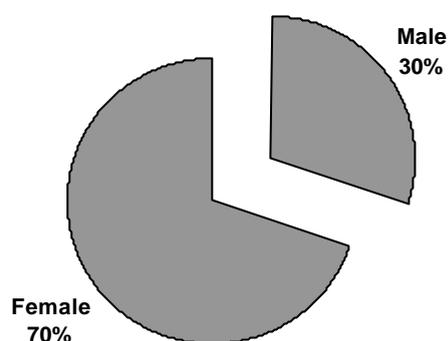
Foundation Education caters for a diverse group of students who enter the programme with widely differing needs. The programme is structured to meet as many of these needs as possible.

GENDER

In 2000 the gender ratio was 70% female students to 30% male.

Figure 34

Gender of Foundation Education Programme Students



AGE

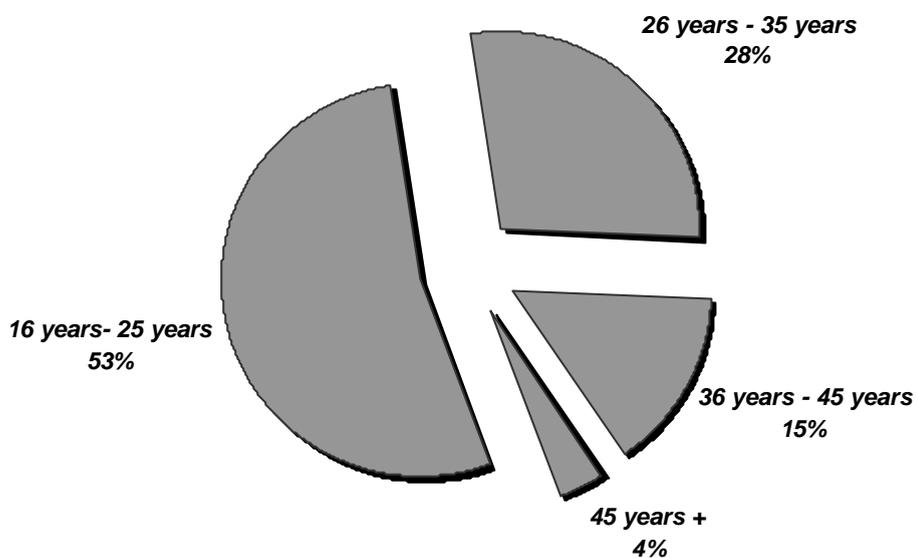
The programme attracts both mature students and school leavers. There is a large age span because students apply at different stages in their lives:

- i) directly from school having failed to gain the qualifications they need.
- ii) after losing a job and needing retraining.
- iii) when children go to school and/or childcare can be sourced.
- iv) when jobs become unrewarding.
- v) when it is recognised that continued unemployment is likely unless qualifications are improved.
- vi) when accidents or ill health prevent them from continuing their original employment.
- vii) when new immigrants recognise that further academic language skills are needed before they can continue their education.

The age range of students on the Foundation Education programme in 2000 was 16 – 56. Figure 35 shows the age distribution of students in 2000.

Figure 35

Age Distribution of Foundation Education Programme Students



ETHNICITY

The ethnic composition of the programme has remained constant from its earliest years. Student ethnicity for 2000 is illustrated in Figures 36 & 37.

Figure 36

Ethnicity of Foundation Education Programme Students 2000

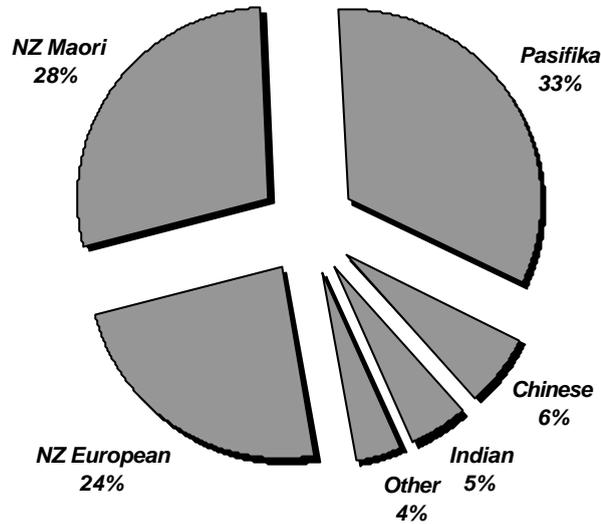
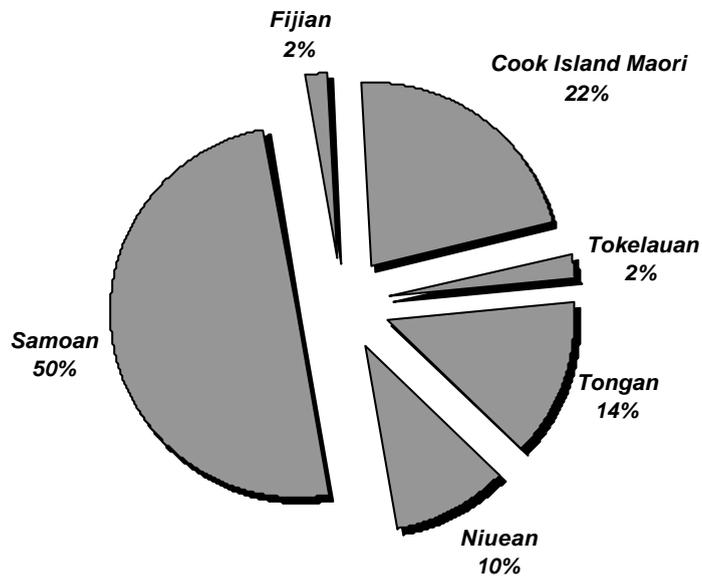


Figure 37

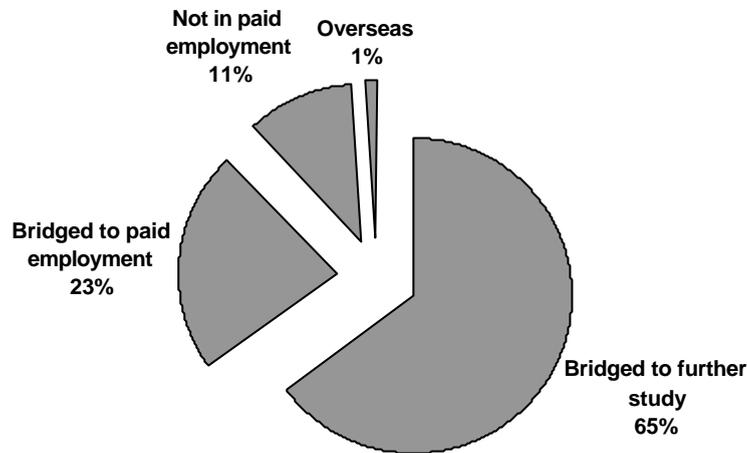
Ethnicity of Pasifika Foundation Education Programme Students in 2000



Student outcomes are obtained through a manual system of telephoning and mailing all students after they have completed the Foundation Education Programme. As in previous years, only 75% of student are able to be contacted with the remaining 25% either having moved, having changed telephone numbers or choosing not to respond to the efforts made to contact them.

Figure 38

Outcomes of students studying on Foundation Education programme 2000



PROGRAMME STRENGTHS

1. Achievement rates that show no ethnicity bias. Maori and Pasifika students achieve at the same rates as students of ethnicities traditionally found in tertiary programmes.
2. The ability to respond quickly in developing new programmes as demand is identified.
3. A mix of courses which provides opportunity for students to be placed at their developmental level in the subjects they need for their career paths
4. Interview and diagnostic processes that allow entry and ensure appropriate class placements for students.
5. Timetabled pastoral care that is a recognised responsibility by all staff.
6. A strong programme culture and sense of belonging as identified by students.

7. Open and honest communication channels for and between academic staff, administration staff, students, Programme Leaders, Head of Programme and Head of Department.
8. A significant position in the field of bridging education as an exemplar and model of success
9. An outstanding lecturing staff that are experts in their subjects, skilled teachers and committed to the value of bridging education.
10. Courses structured to enable students to experience success within their first weeks of study.

OTARA FUTURE LEARNING VILLAGE

The Learning Village was started in 1998 as part of Foundation Education to meet the learning needs of the local Pacific church communities. Part time evening programmes were set up covering subjects and levels requested by church based groups. This programme continues to thrive and change in response to learner based planning. In 2001 this included adding computer classes taught in Pacific languages as a service to 270 students. Pacific radio has played a significant role in communicating the programme to Pacific students alongside the local churches (Coltman, 2001).

Case Study 3:

BEST TRAINING AUCKLAND LIMITED PACIFIC INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Best Training (or “BEST” as it is often referred to) is a Pacific Islands Private Training Establishment. Since its establishment 15 years ago, BEST has become one of Auckland’s foremost providers of tertiary education and training to Pacific communities.

BEST Students

In 2001 BEST had a total number of 550 – 600 enrolments across its two campuses, located in Avondale and New Lynn. (In 2002 a further campus is to be established in Manukau, South Auckland). 70-75% of total enrolments are Pacific, 25-30% Maori, and up to 5% 'other'. Approximately 60% of students are mature-age and about 40% are school-leavers. The gender breakdown is approximately 70 % female, 30% male.

BEST Programmes

According to Programme Director, Rachel Skudder, BEST's programmes "*are congruent with industry standards and the career aspirations of Pacific people*".

BEST offers programmes it describes as:

- comprehensive,
- work-based,
- practical, and
- relevant

BEST has been accredited by NZQA since 1995 and offers a range of Skill NZ and Ministry of Education Certificate, Advanced Certificate and Diploma courses from Levels 1 to 4.

BEST Outcomes

In order to achieve its primary objectives of equipping graduates with the necessary skills, nationally recognised qualifications, and aptitude to gain employment, BEST acts as not just an education provider but also "*a successful employment broker*". Approximately 70% of BEST's graduates from across all programmes go on to successful employment while 15-20% go on to further education. BEST's excellent record in providing pathways for school-leavers into either further education or employment is well-demonstrated by the outcomes of the 133 students (80% Pacific) enrolled in the Youth Training Programme in 2001: 61% went on to further education and 20% into employment.

BEST Teachers

The 42 (2001 numbers) teaching staff are an essential factor in this level of success. BEST teachers are predominantly Pasifika (70%) and Maori (25%) with the remainder being from a range of ethnicities. BEST teachers are defined as:

- professional,
- friendly,
- accessible, and
- encouraging.

BEST Support Services

BEST prides itself on the excellence of student support services provided and sees these as a key factor in their students' successful outcomes. It describes as "unique" the personalised one-on-one attention given to each student to ensure her progress throughout the duration of each programme. This involves regular one-on-one interviews with the course director which enable:

- Identification of individual training and learning needs
- Goal setting opportunities
- Individual learning plans
- Mentoring and encouragement
- Assessment support
- Opportunity for evaluation
- Regular progress feedback on academic attainment
- Guaranteed results

Fleshing Out the General Characteristics

The following excerpts from an interview with BEST's Programme Director, have been included here as a means of elaborating various aspects of their programmes that are significant to this outstanding success:

Teaching quality: *we have qualified teachers that have taught at every level of the state system. We have experts from various employment fields who are interested in making the jump into education. We've gone out to people who have expertise in their industry and persuade them to come in. When people*

not trained as teachers win positions we put them through an adult education training certificate course. If our teachers arrive never having worked within a Pasifika faculty or with Pasifika students we give them on-the-job training in culturally appropriate ways of communication and so on.

And this all means there's a two-way thing going on. We train them, support them, ensure they are comfortable with BEST's ways of doing things, and they feedback very innovative styles of facilitation, very fresh ideas about methods of delivery and new resources. It is all terribly exciting and because we are open to constant challenge about our delivery students benefit enormously.

Student Recruitment, Retention and Achievement : *At this stage in BEST's development we do not have to do much in order to full our courses. I believe our profile as an organisation that sees a job at the end as part of the tertiary education package is such that word-of-mouth is the main means of ensuring our enrolments. Students from all over Central and West Auckland come to us and because of the number of South Auckland students arriving we provided a free bus service for them mornings and evenings.*

We believe in constantly seeking ways of better supporting our students. Retention and achievement have been our buzzwords in the last couple of years. For us if a student is retained that student will attain, so retention is crucial to achievement. Our statistics indicate the point of retention in a particular course that generally ensures students will achieve their qualification and go on to employment. This is so important for improving education outcomes for Pacific people. What's the point of recruiting 80% Pasifika students if 50% of them drop out? It's just perpetuating the cycle of failure so what we've done is provide a full time support person and because the majority of our students are female she's a female staff member and she's fully trained in social work and at-risk intervention and students are referred to her for all sorts of issues. To back her up we put in a system called core studies and she inducts the students, administers the enrolments and then throughout the programme she meets with students one-on-one every two to three weeks. And our students know that if they are absent on a particular day [] will call and

next day if away again she will phone again and if that doesn't work then send a letter and we go from there. So it's pretty intense attendance monitoring even for our mature students.

The other thing we did for enhancing retention and achievement is develop our own database - we call it our customer management system - which means from an academic point-of-view anyone can press buttons and know exactly what's what with any programme – assessment outlines, tutors workplans etc. Anyone can also flick to the student database and see how a student is progressing. So for our one-on-one student progress meetings the Course Director just prints out progress reports over the whole course to date and can see when every assignment was due and the date it was handed in, the test that was just held and what the result was. And if there's any gaps they're called to account – what happened to you? What are you doing about it? And that's been a fantastic help in improving our monitoring – worth the thousands of dollars spent in designing it. It's been awesome.

We also have procedures where I meet with frontline staff every week and look at patterns of attendance and other things. Then we itemise the “at risk” aspects -absentee students, non-achievers - and look at what we've done and ask can we do more. There's a direct link to achievement, accountability to each student – we want them to feel that we know them, we know about them, we care about them. It sure takes blood, sweat and tears to get there though!

BEST's success demonstrates the importance of Pacific providers utilising Pacific resources to deliver quality education and training programmes to Pacific people. BEST Training's supportive environment, emphasis on community values and commitment to assisting Pacific peoples to fulfil their educational and employment aspirations is to be commended.

References

Coltman, D. (2001), *Annual Programme Report 2000. Foundation Education.*

NZ: Manukau Institute of Technology.

Coxon, E., et al. (1997), *Evaluation of the Project Achievement Pilot Scheme.*

Co-authored with Melani Anae, Sailau Sua`ali`i-Sauni, Tanya Samu, Lonise Tanielu, pp. 83.

APPENDICES

- 1. Interview documents - Method A**
- 2. Interview documents - Method B**
- 3. Interview documents - Method C**
- 4. Interview documents - Methods D & E**

Appendices are available from the Research & Evaluation Unit, Research Division, Ministry of Education, PO Box 1666, Thorndon, Wellington or e-mail research@minedu.govt.nz.