Copyright Statement

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

This thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of this thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from their thesis.

To request permissions please use the Feedback form on our webpage.
http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/feedback

General copyright and disclaimer

In addition to the above conditions, authors give their consent for the digital copy of their work to be used subject to the conditions specified on the Library Thesis Consent Form and Deposit Licence.
Ki He Lelei Taha:
Talanoa Mei He Kaliloa of Successful Tongan Graduates

‘Alaimaluloa Toetu‘u-Tamihere

This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education, University of Auckland, 2014.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents—Lu’isa and Fīnau Takatau Toetu’u—whose talanoa mei he kaliloa made me who I am today. I will always carry my kaliloa from you; they have without fail guided me always and will continue to do so. It is also dedicated to my children—Taniela, Sitīveni, Toka and Bruce—, my nieces and nephews—Lu’isa Jr, ‘Alaimaluloa Jr, Anga ‘a e Fonu Jr, Elijah, Marley, Tiana, Danielle, Ethan, and all Tongans who dream of success in education. May the stories in this thesis add to your kaliloa in your journey in education.

With love always,

‘Alaimaluloa Toetu’u-Tamihere.
ABSTRACT

Tonga reputedly has the highest per capita number of PhDs in the world; this indicates the high value placed on formal education by Tongans. At the same time, many Tongans, especially those living in New Zealand, are amongst those seen as ‘failures’ of the education system. With the latter concern particularly in mind, this thesis sets out to examine what a group of successful Tongan graduates attribute their success to. The graduates are alumni of Tonga High School (THS), a state school in Tonga, which has competitive entry criteria. The main participants attended the school during the decades of the 1950s through to the 1990s. The two guiding thesis questions are:

1. What do successful Tongan graduates of THS attribute their success to?
2. What role did THS play in the success of these graduates, if any?

Tonga is the only remaining Kingdom in the Pacific Islands. This developing nation has placed a lot of emphasis on education since the first school was established by missionaries in 1828. The education system is based on Western school models and curriculum, but the main medium of instruction in contemporary times is the Tongan language.

“Success” for Tongans today, and a main selection criterion for participants, means the person has combined academic achievement with a strong Tongan way of being. Academic qualifications (MA only, or a PhD), are complemented by being a useful person, a role model, and a contributing member of society. Such an individual not only follows, but demonstrates respect for and knowledge of traditional Tongan culture, language and values. When appropriate, successful people can also live comfortably in Western spaces, Western education, society and life.

The questions were addressed using an ethnographic qualitative approach. The thesis is underpinned by critical theory, language acquisition theories, post-colonial and indigenous
theories, Pacific research theories, and a Tongan Tala ‘o Tonga theory and methodology. Critical theory is mainly informed by the late Pierre Bourdieu’s work in the sociology of education. His “thinking tools” of capital, habitus, field, sense of the game, symbolic violence, and selection of the elect, originally applied to understanding social reproduction in French education, culture and society, are used as the meta-theory in this study. Bourdieu’s theories are contextualised to form a Tongan Bourdieusian framework, ‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku tofi’a to include important Tongan factors of success. Qualitative data collection methods included a paper survey, ten individual interviews, a focus group interview and archival research.

The central argument is that the graduates attributed their success to both their kaliloa (socialisation within the home) and their learning experiences at THS. The graduates’ talanoa mei he kaliloa highlights the central role of the Tongan family in their education. Family imparted Tongan language, culture, knowledge, values, lotu and ways of being which became part of each participant’s strong habitus; they were strong motivators and a foundation for their Tongan identities. THS’s English language policy, Western uniform, Western curriculum and overseas teachers were instrumental in nurturing and equipping the graduates for further education abroad and success.

The thesis is presented in eight chapters. The early chapters introduce Tonga and THS, survey relevant literature, and discuss methodologies and methods. The findings are presented in two chapters, followed by their discussion and analysis. The final chapter weaves together the findings from the entire study, and addresses the implications of this research for Tongans in education, and for Tonga.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge God first and foremost for the gift of life, wisdom, and the many blessings He has bestowed upon me which are too numerous to mention. This completed thesis is testimony to God’s presence, love and blessings which have carried me through this journey and in life.

I would also like to thank my main supervisor, Dr. Vicki Carpenter and, my co-supervisor, Dr. Melenaite Taumoefolau for their unfailing love and support, wisdom and guidance throughout this doctoral journey. I would not have been able to complete this journey without you. May God bless you richly as you have been a blessing to me.

I acknowledge my scholarship provider, the St. John’s College Trust Board of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. Without your generous financial support my doctoral studies would not have been possible.

I would like to also extend my thanks to my Archbishop, the Most Reverend Dr. Winston Halapua, my Tikanga Polynesia Dean, Rev. Dr. Frank Smith, his personal assistant, Lois Anderson, and the late Althea Story for your love and support. Without your generous support, love and prayers, I would not have come this far.

To all staff and students past and present at St. John’s College, I extend to you my utmost thanks for all that you have done for me all these years that I have been on scholarship. I am truly grateful. Thank you to my Manukura, Rev. Canon. Tony Gerritsen, Elizabeth Warde, Helen Edwards, Tom Ihaka, Linda Ata and to those who have left college but have in one way or another extended love, support and prayers. Mālō ‘aupito.

To all my participants who gifted their stories, I give you thanks for sharing those stories with me. I hope this thesis captures the spirit of giving and empowerment which your stories carried.

To my Māori Archbishop, the Most Reverend Brown Turei, Bishop Kito Pikaahu, his wife, Lenore, the late Ven. Dr. Hone Kaa and my whānau at the Māori Anglican church, Te Karaiti Te Pou Herenga Waka, thank you for your prayers and support over the years. Ngā mihi aroha ki a koutou.

To the many people who have lent a helping hand in New Zealand, Tonga and abroad. To the staff at the Auckland University Graduate Centre; Auckland University libraries, City Campus, Epsom and Tāmaki; the Kinder library and the Tonga Hermeneutics Group at St John’s Theological College in Auckland; with special thanks to Rev. Dr. Nāsili
Vaka'uta, Dr. Tēvita Ka'ili, Dr. ‘Okusitino Māhina, Dr. Brett Heagren, Michael Jack, Jenny Harper and Judy Taligalu McFall-McCaffery, thank you so much. I am truly grateful for all your help.

To Dr. Palenitina Langa’oi and staff at the Public Service Commission in Tonga; Kasa Kilioni at the Examination Unit; Tonga High School principal, ‘Amelia Folaumāhina; the Tonga High School library staff, Sālote Aleamotu’a and Lesieli Vete; relatives and friends, Rev. Tu‘iniua Fīnau, Pela Tu‘ilotolava, Ma‘afu Takinima, Molly Collier, Evelyn Collier, Alfred Soakai Jr, Sonia Soakai, Lilieta Soakai, Alfred Soakai Snr, ‘Ilaise Tongilava Kupu, Kalauta Kupu, Falesiu Fotu, Tēvita Fotu, Lihiatì Fīnau, Niuselu Fīnau, Leonard Fīnau, the late Sengi Ma‘ake Fīnau, the late Manuevaha Pese, the late Viliuhi Pese, Vaimoana Moimoi, Tonga Lea'aetalafo'ou, Taliangi Leveni, Dr. Sengili Moala, Rev. Siale Toetu'u, Tupou Paongo, Rev. Tile Toetu'u, Sisilia Noon, ‘Alaimalutoa Teaupa, Frances Tu'ifuiaiva, Avalon Sika Kautoke, ‘Amelia Fakatou, Byungho Lee, Siosi'ana Tonga Taupaki, ‘Asinate Mafi, Fatai Vaihū, Siu Pouvalu, ‘Ana Lupe Voi, Tuli Smith, Beverly Smith, Rannae Sika, Rosa Solomon, Kisa Amituanai, Manu ‘Akau'ola, ‘Ana Madden, Tansook and Sūsana Prema, thank you for your unfailing love and support over the years.

To the founder of Dilworth School, the late James Dilworth and his wife, Isabella Dilworth; Dilworth School Trust Board; chairman of the Dilworth Trust Board, Derek Firth; Principal, Donald MacLean; Head of Rural Campus, John Rice; Head of Junior Campus, Peter Vos; Armagh House Master, Bill Reeder; Armagh House Matron, Tanya Stall; Armagh House Dean, Sue Armstrong; Wilton House Master, Augie Williams; Nurse, Janet Paul; School Chaplain, Rev. Warren Watson; Rt. Rev. Ross Bay; Julie McInnes; Dilworth staff and students, my deepest gratitude to you all. The generous Dilworth scholarships, love, support and the quality education my sons: Taniela, Sitīveni and Bruce Vaitohi have received at Dilworth School have enabled me to complete this thesis. Mālō ‘aupito e ‘ofa ma’a e fānau ni.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank my family, firstly my parents, Fīnau Takatau Toetu’u and Lu‘isa (nee Fīnau) Toetu’u who imparted their kaliloa to me, instilled in me a love of education and nurtured me to become the best that I can be in life, spiritually, academically and in every way, to serve God, family, nation and the world. ‘Oku ou ‘ofa lahi atu kia moua.

To my brother, Bruce Toetu’u; to my nieces and nephews: Lu‘isa Jr, ‘Alaimaluloa J, Anga ‘a e Fonu Jr, Elijah, Marley; and, to my sisters, Ashleigh, Abby and Carolanne. Thank
you so much for sticking with me, supporting me and encouraging me with your love. You have been amazing.

To my grandparents, Solomone Vakautapola Fīnau, Mele Taumoepeau Fīnau, Mele Tu’ipulotu Takinima Toetu’u and Sione Tali Toetu’u; my uncle, Mark Henderson; my aunts, Setaita Lupe Vakameilalo and Ate Tuita Koloamatangi; my great aunts, Anga ‘a e Fonu Takinima and Lōseli Tongia who have all passed from this earth, thank you for nurturing a love for God, family and church in me. May you rest in peace till we meet again.

To my Tamihere family: Rev. Donald Tamihere, Kisa, Tiana, Danielle and Ethan, Andrew, Tessa, my mother-in-law, Catherine, and my late father-in-law, Donald Snr, thank you so much for all your love and care. You have been so supportive of my journey in so many ways. Ngā mihi aroha ki a koutou.

To my husband, Rev. Michael Tamihere and our children—Tanīela, Sitīveni, Toka and Bruce—thank you so much for always being there for me. This journey has had its challenging times but you have stood beside me always and continue to do so. Michael, you have been my greatest support and strength throughout this journey from day one. You have always believed in me and never once complained. I definitely would not have been able to get this far without you. Many, many thanks to our sons for their love and patience during this entire doctoral journey.

To the many people who have touched my life in so many ways that I have not mentioned here by name, thank you once, thank you twice, thank you three times.

May God bless each and every one of you for the gifts of life you have given to me in the myriad ways you have helped me.

‘Ofa lahi atu pea mo e lotu,

‘Alaimaluloa Toetu’u-Tamihere.
# Table of Contents

**DEDICATION** .......................................................................................................................... ii
**ABSTRACT** ............................................................................................................................... iii
**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** ........................................................................................................... v
List of Figures .................................................................................................................................. xv
List of Tables ................................................................................................................................... xvi
List of Appendices .......................................................................................................................... xvii
Mother's *kaliloa* ........................................................................................................................... xviii

**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION** .................................................................................................... 1
  1. **INTRODUCTION** ...................................................................................................................... 1
      1.1. **Who am I?** ......................................................................................................................... 1
      1.2. The Reality of Education for Tongans (and Pacific peoples) .................................................... 3
          1.2.i. **Importance of our *kaliloa* (stories and experiences)** ....................................................... 4
      1.3. ‘Success’ .................................................................................................................................. 5
      1.4. **Context** ............................................................................................................................. 9
          1.4.i. **The Kingdom of Tonga** .................................................................................................. 9
          1.4.ii. **Tongan society** ............................................................................................................ 10
          1.4.iii. **The family** .................................................................................................................. 11
          1.4.iv. **Development of education in Tonga** ......................................................................... 11
          1.4.v. **Tonga High School** ...................................................................................................... 16
          1.4.vi. **Education and language** .............................................................................................. 18
          1.4.vii. **Tongans journey to NZ** ............................................................................................... 19
      1.5. **Structure of the Thesis** ....................................................................................................... 19

**CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW** ......................................................................................... 21
  2. **INTRODUCTION** ...................................................................................................................... 21
  2.1. Bourdieu and Links to Success .................................................................................................. 22
      2.1.i. **Introducing Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002)** ......................................................................... 22
      2.2. Bourdieu’s Thinking Tools and Success in Education ............................................................... 23
          2.2.i. **Forms of capital** .......................................................................................................... 23
          2.2.ii. **Habitus** ....................................................................................................................... 24
          2.2.iii. **Field** .......................................................................................................................... 27
          2.2.iv. **Sense of the game** .................................................................................................... 28
          2.2.v. **Language** ................................................................................................................... 29
2.2.vi. Schools, symbolic violence & reproduction

2.3. Critics of Bourdieu’s Theory

2.4. Why Bourdieu?

2.5. A Tongan-Bourdiesuan Framework

2.5.i. ‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku tofì’a

2.5.ii. Tongan culture: 'The almighty culture'

2.5.iii. Faa'i kavei koula

2.6. Language, Culture and Identity

2.6.i. Tongan language

2.6.ii. Tongan language in Tonga

2.7. Tongan Language in NZ Education

2.8. The Importance of English Language

2.8.3. English the language of success

2.9. Bilingual Education

2.9.i. Important terminology

2.9.ii. The importance of bilingual education

2.9.iii. Subtractive bilingual education

2.9.iv. Bilingual education options

2.9.v. Bilingual education affirming student languages

2.10. Second Language Acquisition

2.10.i. Other factors affecting SLA

2.10.ii. Guard against L1 loss

2.11. Tongans, Education and Factors of Success

2.12. Tonga High School and Education in Tonga

2.13. Tongans and Pacific Islanders

2.14. Factors of Success for Pacific Islanders

2.14.i. Family

2.14.ii. Intervention strategies

2.15. Successful Tongan Graduates

2.16. Successful Schools
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1. Research Paradigms

3.2. Tala ‘o Tonga Methodology

3.3. Qualitative Research

3.3.i. Characteristics of qualitative research

3.4. Research Strategy

3.4.i. Ethnography

3.5. Narrative Inquiry

3.5.i. Why an indigenous narrative inquiry?

3.5.ii. Kali & kaliloa

3.5.iii. Employing kaliloa tool

3.6. Selecting & Contacting Participants

3.7. Data Collection Methods

3.7.i. Kaliloa tautaha: Individual interview

3.7.ii. Kaliloa fakakulupu: Focus group

3.7.iii. Archival research

3.7.iv. Paper survey

3.8. Research Venues

3.9. Data Analysis

3.9.i. Analysis of data

3.9.ii. Individual kaliloa

3.9.iii. Focus group kaliloa

3.9.iv. Paper survey

3.10. Theoretical Framework

3.11. Sum of Data Analysis
3.12. Validity and Reliability .......................................................... 114
3.13. Triangulation ........................................................................ 115
3.14. Member-Checking ............................................................... 116
3.15. Researcher Bias ................................................................. 116
3.16. Researcher’s Role ............................................................... 117
3.17. Prolonged Time in the Field .................................................. 118
3.18. External Auditor ................................................................. 119
3.19. Ethical Considerations ........................................................ 119
3.20. Conclusion .......................................................................... 121

CHAPTER 4: KALILOA: FINDINGS PART I .......................................... 122

4. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................ 122
4.1. Success: Definitions .............................................................. 123
4.2. Kaliloa: Definitions and Significance ....................................... 124
4.3. Kaliloa: Tongan Language Acquisition and Informal ECE .......... 126
4.4. Family .................................................................................. 132
   4.4.i. Family background & influence ........................................ 134
   4.4.ii. Influential family members ............................................. 136
   4.4.iii. Family as collective entity and father’s role ..................... 136
   4.4.iv. Mother’s role ............................................................... 137
   4.4.v. Family practices ............................................................ 139
   4.4.vi. Non-conformist parents ................................................. 140
   4.4.vii. Tranquil family home environment ............................... 141
4.5. Participants’ Status and Role in the Family .............................. 141
   4.5.i. Family education and background .................................... 142
   4.5.ii. Teachers, students & family preparing students for entrance exam ........................................ 145
   4.5.iii. Success in education: ‘Carrying parents’ burden’ .......... 148
   4.5.iv. Obedience led to blessings ............................................ 149
   4.5.v. Influence of peers and siblings ....................................... 149
   4.5.vi. Stories of struggle: Success motivators ......................... 150
4.7. Lotu & Ako: Home Values .................................................... 152
CHAPTER 5: TONGA HIGH SCHOOL: FINDINGS PART II

5. INTRODUCTION

5.1. Tāufa‘āhau Tupou IV: Visionary Founder

5.2. THS Contributed to the Advancement of Tonga

5.3. THS Values Paralleled Family Values

5.4. THS a School for the Best of the Best

5.5. THS Motto: Fostering a Culture of Excellence

5.6. English Language Policy

5.6.i. Tongan graduates' experiences of THS' English only policy

5.6.ii. Views on THS' English only policy

5.6.iii. THS' English only policy: A preference for a bilingual language policy

5.6.iv. English policy: A negation of Tongan language & culture?

5.6.v. Order of language acquisition unimportant

5.6.vi. Tongan and English languages learnt

5.7. Staff and Curriculum

5.8. THS Transformed Mind-Sets and People

5.9. THS Uniforms

5.10. Conclusion

CHAPTER 6: KALILOA: FAMILY, PARTICIPANTS AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

6. INTRODUCTION

6.1. Kaliloa: Family and Church

6.1.i. Language practices

6.1.ii. Transmission of 'aonga and tala

6.1.iii. 'Home-grown' values & practices: Lotu & ako

6.1.iv. Success a result of grandparents & ancestors' prayers

6.1.v. Recollections of family narrative: 'Oua 'e ngalo ho tupu'anga

6.1.vi. Family background

6.1.vii. Mother's influence

6.1.viii. Maintaining a strong identity

6.2. Kaliloa: Participants
6.2.i. Agency .......................................................................................................................... 219
6.2.ii. Belief in a father’s blessing ........................................................................................ 221
6.2.iii. Staying true to their kaliloa ...................................................................................... 222
6.2.iv. Hard work .................................................................................................................. 224
6.2.v. Status and role in the family ...................................................................................... 225

6.3. Kaliloa: Primary School ............................................................................................... 227
6.3.i. Tongan language acquisition ...................................................................................... 227
6.3.ii. Sensing the game ...................................................................................................... 228
6.3.iii. Pō ako ...................................................................................................................... 230

6.4. Conclusion .................................................................................................................... 231

CHAPTER 7: TONGA HIGH SCHOOL .................................................................................. 233
7. INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................. 233
7.1. Language ..................................................................................................................... 234
7.1.i. Total English immersion ............................................................................................ 234
7.1.ii. Indigenous vs English language wars ..................................................................... 236
7.1.iii. Double jeopardy ..................................................................................................... 241
7.1.iv. Ideal SLA context ................................................................................................... 247
7.1.v. Language is power .................................................................................................... 249
7.2. Habitus ........................................................................................................................ 251
7.2.i. Creating critical habitus and possibilities ................................................................. 252
7.2.ii. THS’ motto: A lifelong habitus .............................................................................. 257
7.2.iii. THS curriculum, teachers and culture: Reinforcing a habitus of excellence ....... 260
7.2.iv. THS uniform ............................................................................................................ 262
7.3. Producing New Class and Culture ............................................................................. 264
7.4. Schools Reproduce Class and Culture ....................................................................... 268
7.4.i. Symbolic violence ..................................................................................................... 270
7.4.ii. Globalized or cosmopolitan citizen ....................................................................... 271
7.5. Conclusion .................................................................................................................... 274

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION ................................................................................................. 278
8. INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................. 278
8.1. Main Findings ........................................................................................................... 279
  8.1.i. Kaliloa.................................................................................................................. 279
  8.1.ii. THS..................................................................................................................... 280
8.2. Contributions to Knowledge .................................................................................... 280
  8.2.i. Bourdieusian-Tongan lens.................................................................................. 281
  8.2.ii. Kaliloa method.................................................................................................... 282
  8.2.iii. Language debate............................................................................................... 282
  8.2.iv. Successful school model.................................................................................... 282
  8.2.v. Importance of kaliloa.......................................................................................... 283
8.3. Implications ............................................................................................................. 285
  8.3.i. For THS................................................................................................................ 285
  8.3.ii. Policy initiatives.................................................................................................. 286
  8.3.iii. For the language situation in NZ...................................................................... 287
  8.3.iv. Pacific peoples................................................................................................... 289
  8.3.v. Reflections on using Bourdieu’s theory.............................................................. 290
8.4. Limitations .............................................................................................................. 291
8.5. Future Research ..................................................................................................... 292
8.6. Conclusion ............................................................................................................... 293

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................................................................................. 298
APPENDIX A: Participant Information Sheet ................................................................. 318
APPENDIX B: Consent Forms ........................................................................................ 321
APPENDIX C: Indicative Questions for the Focus Group .............................................. 323
APPENDIX D: Paper Survey Questions ......................................................................... 324
APPENDIX E: Application to the Tonga Prime Minister’s Office to undertake research in Tonga ................................................................................................................. 325
APPENDIX F: Letter of Approval from the Prime Minister’s Office to undertake research .................................................................................................................. 328
APPENDIX G: Letter of Approval from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee ........................................................................................................... 329
List of Figures

Figure 1: Kali Toloni..........................................................................................................................90
Figure 2: Kali Hahapo........................................................................................................................91
Figure 3: Kaliloa..................................................................................................................................91
Figure 4: Paper Survey Attribute Success To...................................................................................132
Figure 5: Paper Survey THS Role in Respondents' Success...............................................................166
Figure 6: Tongan Graduates' Habitus...............................................................................................203
Figure 7: THS Graduates' Habitus and Cultural Capital.................................................................274
List of Tables

Table I: Kaliloa: Contexts and Years of Tongan Language Acquisition.................................................................127
Table II: Interviewees and Influential Family Aspects............................................................................................134
Table III: Ten Interviewees—Scholarships Immediately post-THS and Degrees Attained..................................................162
List of Appendices

APPENDIX A: Participant Information Sheet.................................................................318
APPENDIX B: Consent Forms................................................................................321
APPENDIX C: Indicative Questions for the Focus Group........................................323
APPENDIX D: Paper Survey Questions...................................................................324
APPENDIX E: Application to the Tonga Prime Minister’s Office to undertake research in Tonga.....325
APPENDIX F: Letter of Approval from the Prime Minister’s Office to undertake research........328
APPENDIX G: Letter of Approval from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee.................................................................................329
Mother’s Kaliloa

I remember and think often of my mother and the countless sessions of talanoa mei he kaliloa she imparted to my brother Bruce and me whilst growing up. I especially drew strength from our mother’s kaliloa in times when I was disheartened during my educational journey. From the shores of Tonga where I was first educated to the shores of Hawai‘i, hundreds of miles away from my homeland, and now on the shores of Aotearoa where I continue my journey in search of an education. I continue to think of my mother and her kaliloa—her experiences, struggles, prayers, wisdom, values, teachings, dreams for my brother and I, genealogy, family history and more, all of which sustained and continues to sustain me in the journey of life.

First there was the kaliloa of our humble beginnings and how my maternal ancestors left the shores of Niuafo’ou and Niuatoputapu (two of the most distant islands in the Tongan group of islands) to live on the main island of Tongatapu in search of a better life. Then there was the story of how grandfather cycled on his decrepit bicycle five to six times a week from Nuku’alofa, the capital where the family home was located to the bush allotment miles out in Vaini, a rural area, to plant crops, raise chickens and pigs to supplement his meagre income as a ‘government -driver’ (chauffeur) to feed not just his twelve children, but also his nieces and nephews who came all the way from the outer islands to get a better education, and his sisters and their families who lived nearby.

Another was the kaliloa of how she and her friend Sione (pseudonym) used to walk by the rich houses inhaling the delicious aroma of hot bread from family breakfasts on the way to school, imagining they were sinking their teeth into the hot bread while they were in fact chewing on leftover to’okutu (Tongan dumpling made from tapioca and flour). Today, Sione and my mother both hold university degrees and can afford some luxury items in life. Mother never failed in the countless retellings of this story to emphasize that she and Sione—to this day—still remember their humble beginnings. This story was told to illustrate that dreaming combined with hard work will enable one to realise one’s dreams and that everyone is in charge of his/her own destiny.

Then there was the kaliloa of the son of our once well-off neighbour who now is begging money off the streets for cigarettes, and how he wasted away the family fortune and did not get his education when he had the opportunity to do so. Mother told that story to my brother and me to say: ‘Carpe diem’—seize your chances with both hands while you still can, and make the most of your blessings.’ It was mother’s plea for us not to let opportunities drift away before it was too late.

I always looked forward to my mother’s kaliloa; they were told with a specific purpose in mind, and they were always told when my brother Bruce and I needed them most. You could say there was a story for every occasion, every moment of indecision, every situation we found ourselves in, and every difficulty which came our way. These were our stories told from the kaliloa gifted to us by our mother. My educational journey has not been without its struggles and dark moments, and during those times, I did what came naturally, I reached out to my mother’s kaliloa deeply embedded in my memories. And without fail they continue to carry me...Mother continues her kaliloa today, this time to all her grandchildren: my children and my brother’s children. The kaliloa will be carried by my children and passed on to educate and to strengthen those who follow behind just as my ancestors’ kaliloa were passed on to my grandparents, my parents, my brother and I, and onwards. The kaliloa will carry on...
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

My personal reflection above emphasizes the importance I place on imparting one’s experiences, journey and stories as a significant part of Tongan ways of being, *talanoa mei he kaliloa* or *kaliloa* for short. This is a Tongan socialisation process and an empowerment tool for Tongans in the journey of education and of life. My mother’s experiences, stories, family histories and genealogies continue to strengthen me in my educational journey, still a foreign pathway and with its own difficulties.

This thesis is an ethnographic study of successful Tongans who are alumni of THS and their journeys in education. This explains the title, ‘Ki He Lelei Taha: Talanoa Mei He Kaliloa of Successful Tongan Graduates.’

1.1. Who am I?

I often recalled my mother’s *kaliloa, a kato* (basket) of inspirational stories and thoughts during my own personal journey in education from Tonga to Hawai‘i, and now in New Zealand (NZ) where I study and live. Attending classes at the University of Auckland, School of Critical Studies opened my eyes to the available literature on Tongans and Pasifika peoples in education. ‘Pasifika’ are people indigenous to Tonga, Fiji, Niue, Tokelau, Samoa and the Cook Islands who live in NZ. The education literature highlighted that we Tongan and Pacific students are part of what is commonly known as the ‘long-tail of underachievement’ in NZ, and elsewhere (Jones, 1991; Bauer, 1993; Nash, 2000; MacIntyre, 2008; ‘Otunuku, 2010; Kalavite, 2010; Chenoweth, 2014). Well-known Tongan educators, Thaman (2002) and Taufe‘ulungaki (2002) also maintain that there is underachievement also in education in the Pacific. Although a reality, ‘portrayals’ of Pacific peoples’ educational failure over the years (May, Cowles, & Lamy, 2012), left me feeling discouraged. This mood
darkened as I delved deeper into the research findings. The story remained mostly constant—Tongans underperformed in education and this led inevitably to other socio-economic and societal ills. Negative portrayal of Pacific peoples in education and literature can be traced throughout history (see Michelle Keown’s influential works, 2005, 2007).

Similarly, prominent Tongan anthropologist, the late Epeli Hau‘ofa (1975) noted and sympathised with Pacific students who were bombarded with negative portrayals of themselves; these students were told they were not good enough. I could identify with Hau‘ofa’s seminal works (1975, 1994, 1998) and valiant efforts to criticise deficit portrayals of Pacific peoples and to empower Pacific youth. It felt like a bleak future was on the horizon for Tongans and other Pacific peoples.

But in the midst of this harsh reality, I was encouraged by my Master’s classes in the School of Critical Studies. I was drawn to critical thinkers such as Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire and the French sociologist, Michel Foucault, whose work encouraged me to become critical of power structures and oppressive systems. In particular I became aware of hegemonic structures in education, and pedagogies which seem to impact negatively on my people. I read an article by the late Roy Nash (2000) entitled ‘Educational inequality: The special case of Pacific students’. Although a reality, I questioned the view that high aspirations amongst my people and fellow Pacific peoples were unrealistic, and such expectations were perhaps contributing to underachievement for Tongans and Pacific peoples. In my mind, to aspire to succeed in education was a basic human right for every student and parent. Without dreams, where would the world be? Dreamers such as Martin Luther King Jr who dreamt of an equal society for all people, and Nelson Mandela who dreamt of a democratic Africa let their dreams fuel their passions and life’s work for equality and justice for all.
And I wondered—were there stories of Tongan success in education for our young people to draw inspiration from? I personally was inspired by my mother’s kaliloa since the day I began to understand the first shared kaliloa. As a result of my thinking and reading, and history, I decided to focus my thesis study on successful Tongan graduates in education. But where would I base my study, and on whom? It felt natural to look to Tonga where my education first began, and to the high school where my mother, brother and I too, went to school—Tonga High School (THS).

THS is my alma mater. For six years (1988-1993), I attended THS. I sat the competitive national secondary entrance exam in 1987 and was selected for entry. In 1994, after my mid-term exams at Tonga National Form 7 in Tonga, I was awarded a scholarship to study for my BA in English in the United States. After graduation in 1998, I returned to Tonga to teach for six years (1999-2004) at my former high school. I left THS in December of 2004 as the Head of Department for English, to study in NZ. THS was the top-performing school in Tonga during my time both as student and teacher. Through my contacts I knew that alumni of THS seemed to be successful in academia and the wider world. It felt like a natural progression on my part to ponder on what produced successful THS alumni, and to link such reflections with my readings in critical theory.

Two research questions emerged during my thinking process. They emerged like a revelation of light at the end of a dark tunnel, a revelation too of life, and life giving experiences:

1. What do successful Tongan graduates of THS attribute their success to?
2. What role did THS play in the success of these graduates, if any?

1.2. The Reality of Education for Tongans (and Pacific peoples).
Bowles & Gintis 1976; Chenoweth, 2014; Jones, 1991; Kalavite, 2010; Milne, 2009; Popkewitz, 1993). The failure of Tongan and Pacific students is well reported in NZ literature (Deerness, 2012; Kalavite, 2010; MacIntyre, 2008; Nash, 2000; ‘Otunuku, 2010).

Maori and Pacific peoples form a high percentage of the minority populations in NZ (Statistics NZ, 2013). Students from these ethnic groups make up the majority of the long—tail of underachievement in schools (Gray, 2012). The 2010 New Zealand Government’s call for Standardized Tests to determine National Standards for all students was seen as harmful rather than helpful by many educators, especially for minority students who are underachievers. According to W.B. Elley (2010), writing in the *New Zealand Listener*, “What parents of struggling students need is not repeated data on how poorly their children are doing, but sound advice on how to help them” (p. 6).

In the same spirit of seeking ‘alternative ways’ of enabling failing students, as inferred by Elley (2010, p. 6), my research was founded on hopes to contribute to the body of literature that offers ‘sound advice on how to help’ Tongan students to succeed in education. For Tongans in education, there needs to be a focus on success in education. A success focus can provide alternative messages and pathways away from the deficit portrayals that are more usually documented.

**1.2. i. Importance of our kaliloa (stories and experiences)**

Stories are a powerful means to tell and document the experiences of a people from their perspectives. Mexican American, civil rights activist, lawyer and academic Richard Delgado (1988, 1989) states that for minorities “The attraction of stories for these groups should come as no surprise. For stories create their own bonds, represent cohesion, shared understandings, and meanings. The cohesiveness that stories bring is part of the strength of the outgroup. An ‘outgroup’ creates its own stories, which circulate within the group as a kind of counter reality” (Delgado, 1988-89, p. 2412). Delgado defines ‘outgroups’ as
“groups whose marginality defines the boundaries of mainstream, whose voice and perspective—whose consciousness has been suppressed, devalued and abnormalized” (Delgado, 1988-1989, p. 2412). According to Delgado, the ‘ingroup’ (the dominant group in society) produce their own stories which “remind it of its identity in relation to outgroups, and provide it with a form of shared reality in which its own superior position is seen as natural” (p. 2412). Hence the intention of ‘outgroups’ stories is to disrupt the ingroups’ stories. Battiste (2000) and Nabobo-Baba (2004) also advocate for the empowering of the ‘silenced’, the ‘voiceless’, and the marginalised in telling their stories.

This research adopts the ‘positive deviance’ approach of Berggren and Wray (2002), Marsh, Schroeder, Dearden, Sternin, and Sternin (2004), also used in Mila-Schaaf and Robinson (2010) to tell the stories of successful Tongans in education. Berggren and Wray’s (2002) ‘positive deviance approach’ is a framework implemented in a study of poor nutrition within impoverished locales in Egypt using successful models of healthy individuals or what he terms ‘positive deviants’. The examination of positive deviants and their successful eating practices, meant that the findings could be shared with other members of the community and hopefully produce similar results. At the heart of this ‘positive deviance’ approach is acknowledgement that the answers to issues are already present within communities; involved is the ‘respecting’, ‘valuing’ and ‘affirming’ of participants, highlighting the positive characteristics which will achieve a successful outcome (Berggren & Wray, 2002, p. 8; Marsh et al., 2004). Similarly, this thesis focuses on successful Tongan graduates, rather than on explanations for failure or deficit theories. Success is central to the two questions guiding this ngāue. The following section explains what is meant by ‘success’ in this thesis.

1.3. ‘Success’

‘Success’ can be different things to different people. For some it may mean attaining a desired career, or the possession of material possessions. For others, success may mean the
achievement of a sense of peace or well-being in the world. Success in education research, whether in France, Tonga, NZ or elsewhere, usually refers to academic achievement (Airini, McNaughton, Langley, & Sauni, 2007a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979; Chenoweth, 2014; Deerness, 2012; Fasi, 1999; Kalavite, 2010; Kata, 2006; MacIntyre, 2008; Vea, 2010). A much broader definition of success is set out by Airini et al., (2007b) in their study of Pacific students in a NZ university. Success according to Airini et al., (2007b) is attaining a pass or higher grades, personal goals, forging opportunities between university and future career pathways; their definition of success links the individual to the community. Success in this thesis, includes both Western and Tongan notions of success.

Success in education in the Tongan context means that a person is *poto* (has knowledge). In ancient times, *poto* involved being knowledgeable in certain skills which enabled a person to survive and engage in Tongan society. These included skills involved in voyaging, building canoes, pottery making, planting crops, fishing, and fighting, in addition to cultural knowledge of language, oratory, poetry, dance, song, genealogy and so forth. *Poto* also denoted a person who knew how to act and behave in certain contexts and amongst certain people who were present. The Tongan expression for such a person is *poto he anga* (know how to act/behave). Therefore a person who did not know how to behave was called *vale* (stupid/foolish). Measurements of *poto* depended on how you used that *poto* to benefit others—your family and your community. Children were taught using *talanoa* from the *kaliloa* (stories told from the *kaliloa*—see Chapter 2: Literature Review and Chapter 3: Methodology for more on *kaliloa*), and the teaching came especially from older females within the family; as it was the main task of the mother, aunties, and grandmothers to instruct children. A person who behaved in a manner that was considered *vale* was told in no uncertain terms that the mother had not done her job well. The expression then would be *taʻeakonakiʻi* (not taught/unschooled; *taʻe*: negation prefix; *ako*: taught/teach/learn).
With the arrival of the missionaries in 1797 came a different form of *poto* and hence a different meaning of the term. Missionaries brought with them Western education in the form of reading and writing (literacy), arithmetic (numeracy) and other forms of knowledge. The new challenges changed the notion of *poto* to one skilled in the *pālangi*’s education. Tongans witnessed that the acquisition of the *pālangi* knowledge would mean success and wealth in the form of jobs and positions in the civil service, and also enable employment overseas. *Poto* was measured using predominantly *pālangi* methods such as exams, tests and so forth and ultimately assessed in the *pālangi* language so one had to be literate in this language.

In the 21st century, success for Tongans arguably combines all the above connotations, which are sourced from both Tongan and Western understandings. Success includes an individual striving to excel or to reach the top in one’s field or endeavours. In Tongan terms ‘academic excellence’ is translated as *a’ua’u ki he tumu'aki*, literally: ‘reach the pinnacle’. Within the field of education, Tongans are very much aware of, understand and value academic excellence (Fusitu’a, 1992; Kavaliku, 1966). Naturally, following the universities’ basic hierarchy of qualifications, a doctorate is the highest form of academic achievement within education and across subjects and disciplines.

However a list of academic qualifications alone does not mean success according to Tongan values, culture and worldview. Success in education must be reflected in one’s way of life, for example: — what does one do with a PhD? And, in carrying out that job, do you contribute to the betterment of others such as family, community, church and those who are in need? Success and life in the Tongan worldview is tied to the collective (Tu’itahi, 2009). When one accomplishes one’s doctorate for instance, in addition to benefitting from your expertise and financial contributions, your family, neighbourhood, community, church and country also gain recognition and an enhanced reputation.
Due to the strong sense of community inherent in Tongan society, one’s success in education involves the sharing of that success whether through loving service (offering of one’s expertise free of charge) or perhaps through monetary donations or similar. The notion of success within Tongan society and amongst Tongan people also involves the important cultural concept of ‘reciprocity’. Reciprocity in the Tongan language means foaki (giving) or vaevaemanava (the sharing of breath). The latter implies breathing life into the other, or the sharing of air so that the other may also live. In Tonga where resources are scarce and life is hard in many ways, vaevaemanava of one’s success is a fundamental value in Tongan living.

Combining the above Tongan notions of success, this thesis includes both Tongan and Western notions of success. The use in the thesis of the word ‘Western’, such as in ‘Western success’, is not intended to signal homogeneity. A seemingly infinite range of education systems, nations, histories, peoples, philosophies, languages, ideas, epistemological frameworks, paradigms and so forth encompass or identify what could be described as ‘Western’. When Tongans use the word ‘Western’ it often implies the English-based governance/national structures, English language, customs and education systems which are typical in New Zealand and Australia. ‘Western’, as used in this thesis, thus signals heterogeneity within boundaries which are generally not inclusive of indigeneity; there are clear demarcations between what is considered ‘Western’ as opposed to what is ‘Tongan’. These distinctions become more evident as the thesis unfolds, but an example is where ‘Western’ is used is when the notion of success is discussed. The successful individual from a Tongan point of view has not only attained academic qualifications (MA or a PhD), but is also a useful role model, and a contributing member of society. From a Western point of view, the academic qualifications may well suffice. Successful therefore, in this thesis, describes the individual who has succeeded in Western spaces, but who also has respect in Tongan spaces: Tongan society, home and family. Such an individual not only follows, but
demonstrates, traditional Tongan culture, language and values where appropriate, and also can exist in Western spaces: Western education, society and life. Success for a Tongan therefore means the person has combined academic achievement with a strong Tongan way of being.

In the following section, Tonga, the context of this study, will be explored. This is necessary background especially for those readers who are not Tongan. This context frames all of the findings.

1.4. Context
Discussion of the context for this research includes a description of the Kingdom of Tonga, Tongan society, family, the education system, early studies of education in Tonga, medium of instruction in primary schools, a brief background of THS, education and language, and lastly the journey of Tongans to NZ.

1.4.1. The Kingdom of Tonga
The Kingdom of Tonga is the only remaining monarchy in the South Pacific and it dates back to ancient Polynesia. Comprising a total of 170 islands (only 48 inhabited), Tonga covers an area of 747 square kilometres. Tonga’s many islands are divided into three major island groups: Tongatapu, Ha’apai and Vava’u. These island groups are home to a population of 103,036 (2011 census), a drop from 103,365 in its 2006 census. Tonga’s official languages are Tongan and English. The Tongan economy is mainly subsistent with a high dependence on foreign aid and remittances from Tongans living abroad. Tonga has close ties to its Pacific neighbours, Fiji and Samoa, and has good foreign relations especially with New Zealand due to proximity and past peaceful historical connections.

In 2006, riots broke out in Tonga in the central business district marking Tonga’s move towards a more democratic government. By 2012, Tonga had in place its first people’s elected ministers, from whom the 2014 Prime Minister was chosen. Although a noble
himself, this Prime Minister was a result of the people’s choice. Tonga has changed in many ways due to westernisation, globalisation and education. In the future, more changes are inevitable for Tonga.

1.4. ii. Tongan Society
Tonga is a hierarchical society based on ancient chieftainship, a legacy passed on from its first descendants, the Lapita people (Campbell, 1992). The kingship system denotes that rule and inheritance of land is essentially through birth right. Tongan society is divided generally into three major classes: Tu‘i (king/monarch), Hou’eiki (chiefly/aristocracy), and tu‘a (commoner/peasant) (Campbell, 1992). Tongan language reflects and maintains this hierarchical structure of the society as there are three distinct levels of language used for the three main levels of society: lea fakatu‘i (kingly language), lea fakahou‘eiki (chiefly language), and lea fakatu‘a (commoner language) (Taumoefolau, 2012).

The above ranking of society is underpinned by a belief in Tongan legends that the first Tu‘i Tonga, ‘Aho‘eitu (AD 950) was a demi-god, the son of the god, Tangaloa and an earthly mother, Va‘epopua. This meant that the king and his descendants were tapu (sacred) and possessed mana (authority, skill, charisma often associated with the divine). The marriage of royalty and nobles were strictly regulated by the tu‘i himself and were restricted to intermarriage between these two classes, thus preventing social mobility for commoners.

Early changes to the above structure were brought on by a change in Tongan law. The 1862 Emancipation Edict, enacted during the reign of King George Tupou I, freed all tu‘a from bondage to chiefs and made education compulsory for all children regardless of rank. Helen Morton (1996), an anthropologist who has studied Tonga and Tongans might argue that Tongan society has changed and that the hou‘eiki and tu‘a have been ‘eroded’ due to developments such as western education (p. 23). To a certain degree this is true, education has indeed created a new class of tu‘a, successful in areas of business, medicine, education
and others. However, the fact remains that in traditional events, government and church functions, and others, the tu‘i and hou‘eiki are still acknowledged and occupy places of prominence in Tonga or abroad.

1.4. iii. The family
The Tongan system of hierarchy is reflected in the structure of the Tongan family, which is also subject to similar rules of rank and status. The father’s status is reflective of tu‘i status within the home. The father’s sister is also ‘eiki (of high rank and status) to her brother’s wife and children who are then tu‘a. The sister is the mehekitanga and so is accorded respect in different ways, such as the gifting of tapa, mats and money during her nieces and nephews’ birthdays, christenings, weddings, funerals, and so forth. In addition, the mehekitanga can name her nieces and nephews at birth (for more on the status of a mehekitanga see Taumoefolau, 1991).

The mother’s job is to serve and support the husband and care for the children. The children however, are not tu‘a when it comes to their mother’s family. The children in fact are ‘eiki (of senior status) to their maternal uncle, his wife and children. Therefore, a person can be ‘eiki in relation to one group of people, and in relation to a different group of people, that same person can be tu‘a as explained above. There is then a cultural genetic-based complexity to Tongan relationships and status; however, any confusion is arguably more likely to be experienced by non-Tongans. Tongans whether living in Tonga or as part of various diaspora, are more inclined to accept the hegemonic mores and behave accordingly.

1.4. iv. Development of Education in Tonga
The development of education in Tonga is tracked by six important studies conducted from the 1950s-1990s. These include Kemp (1959), Sutton (1963), Allen (1963), Kavaliku (1966), Paongo (1990) and Sāmate (1995). All authors traced the development of education in Tonga in varying detail and length. Kavaliku (1966), although not the first study, is a
seminal piece as it is one of the most noted in the Pacific to have a comprehensive, insightful and in-depth exploration of education as a key advancement tool in a developing country. Kemp’s study is the shortest coverage of education in Tonga (1950-1960s), but is the first of these studies to look at education in Tonga, beginning in 1955.

All of these studies highlight the important role of the Christian church mission in establishing education in Tonga. The first school, established in 1828, instigated dual partnership roles in education between church and state, with strong leadership and initiatives by the Tongan monarchs in the development of education in Tonga (see also Campbell, 1992; Latukefu, 1974).

Kavaliku’s work is the most detailed weaving together of the most influential factors that shaped educational development in Tonga: Christianity, Tongan monarchs, government, MOE officials, and the high value placed on education by the Tongan people. Highly noted by Kavaliku (1966) were the influences of Tongan monarchs, King Siaosi Tupou I and Crown Prince Tungī, Minister of Education in 1943, later King Taufa'āhau Tupou IV, founder of THS. In Kavaliku’s (1966) view, Western education in Tonga for these monarchs was for the enlightenment of all Tongans, their progress, and to maintain Tonga’s independence as a nation. King George Tupou I was responsible for important education initiatives in Tonga, especially the establishment of the first high school, Tupou College, modelled on an academic style school in 1866 using a Tongan language medium and producing Tongan scholars (*kau matematika*).

Also noted in Kavaliku’s work is prominent educator Rev Dr James Egan Moulton’s (see J. Egan Moulton’s 2002 book, *Moulton of Tonga for more*) fundamental role in Tonga beginning in 1865 upon his arrival in Tonga. King George Tupou I recruited Moulton in order to educate the nation along Western models of schooling. King George Tupou I’s famous quote: ‘My people are poor for lack of knowledge’ was his reason behind his hiring
of Rev Dr Moulton to establish Tupou College. Moulton was a prolific translator and responsible for generating Tongan versions of Western classics for the education of the Tongan people. He coined the term ‘Matematika’ (Moulton, 2002) literally, ‘mathematician’ a title for Tongan scholars who graduated top of the class from the high school Moulton himself established. Arguably, Moulton was responsible for creating the first ‘academic Tongans’ or in his own terms—‘Kau matematika’ (Moulton, 2002); these terms are now used to refer to THS alumni only after THS was established in 1947 as the top school in the nation.

Sutton (1963) focused particularly on the important roles of the church and state in Tongan education. According to Sutton, education will continue as a partite system of church and state due to limited funds and this prediction has remained true. The providers of education in Tonga tend to be either of the two key players, church and state, with minimal privatisation.

A tangent in analysis amongst all these studies is Paongo’s (1990) inclusion of pre-missionary education, i.e., traditional Tongan education. Paongo maintains education for Tongans began within the home, by the family, with the key purpose of producing skilled individuals for successful living and to maintain tradition. Paongo highlights written accounts by Europeans who witnessed the traditional education of Tongan families. For chiefly families, Paongo argues that skills of oratory were passed on by word of mouth, through ‘tellings’, stories or instructions by parents, and other Tongan traditional means. Paongo highlights family as the most fundamental source of education within Tongan homes, noting Tongan children never lacked caregivers as they were surrounded by more than a few at any given time.

Of particular interest to this study is Paongo’s (1990) mention of a ‘nocturnal confabulation’, a Tongan traditional story or teaching session which he claims were night sessions specifically for chiefly families. This view is contradicted by Rev. Tu’iniua Finau
and Pela Tu‘ilolotava (personal communication, 2011); Toetu‘u-Tamihere (2010, 2011, 2012a, 2012b); Taumoefolau and Toetu‘u-Tamihere (2011), who argue this nocturnal confabulation process is in fact the kaliloa, a Tongan traditional socialisation process commonly practised in Tongan homes.

All six studies discussed above highlight key issues in the development of education in Tonga at the time of each study. These include: an overemphasis on academic education, a lack of material and economic resources, ineffective planning, unqualified and underpaid teachers, amongst others. Allen (1963) identified the lack of secondary education and the absence of higher education in Tonga at the time. In 1960 alone, Allen reported 22 Tongan students had to be sent abroad, one to Australia, three to Fiji, and 18 to NZ to pursue higher education. As early as 1960, Allen (1963) highlighted a key issue in the development of overseas-trained Tongans that continues today—the ‘brain drain’, where the best of the educated Tongans locally and abroad do not return home, but rather choose to live abroad. This is an on-going issue amongst other developing countries as well (see Beine, Docquier, & Rapoport, April 2008; Docquier, Lohest, & Marfouk, 2007; Gibson & McKenzie, 2011; Skeldon, 2005).

Samate (1995) proposed a more ‘holistic, integrated, balanced’ education model of development for Tonga, in which the government would be deliberate in engineering a balance between skilled labour and technical and academic human capital output. Samate goes further by calling for more Tongan language and subject focus, in addition to holistic changes in curriculum and government planning. By ‘holistic’, Samate meant a focus on both English and Tongan languages, and Tongan knowledge as required for a more integrated, relevant model for Tonga. Samate argued for the inclusion of Tongan and English languages as important factors in the development of the nation, arguing that the language is central to maintenance of Tongan culture, and English language is necessary as it is the
dominant language. Samate’s reiteration of the need to include islands’ traditional socio-cultural aspects in the development of Tonga was noted in earlier work edited by Tupouniua, Crocombe, and Slatter (1975), titled ‘The Pacific Way: Social Issues in National Development’. Tupouniua et al., (1975) emphasised what Samate (1995) found later as problematic in Tongan planning—the continued overwhelming focus on material development in economic planning and policies in Pacific nations, which ignored social aspects. Tupouniua et al., (1975) predicted the gap in social aspects in Pacific development and in education would lead to more problems for Pacific nations.

These studies however, although seemingly pessimistic, contained hopeful highlights on the potential role of education in Tonga’s future. Kemp (1959) saw returning Tongan scholars as holding special responsibility in the future development of Tonga, something that Tu’i’inukuafe (1976) took up in his study, ‘Overseas-trained Tongans and their contribution to the modern development of Tonga’. Allen (1963) maintained that the future of schools in Tonga was optimistic, as Tonga demonstrated a good amount of its interest and investment in education compared to other nations. According to Allen, Tonga spent 14% of its national budget on education, compared to Russia’s 3.2%, the United States’ 3.1% and England’s 3.2%. Allen ended on a hopeful note, that Tonga was developing its education for its peoples, the benefits of which will last. Allen also averred that Tonga will maintain its task in integrating “the best from the ‘outside’ world into their schools” (Allen, 1963, p. 349).

The conclusions of these studies demonstrate a consensus agreement that education in Tonga is a catalyst of change for its people, and education has the potential to maintain Tonga’s hopeful prospects in the future. All authors agreed that education is significant and highly valued in the worldview of Tongans. While these studies trace the development and
problems in education for Tonga, they also highlight that Western education is highly valued by its monarchs (including the founder of THS) and the Tongan nation.

Further evidence of the valuing of education amongst Tongans is given by Allen (1963) who maintains that:

Though relatively content and happy, the Tongans have always displayed an affinity for education and a desire for progress. From the first formal education to the present system of schools, the citizens seemed anxious for learning. (p. 346)

One hundred and eighty-five years on, after the first school was established in Tonga and almost 55 years after the first of these studies, education has remained a key concern and priority for the Tongan people. A number of Tongan migrants have left their island homes behind, in pursuit of better education and other opportunities abroad (see Connell & Brown, 1995; Cowling, 1990; Lee, 2003; Tongati‘o, 1998; Tu‘itahi, 2009).

The following section takes the focus to Tonga High School, the concern of the second research question.

1.4. v. Tonga High School
THS was a prestigious school on its establishment in 1947, and it soon became the top preferred choice of parents for their children as a post-primary institution (Afu‘alo Matoto, 1997, p. 30). Examination pass rates have been consistently high. According to results for School Certificate exams (Form Five), Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate (Form Six) in the 1980s to the 1990s, and later the New Zealand Bursary exams in the 1990s, THS students rated top both in the majority of student passes (a 99% pass rate) and the highest level pass grades compared to other schools in Tonga (Ministry of Education and Examination Unit Annual Reports, 1980s-1990s).

Tonga High School’s creed is ‘To the best’—‘Ki he lelei taha’. Through a process of rigorous selection, using an English-medium secondary school entrance exam (SSEE), THS
chose the top students from all of Tonga’s finest and brightest for entry. The SSEE was highly competitive and selective as only students with the top marks from primary schools all over Tonga were admitted. In the SSEE results for entrants to THS in 1947, “twelve Tongan students gained 70% or more” (‘Aho, 1997, p. 17). This was the academic calibre of THS entrants. Tonga High School therefore rated as the best school in all of Tonga and produced highly successful individuals in both the professions and academia. However selective the process may have been, it was not a school restricted to the hou’eiki, the house of the tu’i, expatriates or the house of the nōpele. In fact anyone was eligible on the basis that their academic performance was at the standard set for THS entrants and willing to work hard to maintain those academic standards.

The founder’s intention was to educate his people at a level equal to that found in Western countries. Like his predecessor, Siaosi Tupou I, Prince Tupouto’a recognized that the only way to empower his people was through good quality education reflective of that found overseas that he was fortunate enough to have experienced. Students wore European-style uniforms, and had inspections of study spaces at home. Furthermore, teachers were recruited from overseas, mainly New Zealand, hence the teaching staff were at first predominantly qualified pālangi. The school was unique when it was first opened as it was then the only English-speaking high school. The 1980s marked the beginning of the establishment of replicas of THS with sister schools in Niuatoputapu (1982), Vava’u (1985), ‘Eua (1986), Niuafou‘ou (1990), and Ha‘apai (2001) (Report of the Ministry of Education, Women’s Affairs and Culture, 2011, p. 117). The initiative to establish THS sister schools on the outer islands, ensured similar levels of academic education were accessible to all Tongans.

Importantantly, THS has introduced some changes over the years. For instance, the boys’ shorts were replaced by tupenu (traditional Tongan skirt for males) and ta‘ovala
(traditional waist mat). In the late 1960s Tongan language was introduced as a subject, and from this point on THS was no longer an exclusively English only school (M.Taumoefolau, personal communication, Feb 2014). However, this study looks at THS within the span of the 1950s—1990s at which time, despite these changes, its Western character was prominent and it generally remained that way throughout that period. THS's English-only language policy was phased out in 2010 due to the change in the Tongan Ministry's language policy to implement a 50/50 Tongan and English language use at high school level (Vea, 2010), but this lies outside the period of study. THS was more ‘Western’ in 1947 when it was established and slowly evolved into a more Tongan-oriented school, as it is now in 2014. In general then, the THS context as covered in this thesis was a Western model of schooling as was the intention of its founder, Prince Tupouto‘a Tungī.

The following section traces Tonga’s education and language of instruction over the years.

1.4.vi. Education and language

With the arrival of the missionaries, in the late 18th century, education in the Tongan language was introduced as part of efforts to spread Christianity (Campbell, 1992; Spolsky, Engelbrecht & Ortiz, 1983). Reading and writing in Tongan vernacular were integral to the teaching and learning of the Bible, so missionaries’ first acts of pedagogy involved teaching Tongans to read and write in the vernacular (Taumoefolau, 1998). In the 21st century, the main medium of instruction in schools remains the Tongan language. The majority of ECE and primary schools have Tongan as the medium of instruction for the first crucial years. The majority of pre-schoolers in Tonga do not attend ECE; they enter schooling directly from home. Today most Tongan children learn first using the Tongan language.

Education in Tonga at present requires proficiency in the English language as it is the main assessment language used for secondary school exams except in language papers such
as Tongan, French and Japanese. At high school level, the English subject is encouraged to be taught in English, yet studies by Peseti Vea (2010) and ‘Ungatea Kata (2006) note that teachers and students find it easier to teach and learn English subject content using Tongan.

1.4. vii. Tongans journey to New Zealand

Tongans started their migration to New Zealand during the 1960s and 1970s, for socio-economic reasons. A work scheme was established between the New Zealand and the Tongan governments where unskilled workers travelled to NZ to work in urban factories. The search for ‘greener pastures’ in terms of education for the children, better living and higher paid jobs were major ‘pull factors’ for migration to NZ. According to the 2006 NZ census, Tongans numbered at 50,478, a 24 percent increase from 40,719 people in the 2001 census (Statistics New Zealand, 2006, p. 2). This percentage is projected to increase in future. In 2010, there was currently one Pacific student in every ten students; demographic estimations maintain that the ratio projected will be one Pacific individual to five (TV Channel One News, six p.m., 17 June, 2010).

Education is valued by Tongans (Kalavite, 2010; MacIntyre, 2008). THS’s Western school model was established to create future Tongan leaders for the nation, in full knowledge of its founder of the value of a Western education in a nation whose main language was Tongan. Seminal studies from the 1950s to the 1990s on education and its role in Tonga has been surveyed here in relation to the two research questions: To what do successful Tongan graduates attribute their success, and what role did THS play in their success, if any? More relevant literature, and theories pertaining to the focus of this thesis will be explored in Chapter 2. The next section gives a breakdown of the structure of this thesis.

1.5. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into eight chapters as follows.
This chapter, as demonstrated, contains a general introduction to the thesis, my position in the research, how the research questions emerged and an introduction of the context. Chapter 2 explores and reviews the literature to the research questions, including an explanation of the meta-theory used, alongside a Tongan parallel of this theory. Chapter 3 delineates the research process, methods and theories used in the entire research process, highlighting issues for the study. Chapters 4 and 5 share the findings with the former linking to Tongan culture and the latter more to THS. Chapter 6 follows by discussing the findings underpinned by Tongan notions of success, and what education means for Tongans, using relevant literature and the meta-theory chosen, alongside its Tongan parallel. Chapter 7 ensues with a discussion of the findings, this time underpinned by Western notions of success and Western aspects of education, using also the chosen Western theory and its Tongan parallel framework. The conclusion of Chapter 7 spells out the thesis argument. Chapter 8, the final chapter, weaves together the entire study, and asks what the implications of this research are for Tongans in education and for Tonga.

The following chapter situates the questions within meta-theory, and further examines the literature relevant to the two research questions.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2. INTRODUCTION

This literature review is guided by the research questions: *To what do successful Tongan graduates attribute their success?* And, *what role did Tonga High School (THS) play in the success of these graduates, if any?* Framing this critical inquiry is French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu’s *theory of practice* which highlights important factors of success in France’s educational system during the 1960s-1990s. Bourdieu’s success factors included: schools, family, language, culture and identity. Similar success factors are likely to emerge when addressing the research questions, hence similar concepts are used to frame the literature in this chapter.

Research on the education of Tongans in Tonga and New Zealand (NZ) is important as this study involves participants who now reside in both contexts. A literature search has revealed relevant literature on Tongans and Pasifika education. Literature from various Pacific nations provides some background on what might lead to success for Tongans.

The chapter begins with an examination of the work of Bourdieu and the rationale for using his theoretical concepts. From this, a Tongan Bourdieusian framework is introduced; this merges important Tongan notions within a Bourdieusian theoretical lens to guide this inquiry. This is followed by the canvassing of relevant literature concerning: Bourdieu and links to success; important Tongan concepts; language, culture and identity; Tongans and education, and factors of success and research on Pacific peoples generally. Combined, this literature provides a repository of knowledge into which the research questions and the findings can be positioned.
2.1. Bourdieu and Links to Success

2.1.i. Introducing Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002)
Eminent French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu’s work provides a useful and relevant framework of inquiry into factors of success for Tongan graduates of THS, and the particular role THS may have played in their achievements. Bourdieu’s theory of practice was originally applied to understanding social reproduction in French education, culture and society, with particular emphasis on the theoretical constructs, or ‘thinking tools’, of capital, habitus, field, sense of the game, symbolic violence, and selection of the elect (Bourdieu, 1990a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979). These tools emerged from Bourdieu’s attempts to explain what he saw as the absurdity of dualisms such as subjectivism/objectivism and individual/collective to explain social reality (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1989). Bourdieu believed that such binaries could not adequately explain why people behave the way they do. For Bourdieu, binaries interact in a complex manner, underpinned by relations of power resulting in social reality. This thinking was, in turn, grounded in Bourdieu’s deep concern for society, the causes of peoples’ behaviour and the circumstances in which society existed. His oeuvre (Bourdieu, 1986, 1990a, 1990b, 1996a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) was influenced by the great fathers of sociology, Weber, Durkheim and Marx.

Bourdieu’s work in the 1960s-1970s on education and culture, and in particular, Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1977, 1979) work on French schools as reproducing literate white middle-class values and culture, while excluding those whose cultures are viewed as different, is central to this study. Arguably an important influence on educators and scholars (Harker, Mahar, & Wilkes, 1990), Bourdieu’s reproduction theory, based on the individual’s access to certain types of capital and habitus provides an explanation for why certain sections of society are more successful than others in education.
Re-worked in this study to be made applicable to a Tongan education system and research amongst Tongan graduates, Bourdieu’s ideas and thinking tools provide significant epistemological and methodological ways to better understand education for Tongans in order to identify factors for success and to find alternative pathways. In the 21st century, Bourdieu’s theories continue to offer fresh ways of understanding how society works. Culture and socio-economic status, two influential success factors in Bourdieu’s study of French schools, are relevant and, arguably, important to the study of education in Tonga; socio-economic class and culture (both Western and Tongan) permeate all domains of Tongan society. Bourdieu’s thinking tools, in considering the complexity of success in education, need not be limited to a particular place or culture (i.e., France); they have been applied worldwide (Deerness, 2012; Sallaz & Zavisca, 2007) and they can be usefully applied to education in Tonga to explain and illuminate the success of some Tongans in education.

2.2. Bourdieu’s Thinking Tools and Success in Education
Bourdieu developed key concepts to better understand human behaviour, and, in education, to understand student outcomes. Those selected and examined here, are: forms of capital; habitus; field; sense of the game; language; symbolic violence and reproduction; and, selection of the elect.

2. 2. i. Forms of capital
According to Bourdieu, three ‘forms of capital’—economic, cultural and social—contribute to educational success (Bourdieu, 1986, 1996a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979). Economic capital such as land rights can be instantly converted into money in what Bourdieu terms ‘fields’ (contexts) which have their own internal power relations. This capital underlies the other forms of capital, especially cultural and social—in other words both cultural and social capital can translate to economic capital. For example, certain cultural capital, such as educational qualifications, can be used by the individual to earn income.
Cultural capital is culture embodied in the person (Bourdieu, 1986, 1990a). Cultural capital takes three forms: embodied, objectified and institutionalised. ‘Embodied’ suggests students internalize their culture. Students therefore, have differential capital depending on their status and culture. Objectified capital is culture embodied in objects such as books and pictures. Institutionalized capital is capital validated by institutions such as qualifications which differentiate and allocate power to individuals within society (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986, 1990a, 2004).

The third form, social capital, is the connections individuals have; these relationships can provide them with access to other capital. For example, middle-class students often have social networks which enable them to access forms of capital which working-class students may not have. For instance, the parents of middle class students are more likely than working-class parents to socialise with teachers, lawyers and doctors. Bourdieu found that French students with dominant social capital have a greater chance of succeeding in education (Bourdieu, 1990a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979).

The socio-economic background of a student’s family usually influences the forms of capital to which the student has access. According to Bourdieu each of these forms, depending on the field and the ‘amount’ and access to possibilities, these can either privilege or disadvantage the student. In this study, where ever the words ‘capital’, ‘forms of capital’, ‘social’ and ‘cultural capital’ are used, they closely reflect Bourdieu’s use of the terms. Given the nature of the research questions, greater consideration will be given to forms of capital that are significant from a Tongan perspective. Also significant amongst Bourdieu’s theoretical tools, is his use of ‘habitus’.

2.2.ii. Habitus

Habitus is a complex concept but, put simply, it denotes what we consider reasonable and natural—accepted without question—and how such considerations affect, for instance
how we talk, behave, act, relate and interpret (Bourdieu 1990a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979). Thompson (1992) provides a clear interpretation of *habitus*:

Habitus is a set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways. The dispositions generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are ‘regular’ without being consciously co-ordinated or governed by any “rule”. The dispositions which constitute the habitus are inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable…. Dispositions are acquired through a gradual process of inculcation in which early childhood experiences are particularly important. Through a myriad of mundane processes of training and learning, such as those involved in the inculcation of table manners (“sit up straight”, “don’t eat with your mouth full”, etc), the individual acquires a set of dispositions which literally mould the body and become second nature. The dispositions produced thereby are also structured in the sense that they unavoidably reflect the social conditions within which they were acquired. (p. 12)

History, class and culture help form students’ *habitus* which becomes an internal law.

When students attend school, they bring a particular *habitus* that affects student outcomes:

In a student population, we are dealing with the final outcome of a whole set of influences that stem from social origin and have been exerted over a long period. For students from the lower classes who have survived elimination, the initial disadvantages have evolved; their social past has been transformed into an educational handicap…. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979, p. 14)

When considering language and culture, *habitus* as “the internalization of externality” (Bourdieu, 1968, p. 706) is important to this study. The culture and language internalised formatively at home can be valued differently when culture internalised at home is externalised by the individual at school. Bourdieu (1968) explained that *habitus* is synonymous with culture, i.e., the culture of the individual influences how the individual enacts his/her being in the world. Defining *habitus* as the internalization of externalities
(Bourdieu, 1968, p. 706) and the externalization of internalities takes into consideration the complex ways the socio-historical, economic, political, religious and cultural milieus are embodied.

In education systems, students with underprivileged *habitus* are ordinarily excluded, while those with privileged *habitus* are legitimated. Privileged students in NZ’s education system are more successful (May et al., 2012); they possess knowledge and dispositions that are more likely to be valued by the school (Jones, 1991; ‘Otunuku, 2010). In Western countries, privileged students have access to cultured experiences such as opera, museums, libraries, art exhibitions and these add to their repertoire of knowledge. Bourdieu explains such variations:

Not only do the most privileged students derive from their background of origin habits, skills, and attitudes which serve them directly in their scholastic tasks, but they also inherit from it knowledge and know-how, tastes, and a ‘good taste’ whose scholastic profitability is no less certain for being indirect. ‘Extra-curricular’ culture (la culture ‘libre’), the implicit condition for academic success in certain disciplines, is very unequally distributed among students from different backgrounds, and inequality of income does not suffice to explain the disparities we find. Cultural privilege is manifest when it is a matter of familiarity with works which only regular visits to theatres, galleries and concerts can give (visits which the school does not organize, or only sporadically). It is still more manifest in the case of those works, generally the most modern ones, which are the least ‘scholastic’.

In every area of culture in which it is measured—be it the theatre, music, painting, jazz, or cinema—students have richer and more extensive knowledge the higher their social origin. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979, p. 17)

Privileged students’ *habitus* places them ahead of their less-privileged counterparts. According to Bourdieu, the former are more successful. Children of professionals and industrialists follow in their fathers’ footsteps. The underprivileged remain that way, and the
privileged remain privileged; this is essentially reproduction. However, there is room for what Bourdieu calls ‘strategic calculation’, more commonly termed ‘agency’. Individuals can operate strategically by acquiring the legitimated *habitus*, and minorities can acquire the dominant *habitus*.

In effect, *habitus* produces seemingly ‘common sense’ behaviours. While we are not fully controlled by *habitus*—we recognise the incongruities between a common sense belief and our actual experience—we do not have total freedom of control over our actions and behaviours either. Whether one’s *habitus* translates into an advantage in educational achievement, from the field of one’s formation, for instance, at home, to the field of one’s schooling, it provides a lens into the complex forces at work on the student’s pathway to success.

In this research, when *habitus* is used, it refers to all those experiences, and past and continuing influences which helped form the type of individuals these participants are and continue to be through their actions, words, outward appearances, and demeanours. *Habitus* herein then, is inclusive of the culture, history, past, influences, and impacts of the participants’ surroundings, written/embodied on his/her persona, which helped to form the type of individual the participant has become.

**2.2.iii. Field**

‘Fields’ are the contexts where forms of capital are the currency of exchange (Bourdieu, 1990, 1996a). Individuals compete in fields, or as Bourdieu further defines it, ‘gaming spaces’, for ‘stakes’ which are particular to a specific field. Within this relational space individuals occupy particular positions and maintain and defend their positions (Bourdieu, 1990, 1996a). As such, individuals have varying forms of power and are themselves permeated by power (Bourdieu, 1996a), and they recognize and stand by the rules of the field which validates their gaming space and gives the game credibility (1996a). In
these gaming spaces, students can be in constant competition with others over forms of capital, which, in turn, can be translatable, thereby granting students, power to exchange in other fields. For example, capital recognised by the school is rewarded with other valuable capital, such as certificates. Academic writing skills contribute to the gaining of degrees which, when taken into the work place, can assist in the accumulation of economic rewards or capital.

Field therefore is a crucial success factor. It is within the field that a student’s *habitus* is legitimated or otherwise and perhaps reformed, and capital is accessed (Bourdieu, 1986, 1996a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979). Therefore, according to Bourdieu, fields such as school and home are highly important in student success. Each field helps configure the *habitus*, the capital of students; each has rules and structures in place that render symbolic power to some students more than others.

Individuals however, can implement strategic measures to re-position themselves within fields (Bourdieu, 1996a). To make strategically beneficial moves within fields means students acquiring, therefore, a sense of the game in the gaming space. Field, as employed in this study, closely resembles Bourdieu’s usage of the term—in simple terms, field is any field in which there are forms of capital that are vied for and influence the individual’s formation, whether positively or negatively. Home is the beginning field for each individual as this is where the individual is born and nurtured; other fields in Tonga include the school, church and village.

2.2. iv. Sense of the game

Bourdieu (1990b) also defines *habitus* as a “practical sense” and “the ‘art’ of anticipating event” (p. 66). ‘Sense of the game’ then is about the encounter between an agent’s *habitus* and the field, whereby the agent’s incorporated history (*habitus*) and objectified history (knowledge of the field and how it operates) allows the agent the
capability to anticipate the events that take place within the field. Sensing the game emphasises that individuals possess agency in the gaming space of education. Thompson (1992) links *habitus* to sense of the game thus:

As a durably installed set of dispositions, the habitus tends to generate practices and perceptions, works and appreciations, which concur with the conditions of existence of which the habitus is itself the product.

The habitus also provides individuals with a sense of how to act and respond in the course of their daily lives. It “orients” their actions and inclinations without strictly determining them. It gives them a “feel for the game”, a sense of what is appropriate in the circumstances and what is not, a “practical sense” (i.e. sens pratique). The practical sense is not so much a state of mind as a state of the body, a state of being. It is because the body has become a repository of ingrained dispositions that certain actions, certain ways of behaving and responding, seem altogether natural. (Thompson, 1992, p. 13)

A feel for the game is often a product of having already experienced the game (Bourdieu, 1990). Middle-class students often already have a feel for the game in education as their homes have inculcated a similar *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990). Students from lower-class backgrounds, on the other hand, are less likely to succeed in formal education due to a lack of a sense of the game as they transfer from one field to another (Bourdieu, 1986, 1990b; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979).

**2.2. v. Language**

A sense of the game is also important when it comes to using language in institutions, i.e. any relations where individuals have symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1992). Indeed, the rules of the game are reinforced by a collective consensus of the type, intonation, and purposes of language amongst individuals in a particular field. Bourdieu’s theories surrounding language reflect the valuing of the dominant language over others, where language is an entity which reflects historical relations of power. As will become more apparent in this chapter, this
The notion is central to this study. For Tongans and minorities worldwide, it can be argued that symbolic violence occurs when underachievement is blamed on a student’s lack of knowledge of the dominant language. In contrast, competent users of a dominant language can exercise power, and influence others and their environment. Language can often be left to operate in ways that are misrecognised for the power-laden medium of exchange that it is (Bourdieu, 1992).

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) examined the relationship between ‘linguistic capital’ (ability to master language), held by French students, and the selection process of students for university. They found that the language used by families to socialise students within the home varies from the working to middle and upper classes. School systems validated the language used by the latter two. Hence the unequal selection of students for university entrance is masked or misrecognized due to the fact that schools are imbued with, and value and reproduce, the linguistic capital that upper- and middle-class students bring from home. As Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) point out:

the scores obtained in a language test are not simply the performance of the students characterized by their previous training, and their social origin and their sex, or even by all these criteria considered together, but are the performance of the category which, precisely because it is endowed with the whole set of these characteristics, has not undergone elimination to the same extent as a category defined by other characteristics. (p. 72)

The fact that the school values a particular set of capital means unequal selection for working-class students, and a masking and legitimation of this act of symbolic violence. Upper-class students are usually more successful in education because they bring legitimated capital to the learning exchange (Bourdieu, 1984, 1996a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).
The dominant language required for formal education, can of course, be acquired. The possibility of language acquisition combined with a sense of the game raises the potential for success of second language learners.

So, while language is central to education within school systems, not all student languages are valued in the same way. This leads to students, whose languages and cultures are undervalued, being affected or impacted by ‘symbolic violence’.

2.2.vi. Schools, symbolic violence & reproduction
Symbolic violence is when power is exerted, especially on the marginalised, through actions, policies, pedagogies and procedures, in ways that are unrecognisable as such. Symbolic violence results in control over the dominated. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977):

…every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force, adds its own specifically symbolic force to those power relations. (p. 4)

Thus, as Tom Bottomore (1990, cited in Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) asserts, symbolic violence ensures that:

not only are the ruling ideas, in every age, the ideas of the ruling class, but that the ruling ideas themselves reinforce the rule of that class, and…they succeed in doing so by establishing themselves as legitimate…by concealing their basis in the power of the ruling class. (p. xv)

This was borne out in a significant study by Alison Jones (1991) in a NZ school; she found students from different socio-cultural backgrounds were treated unequally due to symbolic violence. Jones researched two streamed classes in an Auckland girls’ school—5 Mason, a class of economically poorer, Pacific Island (PI) girls and 5 Simmonds, a class of Pakeha (Western), middle-class students. Each group brought different sets of capital which
formed the girls’ distinct conceptions of school. Differing notions of what school work entailed and how knowledge is acquired were exacerbated by the teachers’ differing teaching styles for the two groups.

Teacher pedagogies reflected the teachers’ views that PI girls possess very little knowledge. When the Mason girls attempted to co-construct their own learning, the teacher curtailed it; teacher pedagogy limited the girls to imitation and low-level learning with little student—teacher interaction. Alternative pedagogies by the teachers could have affirmed the PI students’ self-belief; instead a form of symbolic violence manifested.

In contrast, the Simmonds girls were encouraged, even challenged in their learning. These girls were co-constructors of their own learning. The girls also engaged in further discussions with teachers, reinforcing their own conceptions of schooling. The Simmonds girls’ capital matched the capital the teachers held and valued (Jones, 1991). In contrast, the teachers’ symbolic violence against the Mason girls led to failure. Therefore, teachers’ notions of suitable learning reproduced failure for the Mason girls and success for the Simmonds girls. Similar assertions are made in studies by Nakhid (2003) and ‘Otunuku (2010). The latter focused on Tongan students in high school in NZ to determine why they continue to fail. ‘Otunuku (2010) found that teachers’ perceptions of their Tongan students impacted negatively on their interactions with them, leading to student failure.

School systems can perpetuate symbolic violence and be implicated in the reproduction of class, culture and society. As shown in Jones (1991), Nakhid (2003) and ‘Otunuku (2010), this system of symbolic violence is also embedded in the school systems’ selection of the ‘elect’ in higher education. Bourdieu’s work (Bourdieu, 1986, 1988, 1996a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1997, 1979) established symbolic violence was functioning well in French education.
2.2.vii. Selection of the elect in higher education

Students who possess the capital and *habitus* which schools value are considered by Bourdieu to be the elect (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979, p. 1). As such, the elect are more likely to be selected for further education and success in a self-reinforcing system. Terming this ‘selection of the elect’, Bourdieu found that, in French higher education in the 1970s, stark differences existed in the representation of the various social classes (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Low socio-economic students were the least represented compared to students with families of industrial and professional backgrounds.

In contrast, the higher the individual was on the social ladder, the higher their chances of retention and graduation. In French higher education, the ratio was one percent for farm workers to seventy percent for industrialists, and eighty percent and above for professionals (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979). Unfair pressure, according to gender and class, also directed students to ‘selected’ study options, and impacted on their academic progression (Bourdieu, 1996a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979).

A student’s status, therefore, affected their retention and success in a French education system with selection and elimination mechanisms which gave an unfair advantage to middle- and upper-class students. Whether the same holds for the graduates in this study will be determined from their perspectives as to what factors, including their status, they contribute their success to. The next section explores some reservations surrounding Bourdieu’s theoretical perspectives.

2.3. Critics of Bourdieu’s Theory

Bourdieu is not without his critics, particularly in his use of agency, capital, _habitus_ and fields or gaming spaces. With regard to _habitus_, several critics contend that Bourdieu’s theories are deterministic, reproductive, pessimistic, and thus deny the agency of the individual and the power to effect change (Giroux, 1983a, 1983b). According to Kramsch (2008), students in his undergraduate class in a lecture on Bourdieu questioned where an
individual’s agency was, in relation to *habitus*. In turn, it was argued by Kramsch (2008) that *habitus* can transform through education, and an individual could possess many *habitus* in view of the different fields an individual might be exposed to (Kramsch, 2008). Kramsch argues that “Bourdieu does not deny individual agency and the possibility of change, but he never separates the individual from his/her social make-up and from his/her personal and collective history” (p. 44).

That the family’s forms of capital determine success is argued against by New Zealander Nash (1990). He maintains that members of the same family achieving at different levels at school, and following different career trajectories with varied incomes, proves that Bourdieu’s theory that family capital determines success does not hold. Nash maintains that Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* is deterministic and overused, vague and strained, with his language being ambiguous and far too complex for students to understand.

Bourdieu is also criticised by Warde (2004) who argues that, while Bourdieu’s argument is impressive, his use of field is ‘overstretched’. In particular, Warde finds the use of field most problematic in its correlation with games, stating that the “notion of game overemphasises consensus about the rules governing action” (Warde, 2004, p. 26).

Bourdieu himself addressed some of the criticisms of his work as being pessimistic in nature, taking away hope of individual agency or the power to change one’s circumstances:

> It is, of course, never ruled out that the responses of the *habitus* may be accompanied by a strategic calculation tending to perform in a conscious mode the operation that the *habitus* performs quite differently, namely an estimation of chances presupposing transformation of the past effect into an expected objective. But these responses are first defined, without any calculation, in relation to objective potentialities, immediately inscribed in the present….

(Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53)
In the first instance, Bourdieu argues that actions, attitudes, perceptions, and other ways of re-enacting one’s being in the world, can be unintentional or intentional, strategically carried out in anticipation of, or as an automatic response to, one’s surroundings inscribed by the past on the individual’s habitus (1990). However, Bourdieu also argues that his notion of habitus significantly involves what he calls a ‘practical sense’, sense of the game or feel for the game whereby the individual, if he/she so chooses, is able to discern what is appropriate or inappropriate, what may be damaging or profitable behaviour for one’s self in particular fields, and act accordingly in order to succeed (Bourdieu, 1990).

Despite criticisms of Bourdieusian theory, even his critics can appreciate Bourdieu’s contribution. This is the case with Nash (1990):

The sociology of education has learned a great deal from Bourdieu. There is no doubt that in Bourdieu we are dealing with a very important and richly creative social theorist. As a result of his work we have been able to think about problems which were unduly neglected, and above all, to recognise the interconnections between social processes and practices which conventional methodologies and arbitrary academic boundaries do so much to obscure. Through Bourdieu’s work we have been able to reconstruct a theory of family and recover the centrality of family resources to educational differentiation within a radical context which allays the fear of a retreat to cultural deficit theory. The analogical, metaphorical nature of his core concepts has forced comparisons and connections that have been fruitful. (p. 446)

Criticism of Bourdieu’s work has not affected the enormous influence and use of Bourdiesian theory in academia. Indeed, Bourdieu has become a household name in sociology and various fields (see Cockerham, 2012; Eichholz, Assche, Oberkircher & Hornidge, 2013; Silva & Warde, 2010). More recent applications of Bourdieu’s theory in various fields globally (Devine, 2012; Fram, 2004; Mendoza, Kuntz, & Berger, 2012) attest to Bourdieu’s persistent and genuine usefulness in studying phenomenon in society. Frank
(2012) sums up Bourdieu’s relevance and enduring significance in his review of several volumes of work on Bourdieu:

> These volumes are ample evidence—41 authors, writing over 900 pages—of the continuing influence of Pierre Bourdieu a decade after his death in 2002. I believe Bourdieu is as great a sociologist as ever lived. His biographical situation positioned him to produce what is arguably the most compelling culmination of the social science tradition that begins with Marx. But Bourdieu’s work may endure mostly because his limitations create openings: the gaps, assumptions, and even biases in his writing incite controversy, attempts at revision, ongoing searchers for updated empirical application reflecting local contingencies, and as the title of Elizabeth Silva and Alan Warde’s volume put it, alternatives. The final section of Michele Lamont’s chapter in Silva and Warde poses the question: ‘Bourdieu, good to think with?’ (p. 138). The affirmative response is evident in the consistent fascination and remarkable variation of these books’ engagement with Bourdieu. (Frank, 2012, p. 319)

More recent use of Bourdieu’s theoretical tools, such as *habitus*, is evident in NZ educators’ works; Stuart Deerness (2012) is an example. Deerness uses Bourdieu’s habitus as a theoretical lens. Deerness’s examinations of NZ education attests to the continued value and relevance of Bourdieu’s conceptual tools, regardless of context.

Continued criticism of Bourdieu’s work on the other hand, is also evidence of its relevance; criticism opens up multiple avenues of dialogue on Bourdieu’s controversial yet adaptable and living theoretical constructs. This gives rise to claims such as that by Silva and Warde (2010) that Bourdieu is possibly the most renowned sociologist. Bourdieu claimed that one of the best outcomes of utilising his theory is its “generative possibilities” (Swartz, 2008, p. 46). This holds out, as researchers across different fields continue to use his theory to deepen their understanding of social phenomena.
2.4. Why Bourdieu?
Bourdieu’s theories help elucidate why there is success in education for some students, and not for others. His theories provide the potential to take into consideration Tongan culture and language, alongside dominant factors such as English language and culture, and the roles these may play in the success of Tongan graduates. Bourdieu’s diverse and complex theoretical concepts allow for such meta-analysis; to be moulded to fit the Tongan context and worldview as it deals with culture, behaviour, and language—all aspects Bourdieu has extensively analysed and elucidated through the use and development of his thinking tools.

This thesis therefore, employs Bourdieu’s theories as a point of departure. This involves re-casting Bourdieu’s theory through a Tongan lens in order to construct a Tongan-Bourdieuian vakaua (blended) theory to form this thesis’ central conceptual framework (meta-theory). While Western frameworks help explain phenomena, arguably they cannot be applied directly to the experiences of Tongan participants. Bourdieu’s thinking tools, therefore, are contextualised to provide a relevant theoretical framework to the study of Tongan graduates’ success. Such integration serves to unmask and expose both Tongan and Western factors of success in these Tongan graduates’ educational journeys. In the next section the Bourdieusian framework is explored from a Tongan worldview.

2.5. A Tongan-Bourdieuian Framework
The following highlight elements of forms of capital and habitus from Tongan culture. Together these are combined in this thesis to inform what is described as a Tongan Bourdieusian framework: the national motto of Tonga, ‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku tofi’a (literally-, God and Tonga are my inheritance); the tenacity and strength of Tongan culture; Faaʻi Kavei Koula (the ‘four golden strands’ of core Tongan values); and, kaliloa (the Tongan process of socialisation). These elements are sourced from works by Tongans (Kaʻili & Kaʻili, 1999; Moala, 2009; Queen Sālote, POP (n.d.); Samate, 2007; Taumoepeau, 2011)
that evoke a sense of māfana (connection, warmth, love) and fehokotaki (ties) to Tonga and a Tongan worldview. Sourcing from works by Tongans keeps us in line with the spirit of this inquiry—to critique, yet privilege knowledge from both spaces, both Tongan and Western concepts. The following sections examine the four elements in greater depth.

2.5.i. ‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku tofi’a

Tonga’s national motto, ‘God and Tonga are my inheritance’, highlights the platform for two of the most important forms of capital and habitus in the Tongan worldview: land and God. On the 20th of November, 1839, at Pouono, Neiafu, on the Island of Vava’u, King George Tupou I lifted his palm filled with Tongan soil, looked to the heavens and declared: ‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku tofi’a. His words and actions affirmed Tongans’ ties to Tongan culture, the land and the Christian God by pledging Tonga to God for blessings and safe-keeping. The King’s statement is otherwise known as Tuku fonua ki Langi (the Dedication of Tonga to God) (see Moala, K., 2009, p. 89; Moala, M., 1994, p. 213; Samate, 2007; Shumway, Brigham Young University, Hawai’i and The Polynesian Cultural Center & The Government of the Kingdom of Tonga, 2007).

Tonga and ‘Otua can be broken down into several important concepts. Tonga can refer to: fonua (land); anga fakafonua (literally the ways of the land, i.e., culture); lea fakatonga (Tongan language); and hoto Tonga (Tongan identity). Tonga, using Bourdieusian terms, can encompass habitus and forms of capital (see also Samate, 2007 for more on the interpretation of Tonga’s national motto). As habitus, Tonga for example is the Tongan culture and language embodied by the individual. As examples of social and cultural capital, Tonga can include the kāinga (extended family) and all the resources an individual can attain from this network. ‘Otua includes belief in a Christian God, love and respect for God, prayer, church, and spirituality, all of which are central to Tongan living (see also Moala, 2009; Samate, 2007; Shumway et al., 2007, Tu‘itahi, 2009). As an example indicating habitus,
'Otua is shown in the respectable clothes and traditional wraparound that both men and women wear to church on Sundays to show respect and love for God. As symbols of social and cultural capital, ‘Otua is the church network which often at times provides support in the form of scholarships or pō ako (night study) for students.

For Tongans in education, locally and abroad, it is pertinent to examine Tonga’s national motto and its relevance to education. Notable Tongan educator and Methodist priest, ‘Asinate Samate (2007), argues that important items such as lotu and ako are intricately interwoven like a mat in the Tongan way of life: “Without the existence of the other, neither has value or worth” (Samate, 2007, p. 50). Similarly, Tongan culture and Tongans are intertwined in a ‘spiritual tie’ or ‘spiritual heritage’:

For those who were born and bred in Tonga, no matter where they go and how long they are away from their land of birth, this spiritual tie remains very much a part of their lives. Many who live overseas return to Tonga from time to time to reclaim their spiritual heritage. No matter where they are, they will remain Tongan in their heart of hearts. (Samate, 2007, p.50)

Samate urges readers to reflect on the dedication of Tonga to God, and the role such dedication must play in the life of Tongans today, and in the future:

We believe that Tonga has a special role to play in the world scene. The strong foundation has been laid by our ancestors. Our task is to go back to that foundation and define what makes Tonga unique, what we can give out to the whole world, something that no other country can give. What is our special call? What are our strengths? What can we do well and how best we can make use of the resources available to us—be it natural, financial, cultural, human, or otherwise? (Samate, 2007, p. 57)

The Tukufonua ki Langi, the ‘Dedication of Tonga to God’ is publicly identified in the words of King George Tupou I—‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku tofi’a, what remains for Tongans, fundamental forms of Tongan—Bourdieu’s capital and habitus.
2.5.ii. Tongan culture: ‘The almighty culture’

A well-known Tongan academic, supporter of democracy and Taimi ‘o Tonga newspaper owner, Kalafi Moala (2009) states that Tongan culture is ‘almighty’; it adapts and lives on within Tongans. Moala quotes his father who stated: “‘E kei Tonga pē ‘a Tonga, he‘ikai ke ke lava ‘o liliu”—“Tongans will remain Tongan, you cannot change this” (p. 97).

This speaks to Tongans, internalising their culture as habitus (Bourdieu, 1997, cited in Moala 2009, p. 102). Moala (2009) stated his late father believed “if [Tongans] faithfully live and practice the Tongan way, [we] would achieve a quality of life that surpasses any other” (p. 97).

Moala provides an example of Tongan habitus which remains with Tongans long after the individual leaves Tonga. Stranded at a Vanuatu airport, Moala asked a taxi driver to take him to the nearest Tongan home. The taxi driver obliged and upon arriving at a home, the Tongan homeowner, without knowing Moala, offered the sole bed in the house to his guest. In Tongan culture, hospitality is offered to fellow Tongans in times of need (2009). The actions of the Vanuatu Tongan expressed a strongly internalised Tongan disposition—his habitus.

Culture adaption is also a significant part of Tongan habitus (Moala, 2009). A strong Tongan culture and identity, both underpinned by Tongan language, can help Tongans adapt to Western culture, which can enable success in education. Prominent anthropologist Helen Morton Lee who carried out important studies on Tongans and Tonga, Tongan academic Hansen (2004), and Tongan academics and language activists, Ka‘ili and Ka‘ili (1999) all argue for the importance of culture adaptation. For transnational Tongans, being immersed in Tongan culture and language creates a strong identity which can support success in education (Hansen, 2004; Lee, 2003). Many indicate there is a need for Tongans to maintain their language and culture, alongside attaining aspects of Western culture, if Tongans are to succeed in education (Hansen, 2004; Ka‘ili & Ka‘ili, 1999; Lee, 2003). Barnhardt and
Kawagley (2005) make a similar argument for inclusion of indigenous knowledge in education:

Recently, many Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have begun to recognize the limitations of a monocultural education system, and new approaches have begun to emerge that are contributing to our understanding of the relationship between Indigenous ways of knowing and those associated with Western society and formal education. Our challenge now is to devise a system of education for all people that respects the epistemological and pedagogical foundation provided by Indigenous as well as Western cultural traditions. (p. 10)

2.5.iii. Fa‘a‘i kavei koula

Fa‘a‘i kavei koula\(^1\) is integral to anga faka-fonua (Tongan culture). They are ideals (forms of capital) to which all Tongans aspire as part of their habitus to live successfully and harmoniously with God, land, and people (Queen Sālote, POP). These core values distinguish Tongans as a people and are reflected in: dress (teuteu), speaking (lea), behaviour (tō‘onga), action (ngāue) and relationships (tauhi vaha’a) (Queen Sālote, POP).

Included in the faa‘i kavei koula is faka‘apa‘apa (reverence) for others and for things which will nurture relationships. Faka‘apa‘apa must be observed at all times. The dissolution of faka‘apa‘apa inevitably leads to chaos (Queen Sālote, POP). The second is faka‘aki‘akimui (humility), with has connections to Biblical values, and which indicates that one must not elevate one’s self above others (Queen Sālote, POP). The third is ta‘efieauna, a resolute spirit when endeavours seem unconquerable (Queen Sālote, POP, see also Mele Taumoepeau, 2011). Ta‘efieauna also encompasses pride in one’s mana (integrity), culture, family and origin. Ta‘efieauna has contributed to the building of Tonga, the accomplishments of Tongans, security, and the strengthening of Tongan identity in today’s world (Queen Sālote, POP).

\(^1\)Refer also to Eric B. Shumway et al., 2007; Moala, 1994, 2000.
Taumoepeau (2011) employs various examples from Tongan history, oral tradition and everyday life to explain the concept of ta'efieauna. Taumoepeau (2011) characterises the Tongan heart as dedicated and passionate to a cause, unselfishly giving, sacrificial, and very optimistic. The last is ‘ofa ongongofua (loving obedience to others) (Queen Sālote, POP).

Tauhi vā (maintenance of social relations mentioned earlier, see also Ka'ili, 2008) is synonymous with ‘ofa ongongofua (see Moala, 1994, cited in Moala, 2009; Morton, 1996 cited in Samate, 2007). It is love and servanthood combined.

These fundamental indicators of forms of capital, in the Tongan worldview, are imparted from the kaliloa, the traditional Tongan socialisation process within the home (see Taumoefolau & Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2011; Toetu’u-Tamihere, 2010, 2011, 2012a, 2012b) to form a valued Tongan habitus.

2.5.iv. Kaliloa

Kaliloa or talanoa mei he kaliloa (TMK) in its long form\(^2\) is a metaphor for the ancient traditional Tongan socialisation process. Kali, literally, is the traditional Tongan headrest made out of wood. Kaliloa is a long head rest. Kaliloa also refers to the mother’s arm upon which children may rest their heads while she imparts stories, family history, genealogy, legends, culture, and values to teach, guide and inform the children (see Taumoefolau & Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2011; Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2010, 2011). The kaliloa process takes place within the home, conducted by family to form the desired lifelong Tongan habitus (see Taumoefolau & Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2011; Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2010, 2011). The objective of the kaliloa is to create children who will become successful, contributing members of society. Kaliloa is briefly mentioned in works by Paongo (1990); and, Abel, Park, Tipene-Leach, Finau, & Lennan (2001).

Kaliloa has been examined by several scholars. Prior to European arrival, education in Tonga was informal, family was central, and discipline and manners were part of education

\(^2\) The most written on Kaliloa is in works by Taumoefolau &Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2011 and Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2010, 2011.
Ki He Lelei Taha

(Fīnau, 2011; Paongo, 1990; Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2010, 2011; Tu‘ilotolava, 2011). St Johnston, while living with a Tongan family, witnessed the obedience and good behaviour of the children attending to the chores delegated by parents (Johnston, 1883, p. 67, cited in Paongo, 1990, p. 135). Ian Campbell observed informal training sessions (the ‘nocturnal confabulation’ which occurred after evening meals every night (Campbell, 1957, cited in Paongo, 1990, p. 135). What these scholars were referring to is the kaliloa.

In such a way, children were instructed through ‘experiences’, ‘observation’, ‘telling’, and ‘trial and error’ (Paongo, 1990). Rutherford (1977) maintains:

Much information and skills were passed on from generation to generation by informal means such as children observing their parents and relatives shaping woods, stone or ivory or weaving baskets or mats or building houses or boats. (Rutherford 1977, cited in Paongo 1990, p. 136).

In contrast to Paongo’s claims that nocturnal confabulation was exclusive to chiefly families and limited to the past, the traditional Tongan practice kaliloa, was and is common in every Tongan household (Rev. Tu‘iniua Fīnau, Pela Tu‘ilotolava personal communication, 2011; Taumoefolau & Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2011; Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2010, 2011). Kaliloa is any and all transmissions of knowledge to children. Skills were not strictly for nobility. It was only specific traditional tasks, such as maintaining the royal tombs, which belonged to particular families. It is at the kaliloa that all Tongan children acquire Tongan skills and knowledge (Rev. Tu‘iniua Fīnau, Pela Tu‘ilotolava personal communication, 2011). Abel et al., (2001) mentioned kaliloa when explaining infant care practices, where the child lay on the mother’s arm:

[P]ractical, it enabled easy attendance to the baby’s physical needs during the night, and it was beneficial psychologically and spiritually as the baby received love, comfort and moral and spiritual strength by sleeping with its mother. (Abel et. al., 2001, p. 1140)
In sum, the unique Tongan socialisation process of *kaliloa* ingrains Tongan culture in the child long after the *kaliloa* has passed. All that is considered important in Tongan living, as incorporated in the Tonga national motto, is passed on to the child through the *kaliloa*. The hope and expectation is that the Tongan child will become a successful and useful member of society.

Weaving together Bourdieu’s thinking tools, and aspects of Tongan culture as discussed above, one can identify a number of Tongan cultural capitals, *habitus* and fields that have a potentially important bearing on Tongans’ success in education. In the following section, Tongan language is explored as a significant element of cultural capital in education.

### 2.6. Language, Culture and Identity

Language, indelibly tied to culture and identity is significant, particularly in the complex tensions that can exist between efforts to maintain and use Tongan language while acquiring English language for success in formal education. The triadic relationship between language, culture and identity is vital when considering the challenges and advantages of bilingualism, biliteracy, bilingual education and second-language acquisition to success in education. The following section discusses the importance of Tongan language, which is the first language of the majority of Tongan students in Tonga.

#### 2.6.i. Tongan language


Contextualising language capital as an indicator of educational success calls for the recognition that Tongan language is integral to Tongan culture and therefore is a core foundation of who Tongans are (identity), our source of knowledge (espistemology) and
ways of being (ontology). To recognise the importance of Tongan culture is to also recognise the significance of *lea faka-Tonga* (Tongan language). *Lea faka-Tonga* and culture, and through them, the formation and strengthening of Tongan identity, are vital to the success and education of Tongans (Lee, 2004). The transmission of Tongan culture connects to both language and identity. It is through the *kaliloa* that important elements of culture are passed on to the child using language—to instil culture, connect the child to Tongan people, land, worldview, and create a strong Tongan identity (Toetu’u-Tamihere, 2010, 2011). Tongan educationist, ‘Ana Taufe’ulungaki (1992) argues, “If we lose our language we will also lose our culture” (Taufe’ulungaki, 1991, cited in Ka‘ili & Ka‘ili, 2006, p. 141).

The importance of Tongan language for Tongans is advocated by prominent anthropologists Moana Hansen (2004) and Helen Morton Lee (2004). Hansen and Lee both find that a lack of Tongan language knowledge disconnects some young Tongans abroad from their homeland, and creates an identity crisis for them. Tongan academics and language activists Tevita Ka‘ili and ‘Anapesi Ka‘ili (2006) also emphasise the strong links between language, culture and identity of Tongans abroad, asking—:“Can we become Tongan without speaking Tongan?” Language carries all that is important in a culture (Ka‘ili & Ka‘ili, 1999, 2006).

The above is supported by linguistic expert and equal language rights activist, Jim Cummins (2001) who affirms that the inhibition of a student’s heritage language leads to dire consequences. Cummins states:

> Whether we do it intentionally or inadvertently, when we destroy children’s language and rupture their relationship with parents and grandparents, we are contradicting the very essence of education. (p. 16)

---

1 Ka‘ili and Ka‘ili, 1999; and 2006 piece is titled ‘Lea Tonga mo e Tonga’ (Tongan Language and Tongans), this work is written in Tongan as a chapter in a Tongan book and all quotes from this work are translated here into English. The (2006) book, * Ko e Ngahi ‘Ata Mei He Histōla Mo e Kalatua ‘O Tonga: Ke Tufunga ‘I Ha Lea Fakaako* is edited by Tongan academics, ‘Okusitino Māhina, Tevita O. Ka‘ili and ‘Anapesi Ka‘ili, and published by the Centre For Pacific Studies, University of Auckland.
Cummins (2001) also posits that true educators are those who value students’ prior learning, targeting student capacities and skills as the foundation upon which to start their teaching. When a students’ home language is inhibited and stops developing, the cognitive foundation for acquiring knowledge is debilitated (Cummins, 2001).

It appears from the literature that disconnectedness from language, culture, and identity, have adverse effects on Tongans, including failure in education (Hansen, 2004; Lee, 2004).

2.6.ii. Tongan language in Tonga

Tongan language is the main language used for communication in Tonga (Spolsky et al., 1983; Vea, 2010). Tongan students learn English as a second language in local schools while Tongan language remains the first language through which the majority of Tongan students acquire knowledge (Vea, 2010). Regardless of whether education is ‘non-formal’, ‘informal’ or ‘formal’ (Thaman, 1995), Tongan is the majority language in Tonga. As such, the Tongan language is the medium of the kaliloa. In other words, the Tongan language is the carrier of the founding knowledge for the Tongan child. Tongan language is therefore significant to both individual and collective identity within Tonga (Taufe‘ulungaki, 1992).

In Tonga, Tongan culture is a lived and, spoken phenomenon practised by the Tongan people. Taufe‘ulungaki (2004) asserts that Tongans knowing their own language and culture leads to a strong Tongan identity (cited in Tu‘i‘onetoa, 2013, p. 20). While kaliloa as a Tongan socialisation process is responsible for cultivating strong Tongan identities in individuals, it is the Tongan language which makes this possible. It provides the means of transmitting and maintaining Tongan culture and identity (Taufe‘ulungaki, 1992). Moala (2009) claims that Tongan culture is embodied in Tongans. Lee (2004) and Hansen (2004) advocate that it is the Tongan language and culture which create strong Tongan identities, particularly in transnational Tongans.
Tongan language also carries Tongan cultural ways of speaking: *faka’apa’apa* (honorific) (Queen Sālote, POP; Ka’ili & Ka’ili, 1999), *lea fakatu’i* (regal), *lea fakahou’eiki* (chiefly), *lea fakamatāpule* (polite), *lea faka’aki’akimui* or *lea fakatōkilalo* (self-derogatory way of talking to show humility) (Taumoefolau, 2012). Tongan language incorporates respectful speech, ceremonial language, plus oratory, and these are used in such domains as ceremonies, songs, poetry and dance. In essence, Tongan language not only carries the culture but also our histories, epistemology, ontology, and theology. Tongan language is a marker of who Tongans were and are, and where we come from. The language will also hopefully guide Tongans to who we will become in future, and for generations to come, both in Tonga and abroad.

To highlight the interconnectedness of language to culture and identity, and vice versa, it is relevant to compare the Tongan language situation in Tonga to that in NZ.

**2.6.iii. Tongan vs Māori language situation**

The language situation in Tonga stands in contrast to the language situation of indigenous Māori in NZ. Māori language survival has been at risk since the 1930s (May, Hill, & Tiakiwai, 2006) and the dire situation continues today. According to the 2013 NZ census, “In 2013, 125, 352 Māori (21.3 percent) could hold a conversation about a lot of everyday things in te reo Maori, a 4.8 percent decrease from the 2006 Census” (Statistics NZ, 2013, p. 11).

For most Māori, there is a clear separation between Māori language and their existence. English is the dominant language in New Zealand (Penetito, 2002, 2010; Smith, 2003). Most Māori are unable to speak Māori, but they try to maintain their culture and identity through their understanding and observance of key cultural concepts in Māori tikanga and in oratory in the marae (Metge, 1976; Penetitio, 2010). The 1980s marked a call by prominent Māori to include Māori language in education (May, Hill, Tiakiwai, 2006;  

---

Penetito, 2002; Smith, 2003). In response, Māori immersion schools were established to revive Māori language and culture.

Tonga has never been colonised and this has meant the Tongan language is still prevalent in Tonga. Linguistic academic Otsuka (2007) warns, that despite appearances, the Tongan language is endangered due to its speakers’ voluntary shift to use of English language for socio-economic reasons. However, the fact remains Tongan language is the majority language spoken by Tongans in Tonga (Spolsky et al., 1983; Vea, 2010). Tongan society houses a wealth of Tongan literates.

Local high schools in Tonga generally use Tongan language for instruction (Vea, 2010). In secondary schooling in Tonga, teachers are teaching the English subject content using Tongan language (Heimuli, 2006; Kata, 2006; Kilioni & Kupu, 2006; Spolsky et al., 1983; Vea, 2010). Some argue that schools in Tonga should teach subject content using English as a medium (Airini, McGrath, Taumoefolau, & Langley, 2005), especially in view of exams which use English (Kilioni & Kupu, 2006). The current change in Tonga’s education language policy for 50/50 Tongan and English language use in high schools (Vea, 2010), causes concern amongst some school principals, such as Paul Fonua of Tailulu College, due to the already prevalent use of Tongan language in most local schools in Tonga.

2.7. Tongan Language in NZ Education

In NZ, lea faka-Tonga (Tongan language) is sometimes offered at secondary level as an optional subject and at university level as part of Pacific studies. For instance, at the University of Auckland, Tongan language 100 level is offered as part of Pacific studies. While these lea faka-Tonga classes within the NZ education will not resolve the Tongan language maintenance issue in a foreign context, it nevertheless is a beginning point. An ‘Inquiry into Pacific languages in early childhood education’ report by the Education and Science committee in NZ to the House of Representatives (2013) shows that the maintenance
of Pacific languages, including Tongan in the NZ context, is in the hands of Pacific communities rather than the government. The NZ government will not legislate for Pacific languages to be compulsory in NZ schools, despite bilingual research (Franken, May & McComish, 2008; McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010; Taufe‘ulongaki, 1992 amongst others) which points to the advantages for Pacific Islanders learning their own languages first. Tongan language, culture and identity are integral to success in education for Tongans in Tonga and in NZ. However, equally important is proficiency in English academic language. The next section explores this further.

2.8. The Importance of English Language
Globally, English is the dominant language of business, communication and education (Bianco, 2010; Guilherme, 2007). In NZ, the English language took prominence during colonisation in the nineteenth century hence Maori were educated mainly in the English language (May, 2005). English is the dominant language of NZ society (Statistics NZ, 2013). Tongans resident in NZ have to use English language not only for everyday communication but also for school based learning - hence English proficiency is extremely important. It is to be noted, however, that more than half of NZ’s Pacific Island population were born or have been raised in NZ; many of them regard English as their first language and are less comfortable using their Pasifika language (Taumoefolau, Starks, Bell, & Davis, 2004). Students who have English as their L2 (second language) are mainly those who have recently entered NZ. Research findings in Pasifika ‘underachievement’ concur that there are several ‘causes’ of underachievement, including difficulty with English (Kalavite, 2010; Nash, 2010; ‘Otunuku, 2010).

English language is important as it is the language of formal education, business, white collar work and politics in Tonga (Spolsky et al., 1983; Kata, 2006; Kilioni & Kupu, 2006; Lotherington, 1997; Vea, 2010) and worldwide (Bianco, 2010; Phillipson, 2001).
Indeed, the continued underachievement of Tongans and Pacific peoples throughout history in Western education systems locally and abroad has been attributed to, amongst other factors, the difficulty of making the leap from indigenous languages and cultures, into negotiating the Western system and using English language capital (Airini et al., 2005; Bauer, 1993; Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2005). This has often meant the valuing of English language and culture over indigenous Pacific languages (Thaman, 1995, 2002; Taufe'ulungaki, 2002). Research demonstrates that education for Pacific peoples in the islands and abroad remains overwhelmingly Western in structure, curriculum, and language (Burnett, 2007; Teaero, 1999; Thaman, 1995, 2002).

Tension, however, exists as Tongans grapple with maintaining their language and in their efforts to acquire English language for success in education and to attain economic stability. This language tension continues in Tonga where, in 2010 (Vea, 2010) and 2012 (Matangi Tonga online, January 30, 2012), changes were made to Ministry of Education language policies for schools. The policy objective is to make Tongan language the medium of instruction from pre-school to primary level, with decreasing use as high school approaches. The overall aim is for an increase in English language so that both English and Tongan are equally allocated 50% each, by high school level (Matangi Tonga online, January 30, 2012; Vea, 2010).

The high school curriculum in Tonga uses English language as the medium of assessment, although local high schools in Tonga often use Tongan language to teach content subject knowledge, including English as a subject (Kata, 2006; Kilioni & Kupu, 2006). As a consequence, local high schools such as St Andrew’s school that use less English in school fail compared to schools like THS in national exams (Kilioni & Kupu, 2006). Furthermore, as Vea (2010) shared “Recalling my experiences in the seven years I taught in three different schools in Tonga, the majority of the students did not like English as a subject nor as a
second language.” (p. 2). English language is essential if the Tongan student hopes to succeed in formal education anywhere. Airini et al. (2005) argue that English proficiency for Tongan students is required for academic success; they recommended that Tongan teachers trained at the Tonga Institute of Education (TIOE) graduate as proficient in English.

There is a view, however, that the learning of English and having access to Western culture (Mila-Schaaf & Robinson, 2010) creates an individual who can function effectively in multiple cultures (cosmopolitan) and in a globalized world. Guilherme (2007), for instance, explores the close connections between language and citizenship with particular focus on English as a global language. Acknowledging the dominance of the English language, Guilherme (2007) maintains that it benefits both individual and collective aims to succeed in the professional and social arena. The notion of creating a cosmopolitan individual by acquiring English language speaks to allowing for the fluidity of movement by Tongans in education, between Tongan home and mainstream, and in global spheres such as formal education overseas.

2.8.i. English the language of success
As already indicated, English is the language of assessment in education in Tonga (Fasi, 1999; Kata, 2006). Hence English is the language of success in formal education at high school and tertiary levels in Tonga. This results in inequalities in Tonga; schools suffused with English language capital are more likely to enable school success (Kata, 2006).

The distinction between middle class and working class French in Bourdieu’s work (Bourdieu, 1990a, 1992; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979) is complex when applied to Tonga and the use of the English language there. Whereas French is not a foreign language to both middle-class and working-class French students (Bourdieu, 1990a, 1992; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979), English is a foreign language in Tonga for both commoners and
nobility alike. There is a vast difference between speaking the same basic language, as in the case of Bourdieu’s French students, and Tongan students trying to acquire a foreign language.

Both Tongan commoners and nobility in Tonga require academic English proficiency to succeed in school. For Tongans in Tonga, the disadvantage perhaps is that English is most often a second language for Tongans in Tonga. The same issue is faced by Tongans and Pacific students in NZ education where English is a second language for most of them (Read, 2008). NZ-based Tongan students are still underachieving even though they live in an English-speaking nation. The NZ situation may indicate the difficulty in acquiring a foreign language and in trying to master the same language at a professional and academic level. The case may be that NZ Tongans speak a colloquial level of English, hence their academic English language is limited. This issue is further canvassed later in this thesis.

English is required for success in formal education in both Tonga and NZ. The only difference is that in Tonga, the English language is a minority language. This highlights therefore the necessity of acquiring English language at the ‘optimum’ age (Lenneberg, 1967), not too early on so as to prevent a subtractive language learning experience (May, 2002; May & Hill, 2004) but at the prime age, after Tongan language is firmly embedded. The acquisition of English as a second language is best achieved after there is competence in L1 (Franken et al., 2008; May, Hill, & Tiakiwai, 2004). On the other hand, in NZ Tongan is a minority language, and there are increasing numbers of Tongans pursuing further education. To be proficient in English academic language is important for all Tongan students, wherever they live.

There being ample research and theory which promotes both the importance of the acquisition of English language capital alongside Tongan language capital, the significance of, and need to, explore bilingualism and bilingual education becomes evident.
2.9. Bilingual Education
The significance of Tongan and English languages for Tongans in education perhaps calls for a closer examination of bilingual education. This section will explore its important terminology. In addition, it will examine why bilingual education is vital and both negative and positive aspects of bilingual education will be covered.

2.9.i. Important terminology
‘Bilingualism’ is the use of two or more languages for communication (Butler & Hakuta, 2004, p. 115). The first language a speaker acquires is her/his L1. The second is his/her L2. “Bilinguals” are individuals who can communicate in two or more languages (Butler & Hakuta 2004, p. 114). ‘Bilingual education’ involves learning in two languages (May, Hill, & Tiakiwai, 2006, p. 2). Being biliterate means having the ability ‘to read and write in two languages’ (May et al., 2006, p. 3). Bilingualism for Tongans is a necessity because success in education requires individuals who can read and write in both languages, L1 Tongan and L2 English or vice versa. Is bilingual education therefore the way forward for students who are speakers of a language other than English?

2.9.ii. The importance of bilingual education
There is ongoing debate on the effects of bilingual education on students (Vea, 2010). New Zealand bilingual education research between 1920 and 1960 depicted bilingual education as a “negative phenomenon” (May et al., 2004, p. 19). The main argument against bilingual education was that it was confusing and decreased cognitive development (Lee, 1985, p. 501, cited in Vea, 2010). More recently, Cummins (2001) maintains bilingualism and multilingualism advance student language skills and academic cognitive abilities.

Furthermore, the student’s aptitude in the mother tongue can arguably determine aptitude in the second language. Bilingual experts Cummins (1979) and Hakuta (1990) maintain that the acquisition of one’s own language enables rapid and proficient acquisition of a second language. According to Fusitu’a (1992), who researched Tongan students in
Auckland, competency in, first Tongan, and then English, enhances Tongan students’ learning, and leads to success. Franken et al., (2008) and Fusitu’a (1992) emphasise the valuing of prior student knowledge where a strong first language then a second language is acquired, preparing students for the intense English language experience at tertiary level.

In fact, bilingualism appears to be highly beneficial in more ways than one. It sharpens academic ability and increases language skills generally (Franken et al., 2008). Taumoefolau (2012) sees bilingualism and biliteracy as an antidote to the sense of ‘in-betweenness’ (not belonging to either the Tongan or NZ context) that NZ and Island-born Pacific peoples experience in NZ:

- Pacific Islanders who are bilingual and biliterate in their Pacific language and English are more likely to be bicultural thereby understanding perspectives and insights from both worlds.
- They are more likely to be emotionally and socially equipped to deal with the challenges of everyday life, having more options open to them when they meet life’s crises (pp. 117-118).

Research findings on well devised school bilingual programmes prove that continued learning of the home language, alongside mainstream language in school, neither detracts knowledge nor has adverse effects on the acquiring of mainstream language (Cummins, 2001).

While the in-betweenness that NZ-born Tongans experience may sometimes appear to be less negative in the sense that their island language (and culture) are not required for survival in a NZ context, Taumoefolau (2013) cautions that many NZ-borns Tongans are excluded within their own Pacific communities in NZ due to their lack of Pacific language and culture. Such exclusion can lead to loneliness, feeling lost, and failure in education. Similarly, island-born NZ based Tongans face inbetweenness because they exist in a foreign land and culture, and use a foreign language (Taumoefoalu, 2013). Taumoefolau argues,
however, that Island-borns who have a strong language foundation, culture and identity are better able to cope with the range of challenges which they can face in NZ.

Amituanai-Toloa (2010) asserts the importance of bilingual education for Pacific students within the NZ context. Amituanai-Toloa argues that bilingual education is vital to Islanders’ and Māori success. However, she indicates that the current educational environment is perhaps only paying lip-service to advocating bilingual education, because current educational policies fail to recognise its importance as a pathway for PI success in education. Amituanai-Toloa recommends (2010):

The best help we can give to bilingual teachers, to their students and their parents, and ultimately to the community is to recognise that in the current bilingual environment there is a need for more specific alignment between national policy, schools’ understanding of bilingual education and a more inclusive collaboration….Currently, bilingual education specifically and Pasifika education generally are like litmus paper used in science experiments to see if the colour changes. (Amituanai-Toloa, 2010, p. 8)

Similar perceptions are offered by Franken et al., (2008), McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010) and Hunkin (2012). They discuss what they see as ineffective services for bilingual education for Pacific peoples, despite the decline of Pacific nation languages (for instance Samoan, Niuean, Cook Island Māori and Tongan).

**2.9.iii. Subtractive bilingual education**

There must be caution, however, on the delivery of bilingualism. In bilingualism one language should not suffer at the expense of the other, particularly for non-English speakers: this is known as subtractive bilingualism. Studies by Podmore, Sauvao and Mapa (2003), and Tagoilelagi-Leota, McNaughton, MacDonald and Farry (2005) examined Tongan and Pacific children’s transition from ECE to schools. Tagoilelagi-Leota et al. (2005) tracked the biliteracy and bilingual progression of Tongan and Samoan children as they transitioned from
home and ECE immersion in their L1 (Tongan or Samoan) to English-mainstream medium schools in NZ. At school, the children acquired L2 English through highly effective school programmes designed to develop English proficiency. After one month of attending an English-medium school, these children showed significant signs of English L2 acquisition while at the same time their L1 decelerated.

McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010) also explored the status of four Pacific languages in NZ, including Tongan. Findings showed Pacific families made limited use of their languages at home; as the shift to English language increased, the loss of Pacific languages occurred. Language loss results in adverse socio-cultural issues for Tongans abroad, increasing culture and identity loss which can result in alienation and failure (Hansen, 2004; Lee, 2004; Taumoefolau, 2013).

These studies suggest that L1 maintenance should ideally continue alongside the L2 literacy and language acquisition programmes in schools post-ECE immersion, to create biliterate and bilingual Tongans (and Pacific students). The major issue, however, is that discontinuity in L1 may lead to L1 loss, which signals the importance of government policies and family practices.

2.9.iv. Bilingual education options

Important work by bilingual expert Cummins (1979) explains the different ways bilingual education can occur. First, submersion, whereby the child’s L1 is disregarded. Second, L2 immersion/L1 maintenance programmes, where both L1 and L2 are cultivated. Thirdly, transitional, where L2 is employed after the learner’s L1 is functional. The final way is through maintenance, where both L1 and L2 preservation and continuance are the goals (Cummins, 1979, pp. 245-246).

The bilingual option that safeguards L1 Tongan language while allowing for proficient acquisition of L2 English seems the most ideal for Tongans in education. Such
progammes take the language situation into consideration. For example, in NZ, English language is the majority language. Pacific languages could perhaps be incorporated into NZ schools as immersion programmes to ensure their survival (McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010). The education of indigenous peoples arguably requires a paradigm shift from the valuing of monocultural, monolingual English to the valuing of home languages and cultures (Baer, Dunbar, Skutnabb-Kangas & Magga, 2008; Cummins, 1986; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Durie, 2009; Fitzsimmons & Smith 2000; May, 2002). There is a growing awareness of the loss of culture, language and identity for non-English speakers globally as indicated in seminal work by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) in research for, and by, indigenous peoples. The United Nations does what it can to safeguard the loss of indigenous cultures, languages and identities of indigenous peoples (UN, 2008).

2.9.v. Bilingual education affirming student languages

Affirming first languages and cultures such as bilingual education in schools sends a clear message to students that prejudice, exclusion and racism in mainstream society will not be tolerated. Such policies reflect and celebrate who the students are, and can be, in their communities. Cummins (2001) maintains that the affirmation of student language and culture in school will create a positive discourse against hegemonic attitudes and systems in society and in schools. In summary, Cummins argues that schools should be encouraged to frame student culture and language as benefits rather than issues to be rid of.

Two important studies (Fasi, 1999; Manu, 2005) conducted in Tonga indicate the affirmation of Tongan language for Tongan students leads to success. Fasi maintained that using only English language to test the knowledge of Tongan students in maths was problematic. Fasi (1999) found that the use of English language as the assessment language for maths for Tongan students in Tonga led to failure, and the policy was a poor indicator of the true ability and intelligence of students. When the English language was removed,
Tongan students did far better as a result of increased understanding of math problems (Fasi, 1999). Likewise, Manu (2005) found that, when barriers in language comprehension were removed in terms of allowing for more language switching between Tongan and English, Tongan students showed greater ability in maths.

The significance of bilingualism and bi-literacy cannot be overstated (Bianco, 2010; McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010). Both languages are required for all Tongan students to succeed in education anywhere. Both academic level L1 and L2 are needed for the success of students in school (May et al., 2006). Tongan language is required for the maintenance of a strong cultural identity that is accompanied with confidence in learning within the dominant Western contexts. To provide the right pathways to acquire both languages without subtractive impact on either L1 or L2 for Tongans, it is important to explore second language acquisition theories.

2.10. Second Language Acquisition
Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories are important as they provide useful knowledge on the best way to attain proficiency in L2 while maintaining L1.


\(^5\) See also subsequent work by Krashen & Terrell (1983) for more on Krashen’s acquisition-learning hypothesis.
disputes over Krashen’s acquisition-learning theory are hard to resolve as individuals may be involved in both acquisition and learning.

Second is Eric Lenneberg (1967), critical period (CP) hypothesis which advocates there is an optimum age range for acquisition of L1. The most critical years to acquire L1 are between the early years and adolescence. If the speaker attains L2 while not yet proficient in L1, the outcome will be subtractive (Lenneberg, 1967). Similarly, Lightbown and Spada (1993) assert that, if the goal of L2 acquisition is to attain ‘native-like’ proficiency in L2, then the earlier the age start in L2 acquisition the better. However, Lightbown and Spada (1993) also caution that for minority speakers, subtractive effects of L1 will result if L2 is imposed early on while L1 is at a premature stage. In research by Cummins (2001), Skuttnabb-Kangas (2000) and Baker (2000), there is a consensus that a strong basis in children’s mother tongue (L1) is highly advantageous for advancing L2 successfully.

2.10.i. Other factors affecting SLA
Krashen (1981, 1982) and Ellis (1997) contend that other factors also contribute to successful acquisition of L2. These include: attitude, “self-confidence”, “self-esteem”, “empathy”, and “attitude toward the classroom and teacher” (Krashen, 1981, pp. 23-24), and mutual respect between acquirer and native speakers (Ellis, 1997). The L2 acquisition will be a positive experience when the acquirer and native speakers have mutual respect; animosity will lead to rifts in social relationship and less acquisition (Ellis, 1997).

2.10.ii. Guard against L1 loss
To guard against loss of the mother tongue and any associated negative consequences (Hansen, 2004; Lee, 2004; Taumoefolau et al., 2004), Cummins (2001) advises parents to set tenacious language rules in the home, promote multiple ways of using the language including reading and writing, and to seek contexts where the first language can be further developed. Tongan academics, Tevita Ka‘ili and ‘Anapesi Ka‘ili’s own Tongan language acquisition in
the United States, is a case in point (Ka‘ili & Ka‘ili, 2006). Ka‘ili and Ka‘ili’s parents set language rules making Tongan the language in the home, provided Tongan reading materials, and used multiple forms of Tongan language, oral and written. These practices are consistent with Cummins’ (2001) recommendations for language maintenance. For Tongans in Tonga and abroad, Tongan gatherings such as community and church events enable both L1 maintenance and L2 English acquisition (Taumoepeulu et al., 2012).

Language cultural capital, culture and identity are so intricately interwoven that it seems missing one element from the triad will expose individuals to consequences that could impact on any success in education. Both Tongan and English language competencies are important success factors in education. Therefore bilingual and second language acquisition theories provide insightful ways into the complexities and tensions Tongan language learners seem to face when trying to maintain and use their own indigenous language while acquiring academic English language in efforts to succeed in education. It is now important to review research on Tongans and education to determine what other factors of success may be in existing literature.

2.11. Tongans, Education and Factors of Success
Tongans value education (Kalavite, 2010; MacIntyre, 2008; ‘Otunuku, 2010; Tu‘itahi, 2009; Tu‘i‘onetoa, 2013). This can be traced back to the establishment of the first school in Tonga in 1828 as indicated in seminal work by Tongan educator, Langi Kavaliku (1966).

This section examines literature on Tongans, education and factors of success, with a focus on what has been written on THS and Tongans, the foci of this research. Where there is paucity of Tongan-specific research, literature on Pacific Island students and models of success generally in the Pacific and abroad is examined. Such material provides useful parallels in the Pacific context in which Tonga sits. Attention is also given to NZ research that focuses on Tongans and Pacific Islanders in education. This material centres on the areas
of: Early Childhood Education and Primary School, High School and Tertiary Level, and NZ Ministry of Education research.

2.12. Tonga High School and Education in Tonga

Literature on THS and its alumni is sparse. What is available includes: annual school reports by principals; THS yearbooks; THS commemorative magazines; Tonga Ministry of Education (MOE) reports; and THS and alumni social media websites of various cohorts who attended THS. There are also studies focusing on the general overview of education in Tonga, Tongans and Tonga (Campbell, 1992; Kavaliku, 1966; Spolsky et al., 1983; Thaman, 1993) or on a particular aspect such as studies by Heimuli (2006) and Katoanga (2006). While these works briefly mention THS, there is neither an extant in-depth study of THS and its alumni, nor research into THS and its objectives since the school’s establishment in 1947.

Published Tongan research findings which contain a generic overview of education include Kemp (1959) Allen (1963), Sutton (1963), Kavaliku (1966), Paongo (1990), and Samate (1995). This material was largely explored in the previous chapter. Although limited in number, these publications are nevertheless important as they reveal key points about education and its role in Tonga.

It is sufficient to state at this point that schools in Tonga played and still play a major role in the development of Tonga (Allen, 1963; Kavaliku, 1966; Kemp, 1959; Paongo, 1990; Samate, 1995; Sutton, 1963). Christianisation and the civilising of ‘natives’ were the first key roles of schools in Tonga, followed by a more academically focused education system based on Western models of schooling. Similar historical experiences of education have occurred in neighbouring Pacific nations (Thaman, 1993), and in New Zealand, to varying degrees. Notwithstanding historical agendas, the academic purpose of education remains very much alive today in Tonga.
2.13. **Tongans and Pacific Islanders**

Although Pacific people share a common ancestral language and history, each nation and culture has unique characteristics (Campbell, 1992). While a paucity of research on THS and Tongan graduates requires a thorough examination of literature on Pacific students and education more generally, it is important to note that the tendency to group Tongans and other Pacific students in one category is problematic. Noting this challenge, though, only adds to the necessity and benefit of examining the natural parallels in the Pasifika context. The following sections weave literature on Tongan school models and students, and factors of success, with similar studies located in the broader Pacific context.

2.14. **Factors of Success for Pacific Islanders**

Most researchers in the field of success for PI students advocate a cultural, home, family, school and family relationship, combined with an interventionist and pedagogy priority focus. Research by Bishop and Glynn (1999); Manu’atu (2000); Alton-Lee (2003); Bishop and Berryman (2006); Carpenter and McMurchy-Pilkington (2008); Manu’atu and Kepa, (2001); and Airini and Curtis (2009), are examples of the many with such a focus. Similar studies in the international arena deal with the education of minorities and indigenous peoples in Australia, United States, Canada and America (Battiste, 2002; Delpit, 1995, 1997; Ninnes, 2000).

Research by Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa’afoi, Taleni, and O’Regan (2009) and Fletcher et al., 2005 (cited in Fletcher et al., 2009) reveals what Pacific parents, teachers and students view are success factors. Most findings show that students perceive, in order of importance, the following: parental support and love; maintenance of cultural identity; parents’ and schools’ high expectations for students; home and school relationships; and church (Fletcher et al., 2005, p. 5, cited in Fletcher et al., 2009, p. 25). Success increased when students’ cultural values, knowledge, language and identities were visible in teacher pedagogy. In
addition, parents and students strongly desired strong cultural identity and achievement in mainstream culture (Fletcher et al., 2005, cited in Fletcher et al., 2009):

The findings ... emphasised the importance of acknowledging the cultural capital of Pasifika students and their families in the school setting. Both the Pasifika values of respect for elders (such as parents, ministers and teachers) and the church, plus the centrality of the Bible and reading at home and at church were highly evident. (p. 25)

Fletcher et al. (2009) identified factors which limited success for NZ-based Pacific students: difficulty in text comprehension; lack of visibility of Pacific languages and cultures within schools; parents working long hours with less time to help students from home; and, the role of church in enabling early biliteracy for Pacific students. While Bible reading is instrumental in literacy learning at church and at home, traditional beliefs, such as not questioning the Bible and authority of elders can inhibit students’ critical literary skills (Fletcher et al., 2009). Some contend that teacher understanding of the tension between literary critical skills and the Pacific culture of not questioning authority or sacred text will increase Pacific student success (McCaffery et al., 2003, cited in Fletcher et al., 2009).

NZ critical educator, Ann Milne, is highly influenced by the work of American educator, Jeff Duncan-Andrade (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). In her South Auckland school Milne sets out to foster equitable achievement for all, especially those on the margins such as Pacific and Maori students. Milne (2009) explores how NZ schools generally do not reflect the diversity of their students; the school settings tend to be predominantly Western and mono-cultural. Milne maintains that schools in NZ, and other countries with English-speaking education systems, are ultimately white and hegemonic with their predominant focus on English and Western culture and knowledge. What Milne (2009) calls for is a paradigm shift, where leaders and educators question why and how entire education systems can favour some students and discriminate against others. Such a shift would entail educators
engaging in self-reflection to understand how they might be contributing to inequitable experiences of schooling by students from diverse cultures.

A similar call for a paradigm shift to enable minority success in education is evident in much earlier work by Cummins (1986). He states:

I have suggested that a major reason previous attempts at educational reform have been unsuccessful is that the relationship between teachers and students and between schools and communities have remained essentially unchanged. The required changes involve personal redefinitions of the way classroom teachers interact with the children and communities they serve. In other words, legislative and policy reforms may be necessary conditions for effective change, but they are not sufficient. Implementation of change is dependent upon the extent to which educators, both collectively and individually, redefine their roles with respect to minority students and communities. (pp. 18-19)

2.14.i. Family
An additional factor that has been demonstrated as a principal success factor in education is family (Biddulph, Biddulph, & Biddulph, 2003; Bourdieu, 1986, 1990b, 1996a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979; Davis-Kean, 2005; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Israel, Beaulieu, & Hartless, 2001; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999). American educators and experts on family influence on student success, Anne Henderson and Nancy Berla (1994) examined 66 works from 1969 to 1993 to determine family impact on student success. They state:

The evidence is now beyond dispute. When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life. In fact, the most accurate predictor of a student’s achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which the family is able to:

1. Create a home environment that encourages learning
2. Express high (but not unrealistic) expectations for their children’s achievement and future careers

3. Become involved in their children’s education at school and in the community.

(Henderson & Berla, 1994, p. 15)

And further:

Major findings indicate that the family makes critical contributions to student achievement from the earliest childhood years through high school, and efforts to improve children’s outcomes are much more effective when the family is actively involved. (p. 1)

Henderson and Berla (1994) maintain that the family has fundamental influence on student success from the earliest years of the child’s life. Their principal findings highlight that families do this through nurturing of student habitus and providing forms of capital. This includes the passing on of values and attitudes conducive to success, regardless of family education or culture. Success, then, is a result of pro-active families. In addition, Henderson and Berla advocate family—school partnerships, and families—schools—community collaboration which can increase student achievement.

While highly educated parents have positive effects on student success, parents with little education and a lack of English can also make a difference (Biddulph et al., 2003). Home processes influence student outcomes, regardless of parents’ education and income. Wylie (2001) completed a five-year longitudinal study of children in NZ (the Competent Children Study), and discovered that quality support and activities at home and outside the home such as after-school programmes involving language, maths and symbols resulted in student success.

There are studies on Pacific and Māori students which highlight family as fundamental to student success at tertiary level. These include Airini et al., (2009); Clark (2006); Marat et al., (2011); Penn (2010); and Williams (2010).
Findings by Airini et al. (2009), Penn (2010), and Williams (2010) indicate the following are integral for the success of Maori and Pasifika at tertiary level in NZ: student obligation to family as a powerful motivator; family support, student cultural connection and identity; faith in God; student determination to achieve; social support networks; recognition by institutions of student cultural capital; and self regulation where the individual establishes and strives to achieve goals. In addition, high expectations of teachers, the maintenance of cultural identity in students, and the inclusion of student languages and cultures are key success factors.

The above literature highlights the central role family plays in PI students’ education, in addition to the inclusion of students’ cultures within schools. The literature findings indicate the importance of making strong connections between the student’s school and home environments. For minorities, it appears to be essential that schools, families and communities all collaborate to enable student success. In other words, using Bourdieu’s terms, the building of social capital or connections is important.

2.14.ii. Intervention strategies
To increase the success of Pasifika students (including Tongan students), Clark (2006) implemented an interventionist strategy in Victoria University, NZ, over the span of 15 years. Tangata Pasifika was a response to a call by community elders who witnessed their young people excluded from valued occupations such as medicine. The Tangata Pasifika strategy offered a mainstream statistics course for first-year Māori and Pacific students who required a maths class for their core majors. Focus was placed on student abilities, rather than their lack of abilities in statistics.

This strategy increased Pacific and Māori success in statistics to the same level as other students. Clark noted:
The elders knew what they wanted—a programme, Tangata Pasifika that was not remedial. It was based on a California model that they had read about. The results are interesting in that we have found out a lot of previously undetected ability and the shift from a deficit model to an achievement model has been critical. (2006, p. 2)

Key success factors of the Tangata Pasifika programme included: high expectations, navigating cultural differences, a sense of comfort in class, and lecturers listening to student needs. Clark concluded:

We must raise our expectations of minority pupils. Comfort and high expectations don’t sit easily together in some people’s minds but our Tangata Pasifika group is very clear on this one. Hard do-able work, which is rewarding is what students find comfortable. The worst classroom is the “remedial” classroom. It’s uncomfortable, insulting, undermining and limits achievement. (2006, p. 4).

2.15. Successful Tongan Graduates
Many Tongans have succeeded in education. Tonga boasts a 99 percent literacy rate and, as already indicated in the abstract, the highest number of PhDs per capita in the world (Māhina, 2007). Notwithstanding this, it is well documented, that Tongans and Pacific peoples are under-performing in education systems in the United States and NZ (Bauer, 1993; Marat et al., 2009; Nash, 2000; ‘Otunuku, 2010; Statistics New Zealand & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2010).

There are limited studies specifically on Tongan graduates, and existing studies do not explore success in depth, or the entire educational experience through to university. NZ Tongan students often feature as part of the category ‘Pasifika’ or ‘Pacific Island’ student category. Available literature focuses on education abroad especially in NZ (Faumui, 1996; Kalavite, 2010; Marat et al., 2011; Taufa, 1979), problems encountered at university (Bauer 1993; Faumui, 1996) and life after graduation (Faumui, 1996; Kalavite, 2010; Kupu, 1989;
Taufa, 1979; Tu’inukuafe, 1976). These studies are important as they are seminal works by Tongans and one Samoan who studied Tongan graduates.

Faumui (1996) extends Oloi’s (1994, cited in Faumui, 1996) study on Samoan women at tertiary level to include Tongan women. Faumui (1996) explored the ‘tensions and contradictions’ participants experienced between university and home culture. However, there is no in-depth focus on Tongan women graduates only, and their views on what contributed to their success.

Three studies on successful graduates have particular relevance to this study. However, these works neither focus specifically on success, nor do they link high-school education in Tonga and participants’ success in tertiary study. These studies focus on graduates’ experiences in Tonga, and are written by Tu’inukuafe (1976), Taufa (1979) and Kupu (1989). There is a lack of focus on graduates’ local Tongan high school education experience and the influence this may have had on their success.

Tu’inukuafe’s seminal (1976) research is the first original study on Tongan graduates (Overseas Trained Tongans/OTTs) which included an examination of how these OTTs contributed to Tongan society. A small but significant part of his overall focus ascertained how OTTs were treated by nobility within the government. Tu’inukuafe found OTTs were tu’a—“peasants…despite their education and skills” (p. 32) with their right to acquire and hold positions of influence in government still considered anomalous.

Taufa’s (1979) study is similar to Tu’inukuafe’s (1976) work in the following ways. Taufa also explores the experience of returning Tongan graduates. In addition, Taufa highlights the tension between anga faka-Tonga (Tongan way) and Western influences such as the disruption to traditional hierarchy—where status is achieved through Western academic success rather than birth-right. However, where Tu’inukuafe (1976) gives his greatest attention to the positive impact of returning graduates, Taufa explores more widely
the negative experience of returning graduates. Subsequent effects include the loss of educated Tongans overseas seeking ‘greener pastures’.

In contrast to Tu’iinukuafe and Taufa’s studies, Kupu (1989) conducted a socio-anthropological study of successful Tongan women graduates. Kupu emphasized that being a graduate meant her participants were no longer homemakers but main providers. Drawbacks, however, meant less involvement in church. Similar to Tu’iinukuafe (1976), the majority of Kupu’s (1989) participants (53 percent) were THS alumni, again without further elaboration.

Why a majority of returning graduates were former THS students and what role THS played in the participants’ success was not explored in Kupu (1989), Taufa (1979) or Tu’iinukuafe’s (1976) research. Their findings show the importance of exposure to a Western education overseas, yet they still leave the question largely unanswered as to what influences within Tonga contributed to these graduates’ success.

2.16. Successful Schools

Determining the factors for the success of THS graduates begs a closer examination of other successful models of schooling, especially in the Pacific Islands. There is a helpful parallel to THS in Samoa College in Samoa, examined in literature by Barrington (1968), Vaa, Tamasese, Fiti-Sinclair, Te’o and Afamasaga (2003) and Coxon (2007). These studies highlight why a total English immersion model in a Pacific nation can be successful. Samoa College and THS provide similar models of schooling.

Prior to Samoa College, Samoa sent students abroad for further education, with Samoan chiefs levying a tax in 1943 to educate their sons in NZ with aid from the NZ Education Commission. A scholarship scheme was also established by the NZ Director of Education, C. E. Beeby, in 1944 for 12 Samoan students to attend high school in NZ (Coxon, 2007). A decade later in 1953 the New Zealand Ministry of Education established Samoa
College to prepare future leaders for Samoan’s independence, and in reply to a request by the local matai for better local high schools.

Samoa College in 1953 offered a NZ curriculum and an English only policy. Vaa et al.’s., (2003) commemorative book marking Samoa College’s 50th anniversary contained personal accounts by Samoa College alumni celebrating its success. Noted also in these stories is the punishment dealt to students who disobeyed the English-only policy. Students who broke the English-only policy faced corporal punishment (Vaa et. al., 2003). These punishments were often hard, yet its English only policy and Western education provided enormous possibilities for success for Samoan people and their country (Vaa et al., 2003).

Samoa College’s Western schooling system, like THS in Tonga, is not without its critics. Critics of such English immersion models in the Pacific and for minorities cite loss of culture, language, self-determination, identity, and failure as major defects (McCaffery, 2010 personal communication; Taufe’ulungaki, 1992; Thaman, 1993, 1995; Thiong’o, 1986). Despite these criticisms, this particular Western school model did contribute to the success of Samoan students in education (Vaa et al., 2003). At its 50th anniversary, Samoa College had produced successful alumni locally and abroad, including lawyers, doctors, teachers, educators, researchers, business women and men, academics, poets and writers, clergy, and servicemen and women (Vaa et al., 2003).

When examining literature on successful school models in NZ, Te Hau (2006), McKinney (2007), Lipine (2010), Kay (2008) and Gray (2012) provide relevant examples. Key factors across these studies include a supportive family, culture and the importance of relationships between family and school in determining success. Employing Bourdieusian theory to highlight ways St Joseph’s Māori Girls’ College in the Hawkes Bay bridged home and school to enable student success, Te Hau (2006) found that privileging and valuing Māori
language and culture, whanau support, mana wahine (female empowerment) and academic achievement were keys to success.

Similarly, McKinney (2007) found Māori culture was a significant success factor with specific focus on the influence of connections (whanaungatanga) on student outcome. Whanaungatanga, the relationship between people with common goals, commitment, and support towards particular visions such as success in education, includes support networks such as: (1) Mana Arahi: direction, scaffolding, belief and set expectations for students; (2) Mana Tautoko: support, guidance, encouragement, challenges, enjoyment, trust and set rules for students; (3) Mana Whakatipu: love, nurturing, quality discourse, cultivation, and set boundaries; and (4) Mana Māori: language, genealogy, culture and the Māori world (McKinney, 2007). Family, teachers and peers were key forms of whanaungatanga.

Lipine (2010) examined Samoan students in six secondary schools in NZ to identify what factors led to their success. The key finding was that the Samoan family (‘āiga) is fundamental to student success as a source of positive support and motivation in education. Alongside this important factor are Samoan language and culture (fa’a-Sāmoa), churches, socio-economic background, and teachers’ understanding of students and their circumstances. Lipine highlights the importance of community, parents, students and teachers as contributors toward student success.

Kay (2008) studied Year 13 Māori students who were academically successful. Kay’s focus was on 13 students, although parents, teachers and the principal were also included. The objective was to ascertain what motivated and influenced student success in attaining the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 2 and then continuing to study NCEA Level 3. Kay (2008) found family was the most important success factor, and often a specific family member or adult valued education, and that person motivated, and positively influenced student self-efficacy. Teachers and peers also had a positive influence
on students’ success. Teachers affirmed that their positive relations with these thirteen Māori students influenced student success.

Gray (2012) looked at stories of 10 ‘at risk’ students in a state co-educational school in NZ to determine how, despite their status as ‘at risk’, they have over the span of five years in a secondary school attained at least NCEA Level 1. At risk is defined in Gray’s study as experiencing issues of learning, behaviour, health and truancy. Students were male and female and of Pakeha, Pacific, Māori and Asian ethnicity. Research included the examination of students’ lives within and outside the school to determine what impacted on students’ education. The key finding was that the quality of relationships between students, parents and teachers, i.e., in Bourdieusian terms, social capital, entailed strong engagement, respect, and resiliency in and outside of school.

2.17. Tongan Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Primary School

Research on the ECE and primary school experience of Tongans by Tongan researchers in NZ is limited (Finau, 2000; MacIntyre, 2008). However, these studies have contributed significantly to the knowledge on the education of Tongans. A number of themes have emerged from this group of research studies which may indicate fundamental causes of success for Tongans in NZ ECE.

Differences between the realm of home and school in NZ were noted by Pau‘uvale (2011) and Wolfgramm (1991). Pau‘uvale found a mismatch between Tongan and Western interpretations of what ‘quality’ ECE meant. Pau‘uvale maintains that ECE policy-makers and officials must acknowledge Tongan notions of quality ECE such as holistic learning, Tongan language, culture, and values. Wolfgramm (1991) found Tongan children’s reading socialisation practices at home were incongruent with reading practices at school when examining book reading with Tongan pre-schoolers aged 3-4.
In contrast, a report prepared by McNaughton, Wolfgramm and Afeaki (1996) used Tongan reading resources amongst three to four year old Tongans in seven families and in ECE centres. Findings established that the usage of Tongan reading resources within the ECE centres were ideal for teaching these children.

Research on Tongan ECE experiences seems to indicate that parents, mothers, teachers, policy-makers and government ECE officials (MacIntyre, 2008; Lātū, 2009) play significant roles in the educational success of Tongan learners, whether through reading socialisation using Tongan and religious materials, critical, socio-political dialogue with children, or through understanding and evaluation of quality ECE practices. In addition, the incorporation of Tongan culture, language and worldviews (Finau, 2000; Lātū, 2009; MacIntyre, 2008) such as notions of what quality entails in ECE to inform the education of Tongan learners is vital. This will not only maintain Tongan identity but act as a firm foundation for learning of a second language when transitioning to primary school level.

2.18. Tongans and High School

There is limited research on Tongans at high-school level and in transition to tertiary level.

Studies by Kata (2006) and Kilioni and Kupu (2006) of high schools in Tonga look at the use of English, and find Tongan students experiencing difficulty learning English. These researchers maintain that the teaching of English as a subject by teachers at two church schools, and at THS (by the latter researcher) found teachers using Tongan language to teach English as a subject. This led to issues, including failure for these students as English is the medium of testing in Tongan schools.

NZ Studies by Fusitu’a (1992), Fusitu’a and Coxon (1998) and Manu‘atu (2000) highlight the importance of a Tongan strategy to raise achievement for Tongan students through collaboration between families and schools, or families and the government. These
studies also indicate the importance of Tongan culture in the achievement of Tongan students in schools such as pō ako (night study) and involvement in cultural festivals in NZ (Manu’atu, 2000).

Fusitu’a (1992), ‘Otunuku (2010) and Nakhid (2003) found that some teachers held deficit views of Tongan students which contributed to failure. Teachers made few efforts to be critical of the mono-cultural school system that served the students. ‘Otunuku (2010), for instance, found that in the teachers’ views, Tongan students in NZ had more sports success models and fewer academic role models to emulate. Nakhid (2003) examined two groups of secondary students in transition, one into and the other out of secondary schooling. These students were unable to construct how they wished to be perceived within the school as teachers held preconceived ideas and stereotypes of both students and parents.

Fusitu’a and Coxon (1998) and Mila-Schaaf and Robinson (2010) found close links between student cultural backgrounds and success. Fusitu’a and Coxon carried out a participant-observation study from 1991-1992 of a homework centre as part of a wider government-sponsored initiative to combat underachievement by Pacific students at secondary level in NZ. Fusitu’a and Coxon found high expectations of Tongan students and the inclusion of their culture led to success. Tongan parents provided a strong impetus behind the homework centre initiative. Mila-Schaaf and Robinson (2010) also looked at Tongan (and Pacific) secondary students data from Youth Pacific findings. Students who had knowledge of, and took pride in, Pacific language and culture were successful in school. These students attributed their success to their family’s dreams that they succeed as migrants from the Pacific nations.

‘Otunuku’s significant (2010) study was located in the NZ high-school context. He placed particular emphasis on Tongan impressions of secondary education and its influence on success. ‘Otunuku clearly determined conceptions of schooling from the triad
perspectives of teachers, parents and students, and he described the necessary changes that might make success possible for Tongan students.

The above studies indicate the fundamental importance of Tongan culture, language and worldviews as they interface with education, and affect the success of Tongans in education. Family appears to be central to student achievement. Mainstream teachers’ deficit theorizing of Tongan students and their cultures in these studies contributed to Tongan students’ failure. Student achievement was raised when there were positive initiatives in place. However, schools could alienate and exclude Tongans when their culture and language were ignored.

2.19. Tongans at Tertiary Level
Research publications on Tongans at tertiary level include: Nakhid et al. (2007), Kalavite (2010), Vaioleti (2011) and Havea (2011).

These studies note that success depended on whether school and student culture matched. Nakhid et al., (2007) interviewed five NZ-born Pacific students at university in NZ, including one Tongan, to ascertain their perspectives on the pedagogy offered. She noted a mismatch between lecturers’ and students’ relationships. Kalavite (2010) and Vaioleti (2011) argue for the inclusion of Tongan culture in education to increase Tongan students’ success through Tongan based-pedagogy on notions such as ‘ofa (compassion), poto (clever, skilful, understand what to do for the benefit of all), ‘ilo (knowledge, process of knowing), fatongia (duty) and fonua (land, country, people, placenta) to guide relationships in education for Tongans to succeed.

Havea (2011) found lotu (church, spirituality, faith) a success factor for Tongan and Pacific students at university. Underlying the importance of lotu for these students was their own personal definitions of success. Success for participants meant contributing to the collective (Havea, 2011), echoing similar notions of success held by Tu‘itahi (2009) and
Vaden (1998). Success is not just attaining qualifications but the lived reality that reflects that one is enlightened/educated, maintains culture, upholds community rules, and contributes to family, church, and society (Havea, 2011; Tu‘itahi, 2009; Vaden, 1998).

2.20. NZ Ministry of Education Research

The NZ Ministry of Education (MoE) has carried out significant research aimed at improving Pacific students’ success in education. MoE initiatives such as the Achievement in Multicultural High School (AIMHI) (Hill & Hawk, 2000), Te Kotahitanga projects (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2007, 2009) and *The Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012* and *Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success/Māori Education Strategy 2008-2012* are geared specifically to increase Pacific and Māori success in NZ education. All these initiatives were student oriented, i.e., the students’ success, well-being and student perspectives on what enabled their learning were significant. Generally the findings emphasise the importance of the inclusion of student culture in schools, more positive student—teacher relationships, student capacity-building pedagogy, and high expectations by teachers within schools, rather than victim blaming and the cultural deficit views which are held by some teachers.

Two literature reviews have been carried out on the education of Pacific peoples in NZ. One is by Coxon, Anae, Mara, Wendt-Samu and Finau (2002), and the other more recent review is by Chu, Glasgow, Rimoni, Hodis and Meyer (2013). Both reviews identify Pacific cultures, languages, family support and culturally effective pedagogy as integral for Pacific success in education at all levels. The gaps in both reviews signal the need to pay close attention to transitions between school levels and how previous education impacts on the next level of schooling and success. Both reviews note the lack of other ethnic-specific studies. These gaps in literature on Pacific people in education, noted above, clearly need further research to determine the needs of each ethnic group. There is a need to determine,
from Tongan students themselves, what the success factors are from their points of view to inform future policies, pedagogy, curriculum and school systems.

2.21. Conclusion

The literature examined in this chapter is relevant to the focus of this research, “to what do successful Tongan graduates of THS attribute their success”, and, “what role did THS play in the success of these graduates”. It demonstrates that *habitus*, forms of capital and field are significant to student success, as illustrated in Bourdieu’s extensive work on French schools and education. A more in-depth exploration of all these success factors is likely to reveal the nature and impact of Tongan graduates’ language acquisition, socio-cultural background, and identity on their success.

Positive bilingual education and second language acquisition is vital to student success in education as depicted in research on Pacific peoples in which Tongan students feature. Missing is a comprehensive examination of the role of English and Tongan languages in Tongan graduates’ success in education.

NZ research on education clearly documents that a paradigm shift in engagement with Pacific students in schools, family, Pasifika-focused schools, school and family relationships, culture, amongst others, are important factors that contribute to success in education for Pacific students. However, these success factors applied to Tongan graduates educated in Tonga will no doubt reveal nuances and complexities in family influence that only these graduates can reveal from their experiences and viewpoints.

Seminal works by Tongans on Tongan graduates (Kupu, 1989; Taufa, 1979; Tu'inukuafe, 1976), including macro studies on education in Tonga covered in the context section of the previous chapter, reveal THS alumni were a high percentage of the various studies’ participants. However, no studies have examined why this was the case, i.e., why most of the successful Tongan graduates were THS alumni. While research by the NZ
Ministry of Education has found success factors that are common to NZ Pasifika and/or minorities, we do not know enough about Tongan students’ success, particularly related to those who attended local schools in Tonga.

This study aims to ascertain personal rationales for success, and the perceived role, if any, of THS in graduates’ success. The uniqueness of this study is in its specific links to the potential role of THS, and its openness to establishing contributors to success. No other study has taken such a focus, and the findings could be influential for education in Tonga. To address the two research questions it is essential to listen to the voices of THS graduates who are deemed to be successful. The following chapter sets out the research methodology and methods.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3. INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this study are two-fold: to investigate what successful Tongan graduates who are alumni of Tonga High School (THS) attribute their success to; and to examine the role THS may have played in their success, if any.

The purpose of this chapter is to lay out the research process undertaken to address the above objectives. The structure is as follows: (1) outline of the research paradigms and rationale; (2) description of the research design; (3) explanation of the process of participant selection; (4) outline and explanation of the data collecting tools; (5) description of the data analysis process; and (6) an explanation for how issues of validity, reliability and ethics were addressed.

3.1. Research Paradigms

This study is located within a Critical Social Science (CSS) approach or paradigm. It is underpinned by critical theory, post-colonial and indigenous theories (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 1999). Pacific research theory (Tertiary Education Commission [TEC], 2003), and a Tongan Tala ‘o Tonga theory and methodology (Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2012a, 2012b) are important aspects of the methodology.

CSS encompasses a set of beliefs about the social world, the position of the individual in it, and its internal relations. Together these methods which are appropriate for the research study, and how the research inquiry should be carried out (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Neuman, 2003; Punch, 2005). Critical theory underpins CSS. This means that work by critical theorists such as Freire in education, and Bourdieu in sociology and education (Neuman, 2003) help illuminate any findings. As Neuman states, CSS is an approach that “seeks to provide people with a resource that will help them understand and change their world” (Neuman, 2003, p. 85), or as Neuman further elaborates, a CSS is a:
critical process of inquiry that goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real
textures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a
better world for themselves. (p. 81)

This study will uncover what THS graduates perceive to be the factors of success for
them in education. In the interest of exploring alternative pathways and critical thinking on
the routes to success for Tongans in education, this study will examine what successful THS
graduates attribute their success to, and the role THS may have played in their success. The
process of addressing of these questions, and the answers elicited might, in the spirit of
critical theory, ‘change conditions’ and ‘build a better world’ particularly for Tongans in
Tonga, and perhaps for Tongans abroad. An emphasis on successful Tongan graduates’
narratives will reveal experiences which only participants can share.

Premised on the critical theory principle of empowerment, especially of people on the
margins, this study is sourced from a postcolonial indigenous research paradigm as indicated
in Chilisa (2012) and Smith (1999). A postcolonial indigenous research paradigm privileges
and honours indigenous knowledge, values, principles and worldviews, while at the same
time being underpinned by postcolonial, feminist, critical race, decolonising and
emancipatory theories (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 1999).

The centrality of indigenous knowledge in framing the methodological framework is
important. That is, methods of data collection are structured around the worldviews, values,
protocol, knowledge, and culture of the participants. Such methodologies aim to provide
ethical, meaningful, relational, and respectful ways of conducting research, particularly from
the participants’ positionings (Chilisa, 2012, pp. 100-101). In such a framework the
researcher and the participants are co-constructors of the entire research process, with the
answers to issues faced by the participants residing within the participants themselves. This
framework requires accessing indigenous knowledge systems in forms other than written.
Chilisa (2012) observes that there is a range of valid sources of information, such as:
language, stories, legends, songs, dance, artefacts, customs, prayers, and pictures. All of
these are fundamental forms of expression used amongst indigenous peoples.

The research paradigms used to address the questions, therefore, will incorporate
Tongan culture and knowledge alongside Western epistemological frameworks to provide an
approach that is culturally appropriate, affirming and centring of participants as principal
agents in articulating their experiences. It is expected that themes will emerge and theories
be generated. The chosen methodology is particular to, and respectful of, Tongan culture,
while at the same time acknowledging and drawing on a Western paradigm. This is the
general approach taken in the design of this methodology and its application during the
research process.

The chosen CSS approach allowed for sourcing from a Tongan worldview and
epistemology as this is research by a Tongan, amongst Tongans, for Tongans in education,
with the aim to building Tongan capacity (Hau’ofa, 2008; Nabobo-Baba, 2004; Smith, 1999).
Thus, the methodology used has sought to stay close to the principles of building Tongan
people’s potential, being mindful of our history, culture and way of life, and seeking to
empower a people who often exist on the margins (Māhina, 2004c; Mila-Schaaf, 2009;
Smith, 1999).

To achieve the above, this study implements, and adapts the Pacific research paradigm as
constructed by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC, 2003) for research amongst Pacific
peoples in tertiary education in NZ. TEC (2003) states that research amongst Tongans
should:

- be informed by and embedded within the continuum of Tongan worldviews, knowledge,
  practices and values;
• be conducted in accordance with Tongan ethical standards, values and aspirations, such as responsiveness and reciprocity;
• involve research processes and practices that are consistent with Tongan values, standards and expectations;
• include methods, analysis and measurements that recognise Tongan philosophy, spirituality and experience; and,
• include data derived from the broad range of Tongan knowledge and experience.

(TEC, 2003, p. 4)

The above, however, does not mean the ‘archaelogising’ of Tongan cultural knowledge. As Mila-Schaaf argues:

To restore and revitalize indigenous [Tongan] ways of knowing with an agenda of reproducing an authentic version of ‘what has been’ is inadequate in itself. At some point, one must move beyond “archaeology” and focus instead on what and how such knowledge might have continuing energy and force in the present. (2009, p. 27)

A dialectical, contemplative and interpretive process is appropriate, sourcing from Tongan and Western epistemology. Mila-Schaaf (2009) adds:

This then, is not simply a project of restoration, but is rather a project of transformation involving acts of deliberation and negotiation between ideas sourced to different knowledge systems. (p. 28)

In this study, Western critical theory underpins and combines with a Tongan methodological theory that informs and achieves an in-depth appreciation and sensitive application of Tongan philosophy and methods to attain what Smith (1999) avers should be the endeavour of indigenous research: to privilege indigenous epistemologies, build indigenous research capacity and empower indigenous peoples. As in all critical theory approaches, the long-term aim is to change circumstances for the better.
It is important for this study that Western and Tongan traditions are woven together to create a cohesively ethical, humane and relevant methodological approach that seeks to respect all people and contexts involved during the research process. Māhina, Ka‘ili and Ka‘ili (2006) provide the most apposite metaphor for the process itself from an indigenous paradigm—as the interweaving of different strands in how we enact and live life, in this case as the process of research in education. According to Māhina et al., (2006), one must first weave the best of the strands of Tongan ancestral knowledge and ways of being, then add to this the best of secondary knowledge and ways of being in education in the West. Through this interleaving, Māhina et al., (2006) elevate the importance of unity in diversity as they explicate the nature of the Tongan art of sinnet lashing using two diverse colours, black and red, to produce a work of great beauty that signifies the harmonious interweaving of difference in unity. The objective is to combine the best of both worlds, in an approach that respects Tongan culture while simultaneously sourcing from Western knowledge so as to create a research approach that is accepted in Western worldview, yet maintains the Tongan. This is the general approach taken in the design of this methodology and its application during the research process.

3.2. Tala ‘o Tonga Methodology
The methodological framework used in the research process was informed by a Tala ‘o Tonga Methodology (TTM) (Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2012a, 2012b), in addition to Western frameworks. A TTM encompasses Tongan epistemological entities which maintain that Tongan culture and worldviews underpin any and all engagements with participants, methods, analysis of data and the process of writing up the thesis (Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2012a, 2012b). As indicated in Toetu‘u-Tamihere, TTM is inspired by Tongan anthropologist, ‘Okusi Māhina (1992), who uses a different term for tala ‘o Tonga as tala-e-fonua:
(lit. Telling-of-the-land-and-its-people), a vernacular ecology-centred concept of cultural and historical structuring. In short, this Tongan “art form” is a symbolic way of socially representing, in literal terms, past and present events about people (fonua), handed down from one generation to the next by word of mouth (tala). As an essentially social concept, tala e fonua is an indigenous ecology-based mode of construction of the ordered and altered landscape movement of people, characterised by permanence and change in specific human relationships between groups. Thus, tala-e-fonua is peculiarly a Tongan Weltanschauung, a philosophy of life. (Māhina, 1992, p. vi)

Following in the footsteps of indigenous research methodology developed by Māori (Bishop, 1995; Smith, 1997; Smith, 1999) for Māori research known as Kaupapa Māori Methodology (KMM) or Kaupapa Māori Theory and Practice (KMTP), a TTM epistemological framework privileges a Tongan worldview; prescribes and adheres to the use of Tongan culturally appropriate research methods; maintains significant aspects of Tongan life (lea Tonga—language, tupu’anga—origin, hohoko—genealogy, fonua—land and so forth); and, seeks to centre Tongan knowledge and culture. A TTM reflects closely the KMM in efforts to challenge the notions that Western knowledge is better than Tongan knowledge as a paradigm for research or other activities (Hau’ofa, 2008; Nabobo-Baba, 2004; Smith, 1999). It seeks to critique what is considered the norm, that is Western, mainstream methodologies of research, and to include Tongan research methodologies, contributing to developing Tongan research methodology in its nascent stages.

TTM is sourced from Tongan philosophy and a Tongan worldview to promote a culturally relevant approach. Māhina’s Tā-Vā (‘Time-Space’) theory of reality (2002b; 2004b), later developed by Ka’ili (2008) to study Tongans in Maui, also informs this research as it highlights the value Tongans place on the importance of harnessing the vā (space that connects) between researcher and participants. The Tā-Vā theory involves deliberate, collaborative and dialectic engagement to gain deeper insight into the participants’
educational experiences. Valuing the vā involves adherence to Tongan protocol. For instance, humility and gratefulness underpin the ritual of encounter and engagement when meeting the participants. The exchange of genealogy can be used to establish connections to place and origin for the knowledge of both participant and researcher. The use of prayers is also generally used to set and create a space of trust and harmony, within which stories can be openly shared. At the end of the kaliloa (interview/telling of stories), gifting of an item by the researcher to the participant shows deep appreciation for the participants’ time, and sharing of stories is culturally appropriate. The wearing of formal Tongan dress: a long skirt (tupenu), dress or top and the traditional wraparound (ta'ovala or kiekie) is a sign of respect when interviewing participants, particularly in Tonga. Traditional Tongan wear whilst researching in a NZ context is more flexible as NZ is a Western context and so the wearing of formal Western clothing is usually more suitable when conducting research. It would be considered disrespectful for the researcher to carry out an interview wearing jeans.

At the heart of TTM is the original research theory and data-collecting method, Talanoa mei he Kaliloa (TMK or kaliloa as a shorter versions) which is a Tongan contextualised interview or narrative inquiry method (Taumoefolau & Toetu’u-Tamihere, 2011; Toetu’u-Tamihere, 2010, 2011, 2012). While kaliloa is a Tongan traditional cultural practice (Abel et al., 2001), there are no extant examples of its use as a methodological framework for research or as a data collecting tool. Kaliloa was first theorised and used in this research as a separate entity from the talanoa method which has been well developed and described by a number of scholars in their work (Otsuka, 2006; Robinson & Robinson, 2005; Vaioleti, 2006). This is further explored under the data collecting methods section.

3.3. Qualitative Research
The research aims and paradigms, and TTM that underpin this inquiry make a qualitative methodology appropriate. This examines people, occurrences, and phenomena in
their natural settings (Punch, 2005). It is also ‘emergent’ in that there can be flexibility for changing the questions when new revelations emerge during the research process, prompting a refining of questions or the identification of new sites of research (Creswell, 2003). This methodology recognises too that social research is a study of social phenomena. Qualitative methodology employs methods such as ethnography or the study of people from a particular group or culture (Creswell, 2003; Davidson & Tollich, 1999; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Qualitative research is open to multiple ways of gathering data to construct theory (Sarantakos, 2005) with methods that are ‘interactive’, ‘humanistic’, and allowing of active involvement of participants and sensitivity towards theme (Creswell, 2003, p. 181). Being aware that qualitative research values a focus on the interaction between the researchers and researched, and that, as a process, it is political and politicised—a ‘human construction’ that involves power, ideologies and discourses (Punch, 2005)—conscientious efforts were made to recognise my own worldviews and to be aware of how these may affect the research.

In addition, qualitative methods mean that data emerging from the study is open to multiple interpretations and meanings, as human beings construct meaning in various ways. The ultimate goal is to highlight participants’ own construction of what is important to them—from their perspectives, thus privileging their voices. Therefore the paradigms undergirding this study will maintain focus on active participation by the participants.

The qualitative research paradigm is broken down further in next section to describe specific characteristics of qualitative research relevant to this study.

### 3.3.i. Characteristics of qualitative research

My role as researcher is principally as the tool of research rather than as a source or agent (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Miles and Huberman’s (1994) list of characteristics of qualitative research is dated. However, these authors capture in essence what my research
sets out to do. The following are characteristics of qualitative research specified by them, which also typifies this study:

- Qualitative research is conducted through an intense and/or prolonged contact with a ‘field’ or life situation. These situations are typically ‘banal’ or normal ones, reflective of the everyday life of individuals, groups, societies, and organizations.

- The researcher’s role is to gain a ‘holistic’ (systematic, encompassing, integrated) overview of the context under study; its logic, its arrangements, its explicit and implicit rules.

- The research attempts to capture data on the perception of local actors ‘from the inside’, through a process of deep attentiveness of emphatic understanding (Verstehen), and of suspending or ‘bracketing’ preconceptions about the topics under discussion.

- Reading through these materials, the researcher may isolate certain themes and expressions that can be reviewed with informants, but that should be maintained in their original forms throughout the study. (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 6)

For all these reasons, this study is qualitative in approach.

The next section describes a Tongan methodological metaphor that underpins the entire research process.

3.4. Research Strategy

3.4.i. Ethnography

way of life from the point of view of its participants; ethnography is the art and science of
describing a group or culture” (Fetterman, 1989; Neuman, 1994, both cited in Punch, 2005, p.
149). Kaliloa is a Tongan socialisation process whereby ‘tellings’ or stories are passed on
from the teller to the listener with the principal aim of teaching or imparting wisdom
Ethnography, despite the view of its advocates that it seeks the “holistic picture of subject[s]
of study” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990; Jacob, 1987; both cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 200) is, in
the view of non-Western academics such as Said (1978) and Hau’ofa (2008), the main
research method which Westerners used to categorise non-Western peoples as ‘other’.
Works by Margaret Mead (1973) on Pacific Islanders are often cited as a case in point.

In this study, ethnography will be reclaimed and then underpinned by TTM to enable
a culturally relevant and holistic in-depth study of the participants’ experiences. Western in-
depth, interviewing, shaped by TTM, will take the shape of kaliloa (Taumoefolau & Toetu’u-
Tamihere, 2011; Toetu’u-Tamihere, 2010, 2011, 2012a, 2012b), an approach that is useful,
meaningful and relevant as a kaliloa taautaha (individual interviews), and as a kaliloa faka-
kulupu (focus group).

3.5. Narrative Inquiry
Narrative inquiry, used in psychology, sociology, anthropology and education
(Clandinin, 2007; Riessman, 2008; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) to organize and analyse
personal and collective stories including human understandings of themselves, others and the
world in which they live, will also be used in this research. Critics of narrative inquiry infer
that it is an approach lacking in ‘rigour’ (Atkinson & Delamont, 2005). Indigenous
researchers such as Benham (2007) and Smith (1999), however, maintain that such views of
narrative inquiry are arguments of positivists who fail to acknowledge that, for many
indigenous cultures, story has given, and still gives, life to traditions and people. Chilisa
(2012) also advocates that, for indigenous peoples, there are ‘other’ sources of knowledge from within their cultures that are equal if not more valuable than foreign knowledge. As such these indigenous methods of collecting data must be incorporated into the research methods of Western tradition to tell the stories of the indigenous peoples from their own viewpoints.

Debate around the boundaries and use of narrative inquiry as a research strategy is ongoing. Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) posit that there are “real differences of opinion on the epistemological, ideological, and ontological commitments of narrative inquirers as well as differences with those who do not identify as narrative inquirers” (p. 27). This study, underpinned by postcolonial indigenous paradigms, will privilege storytelling in the form used within the Tongan culture as an indigenous culture, as opposed to a Western narrative inquiry (Chilisa, 2012).

3.5.i. Why an indigenous Tongan narrative inquiry?

My interest in an indigenous Tongan narrative inquiry stems from my personal experience of the power of the Tongan traditional socialisation practice, kaliloa. Kaliloa is ethically and culturally relevant for use in a Tongan context; it elicits honest, truthful, and personal accounts or retelling of events and experiences, memories and reflections from the participants, who share their stories to empower, enlighten, guide, teach and strengthen others. Kaliloa is also relational as the stories told by the participant connect the past and the present to the future, while simultaneously establishing a connection with the hearer (researcher). That is, kaliloa is built upon a deep connection between teller and listener, through recollection, remembering, and reciting what is considered important to the teller in the teller’s journey of stories. The listener values the process of re-telling stretches backwards and forwards in time and space, to inform the present and future formation of the individuals engaging in the kaliloa.
3.5.ii. Kali & Kaliloa

*Kali* is an ancient Tongan traditional pillow, synonymously referred to by others as headrest or neckrest (Fīnau, 2011; Kaeppler & Newton, 1971, cited in Dhyne, 1999; Toetu’u-Tamihere, 2010, 2011, 2012a; Tu’ilitolava, 2011). Refer also to Dhyne (1999) for a more comprehensive account of explorers who wrote of the Tongan kali and other sources. There are different types of kali such as, *kali toloni* (Figure 1), *kali hahapo* (Figure 2), *kaliloa* (Figure 3), *tekihi*, and *kali kofe* amongst others. Each kali is named according to the material it is made of, for example *kali kofe* is made out of bamboo—*kofe*; shape or form, for example a *kaliloa* is a long kali that would fit several people; or purpose. In the latter, according to personal communication with Pela Tu’ilitolava (April 19, 2011), a *kali hahapo* (to capture/to accept) and a *kali toloni* (to defer, delay) were two types of kali that a young Tongan lady would use to indicate either an acceptance of or delay of a marriage proposal by a suitor.

![Figure 1: Kali toloni, Auckland Museum 31812. (Photograph courtesy of Auckland Museum)](image-url)
If the young lady accepted the marriage proposal of a young man, she would gift him the *kali hahapo* at the traditional Tongan *kava* celebration, which is the Western version of a date, to indicate her acceptance and as a symbol of her trust and love. But in the case where the young lady is uncertain and needs more time to think over the proposal, she would gift the

---

*Figure 2: Kali hahapo, Auckland Museum 8638. (Photograph courtesy of Auckland Museum)*

*Figure 3: Kali loa, private collection. (Photograph by Jeffrey Dhyne)*

*kali toloni* as a symbol of deferring or delaying her response (Tu‘ilotolava, 2011). What is significant to note is that *kali* is a symbol of the trust placed in someone (Fīnau, 2011; Tu‘ilotolava, 2011). Similarly, the gifting of stories by the participants infers a giving of trust to me as the researcher. By retelling their journeys in education toward success, they are entrusting to me something precious which they expect will be used for meaningful purposes, such as to empower other young Tongans in education. Imparting their stories to me, in trust, carries with it certain obligations on my part to ensure that the stories are used for good, to empower others and not for any other reason. This is the essence of the *kaliloa*: the stories are told to empower others.

Another interpretation of *kali* comes from the saying *Holo e tu‘u he koe ngalu ‘e fasi* which means someone or a group standing firm as *kali* to accept the responsibility or command that will be given to be carried out (Tu‘ilotolava, 2011). *Holo e tu‘u he ko e ngalu ‘e fasi* is a phrase meaning the pose of the surfer in anticipation of a huge wave coming his/her way. If the surfer is not careful or not paying attention, the huge wave will sweep the person off her/his feet. The task of the surfer therefore is to bend one’s legs so as to stand firm, so that the wave does not overturn the surfer. This ‘surfer pose’ is therefore used as a metaphor to depict children who *tu‘u kalikali* (stand firm like the *kali*), to listen, hear, accept and internalise the *ngaahi tala* (tellings) and *akonaki* (teachings of the parents). Adhering to the ‘tellings’ and the teachings (*akonaki*), and following this practice closely within the home, is what can differentiate Tongans as Tongans from other ethnic groups.

*Kaliloa* (Figure 3 above) is a long wooden *kali*, long enough to fit several people at one time. *Kaliloa* as a metaphor means the arm of the mother or father laid out for the children to lay their heads on while stories are imparted from the *kaliloa*—the wise, older, adults in the family, usually mother, father, aunts, uncles, or grandparents. Traditionally, it was the practice that daughters lay their heads on their mother’s arm and sons on their
father’s arm. According to Fīnau (2011), there was no mixing of gender at the kaliloa, unless the child was still a baby, due to the Tongan faka‘apa‘apa code of respect that maintains separate living quarters for different genders, unless it is a couple who are married. As Tu‘ilotolava (2011) explains, the structure of the traditional Tongan fale reserved one leke (room) for all the daughters and the mother at times, and one leke (room) for the sons and the father. There could also be a separate leke for the mother and father only, as well as a loto fale (middle room) which connected all the other rooms whereby the entire family would gather and receive the talatalaifale (tellings in the house—my translation). Talatalaifale, or ‘tellings’ in the house that are universal for both sons and daughters to internalize and learn from was carried out by the father, while fakalekesi was the mother’s task of passing on whatever was valuable in terms of principles to live by for the sons and daughters. Both talatalaifale and fakalekesi according to Tu‘ilotolava (2011) are aspects of the overarching indigenous Tongan socialization process of Kaliloa.

Kaliloa therefore is defined as the passing on of ancient Tongan traditions (tukufakaholo) throughout the ages and it is an important form of education within Tongan society (Fīnau, 2011; Taumoefolau & Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2010, 2011, 2012a, 2012b; Tu‘ilotolava, 2011). Oral traditions in Tongan culture are passed on by laying down—laying one’s head on the arm of the parent—while the kaliloa is fanafana‘i (whispered) to the child (Fīnau, 2011; Tu‘ilotolava, 2011; Toetu‘u-Tamihere 2010, 2011, 2012; Taumoefolau & Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2011).

Again, the essence of kaliloa as explicated here is complete and utter trust (child in this case) placed in someone else (parent/adult) who imparts the information by fanafana or whispers to the child. There are important things to be noted. The kaliloa, being long in form, means there can be several children, lying on their mother’s arm, close to her heart. This speaks of: (1) a closeness, metaphorically, physically and spiritually with one hearing
the peaceful beating of one’s heart which will last long after the process is finished and the child is grown into an adult; (2) the mood of the dynamics is one of love, connectedness and trust; (3) and, there is a vā (connection), both visible and invisible, which the child will draw upon for strength in his/her journey in life.

What is passed on through the kaliloa includes: stories of family history and origin, genealogy, principles and values pertinent to family living, Tongan living, church life and society and lotu (spirituality, prayers); work skills such as tapa making, boat making, taro planting and so forth; Tala ‘o Tonga (Tongan tradition), traditional Tongan fairytales, folktales (fananga), legends, Tongan etiquette (‘ulungaanga ‘o e nofo mo e fakafeangai) and everything that is considered important to the life of the child and the collective, the family, society, church and the country (Taumoefolau & Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2011; Toetu‘u-Tamhiere, 2010, 2011, 2012a, 2012b). These are passed on to prepare the child to be a responsible, upstanding, and exemplary individual. The common expression for such a child is either Fielau he na’e mohe he kaliloa (it is little surprise because she/he was slept at the kaliloa) or Fiela u he na’e mohe ofi (it is little surprise because she/he laid close, in this case to the parent at the kaliloa). In both cases, these sayings indicate a well-behaved child who slept close at the kaliloa and thus listened carefully to the teachings, internalised them, and thus allowed the learnings to take shape in his/her actions, words and demeanour—in Bourdieu’s terms, habitus.

There are key aspects of the kaliloa process noted here that contribute to kaliloa being a culturally relevant model for research for Tongans and researching Pacific peoples:

1. Kaliloa is passed on using the indigenous language as it is through this language that the traditions, philosophy, worldviews, principles, values and all that is deemed important in that particular culture is stored;
2. *Kaliloa* privileges the teller because the teller is considered of seniority in the home, community and in the area of topic talked about in the *kaliloa*. Thus it is usually the elders, in particular the parents, who are the tellers, or in this case the focus of the study, successful Tongan graduates who are THS alumni. It is their experiences of their journey, from their perspective which are privileged and honoured in this study;

3. *Kaliloa* can only occur successfully if the listener is actively and receptively listening. Listening is vital in order to grasp and collect the important information imparted from the teller to the listener(s);

4. *Kaliloa* contains valuable information passed down through time, spanning many generations by word of mouth only, in which case are most often unable to be accessed in the usual Western/mainstream information venues such as libraries and so forth. It is passed on through word of mouth, and crosses many generations throughout time;

5. *Kaliloa* is underpinned by notions of *tauhi vā*—maintaining and nurturing of close relations(Ka’ili, 2008) and *māfana* (warmth) thus it is a valuable social justice tool which can help advance and empower young people through positive stories of courageous feats and of exemplary role models in the family history;

6. *Kaliloa* is never-ending. It transcends time and space (geographical boundaries) by charging every Tongan to be responsible for the sharing of the teachings, the knowledge, and the ‘tellings’ passed on from parent to child, thus ensuring peace and harmony amongst individuals in family, church and society. Once the child grows into adulthood, and starts a family of his/her own, it is the individual’s important responsibility to maintain the tradition for the well-being of all;

7. *Kaliloa* is the essence of culture. Therefore it privileges indigenous ontology and epistemology.
8. *Kaliloa* involves reciprocity (*fetokoni‘aki*) whereby the listener is not only connected to the teller for the wisdom passed on, but carries the obligation (*fatongia*) to use other information gifted to the listener for the good of others. It may also involve reciprocity in other forms, perhaps the sharing of food, small gifts, or help to the listener in time of need.

9. *Kaliloa* cannot be measured or interpreted solely from a Western lens or knowledge as it can only be truly understood from a Tongan context and viewpoint as useful for Tongans (Finau, 2011).

The above important aspects and elements of *kaliloa* make it a culturally relevant and significant tool to be used as the principal data-collecting method in this study. It is a relevant traditional form of interview method to the interview method set out by Irving Seidman (2013). *Kaliloa* can be used as a model for Pacific research (Taumoefolau & Toetu’u-Tamihere, 2011). As Denzin et al., (2008) argue of indigenous methodologies and inquiries:

> [It] begins with the concerns of indigenous people. It is assessed in terms of the benefits it creates for them. The work must represent indigenous persons honestly, without distortion or stereotype, and the research should honor indigenous knowledge, customs, and rituals. It should not be judged in terms of neocolonial paradigms. Finally, researchers should be accountable to indigenous persons. They, not Western scholars, should have first access to research findings and control over the distribution of knowledge. (p. 2)

*Kaliloa* privileges the teller and is underpinned by the *Tala ‘o Tonga* worldview, hence it is empowering for Tongans.

**3.5.iii. Employing kaliloa tool**

*Kaliloa* (short form for *Talanoa mei he kaliloa*) is based on in-depth sharing of experiences through stories imparted from teller to listener in a face-to-face encounter which
privileges and honours the teller (Taumoefolau & Toetu’u-Tamihere, 2011; Toetu’u-Tamihere, 2010, 2011, 2012a, 2012b). Kaliloa is the near-parallel of the interview/ethnographic narrative inquiry method. Where other strategies may carry formal and perhaps rigid protocols that would prevent a more honest and heart-to-heart sharing of one’s experiences, kaliloa provides for an in-depth, profound, culturally sensitive and therefore genuine engagement without rigid time, space and structurally prescribed conversation limits.

When meeting in Tongan culture, prior to any important conversation between two or more people, whether strangers or not, there is a dialogical establishing of vā (connection/relationship/link) which must take place whereby the teller (participant) and the listener (researcher) dialogue to find and establish common ‘links’. If the parties know each other, there will be talk of the well-being of people they both know. If the parties involved do not know each other, then there will be efforts to trace one’s origin to land and people (genealogy). For this research, this is the only time when the researcher (listener) takes an active role in the kaliloa process, by sharing the purpose of research and intentions towards data gathered. This dialogical conversation to establish the vā also includes talk of common interest, with both parties identifying common relations or acquaintances and experiences and so forth, so to cement their ties (vā) upon which the rest of the kaliloa will take place. Indeed kaliloa, based on and sourcing from the overarching Tala ‘o Tonga methodology (Toetu’u-Tamihere, 2010, 2011, 2012a, 2012b) framework, adheres to and is underpinned by the principal Tongan values (faa’i kavei koula) central to Tongan ways of being and engagement (Queen Sālote Tupou III, POP; Moala, 1994, pp. 22-23). These include: faka’apa’apa (respect), faka’aki’akimui (humility), ta’efieauna (unwillingness to be vanquished or defeated and ‘ofa ongongofua (love and hospitality based on feeling). Respect, according to the Late
Queen Sālote Tupou III, must be expressed in: (1) behaviour; (2) words; (3) dress; (4) nurturing of relationships; and, (5) action (Queen Sālote Tupou III, POP).

The principal Tongan values above are central to the Tala ‘o Tonga (Tongan culture, worldview, philosophy) and the Tala ‘o Tonga methodology. These values inform the kaliloa method used in this investigation at every step, regardless of whether the research took place in Tonga or NZ. These values are a marker of what makes a Tongan, Tongan.

Kaliloa, as a traditional ethnographic narrative enquiry interview method, envisioned by this researcher followed certain principles that respected, nurtured and valued the:

1. Vaha‘angatae, the sacred space between the participant and the researcher. Both are co-creators in what is to take place and each individual must be respected;
2. Feitu‘u, the physical space which is also the sacred space in which the dialogue takes place;
3. Laumālie ‘o e feohi, the spirit of engagement in which the storytelling takes place;
4. Kaliloa, the stories recalled from the journey gone past and shared as a me’a’ofa (a gift), to re-tell the reality of the experiences which the teller deems as important in her/his journey.

In addition, it is important to note that the kaliloa data collecting method is a valuable Tongan research method for research by Tongans among Tongans. The method can be however be adapted to fit other research settings as a significant model for Pacific research (Taumoefolau and Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2011; Toetu‘u-Tamihere, 2010, 2011, 2012a, 2012b). The kaliloa method is a culturally appropriate, relevant, and empowering tool for the participants, to uncover their views on what led to their success in education. The following section clarifies the selection of participants.

**3.6. Selecting & Contacting Participants**

The selection of participants and sites was ‘purposive’ (Creswell, 2003; Punch, 2005) hence deliberate. Creswell (2003) aptly states, “the idea behind qualitative research is to
purposefully select participants or sites (or document or visual material) that will help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (p. 185).

The purpose of the research meant that the selection of participants was based on the following criteria:

1. Tongan;
2. Tonga High School alumni;
3. Attained the minimum qualification of either a Master’s or Doctoral degree (education success marker).

I decided to include 10, main participants only. This number of participants, although too small for any generalisation of results, meant a more in-depth study and understandings of participants’ stories (May, 2001).

Using my networks as THS alumni and teacher, I noted down the names of THS alumni who could be deemed successful, who might potentially be interested in being research participants. My co-supervisor, who is also Tongan, assisted with this purposive process selection process. We formed a list of 10 participants, five from NZ and five from Tonga. I was able to obtain contact details for the five participants in NZ but not for the five in Tonga. I emailed and called participants in NZ introducing myself and the purpose for contacting them. I asked the potential participants if they were interested in participating in my research. All five NZ Tongans expressed a willingness to participate, at which time arrangements were made for dates and places for interviews based on the participants’ choice and convenience.

For the five participants in Tonga, I approached them face-to-face and explained the purpose of the research inquiry and the questions to see if they were interested. It was culturally appropriate that I contacted these potential participants face-to-face. All of the five potential participants in Tonga agreed to participate in my study.
The city of Auckland is one of the most highly Tongan-populated cities in NZ, (Statistics NZ, 2013) and Nuku‘alofa is the capital of Tonga, where it is most likely to locate THS alumni, hence it made sense to centre the participant selection in those cities. For gender balance, five female participants and five male participants were selected. To add interest and a variable, my co-supervisor and I chose participants from different decades of entry to Tonga High School, covering the decades 1950s-1980s. Each participant was given a Tongan pseudonym. The dates in brackets indicate each participant’s decade of entry to schooling at THS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tongan participants</th>
<th>New Zealand participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lute (1950s), female</td>
<td>Peni (1960s), male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mele (1950s), female</td>
<td>Lu‘isa (1960s), female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saia (1960s), male</td>
<td>Maikolo (1960s), male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sione (1980s), male</td>
<td>‘Amelia (1970s), female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seini (1980s), female</td>
<td>Tēvita (1980s), male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participant selection was expected to result in a tapestry of stories that covered different generations, both genders, different decades of THS entrance, young and old participants, and participants from Tonga and NZ.

3.7. Data Collection Methods

Three main data collecting methods were considered and chosen from the qualitative procedures (Creswell, 2003; May, 2001; Punch, 2005), bearing in mind the research questions, research aims, in addition to significant elements such as the context (where), agents (who), focus (what) and events (procedures embarked upon by agents in the context) (Miles & Huberman, 1994, cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 185). The qualitative research methods considered suitable and employed in the field to collect data were: individual interview, focus group interview, a paper survey and archival searching.
3.7.i. Kaliloa taautaha: Individual interview

The individual interview was the main method of data collection. This method was chosen as this investigation sought to attain participants’ constructions of reality from their perspectives as they saw and experienced it, and in their own words (Punch, 2005). There are various interview methods ranging from structured interviews through to semi-structured and unstructured (Fontana and Frey, 1994). This study’s kaliloa rests between the semi-structured to unstructured interview form, using a pre-prepared list of questions (Appendix C) with the aim of gleaning relevant information with regards to the two main research questions.

A list of basic background information questions were first asked of each participant (Appendix C) and these were followed by the pre-prepared list of questions 1-6 to start off the interview and a participant’s story. The kaliloa was also unstructured in that the participants took ownership of their stories and highlighted what to them was important in their pathway to success, rather than just answering my pre-prepared questions. An unstructured discussion allowed for a more in-depth exploration of key events in the participants’ journey that otherwise could not have been solicited. In addition, the kaliloa allowed for an honest, raw and fakamāfana (heart-warming) recollection that can only be achieved using the kaliloa method. The above rested on allowing for what Punch aptly describes as, “great flexibility, which can be adapted to suit a wide variety of research situation”’ (Punch, 2005, p. 170).

Some additional research questions emerged out of the first individual kaliloa which is a likely possibility as depicted by Punch (2005, p. 170). These questions were taken and used in the kaliloa faka-kulupu (focus group), and in subsequent individual kaliloa. The first kaliloa interviews were of the Auckland participants from which some questions arose. These questions were then used in the individual kaliloa interviews in Tonga, and in the NZ focus group.
The *kaliloa* in both Tonga and NZ were scheduled for 1-1.5 hours as specified in the Participant Information Sheet (PIS, Appendix A) given to each participant. However, each *kaliloa* took approximately 1-2 hours, depending on the participant’s time and focus on particular aspects of his/her journey. Participants were eager to tell their stories as they remembered them; they shared aspects that they considered important to share as part of their journeys in education. Each participant’s story was special and unique, hence it required me as researcher to be patient, to listen and record for the duration of time that the participant was willing to take to share his/her story. I was mindful of participants’ time that the approximate time duration for both the *kaliloa taaautaha* and the *kaliloa faka-kulupu* was clearly stated in the Participant Information Sheet (PIS, Appendix A) and the Consent Forms (CFs, Appendix B), but as already mentioned, individual *kaliloa* took longer than the time specified. Each time frame was at the discretion of the participants.

All individual *kaliloa* were recorded using an audio recorder to ensure that all the data were accurate. Consent was sought from the participants, and the purpose for using the audio recorder explained prior to the *kaliloa* (see Appendices 1 and 2).

Participants had the freedom to conduct their interviews either in Tongan or English language. All participants used both languages during the individual *kaliloa*, although not in equal amounts. There were an equal number of young and old participants who preferred to conduct their *kaliloa* in the Tongan vernacular, with some English used. All seemed relaxed when switching back and forth between Tongan and English. Where mostly Tongan was used, I translated as best I could to the English language, especially when it came to revealing the findings in the two findings chapters or in the discussion where the interviews were used as direct quotes. If sections of the interview were in Tongan and quoted either in the results or the discussion chapters, I note that the direct quotes were originally given in the Tongan language by the participants.
Furthermore, there were fillers traditionally used by almost all participants in their individual kaliloa in the form of ‘hee’ to signify a rhetorical affirmation by the participant between teller and the listener, or the researcher, to ensure (1) that the researcher agrees and is listening to the point being made; and (2) to establish connection of story, of rapport, and of emphasis made in the course of the story. This filler was not used when quoting directly during the write-up due to word limitations, but it must be noted here as it is a real and honest portrayal of the vernacular and engagement process between the participants and me.

3.7.ii. Kaliloa fakakulupu: Focus group

‘Group interviewing’ or focus group is when the researcher interviews a group rather than just one participant at one time (Punch, 2005, pp. 171-172, see also Creswell, 2003). Similar to individual interviews, the focus group can be structured, semi-structured or highly structured (Punch, 2005, p. 171). A list of pre-prepared questions (see Appendix C) was given to begin the focus group kaliloa. The focus group took these questions on and continued the discussion. I asked more questions in places where clarification and examples were needed from the focus group kaliloa.

This data-collecting method was ideal for several reasons which Punch (2005) explains from his own views, and from the work of others. First, focus groups extract important information which otherwise could not be obtained (Morgan, 1988, cited in Punch, 2005, p. 171). The researcher’s role in a focus group is mostly as facilitator and the interview does not involve direct questions and answers. The working of a focus group creates a space for participants to share and state clearly their “views, perceptions, motives and reasons” (Punch, 2005, p. 171). In a focus group interview, there is also ‘flexibility’ and space to elaborate particular participants’ views (Fontana & Fey, 1994, cited in Punch, 2005, p. 171). Data attained from the focus group can be utilised jointly alongside other data collecting methods that are qualitative in nature (Punch, 2005, p. 171).
Contextualising the focus group as a kaliloa method is not difficult as kaliloa is very much like a focus group, where there are both listeners and speakers on issues that are considered important to all parties, particularly for Tongan living. Factors of success in the education of Tongan graduates and the role THS may have played in the participants’ success, the focus of this research is a perfect fit for the focus group kaliloa, as what is imparted from the kaliloa are considered teachings for those who are listening.

The focus group was used therefore due to the reasons noted above. The kaliloa faka-kulupu in Tonga did not take place due to timing problems. A kaliloa faka-kulupu through tele-conferencing and Skype were also out of the question due to time unavailability of participants.

The kaliloa faka-kulupu in New Zealand did occur. I was able to arrange for two out of the five participants in NZ to meet for the kaliloa faka-kulupu. This took place at a restaurant; it was a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere for the participants to have the kaliloa faka-kulupu. According to Tongan protocol, reciprocity is essential to kaliloa faka-kulupu. Therefore food, coffee and dessert were provided as an expression of thanks to participants for their participation, stories and time.

The two participants brought their partners along to the kaliloa faka-kulupu. Including the participants’ partners added to the kaliloa faka-kulupu dynamics as the two were female, and THS alumni. My brother also attended the kaliloa fakakulupu to help serve the two participants and their partners during the meal. My brother is a THS alumnus. The entire kaliloa faka-kulupu took 2 hours and 38 minutes.

The kaliloa faka-kulupu in New Zealand was vital to the research as the group dynamics encouraged the sharing of information that other types of interviews may have struggled to produce. Although the focus group was planned to meet twice for two hours each meeting (see PIS Appendix A), a one-off focus group was adequate to cover any issues
that arose out of the individual kaliloa. The kaliloa focus group maximised “the explicit use of…interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group” (Morgan, 1988, p. 12, cited in Punch, 2005, p. 171). The kaliloa focus group situation also stimulated participants in making explicit their views, perceptions, motives and reasons (Punch, 2005, p. 171). The discussion with the two male participants on issues to do with their success flowed as the dynamics encouraged participants and their partners to add to, agree or disagree with the line of discussion. My task was purely as facilitator (Punch, 2005, p. 171), thus enabling the participants to discuss and emphasise what was important to them in their respective journeys. Recurring themes and issues from the individual kaliloa enabled particular themes to be re-phrased as questions, thus soliciting more in-depth discussion in the focus group.

3.7.iii. Archival research

Archival research was carried out at THS and the Palace Office archives where a key focus of this research was to determine the vision behind establishing THS and how it may have influenced the success of its alumni. Unfortunately, when it comes to documents stored at THS, a school fire on October 1st, 2000 destroyed some of the school buildings, including the library where records were kept. Everything was destroyed, thus there are no significant archival records except isolated personal records THS alumni and staff, kept. The school principal lent to me the 50th Commemorative Issue Magazine and a 1986 THS magazine from the school library which contained valuable historical information on the establishment of THS. These were the only valuable archival items for this research from THS.

Archival research was also carried out at the Palace Archives, however, there was very little to be found. I had to seek permission from the head of the Palace Office at the time, Mr Dunkley, prior to conducting any data collection. I visited the main office located next to the King’s palace and first enquired whether I could see the person in charge. I was
told to see Mr Dunkley after waiting for half an hour. I introduced myself and my purpose for seeing him by handing over the Letter of application seeking permission to carry out archival research at the Palace Office Archives (Appendix E). I produced the Letter of Approval from the Prime Minister’s Office (Appendix F) and the UAHPEC Letter of Approval to conduct research on my topic (Appendix G). Mr Dunkley gave his approval then called the principal curator, Ami, a Tongan and her assistant, a pālangi woman from Australia, to inform them of my research and to instruct them to help me in whatever way they could to obtain information on THS.

I spent nearly a week reading through archival material without locating much information on Tonga High School. I was unable to take any material out of the archives to photocopy or peruse at my leisure, as the material was old and precious. The little that was found was from the Tonga Gazette 1946, prior to the establishment of THS in 1947. The principal curator at the Palace Archives shared that in Queen Sālote Tupou III’s reign, documents were destroyed in a bonfire and so documents which may have been pertinent to this research were burned. As has already been shared, it was during the reign of her Majesty Queen Sālote when THS was envisioned and established by her son, then Prince Tupouto'a Tungi, who was also Minister of Education after his return from overseas university study.

3.7.iv. Paper survey

The paper survey was used as a form of triangulation to check the validity and accuracy of findings from the main data; the individual kaliloa of the 10 participants. Creswell (2003) recommends that qualitative researchers take precautionary measures to ensure the findings are consistent, valid and accurate. The paper survey was used therefore to confirm or disaffirm findings from the individual and the focus group interviews.

A survey methodology is most often used extensively in quantitative research to attain social and economic information. Punch (2005) discusses a survey:
It has different meanings. It is sometimes used to describe any research which collects data (quantitative or qualitative) from a sample of people. Another meaning, common in everyday language, is a simple descriptive study, usually concerned with different pieces of information, which are studied one piece at a time…its purpose is mainly to describe some sample in terms of simple proportions and percentages of people who respond in this way of that to different questions. (p. 75)

A paper survey (Appendix D) was used to gather additional information from a specific sample, i.e., a group of THS alumni, a bigger sample than the participants used in the individual interviews. This was a supplementary method used to address the research questions.

The paper survey was arranged through the organizing committee for the 64th Anniversary Reunion of THS alumni from various countries. I was granted permission for the survey, to be administered once, between 7 and 10th July 2011. It was carried out at the Annual General Meeting of THS alumni, at the Rendezvous Hotel, Auckland, New Zealand, on July 8th, 2011. The person originally scheduled to introduce me to the forum, prior to conducting the paper survey, had to leave, and this person arranged for another, equally well known alumnus in the arena of education, to introduce me to the forum. It is culturally important that when one administers research in such a forum that the researcher is introduced properly to the forum by a high-status individual in the same arena, in this case, education. After the introduction, I was able to spend 7-10 minutes introducing myself, the topic and the purpose of the research, after which the survey was distributed.

Forty-eight respondents returned the paper survey, but only 46 provided usable data. The AGM meeting proceeded beyond the time limit, prior to the administering of the paper survey, and this perhaps did not help with the response rate or standard of the reflective comments. Upon reflection, the paper survey would have been better placed if it was
administered at the beginning of the AGM when everyone was fresh and attentive. This was my preference, however in such a gathering I had no influence in the timing.

The above data-collection methods gathered data pertinent to the research questions. Contextualising the interview method and focus group methods enabled a more culturally appropriate way to conduct research amongst Tongans in Tonga and in New Zealand.

3.8. Research Venues
This research took place in Tonga and in NZ. In Tonga, archival research was conducted at the Palace Office Archives and at THS, again as Creswell (2003) to affirm or disaffirm the main findings from the kaliloa. In addition, Harris (2001), argues for the use of archives as these are sources of important historical information on a specific subject. Individual interviews were also undertaken in Tonga at the place of choice of participants. In NZ, research was conducted at a hotel, a restaurant, at Sylvia Park Shopping mall, and at the participants’ offices. These were places convenient for the participants. All the venues for the kaliloa were mostly decided for the convenience and comfort of the participants.

3.9. Data Analysis
There are different types of data analyses for particular kinds of qualitative research strategies (Creswell, 2003). This study used grounded theory and ethnographic data analysis procedures (Creswell, 2003) to analyse the data collected. The grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 191) involved a three-step procedure for data analysis: open coding whereby data are categorised into groups; axial coding whereby categories are placed within a ‘theoretical model’; then selective coding whereby connections are made between the groupings to tell a story. The other data analysis procedure, as Creswell (2005) explains, is used in case study and ethnographic research whereby analysis of data are through describing the context and the participants, then an analysis of the data to highlight
issues or themes Stake (1995); Wolcott (1994) both cited in Creswell, 2003 (p. 191).

Creswell cautioned however, that “Researchers need to tailor the data analysis beyond the more generic approaches [utilised] in specific types of qualitative research strategies” (Creswell 2003, p. 191). Taking Creswell’s advice on data analysis, and the fact that this is an ethnographic study the data analysis combined the use of ethnographic data-analysis procedures alongside the grounded theory data-analysis method. Creswell’s specific data-analysis steps followed recommended data-analysis procedures are set out below.

3.9.i. Analysis of data

The steps below were followed to organise, prepare and analyse the data. Note there were four data-collecting methods: the main method was the individual kaliloa of the 10 participants, followed by the focus group kaliloa, a paper survey and archival searching. In addition, I kept field-notes which described the contexts in which the data gathering took place, and my thoughts and reflections during the entire time in the field.

The first step involved preparing the data for analysis. This included transcribing audio-recorded interviews, keeping electronic records of data for easy access, and printing material when required.

Step two involved a first reading of all the data once for meaning and a general feel and sense of the information obtained. Questions were asked of the data. What were the concepts that stood out especially in the narratives, the paper survey, the archival material and the focus group interview? What insights stood out in each set of data: paper survey, individual and focus group interviews? Were the data believable and usable?

The third step involved categorising or ‘coding’ the data into main themes using words from the data themselves. Data were categorised into ‘chunks’ (Rossman & Rellis, 1998, p. 171, cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 192) of themes. Different coloured highlights were used to track themes to make it easier to cut the printed data into chunks with the
pseudonyms penned on top of each chunk to keep track of who said what and on which particular theme. Data were then grouped into piles of similar themes. Focus group data were coded in the same way. Paper surveys were coded separately to generate numerical evidence. In addition, supplementary information like field-notes were read alongside other data to create descriptions of the setting, the tone of the interview. The coding process generated significant themes which were then presented as the findings.

3.9.ii. Individual kaliloa

Data were transcribed, organized and prepared for analysis by sorting, transcribing interviews and collating field-notes (Creswell, 2003). Grounded theory situated within the interpretive paradigm was used to generate theory from the data collected (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, cited in Punch, 2005, p. 154). Adopting an interpretive lens in this study gives rise to the potential of ethnographic research to unveil those issues that often remain hidden among statistical indicators of achievement (Erickson, 1987; Geertz, 1973) such as possible influences on student achievement.

Data collected were read for familiarity. Coding, as in the steps above, was used during subsequent readings of data. The coding process given by Tesch (1990, pp. 142-145, cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 192) was utilised. This coding highlighted themes, issues and descriptions pertinent to my research. Data were then interpreted. Careful reflection and handling of data were employed to ensure participants’ stories were told and that the findings are truly reflective of this. In addition, steps were taken, such as using pseudonyms for participants to ensure the anonymity of the participants.

The first step was to transcribe the individual kaliloa immediately after each took place. Transcripts were emailed back to the participants for verification. A first reading of transcripts was carried out to establish the general sense of each kaliloa. Then a second reading confirmed and highlighted emerging themes in each transcript, using different
colours for different themes. My third reading of the transcripts re-confirmed the key themes and focused on the words of the participants themselves. Key themes were also noted down on a separate piece of paper with each participant’s name on top of the relevant segment of story. In addition, key themes were divided into ‘unique themes’ (themes unique to each participant) and ‘common themes’, (themes common to all or some participants).

The key themes emerged from analysing, classifying and categorising participants’ answers according to the following categories:

1. To what do the 10 participants attribute their success in education?; which further divided into various categories of people, events, school, or home influence depending on the participant terms, usage and context in which these answers were given;

2. What role did THS play in the 10 participants’ success?; which was also further divided into categories or headings such as language, staff, school motto, school objectives and so forth;

3. What is the participant’s definition of success?; which varied and so was classified into categories;

4. Additional comments or ‘Other’ factors deemed important by participants, a category used by the researcher for other important details participants imparted to the researcher such as, ‘last words of advice’ for Tongan people in education and so forth.

These categories, labelled as attributed to who said what, were read through again to determine the final major themes.

The entire process of data analysis above was carried out in the privacy and security of a set place. Confidentiality was always upmost in my mind when the data were handled during analysis.
Out of the above process, two main key themes emerged with subcategories of answers (refer to Chapters 4 and 5). These were then re-presented to retain the integrity and honesty of the stories as relevant to the aim of the project. However, the stories’ number and length did not permit re-storying as used by Yukich (2010). Rather an alternative form that was more suitable to the number of participants and the amount of data collected was used (see Chapters 4 and 5). Yukich (2010) had a much smaller number of participants (3) compared to my 10 participants, therefore, my findings had to find a more ‘suitable’ form that best show presented the findings in a way that readers would appreciate, with the presentation true to the essence of the rich findings that were gifted to the researcher by the participants.

In the process of data analysis, I presented the findings at two supervision sessions. The initial presentation involved laying out the general categories so as to give the supervisors a general sense of the findings. The second took approximately two hours and involved a power-point presentation of the entire findings. This was able to be carried out successfully after the prolonged in-depth process of data analysis as detailed above.

Both sessions presented opportunities to discuss these questions in greater depth which leads me to the next data-analysis method.

3.9.iii. Focus group kaliloa

The Focus group kaliloa transcript was analysed using the same steps 1 through to 3 as set out in Creswell (2003) above, also used to analyse the individual kaliloa. The Focus group transcript was transcribed, then emailed to the participants for confirmation, clarification or correction. A thorough first reading of the transcript was carried out whereby more detailed, clear discussion of important themes, recurring in the individual kaliloa emerged. Theme headings were inserted in the participants’ own words. An additional reading was carried out to confirm these headings as important according to the participants, not according to the researcher’s perception. Then the focus group transcript was printed out,
two copies, one for reference and the other to cut up according to the themes and placed in a pile with the rest of the individual kaliloa themes, but clearly labelled as Focus group kaliloa and with the participants’ pseudonyms on them.

3.9.iv. Paper survey
The paper survey results were copied onto word documents to ensure easy access and to determine the general gist of answers (refer to Appendix D). Individual answers by participants were then copied and pasted under certain headings (family, school, etc) according to what the participants stated they attributed their success to. A similar process was applied to answers to other question and the second research question. Answers were categorised, tabulated, and calculated, using percentages. For the latter, numbers were expressed in words—ranging from ‘a few’, ‘some’, ‘mostly’, and ‘all’ to express the numbers of participants according to their answers.

3.10. Theoretical Framework
As indicated, Pierre Bourdieu’s social reproduction concepts were used as the main theoretical framework. This was contextualised using a parallel Tongan—Bourdiesian framework, see Chapter 2. This framework highlighted that there are particular capital, fields and habitus embodied in Tonga’s national motto (‘God and Tonga are my inheritance’) such as kaliloa, family, Tongan language, and Tongan values and principles which Tongans consider to be as important to Tongan living, including in their journey in education. The framework for data analysis supports Bourdieu’s views on what are the success factors in education, but also argues that particular Tongan forms of capital and habitus from Tongan culture are equally important if success is considered from the viewpoints of Tongan participants.
3.11. Sum of Data Analysis
In general, the data analysis is as Rossman and Rallis (1998, cited in Cresswell, 2003) stated is:

an ongoing process involving continual reflection about the data, asking analytic questions, and writing memos throughout the study. It is not sharply divided from the other activities in the process, such as collecting data or formulating research questions. (p. 190)

Analysis also involved stepping away from the data and viewing all in relation to one another with a specific strategy in mind on how best to re-present the data to: (1) stay true to the experiences and reality of the participants as they told their stories at the kaliloa; (2) tell the participants’ story in a fascinating way so that readers feel they are with you every step of the way, along every step of the research process and in viewing the findings; and lastly, (3) highlight what was important to participants in such a way as to incur reflection and action on the part of the readers, whether through policy-making, more discussion of the same themes or passing on the same stories that would enable access to Tongans in education in all avenues open to them. Data analysis involved complex processes of surveying the data to remain true to what the data themselves offered. Maintaining the integrity of this study’s findings meant putting in place qualitative research methods to highlight common themes across all the data collected and where possible highlight also differences in themes, if any.

3.12. Validity and Reliability
Qualitative procedures were used to ensure the ‘authenticity’, ‘reliability’ and ‘credibility’ of the research (Creswell, 2003). Such precautionary measures guaranteed the data collected were “accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, cited in Creswell, 2003, pp. 195-196). The following measures were put in place to ensure validity and reliability:
3.13. Triangulation

Triangulation is the use of different sources of data to check the validity of findings and to establish validity for themes which emerge from the study (Creswell, 2003). According to Bryman (1988, cited in Punch, 2005), triangulation is important as findings from one kind of study can be used to validate the findings from another. To ensure the validity of findings in this study, triangulation was pursued through the few methods described below.

Triangulation of results in this study was achieved through employing different methods of data collection to attain answers to similar questions from different participants and different dynamics of participant engagement. In the former, data were gathered from 10 individual interviews, and a paper survey which was administered to a group of THS alumni on similarly worded questions. Triangulation was further pursued when answers and questions which were elicited from the individual kaliloa were repeated in the focus group discussion to validate and encourage more in depth discussion from participants. Using the different methods of individual interview, the focus group interview and paper survey ensured findings and themes were reasonably consistent.

Another method of triangulation was that, throughout the course of the investigation, supervisors and peers provided a constant source of triangulation “to build a coherent justification for themes” (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). Monthly meetings with the supervisors during the entire research process added further to the triangulation process.

In addition, the researcher had available to her, peers to help with this work in the form of a St John’s College Graduate Group (SJCGG) comprising Lecturers and fellow Doctoral students at various stages of their PhD journeys; and the Tongan Hermeneutics Group (THG), made up of postgraduate students, a lecturer and various community leaders. Semester gatherings were arranged for the SJCGG where doctoral students presented aspects of their thesis for peer and lecturer verbal reviews and the THG met monthly for the same
reason—to present papers and be subject to peer review. In total, I presented at two THG meetings and one at the SJCGG meet. All presentations were in the early stages of this research to receive feedback on my chosen topic and methodology. The THG group was particularly helpful as this was a Tongan group where I could present my Tongan methodology *kaliloa*. The SJCGG was helpful as well as these included people of European ethnicity; they balanced out the types of reviews received on my work.

3.14. Member-Checking
Member-checking is when participants are given the findings to verify whether they are accurate from their perspectives (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). Participants were sent transcribed copies of interviews, immediately after the individual *kaliloa* and Focus group *kaliloa* to ensure data were credible and authentic from the participant’s perspective and true to their intentions. To this end, following the individual *kaliloa* and the focus group *kaliloa* session, data were analysed using a Tongan—Bourdiesian framework and presented in this thesis in a way that stayed true to the stories imparted to the researcher.

Detailed descriptions of the setting and findings of research have been made (Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8) in order to establish a sense of “shared experience” with readers (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). Discrepancies encountered have been disclosed to give a realistic portrayal of the entire research process.

3.15. Researcher Bias
No research is free from bias because as humans we carry with us certain worldviews, a way of perceiving the world which as Bourdieu’s work established, stems from our upbringing and our socio-economic and cultural background (Bourdieu, 1986, 1990a, 1990b, 1996a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979). Clarification of bias, the process of self-reflection by the researcher is important to openly declare in any ways the researcher can be open to bias. For this reason, my researcher biases were disclosed early in the Introductory chapter to
this thesis, to note any possible bases for bias. Of relevance is the fact that I am a Tongan mother, a THS alumni, a student, Anglican, fluent in both Tongan and English, and open to Western and Tongan worldviews.

It is important in any research, to be self-reflexive throughout the process, and to be aware of how belief systems, attitudes, and habitus might affect any phase of the research, including interpretation and analysis of data. My potential biases were declared to participants, noted in the ethics application and at the beginning of this thesis (Chapter 1), and efforts were made to be as objective as possible. For instance, as a female, I am receptive to feminist views alongside empowering approaches typical of critical theory, yet I am also a conservative traditional Tongan woman due to my Tongan upbringing. Clarifying bases for my biases acknowledges the multiplicities and intricacies of my identities and the spaces I inhabit as an individual and part of collective groupings based on culture, Christian beliefs, gender, and others.

3.16. Researcher’s Role
My role was mostly as facilitator, listener, collector, analyst and presenter of data. Following the principles of kaliloa, my role during the data-collection process was as facilitator during the individual kaliloa, Focus group kaliloa and at the distribution of the paper survey to respondents. Listening was a key skill in both the individual and the focus group kaliloa, I interjected only when there were sections of the participants’ stories which needed clarification. The kaliloa highlighted instead, the participants’, and the paper survey, the respondents’ experiences and views from their perspectives. This multiple make-up of the researcher declares that there are certain assumptions, orientations, attitudes, location in specific research traditions and worldviews of the researcher that impacted on the research.
3.17. Prolonged Time in the Field

Time spent in the field is important to understand the ‘phenomenon’ and context of the study (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). For this study, prolonged time in the field meant that empirical data collection was scheduled for six months: four months in Tonga because of the inclusion of archival research and two in NZ. However, the ethics application for conducting research in New Zealand and Tonga to the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee was approved on March 28, 2011 (refer to Appendix G), a later date than I had originally anticipated. I left for Tonga in April 2011, however research did not start immediately, as I had to apply for a research permit on the 4th of April (refer to Appendix E) to the Prime Minister’s Office in Nuku’alofa, Tonga to do research in Tonga. My application to do research in Tonga was approved on the 20th of April by His Majesty’s Cabinet, and the letter of approval dated and delivered on the 29th of April (refer to Appendix F). I spent only three months between April and June doing field research in Tonga, and had to return in the first week of July for the 64th THS Anniversary which took place in Auckland from the 7-10th of July, where the paper survey was scheduled to be carried out.

Research in New Zealand took place during July onwards through to 2012 when the second interview by a female participant was requested. A lot of my time and energy went into organizing suitable times to interview participants. The one focus group kaliloa was quite difficult to organize as the five participants led busy work schedules and one lives out of Auckland. There were emails back and forth between myself and the five NZ participants trying to arrange a teleconference which would have been ideal due to different work schedules and locations of participants. However, as explained elsewhere, the nature of the kaliloa method meant a valuing of a more physical, face-to-face encounter where the researcher and the five participants were in one location physically, to engage in a kaliloa. In the end, as also mentioned earlier, only two participants, accompanied by their wives who are also THS alumni, were able to participate in the focus group kaliloa.
3.18. External Auditor
The University of Auckland acted as an external auditor reviewing the entire project as part of the annual review of the University of Auckland Doctoral Studies programme.

3.19. Ethical Considerations
This research involves humans, hence ethical issues are central (Punch, 2005).

Ethical issues arise because humans can be important sources of information but must never be used as objects to attain a purpose (Snook, 2003, cited in Williams, 2005, unpublished paper). Precautions were taken culturally and in adherence to ethical research guidelines set by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC research approval reference number 2011/086, see Appendix G), the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) guidelines constructed for Pacific research amongst Pacific peoples in tertiary education in New Zealand (TEC, 2003), and Tongan government guidelines for research in Tonga.

In turn, Tongan guidelines and protocol sourced from a *Tala ‘o Tonga* methodology of doing research in Tonga and in New Zealand amongst Tongans were combined and employed in the course of this investigation to ensure “the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informants” were protected and maintained at all times (Creswell, 2003, p. 201). As the study involved principally a group of 10 Tongans, three of whom also participated in the NZ focus group with their wives, and 48 THS alumni for the paper survey, the ethical issues centred on privacy, anonymity and confidentiality with sensitivity to how these issues are viewed and handled according to Tongan culture (Carpenter & McMurchy-Pilkington, 2008; Smith, 1999; Williams, 2005). Care has been taken when sharing the data, but it is still possible that those close to participants may be able to identify them. As the findings are largely positive and people were proud to share their views, my hope is that any identification made cause little or no stress or harm.
All three data-collecting methods were contextualised to fit the context and participants’ cultural background and setting, in addition to my ethics proposal as accepted by University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) for carrying out research in Tonga and NZ (refer to Appendix G).

Tongan pseudonyms were allocated to each of the principal participants (refer to section 4.8. sampling of participants for these pseudonyms) and the decades in which they entered THS were noted alongside their names for clarity as noted earlier. Participants were informed of the research aim and objectives and what was expected of them as participants as set out in the Participant Information Sheets (refer to Appendix A). In addition, participants in the individual kaliloa and focus group kaliloa, and the respondents in the paper survey were asked for their consent, (the former a signed consent, the latter consent shown by filling in the survey) to participate in the research.

Furthermore, participants were informed prior to the kaliloa that they would be audio recorded, and transcripts sent to participants for approval immediately after the individual kaliloa. Participants and respondents were also made aware that all data would be maintained in a secure location, in a locked cabinet for security, privacy, anonymity and future academic reference. Participants were also made aware that, in the eventuality of them deciding to withdraw from the study, up to the point of transcribing the kaliloa or tabulating the paper survey, all data pertaining to these parties would be destroyed. All other data (sound recordings of kaliloa, paper surveys and transcripts for individual kaliloa and focus group kaliloa collected during the research) would be kept for six years in a secure location, then destroyed according to UAHPEC research regulations and guidelines as stated in the ethics proposal for this study.

Participants were fully informed of the purpose of the research and the requirements of them (refer to Participant Information Sheet, PIS, Appendix A). While assured of their
anonymity from the public sphere, participants were advised of the risk that even the use of a small sample may reveal their identity, especially when the focus group included three of the same participants from the individual kaliloa, making anonymity impossible to maintain as the focus group participants were able to identify each other from the focus group kaliloa. Participants and their well-being are of the utmost importance and this was duly noted at every step during the research process according to Tongan tradition and research ethics as set out respectively by the Government of Tonga and the TTM, and the University of Auckland Human Ethics Committee guidelines.

3.20. Conclusion
This chapter has described and provided an explanation of the steps that were undertaken to investigate: to what do successful Tongan graduates attribute their success and what role may have THS played in their success, if any. A narrative ethnographic qualitative research method, embedded within Tongan and Western epistemological frameworks was employed, all underpinned by a CSS paradigm. In addition, the methodology was informed by post-colonial indigenous approaches, Pacific research theories and Tongan theories of research and analysis. Together these created a research design that respected participants and their context, and the kakala metaphor for a Tongan research process. The main data-collecting tool is the kaliloa ethnographic inquiry/narrative/interview method. There were individual face-to-face kaliloa in both New Zealand and Tonga, archival searching in Tonga, and a paper survey and one focus group was administered in New Zealand. These data-collecting methods ensured that the qualitative data collected in New Zealand and Tonga, informed by Western and Tongan paradigms allowed for a research design that valued and respected all involved in this research, and addressed the research questions. In the next two chapters, the findings collected during the field research are presented.
CHAPTER 4: KALILOA: FINDINGS PART I

Fielau he na ‘e ‘olunga he kāliloa
It is little wonder for she laid her head on the kāliloa
(Tongan saying)

4. INTRODUCTION

Findings in this research, in many ways, reflected Bourdieu’s thinking. One, that students are ‘inheritors’ (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979) of particular types of capital, including culture, to which they have access to as part of their family background. Two, that schools recognise, legitimate and consecrate specific types of capital and *habitus* for its students (Bourdieu, 1986, 1990b, 1992, 1996a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979). The findings reveal that the successful Tongan graduates ‘inherited’ distinct types of *capital* and *habitus* from their family backgrounds (*kāliloa*), churches and schools. *Kāliloa*, as explained in previous chapters, has several meanings, but here it is used as a metaphor to refer to the distinctively Tongan socialisation process at home, and thus the term can be used interchangeably with ‘home’, ‘family’, ‘Tongan culture’, ‘Tongan values’ and ‘Tongan upbringing’. From the data collected (ten individual interviews, 48 paper surveys, one focus group interview, and archival searching) two overarching themes emerged: *Kāliloa* and Tonga High School (THS). These are the two broad categories under which the findings are presented in this and the following chapter. The subsequent chapter, Chapter 5, will take the focus to the findings related to THS.

The key concept, *kāliloa*, and its centrality to the success of THS graduates in NZ and Tonga is discussed in this chapter. The significance of the *kāliloa* is illustrated by the adage above, a Tongan saying used to describe successful Tongan individuals. A successful Tongan individual is said to have laid her/his head on the *kāliloa*. Such an individual has internalised family, home, church and cultural upbringing and as a result is successful (see discussion in previous chapter).
Kaliloa-related findings discussed in this chapter are grouped into the following list of sub-headings. Firstly definitions of ‘success’ and ‘kaliloa’, and kaliloa’s significance are discussed. This is followed by an exploration of family in all its various aspects, including family language practices and family values imparted by the family. These family aspects were success factors, according to participants.

The following section reviews how success was defined by interviewees, focus group participants, and survey respondents. This is important as “success” is a key element of both questions.

4.1. Success: Definitions
Interviewee and focus group participants, and survey respondents, all shared their views on what success meant. According to respondents, there are different levels of success, and variations between Western and Tongan notions of success. On the surface level, success is described as the achievement of set goals, such as achieving a Doctoral degree. The second level is the attainment of material wealth. This includes ownership of resources which make life comfortable, such as a house and vehicle. The third level is a state of being, linked to intrinsic values. For instance, success is achieving a state of happiness or fulfilment associated with one’s family, job, and involvement in church. This third level is experienced both within and outside the individual. It is a success which links the individual to the ‘collective’: family, church, community and country. The fourth (and most valued) level of success is when the individual uses their accomplishments, ‘talents’ or gifts for the benefit of the whole: family, church, community, friends, Tonga and the world.

Participants clearly distinguished between Western and Tongan definitions of success. They maintained that success from a Western perspective includes the attainment of goals in education, acquiring material wealth, in addition to doing the work that an individual would like to do in life. For instance, Peni (at THS in the 1960s) maintained that success is ‘doing
the job’ he ‘loves’. From a Tongan perspective, interviewees felt that success is when you develop your ‘God-given talents’ (Lute, 1950s) to maximum potential and then use those gifts to serve your society, to fulfil all responsibilities that one has been tasked with, and to make a difference where one can. This is the ‘highest brand of success’ (Lute, 1950s).

Success from a Tongan perspective is seen as the result of the prayers of one’s ancestors (Sione, 1980s). This form of success also connects with notions of ‘usefulness’, ‘good’, ‘integrity’ and ‘peace’ (Lute, 1950s; Mele, 1950s; Saia, 1960s; Maikolo, 1960s; ‘Amelia, 1970s; Seini, 1980s). All participants believe that success from a Tongan viewpoint is to be useful to the collective rather than the individual. Lute (1950s) maintained that individual success is collective success. Success is attainment beyond the boundaries of material wealth; it is the attainment of happiness in one’s work and within the family (Sione, 1980s). Lastly, participants agreed that, from a Tongan perspective, success is achieved by a person who has lived by her/his kaliloa, family, church and Tongan upbringing, hence she/he has fared well in education, and carries out her/his responsibilities to the best of her/his abilities in the family, church, community and within the work place. A person of such calibre, being successful, was portrayed by one interviewee as being the ‘360 degree’ individual (Lute, 1950s).

As well as success, kaliloa was central to discussions, and that is discussed in the following section.

4.2. Kaliloa: Definitions and Significance

The 10 interviewees identified important definitions and the significance of kaliloa. Participants in the individual kaliloa described kaliloa as a traditional, Tongan, long pillow made out of wood. As a metaphor, they saw it as the long arm of the mother, or father, upon which the children lay their heads, and stories are told in the evenings. Kaliloa, according to these participants, includes all that is significant to the life of the children so they can be
'aonga (useful), contributing members in the family, community, church and land. Kaliloa therefore includes: akonaki (informal teachings), talatalaifale (tellings in the house), fanafana ‘a e faʻē (mother’s whisperings); stories of struggles and privileges (past and present); Tongan tradition and the underlying values and principles implicitly or explicitly expressed in what was imparted from the kaliloa. In sum, therefore, the participants saw kaliloa as an important Tongan socialisation process, and a key factor in their success.

Kaliloa was the laying of a lifelong ‘connection’, in other words, the continued nurturing of the individual through the kaliloa, an invisible yet visible ‘umbilical cord’, through family storytelling between parent(s) and child as participant, Mele (1950s), expressed:

("t is through the Kaliloa, as I said, when I was lying on my mother’s arms...And you hear the stories that she tells and the values which are implicit in those particular stories. That’s when you develop the bond, not only the physical bond but the emotional bond which lasts a lifetime. (Mele, 1950s).

Kaliloa was further used by interviewees to depict the most significant surroundings in which the child is formed and nurtured—‘family’ and ‘home’. Kaliloa, in essence therefore, is home and family. Whatever is learnt at home, and within the family, forms and shapes children’s knowledge, outlook and behaviour. According to all interviewees, this kaliloa always remained with them, hence the suffix ‘loa’ in ‘kaliloa’, meaning infinite (Sione, 1980s). All participants agreed that inheriting the kaliloa of their family meant that they are now responsible, as adults, for passing the kaliloa on to their children and grandchildren. Another significant aspect of kaliloa for participants was that it included māfana ‘o e loto (the warmth, love and compassion within the heart of a Tongan) (Mele, 1950s; Saia, 1960s; Maikolo, 1960s; Tēvita, 1980s). Māfana is formed and nurtured during the kaliloa, surrounded by family:
[T]hat is the time, not only when you tell stories, but that is the time when you develop the relationships and the values which underpin those particular relationships. So I would say it is the māfana which comes from that bonding. The pālangis would probably call it love. But for us Tongans, there is love and māfana. It’s the māfana which generates us to act, to do the good things we are required to do. So the ‘ofa is inside but the māfana compels you to act towards others. So that’s my definition of the kaliloa. (Mele, 1950s).

Data indicate that there are multiple facets of Kaliloa for the respondents, which encompass family, home, culture, language, place of origin, values, bond, māfana and ‘ofa as key elements. The following section takes the focus to the key aspects of the kaliloa which these participants indicated were instrumental to their success.

4.3. Kaliloa: Tongan Language Acquisition and Informal ECE

Kaliloa, as socialisation using Tongan language at home within the family, was indicated by all interviewees to be the first foundation of knowledge for their successful journeys in education. They saw kaliloa in the Tongan language as fundamental to their formation in Tongan values, spirituality, knowledge and culture, and Tongan language was at the core of their kaliloa. To this end, the family and home were seen to be crucial foundation units of Tongan language, culture and knowledge. Tongan first-language acquisition was seen as highly significant to their success. Tongan language was the tool with which they first made sense of the world, prior to their formal education at school. It is through Tongan language that they were able to articulate their knowledge.

For participants, Tongan language learning rested in the hands of family at home. Their socialisation within the home, through Tongan first-language acquisition was a natural part of their kaliloa (see Table I). They indicated that their later educational success was predicated on their home based, informal, written and oral Tongan language and cultural
learning. The following table illustrates the Tongan language acquisition experiences of the ten key participants.

**Table I: Kaliloa—Contexts & Years of Tongan Language Acquisition Pre-THS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonyms (Gender)</th>
<th>Country of residence</th>
<th>Decade of Entrance to THS</th>
<th>Kaliloa (Informal Education in Tongan language at home)</th>
<th>Formal ECE (Tongan Immersion) Attendance</th>
<th>Sunday School (Tongan Immersion) Attendance</th>
<th>Years of Tongan Language Acquisition Immersion Pre-THS: 10-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lute (F)</td>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>1950s</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mele (F)</td>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>1950s</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peni (M) NZ</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saia (M)</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu'isa (F) NZ</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maikolo (M) NZ</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Amelia (F) NZ</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tēvita (M) NZ</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sione (M) Tonga</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seini (F) Tonga</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Author’s 2011 Fieldwork in Tonga and New Zealand.
Through the learning of values, skills, culture, and prayers - as was the historical practice – the ten acquired Tongan language. Furthermore, their families’ participation in church and Sunday school added to interviewees’ Tongan language learning. Reading, singing, writing and speaking in Tongan were carried out at home and in church in the participants’ family lives. According to interviewees, it was the norm for all Tongan children at the time (1950s to 1980s) to attend church and Sunday school.

As indicated in Table I, the three youngest interviewees (Tēvita, Sione, and Seini) attended ECE as such centres were established by the 1980s. All three reported that their ECE centres were Tongan language-immersion centres. Whether they attended ECE or not, all ten interviewees were immersed in Tongan language acquisition at home and in the primary schools they attended (see Table I). All acquired English as a second language when they entered THS. Tongan language was therefore the primary language used in these participants’ daily living until age 10, 11 or 12. One participant’s experience summarised all the ten interviewees’ experiences of Tongan and English language learning:

I remember when I entered Tonga High and began my immersion in English while at school. Only while at school. When I returned home, it was Tongan language used all the time. And so I guess I felt I did not lose my Tongan language. And of course I attended church and it was in Tongan. Everything else was in Tongan. And so it was English only from 9 am to 3 pm. 8:30 am, but really it’s five hours a day. So, most of my day was still immersed in Tongan. So, I think it might be useful to think about that? The choices we choose and follow. (Lu’isa, 1960s).

All 10 highlighted the key significance of their kaliloa. The lowest mention rate of the kaliloa was by one of the five male (1960s) participants. However, the other four males covered at length their thoughts on kaliloa and expressed raw emotion when they shared the
significance of their formation by the family at home. Each participant’s journey culminated in success, but according to them the laying of foundations was at the *kaliloa*.

Two examples are highlighted below, one very short reference to *kaliloa*, the other an in-depth account indicative of the ten interviewees’ experiences of *kaliloa* as a Tongan language and knowledge nest. Both examples indicate home was the first place of learning. The former example is by a male interviewee, the latter by a female interviewee. When asked about his early childhood learning, Peni (1960s) explained: “Well, of course informally at home, at Sunday School and all that kind of stuff.” When asked about her experience, Mele (1950s) explained:

I think I could attribute my success to my upbringing because my grandmother, my maternal grandmother was blind. And I learnt to read and write in Sunday school before I went to school. I remember reading to my grandmother at about four years of age from the *Bible*. So we all took turns reading to our grandmother from the *Bible* as part of our chores, not chores, part of our responsibility in growing up. And I think I could say that I was a proficient reader before I started primary school. And in those days there are a number of factors in my upbringing which I think contributed to my later success in school which is one of the aspects that I have always talked about to students—how important it is that you acquire literacy in your first language.

And so I was able to read and write through Sunday School and in those days, the Wesleyan Church printed a lot of little reading books. And they were made available in Sunday School and they were distributed as prizes to children, including the Pilgrim’s Progress which is translated into the Tongan language, and a number of other books from English. John Milton’s, for example, poetry was also printed in the Tongan language which was part of the Sunday School Curriculum. And the Fables of course were translated also into the Tongan language and lots of little good books in the Tongan language. And all this printed material
were available to Sunday School children. So there was another book which was on Church doctrine the *Hala Kinikini*. And there were geography and history books as well.

So, to my way of thinking the Sunday School in those days was a far better training ground for literacy than the actual schools themselves, with due respect to my father (*smiled fondly at the mention of her father*) because we didn’t acquire any English at all. English was not taught at all when I went to Primary School in Pipitongi Island (*pseudonym*). We only had Tongan and the materials were very poor and the classrooms of course didn’t have much in it so it was just a long Tongan building, Tongan house and the floor was coral and sand. And that’s where we also learnt to write in our Primary schools. And we used to write in slates in those days. And so on the floor (*paused and laughed happily, perhaps in fond memory of the school setting*)...of the classroom, we traced our letters because paper was quite expensive and quite rare, so exercise books were little treasures that you very rarely used to write on in case you finished the little exercise book (*laughed happily*). So you had to write on the sand because then you can wipe it off and then start again and if you made mistakes, it’s very easy to erase. And you don’t waste paper that way. And so you use your slates where ever you can and the floor of the classroom.

And my mother also had the habit, now that I have gone through university and learnt about all kinds of skills and pedagogy, our mother used to tell us stories so we would lie on her arm in the evening and she would tell us stories. She would read to us from the little books we got in Sunday School. So that was a special treat in the evening, we will take turns like on her arm, listening to her reading these particular stories. And then, while she was reading, it’s like the close test eh, she would read the passage and then stop and ask questions and then what should be the next word etcetera. And because we knew the story so well we would then complete the sentence or complete the phrase...so we were able then to acquire the skills of prediction, in words, decoding words...and interpreting the story in our own way, and retelling it in our own way, in our own fashion as well which made the stories much more meaningful.
We also had a number of our relatives around us and lots of old ladies as well. So in the old days when we did our chores, we would then be given something to look forward to so they would say “Alright, if you are good and finish all your chores in time we would have a pō fananga tonight.” And the pō fananga, I think is one of the most important ways that Tongans used in the olden days to develop creativity in children because the stories were made up. They were not retelling of particular stories, although that was also part of it. But it was creating something new because what happens is that all the old ladies will lie around in a circle where we children will be in the middle or lying in the arms of the next available adult and one would start the story and we used the “Isa” to encourage and also as a mechanism to pause and recollect their thoughts on how to continue the story, so it was a circular type of story so if one person would begin the story and then passed it on to the next person. And the next person would have to think very quickly of how to develop the tale building on what has been said already. So the story will then go round until all the children have fallen asleep and the adults would quit and then we would all go to sleep that particular night. But this is something that we children would all look forward to everyday.

The kaliloa and Sunday school, conducted in the Tongan language, were therefore instrumental in teaching the Tongan language to all ten interviewees. In the focus group (NZ) and interviews in Tonga and NZ, participants underlined the importance of acquiring Tongan culture and language at home as important factors of success in education. The participants maintained it is vital that Tongan children be taught their language and culture. The NZ participants argued the importance of seeking Tongan language clusters in NZ society, and using Tongan language at home and church. These participants stressed that Tongans born or raised overseas must take serious responsibility for maintaining their language and culture, if they wished to attain success in education. Interviewees in Tonga and NZ maintained Tongan students must learn and maintain their language. Possible loss of
Tongan language and culture by other Tongans was one of the gravest concerns of participants.

Interviewees attributed their learning and success to home, Sunday school, church and primary school. Similarly, the paper survey results and the focus group findings highlighted family, home, church and school, in descending order, as important in their success. The kalilola, without a doubt, was considered paramount in these participants’ successful lives.

4.4. Family

Bourdieu (1990b, 1996a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979) maintains family is an important field and network (for social and cultural capital) in the success of students. Family was a paramount factor in the success of these participants. Table II below illustrates the high percentage of paper survey respondents who attributed their success to family and God.

Figure 4: Paper Survey Attribute Success To

N=48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute Success To</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family and God</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard work</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good foundation (Academic and Tonga)</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The focus group (NZ) and the individual interviewees also emphasised that family was instrumental in various ways to their educational success. For instance, fulfilling basic
family needs was a struggle faced by participants, as indicated in participants’ narratives and the focus group responses. Participants shared that their parents struggled at times to feed, clothe, and educate them and their siblings. However, rather than be defeating, such struggles became incentives and strong education motivators. Despite the family struggles, the focus group, paper survey respondents and the individual interviewees all emphasised the family’s strong commitment to enabling student success.

There are differences in the dynamics of the Tongan family which participants noted in the 21st century, compared to when they grew up (1940s-1980s), which they believe affect Tongan student success. Saia (1960s) noted that contemporary Tongan families have undergone many changes, emphasising that in the 1940s and 1960s families were more collectively oriented and engaged in their efforts to enable success for the collective. Saia maintained that, in general, most of today’s Tongan families, at home and abroad, have less contact with extended family. Regular extended family interaction in former days bonded the family together, and was more likely to connect Tongan children to Tongan knowledge and culture (Saia, 1960s). In the 21st century, Tongan families are increasingly more focused on the nuclear unit and its advancement (Saia, 1960s). Lute (1950s) maintained that issues faced by families during the 1950s to 1980s were ‘bread and butter’ issues. Today, young people face more complicated issues such as identity, globalisation and technological advancement (Lute, 1950s). Participants indicated that contemporary changes to Tongan family dynamics are likely have an effect on the kaliloa process, transmission of Tongan language, culture, identity, connectedness to family and home, and success in education.

Family emerged as fundamental to educational success. For the interviewees, there were notable family members and particular family histories which greatly influenced their success. This is an integral finding, and it is explored in the following section.
4.4.i. **Family background & influence**

Family background such as the father’s work, parents’ education and socio-economic background are, according to Bourdieu, determining factors of success in education for students (Bourdieu 1990b, 1996a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979). Table III below highlights important aspects of the interviewees’ family background, some unique, and others common to other interviewees, as evident from participants’ stories. These aspects of the interviewees’ families have, they suggested, influenced their success in education, in both the short and/or long term.

**Table II: Interviewees and Influential Family Aspects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Decade entered THS</th>
<th>Influential Members of Family and Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lute</td>
<td>1950s</td>
<td>• paternal grandfather, exposed to education abroad, helped Europeans in Tonga in exchange for English and music education for children; • maternal grandfather, dux, civil servant, work material became reading material for Lute; • mother strong Christian, father bilingual; • mother, attended Catholic School, attained certificate, spoke English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mele</td>
<td>1950s</td>
<td>• mother and female relatives, good storytellers, ‘informal teachers’; • mother, house-wife, source of physical and emotional support; • Island life and resources provided ideal environment for learning, exploring and creativity as a child; • father, a teacher; • ideal and happy childhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peni</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>• father, dux, civil servant, teacher at church school, liberal; • mother attended high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saia</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>• mother, house-wife, most significant source of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Decade</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Lu‘isa     | 1960s  | support, hard worker;  
|            |        | • father dux, passed away when Saia entered THS.  
|            |        | • *pālangi* grand father, builder; father, only one year of schooling at primary school, builder;  
|            |        | • mother from educated family, teacher and principal;  
|            |        | • Lu‘isa eldest in family, raised to be a leader and mentor to siblings, high expectations.  |
| Maikolo    | 1960s  | father, civil servant; mother an only child so enjoyed certain privileges, most significant supporter;  
|            |        | • grandfather, seaman.  |
| ‘Amelia    | 1970s  | mother a seamstress, great ‘teacher’ at home and in community;  
|            |        | • sister at THS demystified THS for her.  |
| Tēvita     | 1980s  | father, civil servant, legal advisor, attended high school, dreamt for son to be a priest, passed away before submission of Tēvita’s PhD thesis;  
|            |        | • mother, attended church high school, left school to raise family, housewife, strongest supporter and influence;  
|            |        | • Tēvita eldest in his family, raised to lead and care for his sisters.  |
| Sione      | 1980s  | father, traditional and community leader;  
|            |        | • mother, attended high school, bank teller, housewife;  
|            |        | • Pua Island (pseudonym), central place of origin;  
|            |        | • family friend encouraged him to attend local school.  |
| Seini      | 1980s  | father, attended high school, intelligent student, left school to fund education of siblings, banker, passed away;  
|            |        | • mother, eldest of the eldest female hence holds many privileges;  
|            |        | • Seini eldest of the family, raised to lead and care for her siblings.  |

*Source*: Author’s 2011 Fieldwork in Tonga and New Zealand
4.4.ii. Influential family members
All interviewee and focus group participants attributed their success partially to particular family members, as indicated in Table III above. For instance, Lute’s (1950s) paternal grandfather aided foreigners’ work in Tonga in exchange for tutoring in English and music for his children, including her father. Lute’s father was the only Tongan parent who was raised with two languages, Tongan and English (bilingual). When asked if her parents spoke English at home, Lute replied: “It is not that we spoke English at home, no. But that need for that extra help with English I was able to get at home.” Lute reflected back on her grandfather’s wish to educate her father and his 10 siblings in English: “And when I think back it was unusual at that time for the people their age to be bilingual, but all the children were....”

4.4.iii. Family as collective entity & father’s role
Maikolo (1960s) highlighted that his entire family was significant to his success. He also acknowledged the contribution his father and family made to his educational success:

And our father he worked to pay for [the] education of his children and his own siblings.
Sometimes he would send salted fish, dried octopus etc.

And when it came to my undergraduate level. Remember I told you earlier I had children by then. The strongest motivation to me was the fact I had children. But basically that was another motivation, my wife, the children and the family because our children and our family, the support they gave during my study. I never forgot.

Saia (1960s) acknowledged the importance of his extended family, especially when they helped his mother to raise him and his siblings. As shown in Table III, Saia’s father had died. The involvement of the extended family in supporting participants in their education was common to all ten participants, and such support was vital to participant success.
4.4.iv. Mother’s role
While all participants attributed their success to their parents, nine highlighted the importance of mothers or female relatives. All interviewees except Peni (1960s) indicated that their female relatives imparted what Mele aptly described as excellent ‘home pedagogy’. The ‘home pedagogy’ prepared nine interviewees for formal education. Mele noted her mother’s love and care, noting a particularly harrowing experience whilst in primary school:

So it was not until my grandmother died that we came back to Heilala Island [pseudonym], to a rude schock or education where I went to Lile primary school [pseudonym] and got beaten everyday, almost everyday by the teacher for not being able to read anything, or do anything in English. And my mother used to boil water in readiness for me when I come back in the evening to make sure that all my bruises would be washed away. But that was my education and experience in ah, Lile primary school [pseudonym]. (Mele, 1950s).

‘Amelia’s (1970s) said that her mother was the most significant in her journey to success. As housewife and seamstress, ‘Amelia’s mother was an excellent teacher. ‘Amelia recalled her mother taught mothers in the family and village. Lessons ranged from the knowledge and upkeep of different linens, how to care for babies, to maintaining clean homes. She noted her mother’s teaching principle was to maintain high standards. ‘Amelia shared that relatives would clean their houses before her mother arrived because her mother had a high standard of cleanliness. The village women maintained a high standard of cleanliness, otherwise her mother would teach them again. ‘Amelia attributed her success to her mother’s ability to teach and to achieve high standards:

Now, when I reflect upon it. That is pedagogy! She can instruct! I can say mum was a good instructor. And her pedagogy was like ‘Get on with it and do it.’ And then she would watch. Even ironing, she taught us all those things. When she visited relatives’ houses, she told [them] ‘Iron your clothes properly...’ and my relatives would say ‘Ooooh.’
Just like my work now. See, teachers now learn of standards! You set your standards! And I think that is what my mum was doing! Setting the standards and then use them to measure what we were doing. So, when I see standards, it’s not a new thing for me...You see, I can create standards eh because I lived like that.

The male participants all highlighted the importance of parents, and four emphasised the main role their mothers played in their success. The four men noted that having full-time mothers at home, caring for them, cooking, cleaning, maintaining their school uniforms, helping them with their homework when they returned from school, and having a constant, available parent presence at home created a home environment conducive to success.

Male participants maintained that studying hard was something that was motivated by seeing the hard work their mothers did at home, day and night, to ensure that they were educated. Maikolo (1960s) named his mother as the most influential person in his success. Maikolo spoke of his “mother’s love and devotion to us, to our education” which motivated his education. Maikolo’s mother made sacrifices so that he and his siblings received a good education. Their mother moved with them to the main island for school while the father remained on Fa island (pseudonym) to work. It made a huge difference to Maikolo to return from school to the warm, welcoming presence of his mother. Her akonaki and her tireless work for the family was valued by Maikolo. After travelling for two weeks by sail boat to get to the main island where they attended school, Maikolo’s mother said:

Look at this, education is something difficult but you will get there if you know the Lord. [She said this] to all of us. And basically that’s what happened to all of us, in our lives.

Maikolo said that he and his siblings will never forget their mother and all she did for them. In Tēvita’s journey, his mother too was the most influential, owing to the fact that she was at home, full-time. Of central importance to Tēvita’s success was when he received his first mid-year report at THS and his usual high academic performance fell. Tēvita did not
want to listen to his mother’s advice because she had quit school after marriage. In the end he did. Tēvita’s mother was an excellent teacher, she asked for his notes and showed him key study habits. Tēvita’s academic performance improved significantly from that point onwards. Tēvita felt strongly that his mother’s ‘pedagogy’ which he termed ‘kaliloa’, should be used by all Tongan parents as his mother had taught him from the kaliloa. Tēvita advocated that Tongan parents source from the kaliloa as he found it to be vital to his upbringing and education.

4.4.v. Family practices

Family practices at home included storytelling, reading and praying in the Tongan language. Mele’s female relatives told stories in the evenings. Mele’s mother would also read from little Tongan books printed at the time. These kaliloa sessions taught Mele knowledge and a love of the Tongan language. In addition, Mele and her siblings would learn comprehension skills from the story sessions. As indicated above (Table III) one of Mele’s responsibilities as a child was to read to her blind maternal grandmother. This and Sunday school became exemplary training grounds for Tongan literacy; it made Mele a proficient Tongan reader by age four. Lute (1950s) had at her disposal her grandfather’s written work material which she read at a young age. Lute reminisced on her upbringing surrounded by her grandfather’s work: “So we used to read…his bookcases and what have you. So I think that kind of background was extremely sort of empowering and gets a young mind enquiring, you know, things like that.” Maikolo (1960s) shared how members of his church would gather children at his house and the elderly females would pray with them and bless them. Maikolo called it lotu ‘āngelo (angel prayers). These prayers were prayers for God’s blessings on their journey as children (Maikolo). At the time, Maikolo and the children felt empowered in their education by such family practices.
4.4.vi. Non-conformist parents

Three participants highlighted that having non-conformist parents added to their success. Peni’s (1960s) father, for instance, was rebellious. Peni’s father was a “stoic Methodist but he doesn’t obey the rules.” Rather than follow family tradition by enrolling Peni at the church school, where his grandfather and father attended, Peni’s father told Peni to attend THS so he could have a different and better life. Peni recalled how his trajectory in education changed from that of his father’s, and his grandfather before him:

Well, I could have been ex-Toloa, lol. I was all set to go to Toloa because the exam results for Toloa were first released and my father and mother went and bought all the Toloa [uniform] and my father said, ‘Good, come, you can be Dux and this and that, just like he did. And my mother is ex-Queen Sālote College and said ‘Yes, stay in the Church’ and all that kind of stuff.

And then the THS exam results came and my father, it was like he had a bulb in his head, just got turned on. And next thing I know, You go to THS because if you attend Toloa you will be tired out by the hard labour, lots of responsibilities and donations, so and so....Lol.

Anyways, I ended up at THS. I almost ended up at Toloa!

I don’t know what happened to my old man. When the exam results came, he was so happy I passed.

Peni’s father held liberal values which Peni himself embodied. Peni admired and respected his father’s strong convictions and courage to be different in Tongan society. Peni’s father held radical views of Tongan tradition and church. This made a huge impact on Peni. In a similar vein, Lute (1950s) portrayed her mother as having “too much influence” and independence for a woman of her time. Lute’s mother followed her own religion, which was different to her husband’s. Traditionally, Tongan women attend their husband’s church. Lute spoke of her mother’s outspoken nature. Her mother would visit school and question her principal’s decision to prohibit students from attending Sunday school exams.
Similarly, Mele (1950s) spoke of her father as a man ahead of his time. Although there were only girls in her family, their father taught them all the Tongan skills (female and male) there were to know, such as fishing, basket weaving, taro planting, the naming of plants, and so on. Mele (1950s) felt that her father’s upbringing ensured she and her sisters acquired all the valuable Tongan knowledge they needed. This respect for, and nurturing of, difference by Lute (1950s), Mele (1950s) and Peni’s (1960s) fathers contributed to their worldviews, enabling each to forge a pathway in further education that would eventually lead to their success.

4.4.vii. Tranquil family home environment
A secure and peaceful home environment was also identified as important. Mele (1950s), Saia (1960s), Tēvita (1980s), and Maikolo (1960s), for instance, spoke of an ‘ideal childhood’ and the ‘absence of violence’ at home which supported their ultimate success. Saia shared how his parents would always make decisions as a couple. Participants shared they had happy childhoods at home where parents did everything in their power to ensure they were all educated and that they attended Sunday school. The participants maintained it was a blessing to grow up in such ‘loving’, and ‘stable family environments’. As already indicated, the male participants showed deep gratitude that their mothers were a constant presence at home. Mothers were generally seen as creating homes which were secure, ‘warm’ and stable.

4.5. Participants’ Status and Role in the Family
Participants’ status and role in the family also were identified as factors of success. Of great significance in Lu’isa’s (1960s) journey, was her place in the family. As the eldest of four children, Lu‘isa was brought up with high family expectations. Lu‘isa was groomed to be a leader and was told she had responsibilities to fulfil as the eldest. This included
working hard to maintain high academic performance, and presenting exemplary behaviour in school to set an example for her siblings.

Seini (1980s) is the eldest in a line of eldest females on her mother’s side of the family. In Tongan society, being eldest and female is a status of considerable significance and honour (Seini). Seini highlighted that her mother and grandmother’s high status in the family was of considerable importance. Seini’s status and role as the eldest in a line of eldest females meant Seini’s maternal relatives focused much attention on bringing Seini up. Seini was the only grandchild at the time in her extended family. Her paternal relatives were married but had no children. Brought up as the eldest and female grandchild meant certain privileges, high expectations and a collective network of love and support for Seini in her education. Seini’s maternal relatives were constantly around to raise, love and care for her. Seini’s mother did not have to do work when it came to raising Seini. Seini’s primary caregivers were her maternal grandparents whom she grew up with in her formative and primary school years. Seini’s parents had to travel off-island during her primary school years for her father’s work.

Tēvita (1980s), as the eldest in his family, had to work hard at school and set a good example for his younger sisters. This was a difficult task for Tēvita but he took on the responsibility.

4.5.i. Family education and background

The ten participants attributed their success partly to their families’ education and work background. The little education (primary and high school education) that the participants’ elders achieved were strong motivators to attain the highest level of education that they could achieve. The lack of university degrees in their families’ backgrounds was attributable to the immediate need for their parents to earn a living to care for their families of origin.
A high school qualification in Tonga during the 1940s to the 1950s is the equivalent of a first degree in the 21st century from an overseas university (Focus Group, 2011, NZ). A high school certificate qualified Tongan students in the 1940s and 1950s for an overseas scholarship, or a post in the civil service. The majority of the participants’ parents completed high school only. One participant’s father attained a certificate in law.

As indicated, a university education for a Tongan during the 1940s was rare (Focus group, 2011, NZ). The first Tongan to graduate was the founder of THS, in 1941 (Campbell, 1992; Kavaliku, 1966; Samate, 1995). Partly for these reasons, formal Western education is held in high esteem in Tonga. Tongans want their children to be educated as a way to progress the family, and to achieve a good future for their children (Focus group, 2011, NZ).

Three of the participants’ parents were teachers: one mother, and two fathers. The very fact that most of these parents had only attained a high school qualification made education fundamentally important and valuable for participants and their families. According to the participant stories and the focus group, parents valued an education for the participants that extended beyond what they themselves had. The family work and education background were strong motivators for the participants to succeed in education:

My time at THS, father’s job took [my] parents to outer islands to work, longest in Vava’u 6-7 years. This is one of the factors which encouraged me to work hard and study hard, seeing the difficulty faced by the family. Other kids had this and that and I thought how would we get there? And this is what my father said, ‘Education is a lifeline, if you study hard it would lead you to improve the standard of living of family and land.’ (Seini, 1980s)

There were other instances in the participants’ stories. Lute’s (1950s) grandfather had travelled overseas, to Australia, which was rare for Tongans at the time (1920s-1930s). There her grandfather encountered Western education, something which he valued and he later instilled that perception in his children and grandchildren. Lute also shared her
grandfather’s strategic move to contract Europeans in Tonga to teach his children, including Lute’s father: “So you know that’s part of that background, so he had the background of placing a value on education.” Lu’isa’s (1960s) mother was a teacher and became a principal for many years. Education was central to Lu’isa’s maternal side of the family; her mother’s family were highly successful academically. This had a strong trickle-down effect on Lu’isa. Lu’isa too acquired a love of learning. Lu’isa recalls never wanting to miss a day of school as she was always excited and looked forward to it. Although Lu’isa’s father attended primary school for only one year, he encouraged Lu’isa to excel at school. Lu’isa did; she was top student throughout all her school years from primary to high school. Seini stated:

So my parents valued education highly and education for us was my parents’ life, the most important priority, especially my dad.

Saia’s (1960s) parents cherished education and created a good home study environment for him. Saia remembered with affection how his father created a little shelf for his books with pieces of timber he had assembled. It made Saia feel special. Education was also a priority in Mele’s (1950s) family. Her father was a teacher and so instilled in her and her sisters a love of learning - not just Western education, but Tongan as well. Education for Mele ‘came natural’ and therefore was ‘fun’. Her parents did not have to force her to study. It was something she enjoyed, and she worked hard; education was treasured by Mele.

The family work background of participants is indicative of the traditional Tongan division of labour, where men are out in the work place and earning an income, while women remain at home, caring and raising the family. Participants’ fathers worked as farmers, civil servants, church employees, teachers or bankers. Mothers, regardless of whether they had jobs prior to marriage, usually were full-time housewives. The one exception was a mother who was a teacher and later became a principal. Maikolo’s mother had to move with
Maikolo and the children to the mainland to give the children a good education. Other examples are typical of Tēvita’s story:

My mum got what they called at the time a Lower Leaving Certificate. Had to quit school after that to help the family. (Tēvita, 1980s)

My dad never went to school. But my dad really pushed us. He said: ‘I didn’t need to go to school because my parents, grandparents were ok.’ His father, grandfather was a pālangi. He was a carpenter. He built things, they built things. And so, as far as he was concerned, he didn’t see any needs that needed to be met. But my mum. My dad was the one who really pushed us. He said ‘Look, you gotta do better than me!’ And so, we always loved school. (Lu’isa, 1960s).

The message was that their family backgrounds in education, even if lacking in formal education, were the very motivators for these participants to work hard to succeed. In brief, it appears that the lack of parent credentials was just as motivating as parents having attained credentials. Whatever their parents’ educational attainment, participants framed them as motivators.

4.5.ii. Teachers, students and family preparing students for entrance exam

One of the most important indicators of the value families placed on education was the emphasis on preparing the participants by family, participants themselves, and their primary school teachers to sit the local exam to high school level exam. All participants sat the national entrance exam to THS. According to participants’ stories, THS was the top Tongan school and passing to THS carried prestige and honour. All participants, with family support, worked hard to pass the THS entry examination.

Participants viewed the entrance exam as a form of ‘intelligence test’ (Lute, 1950s; Mele, 1950s; Lu’isa, 1960s); they knew that only the top students entered THS. Each participant therefore was a top student at primary school. Passing the entrance exam to THS
was a huge achievement for the times (1940s-1980s) in Tonga. Exam results were displayed outside the premier’s office (1947-1950s), read over the radio, and published in the local newspaper (1960s-1980s).

All the participants reported on the hard work they, their families, and their teachers carried out to prepare them for the local entrance exams. All attended a pō ako (night study) with specially contracted teachers who prepared them for the high school entrance exam. One participant returned to his home island to be under the tutelage of one of the best primary school teachers in Tonga:

My father asked that I return to Sisi Island [pseudonym] because of the competitive nature of the high school entrance exam, and one of the best teachers was there at Elizabeth school at the time. And I returned and entered class five there. And I became valedictorian of Elizabeth school. I sat the high school entrance exam from Elizabeth school to THS. And I was the only one who passed from the district to attend THS. (Maikolo, 1960s)

Families made ‘payments’ of money or goods such as food as ‘gifts’ to the teachers in return for the pō ako for participants. Lu’isa’s story captures the experience of preparation for the entrance exam, in addition to the prestige of passing to THS (1950s-1980s):

I think firstly, when I grew up, it was common knowledge or perception in Tonga that THS was the best secondary school. So when I went to primary school, I always aimed, and all my teachers, and my parents always said ‘You’ve got to get to THS that is the best school in Tonga. And so, my parents always wanted us to do well in education. And so, they pushed us in the sense that they made sure that we went to school, they made sure that we did everything in the primary school well and sit the Primary School Entrance Exam, and that we got into THS. And so, as a consequence of that, I mean education was always an important thing in my family.

In recalling her exam preparation for THS entry, Lu’isa recalled, as did all the other participants, how pō ako was significant then, and still is now for students:
And in those days, and I think it is still relevant now—doing pō ako after school was a really significant thing. And so, the teachers of class 5, we did pō ako every day. And at my house other kids would come and do pō ako with my mum. I never did it with her. I went off to another teacher and so, that really helped, all the exam prep.

Enormous preparatory efforts were made to ensure the participants passed the entrance exam to THS. Pō ako (night study) with the best tutors hired by parents and caregivers were integral to the preparation process to attain a place at the highly reputed school that offered a Western education. THS, according to the participants, was the ‘top school’ and families, teachers and participants were determined to invest time, energy and prayers to successfully enter THS.

And my entrance to THS has a story of its own. At the time, they had the Annual National Exam, they still have that now. But the rules were only the Top 10 could be admitted to THS. And the reason was, that was the size Govt could afford NZ teachers for. All the teachers were hired by Govt from overseas to fast track education of the kids that they picked up. What I didn’t realise it at the time, the Annual Examination were actually IQ. I found this out later. At the time I had no idea what an IQ exam was. So the whole of Tonga up to the age of 10, you qualify to sit the Entrance Exam and only the Top 10 would go into THS. So it was a very, very special privilege for which you struggled hard and you had families engaging teachers to teach their kids at Primary School to try and get them through to this best school. So, after the examination they would put up the results at the Prime Minister’s Office. You know, it was put up at the wall there. So we would go and look at the glass case. (Lute, 1950s)

Four participants indicated that they were the only students from their village/island who passed the entrance exam to THS in their particular year. The other six passed the exam alongside a few others from their primary schools.
4.5.iii. Success in education: ‘Carrying parents’ burden’

Participants also attributed their success to ‘carrying their parents’ burden’ (Lute, 1950s) or ‘vision’ (Tēvita & Sione, 1980s). For all participants, their parents’ vision for them was the highest level of education, to raise themselves above their childhood family circumstances, to care for their siblings, and to succeed. All interviewees attributed their success to ‘carrying my parents’ burden’ wholeheartedly. Lute explained this best when she stated that she believed that “our actions and our dreams are driven by rememberance of all that our parents have imparted from home, their struggles and hardships.” Lute also expressed:

I think one of the most important grounding influences for me was wanting not to hurt my parents. I think a lot of students say that today but don’t carry the burden honestly. Heh.

(Lute, 1950s)

All the participants remembered their parents’ struggles, the values, and carried these with them as motivations to keep striving for success, never wanting to disappoint or ‘hurt’ their parents. All parents were driven by their need to fulfil promises to excel in school that were made to their parents and the need to realise their parents’ dreams of success in education for them. Sione remembered returning home to Pua island (pseudonym) for the holidays and his mother and father would akonaki (advise) him to study hard, to reflect back on his origins, to remember his humble beginnings and identity as motivations to study hard. Sione felt that he was ‘tasked’ by his parents to study hard. To Sione and other participants, it was a natural part of their duty and love for parents to study hard, to pursue the dream of success in education that their parents held for them. Tēvita’s (1980s) father dreamt for Tēvita to study theology. Tēvita did so; he ‘owned’ his father’s dream as did all the other participants their parents’ dreams for them. Each participant had been ‘tasked’ with similar ‘parents’ burden’ to succeed in education.
In Seini’s (1980s) journey her father advised her not to study to be a medical doctor but instead to pursue a Doctoral degree in a field of her choosing. It was important for Seini to follow her father’s advice regarding education, due to his history of having had to find a job to take care of his siblings. Her father worked hard to fund Seini and her siblings’ education, and to ensure they all enrolled in a university degree.

**4.5.iv. Obedience led to blessings**

Participants also attributed their success to the Tongan belief that obedience to parents brought certain ‘blessings’, particularly success in education. According to participants, the success they had achieved in education and in life stemmed from obedience to parents’ teachings and advice. Participants were raised to follow Christian practices such as attending church and Sunday School, and to focus on their formal education. Participants were also taught to follow their cultural teachings at home. All participants followed their parents advice to study hard in school, and remember their humble beginnings. Eight of the interviewees who did talk of blessings in relation to akonaki believed that their success was a result of their obedience to their parents. For instance, Sione (1980s) shared that obedience to his parents akonaki led to his success. Sione’s father is a tauhi fonua with a tofi‘a (a land-owning caretaker of the land) in an outer island. Sione was brought up to uphold Tongan culture and worldview, to serve God, King and country, especially in view of the various changes Tonga had undergone.

**4.5.v. Influence of peers and siblings**

Three participants mentioned the important role of peers, and two named the importance of older sisters in their success. Mele (1950s) had a friend at school who became a positive role model for her from school in Tonga to NZ. Mele also had older sisters who excelled at school. This meant having positive education role models at home. Sione (1980s) was influenced by a family friend to attend the local ‘Atenisi University (see Coxon,
2010 for more on ‘Atenisi University), a tertiary institution established for the masses based on a liberal form of education that encouraged critical thinking in young minds. This led Sione to a later career in government. Sione is a strong advocate of aspects of tradition and democracy which empowers people at the grassroots level, and helps build a strong future for them as independent, successful individuals. Tēvita (1980s) maintained that having peers who were like-minded in high school, i.e., friends who competed academically to succeed, led him down a successful pathway. Tēvita’s peers were a positive education influence who kept him academically oriented and focused at school. ‘Amelia (1970s) shared that having an older sister who attended THS made entry to THS less of a mystery for her.

4.5.vi. Stories of struggle: Success motivators
A key success motivator for participants were the stories of struggle passed on in the participants’ families. Some examples are given here. Seini’s (1980s) father told stories of how he and his mother had to fish for shell fish to sell to help pay for his school tuition. He would also relate the story of when he attended school on the main island of Tongatapu, away from his home island of Fā (pseudonym). He had to nofo hili (live as stranger) billeted on the college site by a tutor, whilst attending high school. Her father’s story were many and were told as encouragement to Seini and her siblings. Such stories of struggle were used to empower his children to strive to be the best they could be in school (Seini, 1980s).
Maikolo’s family stories and circumstances became the motivation for him to succeed in school. It was important for Maikolo to improve his family circumstances. The sharing of family stories of past and present struggles for participants empowered them to forge a similar but a different path, arguably more successful than that experienced by their parents.

4.6. Ko e Hā Hoto ‘Uhingá? Ko e Hā Hoto Talá?
Of central significance to the ten participants’ kaliloa within their home is the nurturing and formation of the individual upon questions participants termed as—Ko e hā
hoto ‘uhingá (What is one’s purpose)? Ko e hā hoto talá (What is one’s telling or creed)?

These are fundamental questions first planted and nurtured at home by the family in the participants’ upbringing. Data indicated that knowing ‘aonga and tala led to these graduates’ success. For these participants, following their ‘aonga and tala meant combining the teachings received from home, alongside their own determination and hard work to attain academic success. ‘Amelia (1970s) captured what tala meant to most participants:

So in our (Tongan) living, there are certain things that are told. These are the tala of living, tala of the land, tala of the village, and the extended family. At this point in time, one has yet to enter university and other educational institutions as such. And these tala are very very important...These tala this is what they do...

What I am beginning to tell you is about living. So, in living there are certain tala and from these tala then I will say, which I think is a wonderful term—I will assume then that in this world there are things that I must do so that I feel that my life is ‘aonga (useful). Because ‘aonga is a value from living. Everything has to be ‘aonga so if these are not ‘aonga then they are not valuable, therefore one is of no use! So I define these talanoa from living which is kaliloa to me, in which being formed. (‘Amelia, 1970s)

A Tongan individual’s ‘aonga and tala, according to participants, are established within the home and church prior to attending school. These tala “combined all the things rendered important in our little living, our little family, little extended family, and in Tonga overall” (‘Amelia, 1970s). The Tongan individual is socialised to know one’s place, status, responsibilities and how to interact with others to create harmony and peace in socio-spatial relations (Ka’ili, 2008). ‘Amelia explained that these tala and ‘aonga must be embedded in the individual so that when she/he travels overseas to live and study, these will prevent one from the delusion that the journey was easy. Rather, ‘aonga and tala instilled in the individual, will foster acceptance and awareness that the journey is one of ‘a long struggle’ so
that one does not waste time stressing (‘Amelia, 1970s). The focus group (NZ) maintained that ‘aonga and tala were central to their success, particularly when they knew their culture, origin and connections to home of origin.

‘Aonga was a driving question for all participants. It drove participants to work hard in education as a way to show their ‘aonga. ‘Aonga guided their actions and efforts. For instance, Peni (1960s) attributed his success to ‘hard work’ and a life-guiding question:

There’s no substitute for hard work because I worked my butt off in everything I do. And I think the other thing is, the fact that you are always thinking—Am I useful? This is a guide question to what I do. You know, I’m doing a lot of research and management now. When I was at school all I wanted to do was something useful.

Tala and ‘aonga carried lifelong importance for all ten participants’ success. Data confirm that tala and ‘aonga continued throughout the life of participants. After attaining degrees from university, these participants sought ways to be useful at home, church, work, and in the community. Participants also passed on their ‘aonga and tala to their children. Participants also shared that all the places they journey to add tala and ‘aonga to their existing tala and ‘aonga formed within the home. All participants concurred that other values, knowledges, and worldviews are acquired along the way as one lives life in different places, and encounters different people and cultures. The values, implicit or explicit in family stories, were all part of the consuming effort by parents and grandparents to ensure the participants were ‘aonga and that they lived by their tala so that they become successful in life. For all 10 participants, the questions of ‘aonga and tala remain with them long after their childhood and adolescence has passed, and continues as they live today.

4.7. Lotu & Ako: Home Values

Lotu (prayer, belief in Christian God, spirituality, church) and ako (education/learning) are two of the most important family values which contributed to the
success of these THS graduates. The highest number of respondents, 20 out of the total of 48 survey respondents, attributed their success to God and family, hence *lotu* and *ako* (refer to Table II).

According to the interviewees, *lotu* and *ako* were significant values in the family. Within the ten participants’ families, it was the norm that prayers were part of evening activities as parents instilled a belief in the Christian God who gives hope, help and blessings in one’s journey. This was especially important in the participants’ formative years. Lute (1970s, Tonga) summed up this notion:

> You grow up here. The Tongan family teaches you there’s a God and teaches you that way of life. I don’t see why you go overseas and you change. You see, when I look back, every Easter I’d be at the Christian Easter camp somewhere in NZ. That was the maximum travelling I had in NZ. Because I didn’t have any money to go and tour. But when I think back to how many places I saw in NZ, would you believe that the places I went to, are places for Easter Camp (*laughs delightedly*).

> I remember I went to the Waitakeres. First time, such a beautiful place. It was an Easter camp heh. I remember going down to Levin, Easter Camp. So I went to the Easter Camp. I joined the church choir. I was not a Bible banger and I’d miss church now and then, but I think the basic principles helped you a lot.

For interviewees like Saia (1960s) and Lu’isa (1960s), *lotu* and *ako* were central to their family living. Every effort was made by parents to nurture growth based on *lotu* and a good sound education at home and within formal schooling. Sione (1980s) maintained that *lotu* and *ako* were valued by his parents, and that success was the result of the *lotu* of parents, grandparents, and ancestors. For Mele (1950s), *lotu* and *ako* were intertwined in her journey. The former, in the shape of the Sunday school, enabled her abilities in the latter.
Saia (1960s) attributed his success to the ‘priorities’ placed on lotu and ako at home: “Perhaps the most important thing to me, thinking back at this time, I was blessed because I grew up in a family that warms my heart reflecting back, there were two things that were emphasised, ako and lotu.” Saia remembered fondly how his parents did everything so that he and his siblings received an education and attended Sunday school. Saia said that shared prayers were a normal part of their daily routine. Family prayer was accompanied by the informal education (akonaki) of his parents. Lotu and the akonaki were laid as foundation during the formative years. This also included his ‘mother’s whisperings’ and family interaction with one another, which added to the ‘closeness’ of family life. Saia shared that, in all their family celebrations, prayer was central. These family engagements which combined lotu, and the celebration of special life events connected family members due to the warmth which emerged from harmonious engagement of family. Saia also remembered that the year his father died was difficult. However, the laying of the foundations of lotu and informal akonaki at home enabled Saia and his siblings to ‘cope’ well with problems, without letting the issues overwhelm them as individuals.

Maikolo (1960s), shared the two most significant motivational factors which contributed to his upbringing:

There are many factors, but to me, the most important growing up in the family....There were only two things. It is ako and lotu, that is the most important thing. [There are] only two important things in life, and that is education and lotu. We must know the Lord and we must attend church.

Lotu guided Maikolo’s life. Similar to other participants, there was an awareness of God’s guidance and presence within his own life and journey, hence a strong sense of gratefulness to God for his success. Maikolo also stated:
And so you will notice in my life, I will never demarcate myself, despite my education, despite my knowledge, and whatever, but lotu will still be on my side, in everything. So I’m spending a lot of my time at work, in education and such. At the same time, I try and balance that with my belief in the Lord and my ministry in the church. Whatever I have, I give it so that I show to the Lord [my gratefulness]. That’s my belief! It is a motivation for me.

Lu’isa’s (1970s) highlighted lotu and ako were significant in her upbringing. She attributed her success to these factors:

And even though Church was a top priority, I look at education as high priority and church as top priority. Family was first. So it means all these things. The high priority was to keep them all up, and never lose sight of it.

It was the home in which these values, lotu and ako, were built and passed on to the participants to form them as children; lotu and ako were firm foundational values for a successful life. For all ten interviewees, the majority of the paper survey respondents and the focus group, lotu and ako were two sides of the same coin. For THS graduates who participated in this research, lotu and ako went hand in hand. One could not exist without the other. The data showed that incorporating both lotu and ako as significant values within their homes by family contributed to success.

4.8. Conclusion
Kaliloa (family, home, home grown values, language, mothers, family background, carrying family’s burden, family stories of struggle, tala, ‘aonga, lotu, ako) was central to the success of these THS graduates, hence it is highlighted as a major finding. The kaliloa instilled core foundations which enabled and prepared participants for formal education. Kaliloa passed on Tongan knowledge, which enabled participants to form their identities, make sense of the world and articulate their knowledge of the same. In addition, kaliloa
nurtured within these THS graduates, ‘home grown values’ which remained with participants and empowered them in their respective journeys to academic success.

In addition, fundamental *kaliloa* questions such as what is one’s ‘aonga and one’s *tala* directed participants’ pathways. It was at the *kaliloa* (home), that certain principles were imparted to the individuals by the family. These principles were long lasting and had a profound effect on individuals. *Kaliloa* was central to THS graduates’ success and it underpinned their total lives. Success in education as determined from the data were two-fold. From a Western perspective, success is the attainment of set goals. From a Tongan perspective, success is to be a useful individual and carry out work that benefits the collective.

*Kaliloa*, therefore, in its myriad of forms, was very significant for each and every participant. All spoke or wrote of it in distinctive ways, and to varying degrees. THS also emerged as a defining critical factor of success for participants. In the following chapter, data in relation to THS is examined.
CHAPTER 5: TONGA HIGH SCHOOL: FINDINGS PART II

‘Oku ‘auha hoku kakai he masiva ‘ilo
My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge
(King George Tupou I, cited in Moulton, 2002, p. 16; p. 31)

Grow up, o tender plant, for the days of your world,
Your hand to the tools of the Pakeha for the welfare of your body,
Your heart to the treasured possessions of your ancestors as a crown for your head,
Your spirit to God, the creator of all things.

5. INTRODUCTION

The culture of a student can affect the student’s chances of success in education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979). However, one culture often cannot offer all that is necessary for a student to succeed in a global world, particularly in the case of students from non-Western cultures, as is the case for the participants in this study. The opening quotes indicate that one’s own culture (body of knowledge) can be insufficient by itself in a globalised world, and calls upon individuals to attain also knowledge of other cultures, and knowledge of God (Christian God) (King Tupou I, Sir Apirana Ngata). A key finding from data analysis is that the participants believed that THS with its Western ‘culture’ played an important role in their success.

While it cannot be denied, (as demonstrated in the previous chapter), that kaliloa was a significant foundational factor in success, this chapter will illustrate that THS was the key difference in driving and expediting their success in formal education in Tonga and beyond. This by no means argues that THS is more important than the kaliloa in its role in student success. On the contrary, the data show that both kaliloa and THS, with their strengths combined, contributed and were integral to these THS graduates’ success. Kaliloa
established a strong Tongan knowledge foundation, upon which THS added its distinct body of knowledge; together these equipped graduates for further education in the wider world and success.

This chapter discusses six fundamental aspects related to the effects of THS; all were highlighted in the data and emerged as significant themes. These are: Tāufaʻāhau Tupou IV: the visionary founder of THS; the THS motto Ki he Lelei Taha; English language policy; staff and curriculum; transformation of mind sets and people; and post-THS trajectories. These six aspects of THS merge to elucidate THS’s integral role in the success of these alumni. As in the previous chapter, data referred to in this section are sourced from ten individual interviews, one focus group, one paper survey and archival research, all sources illuminate THS’ pivotal role in the success of these graduates.

5.1. Tāufaʻāhau Tupou IV: Visionary Founder
From the school’s inception in 1947, THS’ founder, Prince Tupoutoʻa (later King Tāufaʻāhau Tupou IV) had an incredible, conscientious, intentional, and strategic vision in mind for the kind of education he felt would revolutionize Tonga (Lute, 1950s; Peni, 1960s; Luʻisa, 1960s; Tēvita, 1980s; Sione, 1980s, Seini, 1980s; focus group, 2011, NZ). Having experienced Western education (the founder was the first Tongan to graduate from a University in 1942), he believed that a Western education at the same level as his own was necessary and ideal for his compatriots, commoners and nobility alike. Education was at the heart of Tupou IV’s socio-political agendas and concerns (Campbell, 1992; Kavaliku, 1966; Lute, 1960s). Having attended university in Australia as an integral part of his western training to become an informed leader the Prince, with his mother, Queen Sālote Tupou III’s blessings, articulated a vision for a western style education that would be locally and easily accessible for his people (Campbell, 1992; Kavaliku, 1966). Particularly striking in this vision was the inclusion of a provision for grass-roots people, hard-working, and those
academically endowed, to pursue a formal education overseas, something that the Tongan majority could not afford to provide for their own children (Lute, 1950s). THS, as the school was named in 1951, became an integral part of the founder’s vision to educate and empower his people. As one participant shared:

[L]eaders set up education institutions in different countries but the specific, specificity of Tupou the IV’s purpose for setting up THS, I have never seen that anywhere. Heh. That amazing vision, I can’t afford it for the nation, let’s afford it for the first hundred and just have a National IQ Test to assemble those and fast track their high school education.

If we then go on from Him as the founder of THS to Him, as with the vision, to bring education down and make it the basis of every Tongan home now. His life was for uplifting them. Because that is what the establishment of Training College, THS the improvement of Tonga College, the whole purpose was to bring the God-given gifts of knowledge to human kind, to bring it down to the ordinary man. For let him have it for his own enjoyment. Two let him have it for his own empowerment and freedom. You look at it, it is still not there in most of the world. Most of the world is amazed that we have total literacy. But it didn’t come by accident. It’s a product of a scheme for that to happen. (Lute, 1950s).

The establishment of THS was a reflection of the value the founder placed on educating his people. What emerged from the data demonstrated that the founder’s establishment of THS was responsible for instilling in parents, and in the country itself, a deep love and respect for academic achievement. Parents and students fully embraced the concept and reality of THS:

I knew right from the start that an opportunity to be at THS, it’s special. A lot of parents would like their kids to be at THS at that time. To be there, it was something special for me, for the family. First one in the family to go to THS. (Tēvita, 1980s).

But the opportunity to go to THS, even our part of Tonga—West. The West is well known for school dropouts. Only a few they can make it to THS. So in the year that I sat the exam, I
was the only one from Lose (pseudonym) making it to THS. It meant a lot to me and the whole family. It was everything to me. (focus group participant).

Space to enter THS in 1947 was limited to 12 students (Lute, 1950s). Two students were added to the Minister of Education’s original estimate of 10 students per year for the number of entrants to the Matriculation School (Tungi, 1946, p. 57). Lute (1950s) maintained that 10 pupils was the quota of entrants originally planned, as that was the number of students for which the Tongan government could afford to hire NZ teachers to teach, previously mentioned in chapter one. Lute, the oldest participant remembered vividly the honor and prestige she and her family felt when she passed the entry examination to THS in the 1950s. She recalled a list of the THS entrants was posted in a glass box at the Premier’s office. This display added to the participants’ reputation as the ‘chosen few’ who made it into THS.

THS was also the only school in Tonga during the 1940s to 1990s with a home study space inspection programme (Lute, 1950s; Peni, 1960s; Saia, 1960s; Maikolo, 1960s; Tēvita, 1980s; Tonga High School Golden Jubilee Magazine). Staff from THS inspected students’ study space at home. Three sources support this, the Focus group, two interviews, and a statement by an alumnus from archival research:

Interviewee 1:

Those days the teachers even came and inspected your homes. And they would speak to your parents to make sure you had a desk at home. You had good lighting. (Lute, 1950s).

Focus Group:

Focus group participant (FGP) 1: And one of the backgrounds, you must have known it. When we entered [THS] it was still in place. All the students...they must have a room.

FGP 2: At home.

FGP1: Yes, they must have a room or something and it gets inspected.
FGP2: Yes!

FGP1: One must be able to study in it and be inspected. The students in town had a house. Us in the bush, we had a small house, and so we built a small fale for ourselves.

FGP2: A Tongan fale.

FGP1: A small Tongan fale at home with a small bed. And the only family bed sheet is spread over your bed, the only pillow case and so on. And you had a small desk and a little hurricane lamp for studying as electricity had not reached the rural areas then, and every so often they would come and inspect. That was a defining thing for THS. (Focus Group, 2011).

Interviewee 2:

For THS it was required that they inspect where you put your school materials at home, and a place to study. So those things as you reflect on it now was one of the founder’s vision[s], his need to instil the value of education in parents. Education was not just education at school. A major part was played by parents. And if parents do not play that part or give their support there will not be any success. (Saia, 60s).

Archival research:

...every Tonga High School student was required to have a study room, a table and chair and a good reading light. But wait a minute, what about my kind who had only an open style Tongan fale at home? Build a study room demanded the Principal, ‘Yes sir’ said I. Up went a three metre by two metres Tongan fale on the front lawn. All made of native materials of course, except the chicken wire netting that separate the low pola (coconut leaves wall) from the thatched roof. (Viliami Fukofuka, Class of 1959, p. 44).

The establishment of THS and its rules regarding home study spaces generated positive family valuing of education in the community, church and country. Families with students at THS invested time and energy in the education of their student at THS (Focus
Group; Lute, 1950s; Peni, 1960s; Saia, 1960s; Maikolo, 1960s). As indicated above, if students did not have study space in the house, parents built little Tongan fales (Peni, 1960s; Saia, 1960s; Maikolo, 1960s; Focus Group). THS students generally were not required to do many chores as the families were expected to prefer THS students to prioritise their studies (Focus Group, 2011; Seini, 1980s).

THS extended the locals’ educational horizons to beyond Tonga (Tēvita, 1980s). THS’s main goal was to matriculate Tongan students for study abroad, so that they could achieve even higher levels of education (Lute, 1950s; THSGJM). All ten interviewees successfully transitioned abroad for further studies, although a few did not attain a scholarship immediately after THS (refer Table III). Eight, as shown in Table I, eventually graduated with PhDs and two attained MA degrees. The overarching vision of THS was to foster and nurture future Tongan leaders, so as to educate Tongans for Tonga’s development which would ideally be led by Tongans. One interviewee summarised this:

The reason why THS was established, you know. It was the King’s vision to educate the Tongan people to become informed workers so that they can lead the government. Remember at the time, there were mostly foreigners who worked in Tonga. There were hardly any qualified Tongans. There weren’t any. It was his vision to grow the Tongan workforce. (Lu’isa, 60s).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Scholarships Awarded Post-THS</th>
<th>Highest Degree Attained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lute</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mele</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peni</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>PhD,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Education Details</td>
<td>Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maikolo</td>
<td>No, worked. Obtained scholarship later.</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu’isa</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Amelia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tēvita</td>
<td>No, attended local Theological School. Obtained scholarship later.</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sione</td>
<td>No, took a year off then attended local University. Obtained scholarship later.</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seini</td>
<td>Yes, attended Epsom Girls. No scholarship for University First Year. Obtained scholarship later</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Author’s 2011 Fieldwork in Tonga and New Zealand.

Participants believed that THS’ vision to educate Tongan leaders was achieved (Lute, 1950s; Peni, 1960s; Lu’isa, 1960s; Maikolo, 1960s; Afu’alo Matoto, 1997, p. 30). Ninety-nine percent of CEOs in the Tongan government to date are former THS students (Focus Group, 2011; Tonga Public Service Commission, personal communication, 2013). One participant noted:

...the vision behind establishing THS has been achieved longtime ago with many ex-students coming back with degrees in different areas. But the fact that the government now is constituted with a THS majority, it’s unique, it’s something special. It’s a testimony to what has been a vision in the past. And as a THS ex-student, you are glad that the PM is a former teacher of yours, to be the PM; a classmate...to be a Minister of Sports. (Tēvita, 1980s)

THS has produced many Tongan leaders; the current Tongan government comprises a majority of THS alumni in key government and private leadership positions (Focus Group, 2011; Tonga Public Service Commission, personal communication, 2013). A key finding from the data illustrated interviewees’, survey respondents’ and focus group participants’
views that the establishment of THS by its founder was a transformative vision, paralleled by no other school in Tonga, or by its Pacific neighbours at the time. Tonga was intent on producing its Tongan leaders, and this policy came to fruition when Tongans began taking over leadership positions from Europeans most notably in the 1960s and onwards:

You know you are too young, but back in the 1960s and 1970s it was like a big celebration in Tonga, the first overseas trained Policeman came back ‘Akau’ola. He walked in, and out walked a pālangi. Heh. The first Tongan qualified to be Director of Works came back with a degree, he walked in—and out walked a pālangi. And we were the first Pacific nation to do that. Heh.

So therefore for the last 30 years or so, especially if you attended regional and international meetings, Tonga was well known because Tongans represented Tonga. With most of our neighbors, they were still represented by their colonial officers. Heh.

I remember the day Dan Tufui and ‘Akau’ola became Chief Secretaries. Out walked Victor Sagrian, all the way from London, heh. When Dr Tapa came in. Heh. Walked into Vaiola, I think there was a Dr Brown or whoever Fusitu’a eh. Heh. Mahe Tupouniu. The Minister for Finance at the time was a Mr GoodAcre.... (Lute, 1950s)

Data indicate that the selection system of the national entrance exam to THS was highly academic, prestigious and vied for by both parents and students. THS was the elite school to aspire to (Lu’isa, 1960s; Tēvita, 1980s). Every parent wanted his or her children to attend THS (Lu’isa, 1960s; Tēvita, 1980s). A THS alumni reflected on THS’ elite status at the THS’ Golden Jubilee in 1997:

Having a child at Tonga High School became the objective of many parents who also used every possible means to achieve this. The performance of many primary school teachers was measured by the number of students they successfully prepared to enter Tonga High School....Tonga High School stood above all other schools in Tonga, academically, and it was clearly a school for the elite. Not that it accepted only children from the elite, but it brought
together the best from all backgrounds and gave them the opportunity to become the elite.

(Matoto, 1997, p. 30, Archival research, 2011)

Even before you attended THS, “it was as if poto was already around you, about you and within you” (‘Amelia, 1970s). THS’s objective, to foster future Tongan leaders, appealed to the participants and their parents. Evidence from two interviewees illustrates this:

And when you studied at Tong High, the school motto that Tupou IV established the academic school was ‘To The Best’. It was to train, to educate future leaders for Tonga. And it always was at the corner of every student’s mind—the opportunity to be a leader in the land. And these are elements, to me, that constantly remained in my mind. (Sione, 1980s).

One day my dad took me for a drive from Havelu passed the old THS buildings and I asked my dad why he wanted me to attend THS. He said ‘You see there [pointing to the THS buildings], you know all those who are leaders in this nation, perhaps 99 per cent of them, they were educated here at THS. And THS will also enable you to attain a free scholarship to study abroad as we do not have that kind of money.’

I liked that idea. At the same time they [parents] prepared me and nurtured me to be a good leader one day. You know, I liked that idea, admired the idea of going overseas to be prepared as a leader at work one day. I liked the idea that they [THS] would prep me. And when I entered THS, it was exactly what THS did for me. (Seini, 1980s).

THS in ‘Amelia’s (1970s) view was a ‘doorway’ to, and in Tēvita’s (1980s) perspective, the ‘link’ between Tonga and an overseas education.

[E]very school has its own limits but THS I think it was formed for—to prepare students for further education in other countries like coming to NZ, that’s the major link between THS and overseas.
THS for all participants (Focus Group, Survey, Individual Interviews) was a vision which promised transformative change for Tonga, due to the school’s unique form of education. The focus group concurred that ‘The King’s vision for democracy was THS’. As shown in Figure II above, ninety-four percent of survey respondents designated THS’ role as figuring ‘a lot’ in their success; respondents claimed THS played a transformative role in their success. Participants maintained that THS, with its English medium policy, provided the required foundation for further education overseas. Ninety-four percent of the paper survey respondents maintained THS played a major part in their success. One respondent summed this up clearly: “THS played a significant role in whatever I have achieved thus far. It laid a good foundation and embedded a culture of success in my life. This culture of success I believe remains with THS ex-students long after we leave school.” According to data findings, THS’s impact on student success was long-term.
5.2. THS Contributed to the Advancement of Tonga

Participants from the individual interviews maintained THS added to the progress of Tonga and the Tongan people. The individual interview findings showed THS offered equitable education across gender, class and socio-economic divides. In other words, THS enabled individuals to progress regardless of class, gender and socio-economic status. Tēvita (1980s) remembered nobility and commoners stood on an equal footing at THS, they were all “simply students, there to attain an academic education.” Lute (1950s) stated:

So the History of THS is also the History of the advancement of Tonga. It is also the History of the advancement of women. Because THS places no differentiation between girls and boys. And with the whole setup, you just can’t separate them.

If your IQ result was the basis of entering the school, you entered male or female. And from then on you sailed. You know, you’ve sailed your Ocean of study and then when you come back, you’re already in a far better position. And it is no accident that in the last 20 years up crept the women to the Deputy positions and then to the CEOs, heh.

The year 2006 marked the ‘setting of the Sun’ (passing of a monarch, in this case the founder, Tāufa'āhau Tupou IV) on the Kingdom of Tonga. It was a time of great mourning and a period for deep reflection on the gift that was THS, for all THS students and staff, for Tonga and for the people of Tonga. His Majesty Tāufa'āhau Tupou IV, visionary founder of THS, and ruler of the Kingdom of Tonga, passed away leaving behind a legacy of academic education that took Tonga to unparalled heights amongst its Pacific neighbours (Lute, 1950s). THS played a significant role catapulting the transformation of a people academically. Tonga had achieved a 100 percent literacy rate and the highest number of PhDs per capita in the Pacific in 2006 (Māhina, 2007; Pulu, 2012). The King’s vision for THS played an integral role in the transformation of a people and a nation. Data overwhelmingly indicate the perception and firm belief that King Tāufa'āhau Tupou IV’s establishment of THS was visionary and transformative (all data sources). THS is arguably one of the greatest
accomplishments and contributions made by His Majesty, Tāufaʻāhau Tupou IV to the development and betterment of his people as then, Minister of Education, Prince Tungī (ʻAho Vakaua Souvenir Magazine: THS Double Anniversary 65th & 66th; Campbell, 1992, Focus Group, 2011; Lute, 50s; Tonga High School Golden Jubilee Anniversary 1947-1997).

THS alumni and former Minister of Education and Deputy Prime Minister, S. Langi Kavaliku summed up THS’s transformative role in Tonga, in his tribute to THS’s founder:

The 50th Anniversary of any institution is a very special and important occasion. In the case of Tonga High School it is special not only for past and present students and staff but also to the Government and people of Tonga. It is a time of remembrance and thanksgiving, and of commitment to the ideal to which it was established.

For those of us who were and are fortunate enough to have had the chance to participate in the life of Tonga High School, I believe that first and foremost, we must offer our sincere gratitude to our God for His offering us the chance to receive His Blessings at Tonga High School; truly a time for Thanksgiving and Praise.

It is also a time for offering our thanks to Her Majesty, the late Queen Sālote, for graciously granting approval for the idea and vision to be manifested and to His Majesty, King Tāufaʻāhau Tupou IV, the then Royal Highness, Crown Prince Tupoutoʻa-Tungī and Minister of Education, for the vision and establishment of Tonga High School which at that time was called the Matriculation School. It was a light that shone forth after the darkness of the Second World War based on the ideal of KI HE LELEI TAHA of and for the country and people of Tonga not only in the classroom but in living. It was and is KI HE LELEI TAHA, amongst other things, in knowledge and wisdom, in work ethics, in the norms of behaviour, in understanding, tolerance and peace and in our relationship with our God. (Kavaliku, 1997, p. 5, Archival Research, 2011).
5.3. THS Values Paralleled Family Values

‘Amelia (1970s) and other participants maintained that THS values matched their family values. Parallels were in the importance attached to education, and the belief that, through hard work and dedication (doing one’s best), students can succeed. These values were identical for female and male students (Lute, 1950s; Lu‘isa, 1960s; Saia, 1960s; Tēvita, 1980s; Seini, 1980s). One THS alumnus shared that her father held the same values for her and her sisters; both families and THS believed in preparing independent students:

I was also fortunate to have parents who believed in the importance of education. My father particularly, believed that the most important role of education is to give oneself independence to think, feel, believe, etc. As one wish without being beholden to anybody. That is why he educated his children—to be independent so that they do not have to depend on other people.... (‘Ana Taufe‘ulungaki, Dux, 1963, p. 58, Archival Research, 2011)

THS’s values equalled family values—one had to have ‘aonga—purpose to succeed (Mele, 1950s; Peni, 1960s; ‘Amelia, 1970s; Seini, 1980s). This meant that all ten interviewees and the focus group (NZ) participants, agreed that every endeavour, especially academic undertakings, had to have ‘aonga and significance. To be of use to others was vital post-success. After achieving a PhD or MA, one must be ‘aonga in order for the acquisition of degrees to be considered worthwhile and wholly successful. One participant used the metaphor of a ‘doorway’ to describe THS’ role in students’ success and the important continual emphasis on pursuing one’s ‘aonga, which begins within the home, then is continued at THS.

What I mean is the various paths we followed is possible if we knew our purpose. And that is something that we were raised with in Tonga....THS is symbolic, like something that symbolically portrays the world beyond Tonga. And so when you enter THS, it’s not really what you gain from THS. It’s about finding a little room, this little room here will take me to
Fiji or to Australia. So THS reflecting on it now, you enter, the world is through there.  
(‘Amelia, 1970s).

5.4. THS a School for the Best of the Best
From the beginning, the founder’s vision was to select Tonga’s ‘best of the best’ academically, and give them the opportunity to attain a Western education through immersion in the English language (Focus Group, Individual Interviews). English proficiency and high academic performance were especially valuable to Tongans, as university-educated Tongans were rare in the 1940s (Lute, 1950s). This showed keen insight that a Western education was the key to development and ongoing autonomy in a country which was, at the time (1920s—1940s), led overwhelmingly by expatriate pālangis.

All findings confirmed that THS was seen as the ‘top school’ from 1947 to 1980s (all research data; Kavaliku, 1966). The first 12 pioneers to attend THS obtained 70 percent and above in the entrance examination scores (Siaosi ‘Aho, 1997, p. 17, Archival Research, 2011). This was indicative of the academic calibre of the students who entered THS, and students continued to perform at high academic levels throughout their schooling. According to the interviewees, being the best academically in the country was the norm for THS students. To be the best in the country made THS the dream school that could change students and Tonga (Saia, 1960s). With ‘THS setting the bar at a very high level academically’, the selection system through the national entrance exam, and the continued high academic performance of students drove the education mentality of the country (Focus Group, 2011). THS, a school for the best of the best, was an exemplary vision; it offered a Western education for Tongans, and in pursuit of academic excellence it generated a snowball effect on education in general, for Tonga (Kavaliku, 1966).
5.5. THS Motto: Fostering a Culture of Excellence

*Ki He Lelei Taha*, ‘To The Best’ is the founding principle upon which THS was established (Langi Kavaliku, 1997; *THSGJA 1947-1997*, p. 5, Archival Research, 2011). The school motto was a charge for its students and staff to maintain the best in all areas of endeavours, particularly in academic studies (Individual Interviews; Focus Group; Archival Research). The motto also captured the ability of the students who entered THS. The entrance exam to THS, an IQ test according to all core participants, selected the top academic students in the country. It encouraged high academic performance from the outset. It presented a particular frame of mind and system in itself which encouraged, expected, and maintained the pursuit of excellence within the structures of the school and home. To fail at the time (1947-1980s), would have been in total disregard for the school motto, and for the value so implicitly placed by families on THS and education (Lu'isa, 1960s; Tēvita, 1980s).

Data indicate that the school and home, for participants, worked cooperatively to maintain excellent academic performance (1947-1980s). The motto was deeply embedded in school life and curriculum (individual interviews, focus group, archival research).

Mechanisms were also in place to perpetuate the THS motto:

And at our time, at the end of the year if your results were not up to a particular level, you...remember THS had this program called Transfering, heh. They didn’t call it sacking. Ah it was just transferring you to another school. All to do with maintaining the high standards so that you could go straight from THS to Training College in NZ or to Tech and then onto University. (Lute, 1950s).

*Ki He Lelei Taha* embodied the philosophy of creating the previously mentioned ‘360 degree individual’ (Lute, 1950s). As holistic individual with both the attitude and frame of mind, who is highly persistent in the face of hardships and struggles to succeed in all areas of life—school, church, community, neighbourhood, and country (Lute, 1950s).
The following are participants’ thoughts on THS’s motto:

I learned in THS how to succeed in life by living by its motto “TO THE BEST”. If we do our best in everything we do what is the best and the best is success. (Paper Survey, 2011)

Peni (1960s) from his interview, spoke of what *Ki He Lelei Taha* meant for him:

*Ki He Lelei Taha*, to me, it’s a personal thing that you need to do your best! And that is hard work! And there is no substitute for hard work. To me, it’s that personal thing. And it doesn’t mean that you become the best in everything. It just means that you do your best! And it’s not like that you become the best of everything but to do your best. And that’s what it means to me, and over the years, I’m saying that to my children. Not like that you’re gonna be the best everything in the world, but when it comes to being you, you’re the best at being you. And whatever you’re good at. Whatever you want to be go ahead! That’s what it’s about. You’re good at whatever you do. Forget it, the world may not think you’re the best, forget it. It’s you that must think that you’re doing your best.

And I think that’s why the logo is quite smart because that is what it means is that, I’m talking to you, that you be the best for you. There’s nobody that can be better at representing you than you. If someone else can do it, then obviously you’re not special in any way. Lol.

You’re special because you’re you. And you’re the best at being you. And to me that is what *Ki He Lelei Taha* is. And a lot of people take it much more globally and collectively and it becomes more like you not me. To me, Ki He Lelei Taha, is about me. And at the end of the day, you lie down and pass away, and ask the question: Have I done my best? The answer needs to be ‘Yes!’ That’s what it’s about. It’s not uh, if only I could do this or could do that. If you answer like that, then obviously you were not the best.

Maikolo (1960s) explained that, at THS, there was a different type of ‘motive’ or ‘inspiration’ that seemed to open up possibilities within each student. It inculcated a ‘can do’ attitude within THS students:
And there is a type of ‘motive’ or ‘inspiration’ that a THS student possesses! That kind of value stipulates that—There’s nothing hard! Everything can be done.

Sione (1980s) talked about a certain pride attached to THS. According to Sione, certain perspectives of THS based on the objective and vision of the school lingered with him in his life journey:

There is a certain pride in the students of THS. At the time I was there, there was pride in THS as the best school in the land academically because the leaders of the land were THS alumni, including ministers. At that time, the Crown Prince, the CEOs in the government, directors in the government departments, a majority of them were THS alumni. And when you attend THS, the motto ‘Ki He Lelei Taha’ with which Tupou IV established THS as an academic school, was well known. The training of future leaders for Tonga…remained at the corner of everyone’s mind, the opportunity to become a leader in the land one day. And these elements, to me, have remained in my mind.

Lu‘isa (1960s) spoke of THS’s role in her success as ‘huge’. THS instilled a competitive spirit at the threshold, within the individual through the competitive entrance exam prior to entering THS and through THS’s motto. THS’s motto was a force that drove one’s actions, attitude and behaviour. To Lu‘isa, this notion of competitiveness is embedded in the individual from the very beginning at THS. Data indicate that the THS motto and spirit opened up avenues of ‘possibilities’ for its students. Everything worked together to create the possibilities—teachers’ beliefs in the student, parents’ support, the THS motto and outlook:

In reflecting on it. If I did not compete to enter it, not only that but once there compete every year heh. Because if you failed the exam...You found a place. And then when you get to the upper classes you competed to get a scholarship so you could go for further studies. And I knew that my parents couldn’t afford to pay for (a) University (education) heh. And at that time, it was rare to find a student on private overseas heh. And so you had to compete all the
way through. And you competed to...I mean THS put the idea in your head, your mind that you can be the best! What ever it is that you wanted to do. So, to me, it’s always like the school motto it re-inforce(d) all the practices heh. And so all of that, I think all of that worked. (Lu’isa, 1960s)

Alongside the competitive spirit and the notion of possibilities embedded in the motto, data indicated THS’s status as the top school was an empowering factor for self-excellence. It was a driver to better one’s self, to improve self-performance, to strive to do one’s best at all times and in all places. The school motto became a self-fulfilling prophesy, high prestige, meant high expectations resulting in high performance. The individual was not a single entity but part of the school, and the family. To excel meant you excelled together with your school, and your family:

Your family had the same expectations and it was a real privilege to go to THS so you dare not lose your place because it is not only about you, it’s about your family.... (Lu’isa, 1960s)

Data also illustrated that the strive for excellence was embodied in the ‘tala’ of the school as ‘Amelia (1960s) called it. Lute (1950s) referred to the school motto as a fekau or fatongia, a charge that called upon each student at THS to pursue excellence at school and in life. Seini (1980s) stated:

For those of us who work hard we were raised at THS like that—to strive for the best. It becomes a part of you, your life, to strive at work, in education or in any area, must always strive to do your best. [My colleagues] in [the] work place know if work is given to me that I will do my best even if that means late nights till the morning. My work is hardly ever questioned. None of the work I do...is ever sent back for corrections. At the same time I look out for implications on others of the work I [do]...that all parties connected to the issue are not affected in adverse ways these things were instilled in me by this, these strengthened that side of things—the hard work, to strive at all times and to do your best. I believe that these are the things that THS gave me. These strengthened one’s loyalty to one’s work, performing one’s
work to the best...I remember my pride wearing my tunic...I wanted to be organised, well
groomed and well mannered according to the expectations of its students...We were well
mannered, dressed accordingly, kept our books in order in an attempt to live up to the motto
of THS—To the Best...[The] most significant influence of THS was re-strengthening motto of
the school within our individual lives and you leave THS with good memories of the place.
(Seini, 1980s)

Paper survey findings also indicated an overwhelming pride in the school motto. It
structured the mentality and drive of its students to do their best. Deep and heart-felt
responses to the school motto emerged from the paper survey: “[It] was the corner pillar of
my success.” And another respondent: “The motto of THS—Ki He Lelei Taha—In pursuit of
excellence has [stood] me in good stead in my journey throughout my whole of 62 years.”
As explained by Seini (1980s) above, THS’s motto became a life-long frame of mind which
appeared to drive behaviour and actions.

In addition, the school motto itself instilled a ‘can do attitude’ and perhaps opened up
possibilities academically. All survey respondents who mentioned the THS motto Ki He
Lelei Taha spoke of the lifelong positive impact it had had on their journey. Nine of the ten
interviewees spoke of the motto as the ideal that drove their desire to succeed. The school
motto transformed their mindset to see possibilities—that whatever they put their minds to,
with hard work—doing one’s best, one would produce results (Peni, 1960s; Sione, 1980s).

According to findings from the Focus Group and individual interviews, the school
motto was deeply entrenched within students, and its presence maintained and perpetuated a
desire to excel academically. There was perhaps an unwritten code for participants to strive
to compete and excel over other alumni. Tēvita’s (1980s) interview indicated this mentality,
which in itself was consistent with the other nine interviewees’ views. To Tēvita, there was a
need to excel above other students within THS, and at other schools. It was a passion to
excel driven by the need to live up to the THS motto, to maintain that school motto at all
times. And so it drove Tēvita’s and the participants’ academic performance. *Ki He Lelei Taha* thus became a self-fulfilling prophesy, driving students to perform, think and live to the best of their abilities. It structured outward appearance, nurtured an internal and outward work ethic, and persistently pushed these THS graduates towards success. In addition to THS’s motto, its English-speaking policy was a significant factor of success; this is discussed in the following section.

### 5.6. English Language Policy

All THS graduates, in some way, attributed their success to THS’s English-only language policy. This policy provided interviewees and survey respondents with particular tools to succeed in formal education:

> It [THS’ English only policy] was a big help and it was the school rule at THS to emphasise and encourage study in English of all subjects. This enabled me to reach this level.

> Education up to postgraduate level involved English language particularly in the field of arts, science and maths of course use less words [more to do with numbers and calculations]. The field which I took involved a lot of writing and reading in English. Therefore English proficiency was necessary. And English [immersion] helped a lot, the foundation laid at THS in terms of English language learning through instruction. And I believe the pay-off is seen in the result of [my success in] education. Further to this, we come into a system of work, although this is Tonga, everything is done in English, this government system. (Sione, 1980s).

> It [THS’s English-only policy] was an incredible foresight because the key to expanding our intellect in Tonga was to understand English the language because all the books are in English so I don’t know but I presume it was the founder’s vision to make THS an English language only school because education at THS is conducted in the English language and, with its Western orientation, led you to there.... (THS alumnus; Field Research, Tonga, 2011).
A few examples indicative of the role of THS’s English-only policy in participants’ success include: “THS gave me the door to further studies and being able to communicate in English.” Another shared: “[THS offered an] excellent start to my education when we had to speak/write in English only.” An additional respondent maintained that THS gave her “the ability to learn and speak English fluently, thus assisting me in my future as a woman, a mother and a wife.” For the Tongan graduates in this study, the ability as a Tongan to speak and write in English fluently was seen as a substantial contributor to their success.

All of the focus group and the paper survey respondents, and 90% of the interviewees were grateful for the opportunity to acquire English at THS. English learning was seen to be something that was unique, and it could progress them faster in education. The policy prepared them, especially, for matriculating overseas for further education. This fact was particularly evident in the survey. The majority of the survey respondents are now living in the USA, Australia and NZ where English language is the main medium of communication. Immersion at THS in the English language served the participants well in their new homes abroad.

The honour and privilege of learning English at THS was especially poignant for all five male interviewee participants (in Tonga and NZ) who indicated that, for them, as male students, they did not particularly take to reading English books or reading for that matter, let alone speaking it. All five indicated a deep respect to THS for offering such unique opportunities for them as male students who otherwise, if they had attended other schools that used the Tongan medium only, could not have gone as far in their education. Saia (1960s), for instance, highlighted in his *talanoa* that THS’s most significant role in his success was the acquisition of the English language.

I am able to do the other things. But further education requires English language (*smiles*).

You can’t be successful if your English is not good. I think this is the most important thing
one acquired at THS. So it was at THS that one was able to acquire it so that one can continue on with one’s education.

As indicated by all the five male interviewees, speaking and reading English at THS was picked up more easily by the girls, and girls used the library more often than boys. The latter preferred to remain outside and play games. So for all the male participants, THS offered a supportive context for learning English to prepare them for future academic endeavours. They maintained that THS’s English policy gave pupils a head start compared to other local high school students, whose medium of instruction was generally Tongan.

Participants indicated a deep appreciation of THS’s English language policy as it provided an opportunity to learn English which otherwise they could not have had access to. There were, however, variations in participants’ views on the English they had acquired at THS. One interviewee’s (1960s) view was that, while the English learnt at THS was ‘proficient’, when she attended form seven in New Zealand, she could not understand the colloquial language used by New Zealanders. She said that was because she was taught proper English at THS, in full sentences and with the correct grammar.

Another interviewee (1950s) made the point that attending school in New Zealand had the ‘usual learning problem’, which was to ‘grow’ the English that she had learnt at THS. One male interviewee (1960s) felt that the English he learnt was not adequate, but he was grateful to have attended THS where he did learn English, whereas his compatriots from other local high schools in Tonga who also went for further studies in NZ found learning English extra hard and had failed due to their lack of English while at school in Tonga.

Overall, it was the female participants who seemed to pick up the English language fast and they adapted well to the new overseas learning environment. For the male participants in particular, it was hard but they managed to overcome these difficulties of speaking and reading English in addition to overcoming their shyness in using English. The male
participants were eventually able to speak, write and converse in English which helped significantly with when they took on further studies abroad.

5.6.i. Tongan graduates’ experiences of THS’ English only policy

The ten interviewees and the focus group indicated similar experiences of language learning at THS. All arrived at THS as first language Tongan speakers, and they maintained that encountering English immersion at THS was initially hard. For the first term, most participants did not understand what teachers were saying. Participants often used the word ‘clueless’ or ‘foreign’ to describe their initial experience of encountering English language at THS. Participants said they attempted to ‘blend in’. During assembly, for example, a participant shared that he would follow the lead of the older students because he did not understand what was said. If the older students laughed at what was being said at assembly, then he would laugh along as well to show he understood. Participants also avoided instances where they had to directly speak in English. Interviewees reported feeling shame at their inability to speak the English language. Academic performance for the interviewees consequently suffered in the early stages of entering THS.

Participants gradually overcame their fears as their time at THS progressed. All participants felt that when they started to speak English it was ‘funny’ attempting to speak it, but in the end, their language improved. Some participants, particularly the girls, made extra efforts to acquire English. The older participants (1950s-1960s) admitted a love of reading and read all the English materials available to them. The youngest female (1980s) watched tv and videos, in addition to reading and studying directly from textbooks, with the aim of improving her English. For all the male participants (in both Tonga and NZ), no extra efforts to read were mentioned. However, four of the five male interviewees admitted that they could have done better in English. These males maintained that female students in their time (1960s, 1980s) loved reading and attending the library, whereas the male students preferred
to play outside. At the end of their first year at THS, all ten interviewees indicated they had improved their English language and academic results.

The exposure of the ten interviewees to English language from ages 1 to 11 was minimal, as indicated by one participant:

The only time I learnt English was in school where I had to read these little books like Janet and John books. These were so old days. But Tongan is my first language. I grew up totally immersed in the Tongan language. I learnt Tongan. And so I learnt to say a few greetings in...like ‘Hello’ in Primary School. It wasn’t until I got to THS that...it was compulsory to speak in English....

From birth to ages 10-12, the interviewee participants were immersed in Tongan language and life in the fields of home, church and community. Three of the ten mentioned in passing being read to, the odd book in English language at primary school level, but such experiences were not a significant feature of their learning at primary level. All participants learnt some greetings or farewells in English, however, that was as far as their ‘English language knowledge’ went. There was little to nothing in terms of English language learning prior to education at THS.

Interviewees from the 1950s-1970s were less exposed to English in the sense that the three participants in the 1980s had a different degree of exposure to the English language at home through different mediums, mainly through the television and watching videos, which were introduced to perhaps more family homes than was previously the case for older participants. Seini (1980s) in particular noted, as a first language Tongan speaker, that she looked to television and videos to pick up the pronunciations of English words and to learn new English vocabulary. The older participants were less exposed to such things. The two oldest female participants however, conscientiously set out in their home life to acquire English by reading any English written material they could access. Lute (1950s) for example,
climbed the tree located at the back of her house to read rather than do her chores. Mele (1950s) ran errands and read the English newspapers used to wrap the goods from the shop to learn more English. In addition, Mele would read magazines and even the dictionary at home.

5.6.ii. Views on THS’ English only policy
Although the majority of the data indicated an overwhelming view that success was attributed to the English language policy at THS, there were alternative views of THS’s English-only policy. Three distinct perceptions on the policy at THS (1950s-1980s) emerged from the Focus Group, the Interviews and the Paper Survey. These views are in contrast to the majority of participants who perceived the English language policy at THS was instrumental to student success.

5.6.iii. THS’ English policy: A preference for a bilingual language policy
The first view was held by two of the ten interviewees. They maintained that THS’s English only policy should instead have been bilingual. Mele (1950s) and ‘Amelia (1970s) maintained that THS’s English-only language policy prevented THS students from an in-depth learning of their Tongan language at high-school level. Mele (1950s) argued that including Tongan language at THS in her time would have added a richer knowledge of Tongan culture:

I resented the fact that I was not allowed to study my mother tongue as we were not allowed to study Tongan or speak Tongan in school. I learnt English because I had to, but I soon discovered a love of the beauty of the language which had nothing to do with using it for study purposes, it gave me a world of imagination, for which I am grateful but unfortunately, I could not share my love with other students or teachers at the time.

‘Amelia (1970s) stated:
I was hoping it [THS] was bilingual. But, I kind of understood at the time the significance of English language...because we were told all of that.

But we are talking about education. Education is about culture. And language. It’s not about knowledge detached from culture...which was what...[was]...going...on...in my time...we needed to get the knowledge of foreign culture. Anything about the palangis let’s know that in English, we didn’t care much about our culture. But see, as we come to the present. Forty years later, what they [foreigners] are looking for is our knowledge. In reflecting back, if THS valued both languages and the culture of Tonga and foreign culture, the foreign wisdom, I think that we would have been different people. Tonga would have been developed differently by people with this type of mentality.

‘Amelia also indicated that no one at the time (1947-1970s) thought to question THS’ language policy. ‘Amelia moreover argued that the lack of focus on Tongan language and culture has had consequences on THS students’ behaviour and attitudes. Both ‘Amelia (1970s) and Mele (1950s) mourned the missed opportunity for THS in the 1950s-1970s to offer Tongan language and to study in-depth Tongan culture as the THS focus was fully Western. ‘Amelia maintains this total Western orientation at THS has meant THS alumni ‘seem less Tongan’ in some ways.

5.6.iv. English policy: A negation of Tongan language and culture?
The second view on THS’s English-only policy, which is in contrast to ‘Amelia & Mele’s view of bilingualism, was shared by interviewee Lu’isa (1960s):

Yes! I have never forgotten that and I appreciate the chance [to speak English only at THS]. But when I went to a school that was English speaking, that DID NOT tell me that my culture was not important! Because every time I walked out of the school I spoke in Tongan. You know. So I think for me, if that’s the vision now what is it doing to the ORIGINAL vision? Should we change that? The vision? Are we still working to the best? Are we still having
THS as the place where future Tongan leaders are, you know? Because I think some of that might be missing! (Emphasis by interviewee).

To Lu‘isa, the speaking of English was fundamental to the objective of the school, a view strongly supported by the focus group and individual interviewees. Saia (1960s) summed up the importance of THS’s English language policy:

I can do this and that. But further education requires knowledge of the English language.
You can’t be successful if your English is not good. I think that is an important element attained from THS. So, it was only at THS that one can attain this to be able to go for further studies abroad. (Saia, 1960s).

The focus group fully supported THS’s English language policy; they argued that the policy was placed in a context where the majority of the students were first language Tongan speakers and spoke English only at school. Any time before and after school, students could revert back to Tongan immersion, with the exception of expatriates’ children (Focus Group, NZ, 2011).

5.6.v. Order of language acquisition unimportant
The third view on THS’ English only policy was argued by Peni (1950s, NZ). Peni advocated that the order in which the languages (Tongan or English first) were learnt did not matter. Peni maintained the context (Tonga or NZ) in which one lives should dictate which language is learnt first. If one lives in Tonga, it is important that one acquires Tongan first, as that is the language of that context and vice versa. The former scenario was true of all the interviewees in this study. For Tongans in NZ, in respect of success in education, and maintenance of Tongan language and culture, Peni avers that it is their responsibility as Tongans to learn their culture and language. What is clear from Peni’s views is that regardless which language is your first (Tongan or English), one must learn both. Peni is scornful of Tongan individuals in NZ or overseas who proudly state they are Tongans, yet do
not bother to learn Tongan language and culture. Peni called these self-proclaimed Tongans—‘Dongans’, to reflect their lack of Tongan culture and language.

Mele (1950s) on the other hand, was adamant that Tongans must learn their own language first, prior to the second-language acquisition of English. Mele did not advocate the acquisition of the Tongan language only. She supported literacy in the Tongan language. Mele maintained that it is her ‘sound’ learning first of her Tongan language which acted as a strong platform for her to then acquire the English language:

I suppose the formative years of my life if I would say, although THS helped me to progress, I basically attribute my success to a family upbringing which was a very happy one and also taught me to be master of Tongan literacy. And so I found it easy to in turn transfer the skills that I acquired in Tongan to the acquisition of English.

5.6.vi. Tongan and English languages must be learnt
All interviewees in NZ and Tonga agreed that the Tongan language should be learnt as it carries knowledge of the Tongan culture, people and ancestors that need to be maintained. However, there were differences within this view (as indicated above). What was most clear was that in the context of Tonga where the majority of the time for students spoke Tongan, THS provided English-language immersion. Second-language English acquisition was at first difficult, but students persevered. As indicated, not all interviewees shared positive attitudes to the English-only policies of THS.

THS’s English only policy was generally seen as a step forward in preparing Tonga for its place in the future (Archival Research, Tonga, 2011). Mr Sealy, principal of THS 1966-1969, in his words addressing THS students, framed the necessity of THS’s English language only policy (Archival Research, THS, 2011). Mr Sealy maintained that THS students must ‘master’ the English language ‘thoroughly’ as, firstly they will compete in exams with NZ students whose first language is English, and THS students only have six
years to master the language. Second, English is required for Tonga to participate in international trade and political organizations. Third, Mr Sealy suggested THS students should not fear losing their first language, instead they needed to know that second-language acquisition will enhance students’ language ability and understanding of foreigners. THS Tongan teachers who had acquired English were examples of this. These Tongan teachers were successful speakers of Tongan and English languages, and Mr Sealy encouraged THS students to do the same—acquire English alongside their Tongan language to better understand foreigners. He ended with the following words:

And you too must have similar aims. You must know and understand foreign peoples. Remember, that you are the destined leaders of the future and it is through you that Tonga will be enabled to take her place in the twentieth century. You must understand the foreigner more completely through a more intensive study of his language. Never forget that...the pupils of Tonga High School are a carefully selected group. They are given very special privileges because it is on them that this country intends to lay the burden of guiding Tonga into the fullness of the twentieth century. C.M. Sealy, M.A. (School Magazine, cited in the THSGJA 1947-1997 magazine, pp. 25-26)

THS’s English-only policy was accompanied originally with an intake of European staff and Western-academic school-based curriculum, such issues are explored in the next section.

5.7. Staff and Curriculum
From 1947 to the 1980s, THS hired European teachers, especially from New Zealand, in order to prepare Tongan students for study abroad (Lute, 1950s; Afuʻalo Matoto, 1997, p. 30, Archival Research). THS students were taught by palangis, with the slow and gradual inclusion of overseas-trained Tongans who graduated and returned home (Lute, 1950s). The first Tongan to join the THS staff was returning, overseas-trained S. Na’a Fiefia in 1954 (Paula Bloomfield 1997, p. 11, Archival Research, Tonga, 2011). By 1997 the balance had
changed; there were five expatriates and 45 Tongan teachers (Heimuli, 1997, p. 22, Archival Research, Tonga, 2011).

The ten interviewees had varying opinions on staff. Some felt that the *pālangi* staff were highly beneficial as they held such high regard and expectations of the students, which made a huge impact on students’ academic performance. In addition, the learning of English was, for some, of the highest quality as *pālangis* were teaching their language and their curriculum which added to the high quality of English learning of students. Lute (1950s) and Lu'isa (1960s) stated that even pronunciation was carefully taught, and was important in their time. According to one interviewee, a few *pālangi* teachers were not trained teachers, yet they had university qualifications (Mele, 1950s). Nine of the ten interviewees, maintained that THS had the best teachers, both *pālangi* and – eventually—Tongan. THS, compared to other local high schools, had an advantage as it employed qualified teachers; the perception was that THS employed the best trained teachers (Interviewees, 2011; Focus Group, 2011).

THS’s curriculum was highly academic, yet at the same time it fostered student learning in sports, drama, religious instruction and Tongan culture (Interviewees; Focus Group). There was also focus on agriculture or technical subjects, as was the case in THS’s brother school, Tonga College. THS, from its inception, was highly academic, focusing on subjects which would prepare students to matriculate overseas for further education (Interviewees, 2011; Focus Group, 2011). What was most noted by participants is the commonly held stereotype in Tongan society, that THS is purely academic.

Eight interviewees felt that the THS curriculum was as it should be, highly academic, yet the school also had room for extra-curricular activities which built character, determination and success (Saia, 1960s; Maikolo; 1960s; Tēvita; 1980s; Seini, 1980s). THS, for these participants, was holistic in the sense that there were extra-curricular activities, including a focus on *lotu*. For Saia (1960s) the drills held by *pālangi* teachers instilled values
of cooperation, timing and structure. In Saia’s time (1960s), THS offered extra-curricular activities in view of the lack of activities available in the community. For interviewee and focus group participants, especially the males, THS opened possibilities for lotu, contrary to the stereotype that THS is strictly academic without focus on religion compared to church schools (Saia, 1960s; Peni, 1960s; Tēvita, 1980s; Focus Group, 2011). In fact, the focus group identified that some of the top Tongan priests and theologians are former THS alumni (Tēvita, 1980s; Focus Group, 2011).

Eight interviewees participated in THS’s extra-curricular activities such as athletics, netball, rugby and scripture union camps. Only one out of the ten participants admitted a lack of interest and involvement in extra-curricular activities as her parents were interested in her academic achievements only.

### 5.8. THS Transformed Mind-Sets and People

THS transformed the mind-sets of students and their families, highlighting the opportunities Tongans can attain through a Western form of education (Interviewees, Paper Survey, Focus Group). THS gifted an education ahead of its time (Lute, 1950s; Peni, 1960s; Saia, 1960s; Tēvita, 1980s; Sione, 1980s). It instilled inquisitive and critical minds in Tongan students who were taught in a Western context, often by Western staff contracted for the specific purpose of fulfilling this type of pedagogy. According to the data, variations on this theme emerged, illustrating THS as uniquely intended for the transformation of the mind, mind-set, and spirit. Tēvita (1980s) explained:

I think the greatest contribution of THS to the formation of those people is training them to be OPEN-MINDED, teaching students to THINK FREELY, and I think that is the major difference between Tupou College where Tupou the IV was and his creation of THS is to allow for a more free space for Tongan students to think freely, to be open to other ideas with no tough discipline like teachers like you used to get in Toloa. And despite what others say ‘THS is fiepālangi’ that independent mentality is what I got from THS. Working in the
Church environment for almost 20 years now. It is a very restricted space. I hate to be restricted. (Emphasis by participant)

Peni (1960s) explained that THS fostered a unique ‘mindset’ as a result of its English oriented focus:

The other thing is, with speaking, and this is what differentiates THS. It’s a different kind of mindset....I think that’s what makes them stand out, is that they think different from the church schools, from ‘Atele and it has to do with the speaking of English. You know how we get kicked all the time: ‘Stop thinking in Tongan! Think in English.’ And that’s the kind of talk bred in terms of speaking in English, which is you start to think in a different frame than thinking in Tongan.

Other unique aspects of THS helped transform the mindset of its students and the people of Tonga (Lute, 1950s; Focus Group, 2011). For the latter, the ideal that was THS became an inspiration that placed considerable value on academic excellence. For the former, the prestigious local entrance exam which selected the top students instilled a feeling of high academic ability and uniqueness (Saia, 1960s; Lu‘isa, 1960s; ‘Amelia, 1970s). The status of THS as the top school in Tonga, combined with the school motto, became a self-fulfilling prophesy for all students, the motto and the feeling of uniqueness created the special feeling, hence driving performance (Lu‘isa, 1960s; Tēvita, 1980s; Focus Group, 2011). The sense of being special upon entering THS is captured in a report which discusses prominent Tongan academic and THS alumni, Futa Helu:

Futa says that when he entered the school in 1947 he felt really privileged and special because the whole of Tonga sat the examination and only a few were chosen. He still feels strongly for the school and hopes that the reputation of the school as being the BEST IN TONGA will still be upheld by future generations. (Cocker, 1997, p. 35, Archival Research, 2011)
**5.9. THS Uniforms**

THS’s Western uniform, in addition to the English language policy, made a huge difference on the interviewees’ outlook and preparation for overseas study in a Western environment (Lute, 1950s; Peni, 1960s; Saia, 1960s; Tēvita, 1980s). THS’s English-only policy and curriculum were accompanied by an English dress code which prepared them mentally, and established confidence within a pālangi context (Lu‘isa, 1960s). The Western uniform set the THS students apart from other schools (Saia, 1960s) adding to students’ uniqueness and sense of pride:

> Not only was it the only English-speaking school but we dressed likewise. Remember we wore Panama hats and sandals. And we wore jackets and that set us apart completely from the community. And I think it was the intention to do that. And that was such a key to our confidence overseas. Can you imagine if I went to Epsom Girls’ Grammar where you wore shoes, stockings and hats. And I went there having gone barefoot to school here. Having not spoken English etc? What a psychological whipping I would have got inside me! (Lute, 1950s)

The THS uniform was a symbol of the world beyond Tonga (focus group). A world of possibilities and a step towards the future THS students and their parents wanted. The uniqueness of the pālangi uniform at the time (1947-1970s), together with the high academic achievements of THS students in local and international exams formed an elite of academic excellence. The THS’s reputation was unsurpassed in Tonga at the time (Lute, 1950s; Lu‘isa, 1960s; Focus Group, 2011). To look pālangi created a positive image of students who would one day become leaders, as pālangi had been leaders in the Tongan government civil service (Peni, 1960s; Maikolo, 1960s). The THS uniform, as both the individual interviews and the focus group concurred, was something unique to behold in Tongan society (Maikolo, 1960s).
5.10. Conclusion

THS made a key difference in the success of interviewees, focus group participants and survey respondents due to its unique English-only policy, curriculum, staff, school uniform and school motto which were all part of the founder’s vision of education for his people. THS in all these aspects was instrumental in expediting students’ education to match that of international standards and thereby successfully enabling matriculation of THS students to overseas education. The school instilled a unique sense of self as better than the average Tongan, it fostered a leadership mentality and the desire for life-long commitment to pursuing excellence with an open mind. To be a THS student was, as the data indicated, something truly special.

Selected students were nurtured, shaped and formed for a greater purpose, to become leaders of their own nation. With the establishment of THS, the Tongan student, for the very first time, was equipped in every way possible to walk the path that was foreign, accessing formal education, and yet still remain Tongan. Here apparently lies the treasure that is THS—providing Tongan students with ‘tools of the pākeha for the welfare of body’—tools of English literacy and numeracy, a Western outlook, alongside the ‘treasured possessions of [their Tongan] ancestors’ (Sir Apirana Ngata)—Tongan language, culture, values and principles imparted from the kaliloa, and in addition to Tongan literacy learnt from home, Sunday school and primary school. These enabled participants to find their own way in the world, and in turn, utilise them—both the ‘tools of ancestors’ and ‘tools of the pākeha’, to benefit not just the individual, but one’s family, home-land (Tonga), people, and adopted home-land (NZ).
CHAPTER 6: KALILOA: FAMILY, PARTICIPANTS AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

It takes a village to raise a child (Old African Proverb)
No Man is an Island entirely of itself (John Donne 1572-1631)

Fielau he na’e ’olunga he kaliloa.
It is little wonder, she/he laid her/his head on the kaliloa.
(Tongan saying)

6. INTRODUCTION

The success of these graduates, according to the findings, is premised on both their kaliloa and learning at THS. In support of this argument, this chapter (6), and the subsequent chapter (7), look critically and delve into the data, using theory to give greater support for the position taken. Analysis of the data, informed by Bourdieu’s theoretical tools and the Tongan—Bourdieuian framework, ‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku Tofi’a, demonstrates three important factors. Firstly, in the success of these graduates, Tongan and English languages were integral. Secondly, there was evidence of differences in the interpretation of what success meant, between Tongan and Western worldviews. Thirdly, Tongan and Western notions of what a good education encompasses differed. It is important to note at this stage that all three include both Tongan and Western/English practices and/or understandings.

Based around these three factors, and the final point made above, the overall thesis discussion is presented in two chapters. This chapter centres on matters that impacted on the participants’ success when their learning was in the Tongan language. These aspects, from a Tongan worldview, were considered important for the education and success of these Tongan individuals. The following chapter (7) discusses, in particular, the impact of English language learning at THS, and what was crucial pertaining to a Western worldview that were considered vital to education and success. Both chapters are informed and illuminated by Bourdieuian and parallel Tongan—Bourdieuian (‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku Tofi’a) theories.

Bourdieu’s thinking tools, habitus and forms of capital, and in particular cultural capital, are the main theoretical constructs used in this chapter. The habitus and the forms of
capital that the child brings from home are validated or otherwise by the school, leading to success or failure (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979). Kaliloa, as used in this chapter, includes the various forms of capital (mata‘i koloa or treasured possessions) and the habitus (kaliloa) of the Tongan family (home), church, primary school which participants considered critical. Family/home, church, early childhood education in some cases, primary school, and participants themselves, simultaneously or at times alone, were the agents/fields/networks which transmitted specific forms of capital to form the participants’ habitus (kaliloa) which participants carried in their educational journeys as ‘structured structuring structures’.

The content of this chapter demonstrates that the childhood and education of these Tongans, and their subsequent success, cannot be attributed to one individual or one factor; instead the credit must go to the joint efforts of multiple social networks. Success in education for a Tongan child therefore, perhaps requires the metaphorical ‘village’; the child cannot succeed alone in education (as summed up by the chapter’s opening quote).

In particular, this chapter demonstrates that family was at the centre of kaliloa; it established the first foundation of knowledge for these graduates, added onto by the church (Christian beliefs, prayers, and practices), graduates themselves, and primary school. All of these fields/agents/networks were critical to the graduates’ eventual educational success. The second opening quote, ‘Fielau he na’e ‘olunga he kaliloa’ is a Tongan saying which denotes successful, useful, respected, respectable and contributing members of society. The transmission of Tongan language, culture, values and knowledge through the kaliloa of the family, church, the efforts of the graduates themselves, and primary school prepared and supported graduates for a formal education, and established and maintained a strong Tongan identity in participants.
In this chapter, *kaliloa* is divided and explored under the following three sub-headings: *Kaliloa*: Family and church; *Kaliloa*: Participants; and, *Kaliloa*: Primary school. The following section focuses on *Kaliloa*: family and church.

**6.1. *Kaliloa*: Family and Church**

Tongan knowledge, transmitted through the *kaliloa* by family within the home, supported and prepared these successful graduates for formal education. The findings and analysis of the findings using the Tongan—Bourdieuian theory, ‘*Otua mo Tonga ko hoku Tofi’a*, affirms that the knowledge imparted by the family in the early years (up to age 12) of their lives, within the home, include: Tongan language practices by family; ‘home-grown values’ such as *lotu* (belief in a Christian God, prayers, church) and *ako* (education, learning, school); and ‘*aonga*. *Lotu* is discussed alongside family as they are closely connected. Integral to these is the family’s language practices within the home.

**6.1.i. Language practices**

One of the most important factors of success in education for these Tongans is fluency in the Tongan language. Tongan language is at the heart of Tongan culture/knowledge transmission. Language is the vehicle which carries culture, and that body of knowledge was first acquired by graduates in their homes. Bourdieu (1990) maintains that *habitus* is culture internalised in the individual. *Habitus* influences how the individual lives, behaves, and thinks in the world. Bourdieu (1992) also advocates that the mastery and use of language lends power to the individual, particularly if the language learned is the language of the school. Tongan language accrued power to participants in the sense that literacy in the Tongan language through church and family activities enabled them to read and write, and to later transfer those skills to the learning of English at THS. This form of bilingual education is discussed by several authors (Franken et al., 2008; McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010; Taufe‘ulungaki, 1992, amongst others). Success for these participants therefore is partially
due to their Tongan language. Participants attributed their success to their foundation in the Tongan language through particular Tongan traditional practices which established their pre-primary literacy learning. Such practices prepared them within the home for more formal, school-based education. Some integral traditional Tongan practices and factors are explored below; these contributed to participants’ pre-primary school literacy.

According to all participants there was Tongan reading material available within their homes. The Tongan Bible in particular was accessible for participants; they had access to it, and were able to read it as part of the family ritual of lotu within the home. Lute’s (1950s) example captures all these graduates’ experiences of Tongan language practices within the home (and church):

I attribute my success in school to a very high competence level in the Tongan language and a love of reading developed through reading of Tongan materials produced by the Free Wesleyan Church and used in Sunday schools, which gave me a passion for reading. I readily transferred these skills to English and I read voraciously throughout my time at Tonga High School.

Tongan reading material was also used as part of family rituals or kaliloa practices in the evenings. This is consistent with Bourdieusian theory which argues that the forms of capital available within the home, and habitus formed by the family, leads either to success or failure in education. From birth, students were exposed to the resources and activities of the family. Participants’ stories illustrate this. When participants were growing up, there was reading material which they had access to at home, and they learned to read written resources—such as the Bible—which were made available and accessible.

Participants were engaged in traditional cultural practices at home and in church which exposed them to the oral uses of Tongan language in all its manifestations, including kaliloa. Their experiences of Tongan language acquisition are consistent with Lenneberg’s
(1967) optimum age range for language acquisition. Participants acquired Tongan language literacy through their kaliloa socialisation and, well before the age of 12, established their Tongan language literacy. According to participants, kaliloa exposed them to the different usages of the Tongan language: storytelling using the Bible, fables, legends, family history, poetry, and family history. All of these transmitted the fundamentals of Tongan language use. According to participants, Tongan reading books were incorporated into the kaliloa sessions by family members in the evenings as a reward for carrying out daily chores and good conduct, and also as a significant part of family evening routines. The graduates learnt Tongan language skills such as Tongan oratory and storytelling when the kaliloa took place in family evening gatherings. Both oral and written Tongan skills were acquired in the home, preparing the Tongan graduates for subsequent, more formal, education.

Home offered a natural habitat for acquisition, as argued in acquisition versus learning theories (Krashen, 1981; Krashen & Terrell, 1983), in this case the acquisition of the Tongan language. Participants became fluent in the Tongan language through ‘acquisition’ of cultural knowledge rather than through formal ‘learning’ of syntax and structure (Krashen, 1981; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). As the participants acquired knowledge of Tongan culture and Christian beliefs—lived and oral—they subconsciously acquired the technical rules of Tongan language which resulted in Tongan language fluency. Participants were simultaneously monolingual and mono-literate in the Tongan language as they were brought up within the home, with additional continuity of Tongan language acquisition in Tongan ECE centres (three of the 10 interviewees) and in primary school (all 10).

Whereas research on reading practices in NZ, such as Wolframmm (1991), found inconsistencies in reading practices between home and school for Tongan students, highlighting why Tongan students may be failing in education, this study found consistency in reading practices between the home and school. Participants were reading at home and in
church prior to entering school. Both homes and church provided participants with written Tongan material—particularly the *Bible*. In addition, there were English classics which European missionaries and educators translated into the Tongan language such as *Pilgrim’s Progress* and *The Fables* (Mele, 1950s). The church made these materials available in the homes. This finding is consistent with claims made in a biography on J. E. Moulton which discusses his influence on education in Tonga, and also in findings by Spolsky et al. (1983) who looked at why Tongans are highly biliterate in vernacular Tongan and in English.

Spolsky et al. (1983) documented:

> One of the most prolific of these translators was J. E. Moulton, who wrote, or translated with the help of his students, scores of books and pamphlets, including two volumes of world history, *Milton’s Paradise Lost*, two volumes of *Pilgrim’s Progress*, and a Geography of the *Holy Land* (into Tongan language). Moulton, too, as Principal of Tupou College, published a College Magazine which included among other things a collection of Tongan poetry. In missionaries and educators such as Moulton, the Tongans had people willing to let them gain European knowledge in their own language. (p. 464)

The acquisition of the Tongan language from the *kaliloa* also meant substantial cognitive development in the Tongan language and culture. This finding is consistent with literature on SLA, bilingualism and bi-literacy (Cummins, 2001; Ellis, 1997). First language foundation in the Tongan language at home, in primary school, and at church for the graduates through reading and writing allows for a strong literacy foundation in the Tongan vernacular. Factors such as age, frequency of input and interaction, and implicit input in one’s first language (Ellis, 2012) by the family, within the home for the participants in the Tongan language from birth to approximately eleven years of age, immersed graduates in Tongan language and culture, and established proficient Tongan language literacy.
Consistent with Eric Lenneberg’s (1967) optimum age learning period hypothesis, it seems that the critical years for acquisition of Tongan literacy was between birth and five years of age within the home, with support from church and Sunday school, and continued Tongan language acquisition (Krashen, 1981; Krashen & Terrell, 1983) at primary school level from ages 6-11. This Tongan language foundation stood as a strong language and cultural foundation for participants in their educational journeys. This is consistent with literature in bilingualism and bi-literacy, especially with Cummins’ (2001; Hakuta, 2011) advice that multiple mediums of language are used, parents set rules of language use in home, and seek contexts where the first language can be used. The participants had access to various mediums of Tongan language, written and oral, and were supported by other Tongan language fields such as Sunday school, church, and primary school. Together these forums enabled the graduates to acquire strong literacy in their Tongan language.

Fusitu’a (1992) maintains that a strong grasp of one’s language leads to a strong rootedness in one’s culture and a resilient cultural identity, hence leading to success in education. Fusitu’a cites Clay’s (1970) work which points out that Samoan bilingual learners achieved higher success in reading compared to Māori, as the former had a firmer grasp of their indigenous language, thus a more deep-rooted tie to their Samoan culture and identity. Research by Franken et al. (2008), Amituanai-Toloa, (2010), and Anae (2010) also emphasises the importance of learning one’s own language, leading to a firm and secure foundation in one’s identity, thus allowing for successful learning of another language (English) and culture (Western).

Learning one’s first language bestows *symbolic capital* on the individual—knowledge of one’s world, and a strong rootedness to that culture, thus facilitating learning and development of a second language—in this case, English. Futa Helu recommends that for Tongans and Pacific Islanders, success in Western education can be achieved through the
acquisition of both indigenous and Western knowledge (Coxon & Samu, 2010). But as previously argued, and as illustrated by the experiences and stories of participants and survey respondents, success in acquiring foreign language calls for a firm foundation in one’s own culture, knowledge and language, especially for second-language English speakers such as those in this study. Knowledge of one’s language and culture affirms one’s identity and connections, thus allowing for a more efficient transition to, and acquisition of, another language and culture, enabling the participants, as in this study, to traverse both worlds successfully.

6.1.ii. Transmission of ‘aonga and tala
Family inculcated a sense of ‘aonga and tala within the participants. Two of the most important goals of Tongan informal and non-formal education within the home by family, are to ensure that the child is mo’ui ‘aonga (lives a useful life, i.e., contributes to the good of the family, society, church and nation) and adheres to his/her tala (tellings or teachings). ‘Aonga and tala are two of the most important forms of capital in terms of knowledge that is nurtured and transmitted to the Tongan child within the home.

Formal education in the Western worldview is commonly seen as the passing on of valuable knowledge and skills which are deemed important for formal education, future employment and life in the world. In contrast, the Tongan families of origin, according to the findings, valued the nurturing of ‘aonga and tala. Bourdieu’s work on French schools (Bourdieu, 1990b, 1996a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979) confirms that Western knowledge was the most valued in France, hence schools consecrated it as legitimate knowledge. Western school knowledge can be described as disciplinary knowledge (Lourie & Rata, 2012). Findings indicate that, for these participants and families, in addition to Western knowledge (or cultural capital), distinctly Tongan knowledge (cultural capital) was
valued and instilled in the participants. ‘Aonga and tala, prepared and supported participants for a formal education, and strengthened their Tongan identities.

‘Aonga and tala were inculcated in participants’ upbringing by family through daily living which prepared and supported pathways to education and became important components of participants’ habitus. Through the kaliloa, family talks, the stories, the sharing of family genealogy and family history, the family events, the informal and non-formal education (Thaman, 1995) of graduates at the kaliloa, these two fundamental values ‘aonga and tala were seeded and internalised.

Data show that constantly questioning one’s ‘aonga and tala were deeply embedded within participants from the formative years. Family in its primal role as teacher, mentor, and guide, inculcated family, societal, community, national and church values which guided participants’ behaviour; behaviour that would lead to success and well being. Such values were not to control or maintain unquestioning, obedient, passive individuals as some have maintained that Tongan children are expected to become (Morton, 1996; Tiatia, 1998). According to Tiatia (1998), Tongan and Pacific youth in NZ see obedience as blind obedience to tradition and parents. The findings in this study differ to Tiatia’s findings; the THS alumni felt that obedience, as part of following their ‘aonga and tala, contributed to their success.

In this study, the Tongan conception of obedience is based on the notion of ‘ofa and ongongofua (compassion and respect to attain harmony in living) (Queen Sālote Tupou III, POP). Findings show that obedience was not a blind following of instructions by participants, but rather a following of teachings from elders within the home who had wisdom and knowledge. By following their ‘aonga and tala, i.e., obedience, the participants were able to keep themselves from harm and were able to successfully complete their educational endeavours and experience success. In this type of traditional Tongan education,
the inculcation of ‘aonga and tala are intended to ensure the individual lives a meaningful life for the benefit of the collective body; that is a life that holds meaning for the environment, for others, and for the individual (Paongo, 1990; Thaman, 1988).

For the Tongan graduates, preparation and support for formal education began at the kaliloa when ‘aonga and tala were transmitted to them to form the ‘aonga (useful) habitus individuals who tui tala (follow their tala). The persistence with which the family socialised participants to be ‘aonga and tui tala reached a state whereby these became a permanent part of their habitus, their identities. Participants were therefore steered to behave and act in certain ways that were ‘aonga and that showed tui tala. To be useful contributors to family life meant finding meaningful ways to reciprocate the family’s love and care, through the tasks a child is able to accomplish, which, for the participants, was education amongst other day-to-day responsibilities at home. There were chores to carry out as children to show one’s ‘aonga within the family milieu. In addition, tui tala (following one’s tala) in the Tongan worldview is believed to result in success. This is what happened to all the graduates in these studies; carrying their tala with them, to guide them, led to their success in education.

Participants’ ‘aonga and tala were nurtured through the akonaki (teachings) of parents which in turn instilled a strong Tongan identity. When the formal journey of education began for these graduates, the ‘structures’ of ‘aonga and tala were already in place which enabled them to work hard to succeed in education. This did not mean a seamless education without hardship. Various hardships were encountered by the participants, such as Sione’s story of living as a stranger on the main island of Tongatapu in order to attend THS. Basic needs such as food and adequate places to study abroad were also hardships faced by participants. These hardships did not deter them from pursuing education as their ‘aonga and tala fuelled their determination to succeed. Participants did not appear to feel alienated during their formal education abroad as Tongans in a foreign land. Mele (1950s) captured
this in her narrative. According to Mele at the time she received further education in New Zealand she did not feel she was treated ‘differently’ or ‘discriminated’ against by the teachers. Mele’s strong embeddedness in her identity from home created a strong Tongan persona which prepared her for an overseas education in a foreign land. For Mele, as for all ten interviewees, the key was being strongly rooted in their identities which led them to persevere in the course of their formal education. This was the essence of the kaliloa, to prepare and support the graduates for formal education by establishing unwavering Tongan identities rooted in ‘aonga and tala.

Data also indicated that ‘aonga and tala transmitted to participants knowledge of who they are, where they came from, their role and place in family and society, and the inclination to stay true to these. In other words, tala and ‘aonga instilled and maintained a strong Tongan identity, that despite changes, countless experiences, people encountered, and places travelled, remained intact. It meant the participants’ core identities as Tongans survived throughout their journeys. This however, did not mean an unchanging identity. On the contrary, what this meant for participants is that the basic, core Tongan values, including the two fundamental aspects of habitus and cultural capital, remained with them. ‘Aonga and tala formed the basic foundation of these graduates’ habitus, informing their interactions (refer to Figure II: Tongan Graduates’ Habitus). Peni (see page 136) summed up all the participants’ experiences of how their endeavours were ‘aonga-led when constantly reflecting on ‘aonga as a guiding question.

Even as participants changed and adapted to circumstances, people, experiences and situations in their educational journeys, these notions of ‘aonga (and tala) remained intact. They were established as the foundational layer of habitus, as illustrated in Figure II below.

Participants’ ‘aonga and tala provided the means for them to venture out and be immersed in Western society, culture and languages at THS and overseas. As data
demonstrate, graduates’ Tongan identities were strong enough to enable an openness and willingness within participants to engage in a Western world, i.e., learn a second language (English) and culture (Western). The general view amongst graduates was that there was a wider knowledge pool to learn from, but the basic foundation of learning was first and foremost, Tongan language and culture (see Figure 6 on page 203).

Being rooted in their Tongan identities meant that participants perceived Tongan culture to be important. However it eventually became just as important to acquire Western knowledge and culture, due to its global and mainstream status. According to participants, their core rootedness in their ‘aonga and tala meant a steadfastness when encountering different worldviews, cultures and peoples in their educational journeys; their strong Tongan identities helped them be open to acquiring other cultures and knowledge. Each layer of the graduates’ habitus: ‘aonga and tala, Western culture, language and knowledge combined and transformed these graduates into cosmopolitan individuals (Guilherme, 2007). This paved the way for more formal education, and for life in the local and global arenas:

I think that all that enormous variety which is part of your background, and part of what you picked up on the way, because one’s background doesn’t have it all, heh. Then luckily if life enables you to encounter other strengths heh and to encounter principles, encounter people who broaden things for you, who deepen things for you and who protect you heh. So, I think I have been extremely blessed you know, with the kind of many coloured pictures I’m throwing at you heh. And I think when you conquer the challenges of study, that strengthens you to conquer the challenges of working.

I think you will agree to that because the challenges of surviving the world of study is tougher heh [I nod in agreement]. And they strengthen you so that when you come and become an employer, become a spouse heh. I think that ‘walk’ gives you a lot of power to then try and manage…. (Interviewee, Fieldwork, Tonga, 2011)
Having acknowledged this, participants were adamant that the most important foundation of their lives stemmed from their sense of identity formed at home, in Tongan traditional upbringing. The constant factor throughout their educational journeys was remaining true to their identities as Tongan, and being open to acquiring new knowledge and cultures. The latter were additive and complementary rather than contradictory, life-giving rather than life-threatening, and capacity-building rather than destroying the capacity to remain Tongan. This ability to change yet be able to engage in other cultures and
knowledges stemmed from a strong Tongan identity established in their upbringings within their family homes.

6.1.iii. ‘Home grown’ values and practices: Lotu and ako

Participants described their success in education as ‘home grown’ (Lute, 1950s). They placed particular emphasis on lotu (prayers, belief in the Christian God, church, church activities, and spirituality) and ako (education, learning). Participants highlighted lotu and ako as two of the most important values emphasised in their family upbringing, hence they were deeply embedded in their habitus. This finding is consistent with findings by Havea (2011) who found lotu was highly valued and permeated Tongan and Pacific students’ lives and success at tertiary level. It is also consistent with work by Samate (2007) who argued that for Tongans, lotu and ako are two sides of the same coin, both highly esteemed in the Tongan worldview. Like the double-layered structure of Tongan cultural capital, tapa and mat, ako and lotu are two parts of the most prized entities in a Tongan perspective (Samate, 2007). Both lotu and ako are essential to success in education, and in life, for all participants.

Lotu is a central element in the life of the family which contributed to the success of participants. The majority of survey respondents attributed their success to lotu and all its aspects. Lotu was an integral part of family life and living which remains with them as internal rules to guide and empower them during their life journeys. As habitus, lotu instilled strong and persevering identities within the field of education.

In addition, Sunday school was an exemplary training ground for participants to acquire Tongan literacy. Adults in the family nurtured participants’ habitus along the lines of lotu. Participants’ habitus during the journey, and upon reflection, signals a strong belief and hope in God, and a deep awareness of God’s grace, blessings and guidance—an integral belief that in itself carries the blessing of success.
Involvement and continual practice of lotu by participants abroad, either by attending family prayer, Sunday school, or Easter camps re-strengthened values and principles. Lotu also contributed to the acquisition of capital such as language, building of relationships, broadening of experiences and closer relationships with others. To do one’s best in education and in behaviour was, according to participants, an integral part of their lotu. The common belief among participants is that doing one’s best in school was a manifestation of their gratitude to God for the gifts during their educational journeys: a sound mind, intellect, wisdom and knowledge. Participants’ knowledge of and a belief in God reinforced and strengthened them for further education and for life in general.

Ako was a prerogative for parents and everything was done by parents to ensure that the participant received a good quality education and support from home (Campbell, 1992; Kavaliku, 1966; ‘Otunuku, 2010; Tu‘i’onetoa, 2013). Ako (informally at home and formally at school) was legitimated and consecrated within the family as a key value, as symbolic and cultural capital alongside lotu within the life of the family. Survey participants attributed their success to the family’s focus on ako as a top priority for children. These, in turn, became integral components of the participants’ habitus. Parents would make sacrifices in order for the participants to pursue an education. In one instance, one of the parents moved from their home on the outer island, to the main island of Tongatapu to care for, accompany, and support the education of the participant, and the participants’ siblings. Parents (often the fathers) made certain sacrifices such as living away from participants to take up a job in order to provide for the education of their children. As participants’ parents did not attain a University qualification, parents did all that was necessary to render the economic capital (that would enable participants to realise the dream of acquiring that level of ako). Special provisions were also made at home for participants’ ako. School shelves and a separate fale were built for study space, and the best tutors were hired to prepare participants for exams.
This extra attention not only made participants feel special within the family, but created a sense of enjoyment and passion for studying, and the need to succeed became all the more important. The expectations of the participants and their future success were high, and they felt that pressure in a myriad of ways. Data show special treatment was given to participants; participants were excused from doing chores as the number one priority in the family, was successful ako and lotu. Parents valued the attainment of both Tongan cultural, informal ako and more formal ako at school.

Formal ako for the participants were also an extension of the parents’ dreams. In these cases, the parent or parents of the participant, due to financial constraints and other family circumstances, could not pursue further education beyond high school level. Therefore, it was important for participants’ parents that the participants pursue formal education to the highest level at university.

What the above valuing of ako and lotu meant for participants is that ako and lotu became inscribed as strong and powerful habitus in such a way that there were few outside interests in their educational journeys. In effect the internalisation of the family values, ako and lotu dominated their lives. Such a habitus for participants subscribed a type of behaviour that was conducive to studying.

Participants themselves legitimated and validated ako and lotu as their parents/guardians/relatives instilled in them from home. Participants, especially the females, confessed a love of learning and reading, which commenced from their formative years. The forms of cultural capital and habitus which these participants nurtured and had access to within their homes—reading, writing, speaking were similar to forms of cultural capital and habitus which these graduates’ formal schooling required of them to succeed in education.

According to participants, the valuing of lotu for them and their families also meant the acceptance and internalisation of other Tongan values such as faka'apa'apa (respect),
talangofua (obedience), manatu ‘ofa (fond remembrance), fatongia (duty), loto’i Tonga (heart of a Tongan) as integral parts of their *habitus*. These Tongan principles directed the participants to positive manifestations of the *habitus* through word, action, behaviour and thoughts. Valuing *lotu*, however, did not mean a blind following of *lotu* in the extreme. It only means that *lotu* values were part of the participants’ *habitus* to build and strengthen the participants in their educational journeys. Valuing *lotu* was not a blind acceptance of Christian values, teachings or principles. Participants spoke of challenging and enquiring about Christian teachings and the Tongan Christian way of life at Sunday school and whilst away for further education abroad.

All participants were conscious when growing up that *lotu* was an important Tongan family value and hence an integral value in their lives and an important part of their *habitus*. But when participants went overseas for further studies, there had to be some form of compromise due to the demanding study circumstances and new environments encountered abroad, as opposed to home circumstances. Participants, while overseas, ‘sensed the game’ (Bourdieu, 1992), that *ako* had to be valued alongside *lotu*. Thus they attended church on a Sunday prior to studying at the library. At home, participants knew that Sundays are traditionally for *lotu*, rest, and not for work or study. Participants’ stories showed participants made compromises over their *lotu* belief of no study on Sundays.

Participants used their agency proactively to balance their time spent on *lotu* and *ako*. Participants spoke of attending Sunday service once a week in order to ensure a focus on their *ako*. Lute (1970s) talked about her firm belief, and her respect for the Christian God; she attended youth camps which enhanced her experience as an overseas student but emphasised that she was not a ‘Bible banger’ or a Christian fanatic. Some participants shared that even in the family, attending church activities during the week was regulated to prevent intrusion into much needed quality time for *ako*. This is highly important as research on Pacific Islanders
often points to parents having too much emphasis on lotu activities, to the detriment of their studies (Tiatia, 1998). To succeed in education for participants in this study, overt worshipping God was regulated so that quality time could be spent on ako. Evidence shows that in this study, lotu was an important source of cultural capital (values, literacy skills and knowledge) and it did not hinder participants’ journey to success. The balancing of lotu and education by participants and their families brings up questions of whether the church or God approved of such pragmatism. The answer perhaps is that to study hard and achieve in education in the Tongan worldview is another way of praying, by reciprocating God’s love and blessings through one’s hard work. To utilise one’s mind to achieve academically is seen as using God’s gift of knowledge and wisdom for a greater purpose—study hard, achieve and be of a benefit to others, family, community, people and the nation.

6.1.iv. Success a result of grandparents and ancestors’ prayers

Data also showed that any success by participants was thought to be influenced by lotu mo e ngāue tōtōivi ‘a e fanga kui (the prayers and hard work of grandparents and ancestors). Their own success was viewed by the participants as by-products of faithful and consistent lotu and fulfilling of church responsibilities by participants’ ancestors, dating back through time. Success is founded on the belief that the Christian God is the centre of all that is good for the well-being of the individual and the family. Success is dependent upon God who is seen in the Tongan worldview to be the source of blessings in life, and so one must live by Godly principles in education and in life in order to obtain God’s blessings.

For the Tongan graduates and their families lotu must be a consistent and constant part of one’s journey, not just a necessary appeal when times are difficult. Family ensured that lotu and associated values were passed on to the participants through kaliloa. One participant in particular reported that an integral part of the tala ‘o e lotu for him was when the elderly ladies in his church would gather to pray over him and other children so that their
journey in school and in life might be fruitful and successful. This is indicated in the previous section on findings where Maikolo (1950s) terms it as *lotu ‘āngelo* (*angel prayers*). The interweaving of the *tala ‘o e fāmili* and *tala ‘o e lotu* were efforts to instil the traditional Tongan belief, and view that prayer is vital in one’s journey, hence a crucial part of one’s *tala* and *habitus*. These sentiments, and the close and wider community’s surrounding support, can be described as resilient forms of bonded social capital. Halpern writes extensively about social capital:

> Closure then, or tight bonding social capital in the absence of bridging social capital, does facilitate the ability of members of that community to pass on their values to the next generation. But if these values are anti-intellectual or presume low achievement, then high educational outcomes cannot be expected. (Halpern, 2005, p.155)

For the THS graduates the values passed on were very much pro-intellectual. The tight bonding social capital which surrounded them was beneficial for their eventual academic progress. THS ultimately became the provider of what could be called the bridging social capital.

### 6.1.v. Recollections of family narratives: ‘*Oua ‘e ngalo ho tupu ‘angā*’

Participants maintained that in their educational journeys, recollections of family narratives, struggles and so forth helped with their success. Using the Tongan—Bourdieuian framework, it is evident that, when stories were told from the *kaliloa* - whether of family struggles, history or dreams - the stories forged a connection (*vā*) between participants and their families, and places of origin. Ka‘ili (2005) and Thaman (2003) both maintain that *vā* is a particularly important notion which governs Tongan ways of being. In Ka‘ili’s (2005) work, the maintaining of *vā* amongst Tongan people in Maui led to positive action, successful living and harmonious relations; in the latter, for Thaman, the maintaining of the *vā* determines interpersonal relationships and interaction.
In this research, the recollection of family narratives and struggles encouraged participants to succeed. The participants maintained their vā with parents in the only way they could, by working hard in education in order to succeed. It was a reciprocal relationship whereby parents struggled to enable participants to attain a good education, and participants, out in the field of education, reciprocated by working hard as repayment for their parents’ love, care, and hard work. Participants worked hard to succeed in education because they carried with them memories of family narratives first imparted in the home. In this research, the family stories and recollection of these stories instilled a culturally distinct Tongan habitus, which, for the Tongan participant, added to and maintained their strong Tongan identities and supported them, both spiritually and mentally, for formal education.

This vā also included other Tongan emotions of māfana (warmth, compassion and love which compel positive action), and loto‘i Tonga (heart and disposition of a Tongan to give to others, to make sacrifices, to unite in the face of adversity). Through manatu ‘ofa (fond memories, recollection of connections based on love), family narratives incited helpful attitudes and behaviour. Data indicate that the māfana and vā of participants to family, history, genealogy, home of origin, culture, were most often triggered by the act of remembering and recalling family stories, genealogy, family circumstances, place of origin, akonaki (teachings), fanafana ‘a e fa‘ē (mother’s whisperings), all of which drew forth favourable action long term in participants. The following participants’ responses reflect how family stories and support were internalised by participants, and then carried in their educational journey:

I will never forget the sacrifices my mother made when we grew up, and the stories she imparted to us, telling us—‘Don’t forget who you are and where you come from.’ (Maikolo, 1960s)
I will always remember all the little things my parents did to enable me to study better. My father made me a shelf for my little books, in those days there were no shelves. My father used pallets to make a shelf and said ‘Here, stack and store your books there.’ (Saia, 1960s)

You go overseas for further study, but when you get there, there are obstacles, problems, but one thing is for sure, you will never lose sight of what’s important, to study and to succeed. (Lute, 1950s)

I return home to the islands in the holidays, and every time I do, my mother and father always tell me—‘Look at our humble life, and when you go, remember…’ (Sione, 1980s)

These stories told from the kaliloa strengthened participants. Participants were able to recall and remember during their educational journeys, especially while overseas, where they came from (a specific village, island and family), the purpose of being at school, and the struggles parents faced and overcame to put them through school.

Participants attributed part of their success to carrying, receiving and internalising these stories and messages, together these established strong Tongan identities. Participants shared that in recollecting the kaliloa imparted to them at home, a feeling, a determination, and a responsibility to succeed surfaced as a form of empowerment. One way of describing this is that each participant developed an ‘internalised mentor’. Bourdieu (1990) expresses this as an internalization of what is transmitted to the individual, and is thus embodied as one’s habitus. Bourdieu (1990) avers that one’s upbringing or formation, through such things as the passing on of knowledge and stories, and engaging in and witnessing of practices by individuals within the home and during past experiences, are embodied in one’s habitus which result in certain dispositions, actions, demeanours and thinking. According to Bourdieu (1990), history, family and culture pass on specific codes for individuals that prescribe how they act, think and behave which notions like subjectivism and objectivism as individual concepts cannot adequately explain. As Bourdieu states:
The *habitus*, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices—more history—in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms. This system of dispositions—a present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future by reactivation in similarly structured practices, an internal law through which the law of external necessities, irreducible to immediate constraints, is constantly exerted—is the principle of continuity and regularity which objectivism sees in social practices without being able to account for it; and also of the regulated transformations that cannot be explained either by extrinsic, instantaneous determinisms of mechanistic sociologism or by the purely internal but equally instantaneous determination of spontaneist subjectivism. (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 54)

Family stories, history, culture were passed on to the individual using Tongan language, hence Tongan formed their *habitus*, and in the end compelled them to persevere in their educational journeys, to take positive action, and ultimately to achieve success. Family stories of struggle, hardship, and family origin connect the individual visibly and invisibly through memories, strengthening their ties, *vā* to parents, family, culture, and home of origin. In particular, these stories encouraged and empowered the participants to forge on when they were stressed in their journeys. Those from struggling backgrounds turned their circumstances around by converting negatives to a positive stimulation to succeed. This is what helped these graduates go far and become highly successful. It is in remembering the stories told from the *kaliloa*, stories of ‘struggle’. Here lies the essence of the *kaliloa*—stories sown at a young, tender age instilled and forged a connection in the child/student of humble beginnings, that later could be recalled to produce positive action. Bourdieu maintained:
…although subjects from the most disadvantaged classes are those most likely to be crushed by the weight of their social destiny, they can also, exceptionally, turn their excessive handicap into the stimulus they need to overcome it. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979, p. 25)

The strength in the stories imparted from the kaliloa, also speaks to a strong sense of Tongan identity in the participants. Inculcated through the family from an early age, the kaliloa formed participant’s identities and habitus. Participants’ Tongan identities formed through the kaliloa, remained intact as their journeys in education progressed.

Stories formed the habitus of the participants in this way. According to participants and survey respondents, it was a Tongan habitus that meant they sought to succeed for the good of the whole family, community, church or village. It was also a habitus that consistently strove to succeed despite any difficulties faced along the journey. Participants for instance spoke of a duty to ‘carry out their parents’ burden’—a driving factor in all ten interviewees’ success. Participants ensured that what they did during their educational journeys made their parents and relatives proud.

These bonds of vā established through recollections of family stories are firmly embodied. It was as if, when the family stories were imparted to these participants, an invisible umbilical cord was created, connecting the participants through family stories to the family and their places of origin. This invisible umbilical cord that ties participant to family is the Tongan habitus of vā. It drives action and instils determination in participants. It is a vā that is unbreakable and infinite.

6.1. vi. Family background
In France, a father’s educational and work background is closely connected to the likelihood of whether or not a student will attend university (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979). However, this was not the case for participants in this study – reproduction was less common.
For Tongan graduates in this study, the valuing of education within the home and the family support to educate the graduates led to their success.

Family circumstances prevented participants’ parents from attaining a tertiary qualification. Despite this, parents of participants were still able to instil a deep love and appreciation of education through the kaliloa, and practical family support for participants’ education. As already indicated, support included the payment of school fees, buying books for participants to read, and hiring the best primary school teachers to tutor participants for the high school entrance exam. The fulfilling of these practical acts according showed their parents valued the highest possible educational qualifications for their children. Lu’isa’s (1960s) father for instance, only enrolled in one year of primary school, that was the extent of his schooling experience. He then became a successful builder despite having no educational qualifications. Lu’isa reported that her father’s lack of education meant she had to go beyond her father’s educational background. In the end, Lu’isa gained a Doctoral degree at university.

In addition, if the family did not possess the required knowledge to help the student succeed for example, with homework, the family sought out others who possessed the knowledge needed. For instance, parents hired teachers with the necessary training and know-how to teach their children. Pō ako (night study) (Fusitu‘a, 1992; Kēpa & Manu‘atu, 2006) for all the participants is an example of this family support and preparation of the child for formal education. Pō ako is also evidence of the collaborated efforts of family, community and social networks (Kēpa & Manu‘atu, 2006). All participants were enrolled in a pō ako as parents and tutors involved in a joint effort to prepare and support their students for formal education, particularly to pass the entrance exam to THS. Passing the exam meant the possibility of attaining a scholarship to study overseas or gain a position in the civil service. Family, schools and Tongan society in general legitimated the highly selective high
school entrance exam that identified and accumulated ‘symbolic power’, not just for the students who passed the exams, but also for their families, village or island.

According to participants and survey respondents, to educate one’s children and support his/her learning was an important part of the parents’ vā (‘connection’ and ‘obligation’: Bourdieu, 1986) with their children. For the participants in this study, this was the case. However, parents did not read the textbooks themselves to help their child; instead they co-opted the help of experts. Parents used their social capital (Halpern, 2005), to the best of their abilities, to support and advantage their offspring.

6.1.vii. Mother’s influence

Of great significance in their journeys was the mother’s constant presence in the home as a direct source of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). All the graduates were prepared and supported for a formal education because of the very tangible presence of the mother in the home. Their mothers created an extra special atmosphere of ‘connection’, ‘warmth’ and ‘love’ which sustained them throughout their education, from primary through to high school. In addition, for participants, their mothers were ‘strong’ individuals with strong identities as Tongan women in a Tongan society that was highly patriarchal. There were acts of sacrifice performed by mothers as they willingly created study environments and loving homes for their protégées.

According to the Tongan—Bourdieusian framework, ‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku tofi’a, mothers are expected to be the teachers of children within the home. Children are viewed as tofi’a (heritage) from God (MacIntyre, 2008; ‘Otunuku, 2010) hence it is the responsibility of the mother to teach children lifelong knowledge through the kaliloa. ‘Amelia (1970s) and Tēvita (1980s) found their mothers offered a type of ‘home pedagogy’ which they felt was highly significant to their success. ‘Amelia’s mother taught her the importance of ‘maintaining standards’. Standards were employed by ‘Amelia’s mother in the maintenance
of home, children and the various linens she used as a seamstress. For ‘Amelia, the desire to maintain a particular standard served her well as she travelled to New Zealand for further studies, and in her current life and work. Maintaining high standards is integral to ‘Amelia’s career yet she is used to aspiring to keep high standards in all that she is tasked with, as taught by her mother.

In addition, ‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku tofi’a identifies mothers as sources of wisdom regardless of educational background. Children are to listen and learn from their parents, particularly to the mother whose task it is to akonaki (impart knowledge). For Tēvita, his mother instilled in him a respect for a Tongan form of pedagogy (kaliloa). His mother informally taught him how to go about strategically maintaining notes at high school, and she outlined good study habits.

Narratives helped identify deeper insights such as that Tēvita’s mother was very capable of pursuing an education, however, at the time it was the norm for women to end their education, especially when raising a young family. Although Tēvita’s mother and the other graduates’ mothers did not have University qualifications, they helped their children with homework. For Tēvita, his mother’s study approach from the kaliloa remained an important part of his habitus which he carried with him through high school and beyond. The key to kaliloa learning is the māfana (warmth and love), faka’apa’apa (respect) and tauhi vā (maintaining of social connection) which underline the form of pedagogy experienced by both Tēvita and ‘Amelia.

6.1.viii. Maintaining a strong Tongan identity

All the forms of kaliloa discussed above are highly significant as they contributed to the strength, versatility and steadfastness of participants’ Tongan identities. Kaliloa enabled the participants’ Tongan identities to remain intact while at the same time it equipped the participants to succeed and exist in two worlds: Tonga and Western countries. Lute’s story is
indicative of this. Lute’s kaliloa empowered her to be bold, courageous, inquisitive, and to refuse to accept things as the norm. Lute (1950s) accepts and has pride in her identity as a Tongan:

So in my mind I thought: Why do I have to adopt another kind of persona? I’m already happy with my Tongan persona. When I go into lectures it’s for the improvement and the enrichment of the mind. But it is not the property of the pālangi or whatever. You know, mental advance, academic advance is a universal thing.

In addition, Lute (1950s), despite popular advice to look and dress pālangi as opposed to the shame attached at the time to indigenous dress, deliberately chose to wear her traditional Tongan dress, tupenu, and ta’ovala, to a formal University gathering. She also shared how she refused to accept that being Tongan was anything less than being pālangi, or speaking pālangi made you better than speaking only Tongan, or that Auckland was a better place than being in one’s home-land, Tonga. As evidenced by the following quote, Lute has a strong self-esteem and sense of agency:

And I couldn’t see the contradiction and I always thought, when you go into the academic arena, yes, I go to Auckland to do a BA degree. But that does not mean that the Auckland brain is better than the Tongan brain. They are two different things. It just means they [New Zealanders] are lucky to have the facilities. I don’t heh. So I go there. And I think I have been very lucky because right from the beginning I have looked at the perspectives, the surrounding perspectives. I have challenged it in my mind heh. What perspective I accept. What perspectives I don’t, heh.

See I didn’t accept the perspective that to speak English gives you, you’re one of the upper class. So I mixed with those. No, because to me, this called upper class is again universal. It’s just an issue of refinement! Tom, Dick and Harry can have it. And it’s human, it’s human refinement, heh. It’s not a national possession of anyone country or anyone culture, heh.
All participants felt that their informal education at home, through the *kaliloa*, was a strong foundation for their Tongan identities. Although participants encountered change, different cultures, perspectives and dispositions in their life journeys, such experiences did not mean the erosion of their Tongan identities. Participants saw themselves as Tongan and continue to pass on their *kaliloa* to their children and grandchildren in efforts to maintain their cultural heritage and identities as Tongans. There was an acceptance of things Western, and formal education is important, but there was also a valuing of Tongan informal education within participants’ homes and families. Participants now living in New Zealand noted the importance of learning about other cultures that are present in New Zealand, realising that the fabric of New Zealand society is diverse and that one cannot exist in a vacuum.

NZ participants maintained that young Tongans growing up in NZ should experience a Tongan informal education where available; a Western education, including knowledge of the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa; and knowledge sourced from the diverse cultures in New Zealand. Land and resources (‘Tonga’) in the Tonga national motto ‘*Otua mo Tonga ko hoku Tofi’a* has now extended for the participants and other transnational Tongans. New Zealand participants called for the need to be inclusive in attitude and outlook when educating one’s self. Some participants have grandchildren who are not just Tongan, but also perhaps Samoan or Palangi through their parents. Participants argued that Tongans are better people and thus more attuned to success in education when we are more inclusive in our outlook, approach and attitude.

According to language and literacy education professor at the University of Melbourne, Bianco (2010), multilingualism and multiculturalism, rather than causes of conflict are beneficial for nations. Bianco argues against popular stereotypes that multilingualism and multiculturalism lead to conflict and chaos; he instead argues that countries and individuals that are multilingual and multicultural have low levels of conflict.
and have access to other cultures. In other words people are able to navigate in different spaces due to their experiences of multiple languages and cultures. NZ interviewees argued that it would be ideal to learn other languages used in Aotearoa, in addition to Tongan and English.

Notwithstanding a wider versatility, participants in New Zealand and Tonga felt the urgency and importance of learning Tongan language first, and ensuring that Tongan children and grandchildren are proficient in both Tongan and English. As more and more Tongans are born in New Zealand rather than in the islands, participants felt that to maintain heritage, Tongan culture should be an important priority. Knowing ourselves as Tongans, our history through the use of our Tongan language will create strong Tongan individuals who will be able to exist in both worlds—Tongan and Western. This is a form of success in the highest order. To forsake either one was seen as potentially detrimental to well-being.

6.2. Kaliloa: Participants

6.2.i. Agency

Although data indicated the significant roles of family in the participants’ journey to success in education, an equally important factor was the pivotal part played by participants in their own success. In Bourdieusian terms, graduates demonstrated agency of the highest level through their sense of the game, and through participating the game of education. While it is true that schools are involved in the reproduction of class, this study demonstrates how participants’ agency instead led to production, or success.

The roles of family in the upbringing of the child within the home, through talanoa mei he kaliloa, while highly significant, could not have been solely responsible for the educational success of these graduates. If the participants themselves chose not to internalise family teachings, obey cultural upbringing and genuinely engage with their own studies and trajectories towards achieving set educational goals, then the outcomes may have been
different. *Agency* included the acts of listening, learning, absorbing, internalising and then externalising the things one learnt at the *kaliloa* from the family, *lotu* and school. Most importantly, participants were able to *externalise internalities* (Bourdieu’s *habitus*) when venturing outside the comfort zone of family and home, to places foreign for overseas study. As parents and caregivers were not present, it felt important for the participants to behave in the manner in which they were taught at home. *Forms of capital* transmitted by family within the home, such as Tongan values, teachings and so forth were *internalised* by the graduates as *habitus* which became conducive to their educational success. These aspects of the graduates’ *habitus* were formed and shaped within the home and were lived out away from home when graduates studied abroad.

Participants shared that actively listening and engaging in the *kaliloa* in the evenings included active participation in ‘cyclic storytelling’. According to the data, this is when the teller of stories begins a story orally and then each audience member, adults and children alike would pick up the story thread and contribute to the story, going round the group thus creating a story (see Methodology chapter). The participants’ ability to contribute a meaningful piece to the overall story would reflect whether the participant was, in fact, listening attentively and using his/her imagination. This is a significant part of the *kaliloa*, participants were in fact co-constructors (agents) of the story in this case, actively adding to the storytelling process and thereby acquiring not just the Tongan language but also language skills, confidence and creativity. In one participant’s story, engaging actively in the *kaliloa* story-making process increased her comprehension, ability and love of stories and storytelling. It also planted a love of language and the appreciation of the use of language to achieve certain purposes, which, for this participant, transposed to a later learning of the English language.
Furthermore, participants demonstrated an important element of agency (Bourdieu, 1990b; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) whereby what participants learnt within the home became part of their behaviour, an enacted attitude. This was not simply a blind following of what they had seen, learnt, heard and experienced as children, but instead was what Bourdieu terms ‘a feel for the game’ (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 11). Participants did not merely follow what was passed on from the kaliloa at home and within the church, but made certain strategic choices in their educational journeys abroad that showed agency (Bourdieu 1990), inventive, imaginative and the creative use of principles and embodiment of values (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977, 1979; Bourdieu, 1990). Participants shared that although lotu was a key value instilled within the home, and an important part of their habitus (Bourdieu, 1990, 1992), they balanced their involvement in lotu with their focus on education so that lotu did not interfere with the quality time needed for study and the completion of assignments (see Chapter 4). This pragmatism arguably served them well.

6.2.ii. Belief in a father’s blessing

Kaliloa was the most fundamental foundation in the educational journeys of all participants. Part of that kaliloa and highly visible and significant in Tongan worldview, is that children are expected to be obedient to their parents (Lee, 1996). In the case of these participants, their obedience resulted in receiving their parents’ blessings, i.e., the aspirations and, the prayers that the child may succeed in education and in life.

All participants believe that success stems from following the teachings of parents, thus leading to educational success. Seini termed this ‘father’s blessings’ as a consequence of externalising her father’s kaliloa through acts of obedience. In the Tongan worldview it is vital that the Tongan child is nurtured and socialised in ways that are considered significant to the wholeness and well-being of the entire family as a collective (Queen Sālote Tupou III, POP; Tu‘itahi, 2009). A father’s or parent’s blessing is a Tongan notion that is synonymous
with Jewish Biblical beliefs, in that adherence to one’s parental guidance, leads to blessings which come in the form of success in life in all its aspects, including education. This meant the participants listened to the advice and teachings of their parents. Whereas others may view such behaviour as passivity, where the parent dominates the child, and socialises the Tongan child to conform, it was not the case for the participants in this study.

As emphasised in previous chapters, kaliloa is a culturally distinct, informal Tongan form of education. It requires attentive listening to acquire the full benefit of receiving traditional knowledge imparted from the kaliloa. If participants had failed to listen and internalise the teachings, values, and principles, then they would not have achieved the success they currently enjoy. ‘Otua mo Toonga ko hoku tofi’a is underpinned by the important notion that kaliloa can only work if the child is listening and internalising the kaliloa. Listening is the first step. It was through serious listening that participants were able to internalise kaliloa teachings alongside THS teachings to be part of their habitus, thus preparing them as students for formal education. Participants spoke very highly of ‘home grown strengths’ (Lute, 1950s) which, according to these graduates, cannot be found in a book or accessed from the worldwide web, but can only be acquired at home from one’s parents or by participants actively and attentively listening to the ‘tellings’, mata ki he mata—face to face. It implies in Tongan culture a ‘human connection’ of two or more people, of heart, mind and soul, with each conversing and engaging face to face. Participants therefore, when engaging in the kaliloa, did not passively listen to the passing on of Tongan knowledge, worldviews, family stories, family history and cultural protocol; instead they interacted and connected with the teller(s), the stories and the entire kaliloa experience.

6.2.iii. Staying true to their kaliloa
The Tongan—Bourdieusian framework, ‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku tofi’a maintains that it is the responsibility of Tongan children to adhere to their kaliloa, long after it is
impacted. As *kaliloa* is a lifelong learning, the Tongan child is expected to follow his/her *kaliloa* during his/her lifetime. It is believed parents teach (*akonaki*), but equally important is the role of the child in his/her own life to follow the *kaliloa* so as to succeed and bring peace and prosperity to the family, church, community and nation. One of the most important ways to achieve this is for the participant to remain true to the gift of *kaliloa* passed on to him/her within the home by family and at Sunday School by the church, and later imparted by the school (primary and THS). This means actively living out the *akonaki* (teachings) and the *tala* (tellings) passed on at the *kaliloa*. In other words, it entailed participants ‘externalising the internalities’ through their *habitus*. Not only did participants claim that their *kaliloa* was internalised, they also argued that the *kaliloa* must be re-enacted in one’s life, i.e., it is an integral part of their *habitus*.

The active living out of one’s ‘*aonga* (meaning) (externalising their *habitus*) which makes the *kaliloa* a living, breathing, life-giving practice is the ultimate objective of the *kaliloa*. One such example, is that each participant noted need to live up to the two important questions: (1) What is my purpose?; and (2) What is my meaning? All reflected that success in education was to be of use to family, church, community and land. To live a purposeful life is the pinnacle of Tongan *kaliloa*. Every child is a gift from God as believed in Tongan worldview, to be cared for and loved (‘Otunuku, 2010; MacIntyre, 2008). But with privileges come serious responsibilities for the child—to live a useful life that will give meaning to one’s existence, and this is measured by gifting back to others in the ways in which one can—through knowledge, time, and all forms of capital one can reciprocate to the collective, the family, church, society and nation. Carrying out certain actions to succeed, especially in educational endeavours, was one way of demonstrating to family and community that one has a purpose.
6.2.iv. Hard work

An additional factor mentioned by participants as contributing to their own success is as one participant put it—‘just plain hard work on my part’ (Peni, 1960s). Reflective of other participants and survey respondents’ response to what do they attribute their success to; Peni explained that his success in education was due to his own efforts which simply meant he had to put in sheer ‘hard work’. While Bourdieu (1986) is correct in asserting that possessing certain capital and having access to these forms of capital legitimated by the school is significant it is also true, as shown in this study, that agency through individual hard work can achieve positive results. Hard work took different forms in participants’ and survey respondents’ journeys in education. For all participants it meant night tutoring (pō ako) from the best teachers at primary school level, even though participants’ reports were of a high standard. For others, it meant extra reading outside of classroom work. In all cases, although the parents did not possess the educational training to help their own children to study school subjects, they paid for tutors who had human capital to enhance their children’s learning.

There is in these instances evidence of agency. Respect for traditions in participants’ daily decision making was maintained, but at the same time they created opportunities in their own educational trajectories which ultimately led to success. For Tongans in education, this is highly important; to navigate the ‘spaces in between’ cultures, Western and Tongan, to find what would effectively contribute to their success in education. Participants demonstrated that success in education can mean incorporating Western values and principles with Tongan values and principles. Lotu has remained an integral part of their lives as Sāmate (2007) maintained, and as the Tongan—Bourdiesian framework noted, lotu and ako (two integral phenomena in Tongan living). Success involved using agency to determine and find compromises between the two worlds, Tongan and Western.

It is a delicate dance for Tongans to participate as global citizens yet remain embedded in Tongan ways of being. Mila-Schaaf and Robinson (2010) speak of Pacific
peoples in the NZ context and advocate they are advantaged when they can source from their polycultural capital and Western capital in education and all other spheres. Being able to exist in two spaces also means speaking of globalisation in terms of languages. Guilherme (2007) and Bianco (2010) maintain that speaking English is key to moving between different spaces, but Bianco (2010) cautions and emphasises that speaking only English and no other language is a disadvantage. To be truly cosmopolitan and global means to become multicultural, multilingual and be open to other languages and cultures. These graduates allowed themselves, through their agency in particular, to gain both access to Tongan and English languages and worlds. Such agency served the graduates well.

6.2.v. Status and role in the family

The participants’ status and role within their families was a significant contributory factor of success in education. Participants shared that their positions and roles in their respective families meant certain privileges, expectations and obligations which served to enhance participant success in education. The Tongan—Bourdiesian framework, ‘Otua mo Tonga, values status and hierarchy as Tonga is a hierarchical society based on lineage and birth. The eldest therefore has particular forms of capital at his/her disposal. The eldest son inherits the land, but the eldest daughter carries symbolic power as the fahu or ‘eiki in the family. She can have certain privileges such as access to the material possessions of her siblings and the parents, and have a say in family matters. But with these privileges come also responsibilities and expectations to be a role model to the rest of the siblings and family members. As already noted, Lu’isa is the eldest in the family, hence there were high expectations for her to perform well academically. Lu’isa was encouraged, nurtured and supported by the wider family to succeed. Unlike the generation of participants’ mothers who were obligated to leave school and raise a family once married, Lu’isa and all the female participants in this study were supported and prepared to succeed in education as women. In
Lu'isa’s case, her status as the eldest outweighed the conventional and societal norms for women at the time (1960s).

For Seini (1980s), being a female of high status in her family, i.e., the eldest in a line of females, meant she possessed a high amount of forms of capital. Perhaps because of this she was supported and cared for in her journey through education. Her mother did not have to do much for her in her upbringing as her mother’s family surrounded her with attention, love, and care amongst other privileges (see Chapter 4). There was always a family member looking out for her and providing care and attention. In her formative years to pre-THS days, as the eldest grandchild, she was raised by her maternal grandparents and members of her maternal grandmother’s family, amongst whom Seini had accumulated ‘symbolic power’ as the daughter of the eldest female, of the eldest female.

Lute, as the eldest female, acquired a strong sense of self-identity as a woman. Hers was a position of a high, respected, strong Tongan woman, as formed and harnessed within a traditional Tongan family environment. Lute strongly believed that women could perform equally well, if not better than men in civil service, and leadership positions. She felt that, in addition to intellectual abilities, she possessed symbolic and cultural capital such as a position of respect, which women could use to their advantage. To Lute, women could have a place in both public and private spheres of life, if they chose, and could excel in whatever they chose to do. Her resolute identity as a Tongan and a woman became a valuable component of her journey.

The participants’ roles were significant in the entire process. But what underpinned the agency of these individuals is best explained by the work of Helen Morton Lee (2004), the previously discussed anthropologist who has studied Tonga and Tongans. Lee maintains that it is expatriate Tongans who are rooted in Tongan culture and language, in our Tongan Bourdieusian framework, ‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku tofi’a, Tongans who carry their kaliloa,
who are strong individuals able to also learn Western culture and ways of being who become successful. Having strong Tongan identities arguably led to the agency of these graduates. Lee (2004) maintains:

…it is crucial to help them (Tongans) to build a secure sense of identity and belonging, which necessitates the acquisition of at least some level of competence in language and cultural skills. I found that the most ‘successful’ of the younger generations, using both Tongan and non-Tongan definitions of ‘success’, are those who manage to do well in the formal education system and in their occupations overseas, yet are fluent in Tongan and at ease with the Tongan way; in other words, those who are comfortable in both worlds. (p. 249)

Participants immersed themselves in their kaliloa while also recognising what Western culture could offer through THS, a move which they believed would open doors to further studies. Therefore, participants’ strong identities as Tongans led to deliberate agency through their own efforts and hard work, alongside their own parents, relatives and school, and teachers enabled each participant to pass the national exam and in preparation for further studies overseas. Preparation for further education meant the combined efforts of all important networks working together to achieve a common goal—prepare all graduates for formal schooling locally and abroad.

6.3. Kaliloa: Primary School

6.3.i. Tongan language acquisition

All participants attended primary schools which were Tongan language immersion centres, with minimum previous exposure to English. The acquisition of first language Tongan for all participants, begun in the home, continued to develop. It is important for speakers of English as a second language that they are proficient in their first language (Franken et al., 2008; Taufe'ulungaki, 1992). All participants in this study were able to
further develop L1 proficiency for a period of six years within the primary school level after immersion in a non-formal education within their homes and amongst family, and also in Sunday school (church) where Tongan the language is used.

Taufe‘ulungaki (1992) recommends learning Tongan language first as it is the group language and skills learnt from it which can be transferred to procurement of the English language in all areas: speaking, writing, reading and listening. Furthermore, cultural maintenance is based on a strong language base creating a tenacious Tongan identity (Taumoefolau, 2012). This holds true for these graduates as they were born and raised upon Tongan language and culture and became proficient in Tongan language and literacy for the first 11 years prior to entering Tonga High School.

6.3.ii. Sensing the game
Bourdieu (1992) maintains that students who have a sense of the game are able to better navigate their way to success in education. To Bourdieu (1992), ‘sense of the game’ is about the encounter between an individual’s *habitus* and the field, whereby the individual’s incorporated history (*habitus*) and objectified history (knowledge of the field and how it operates) allows the individual the ability to anticipate the events that take place within the field (Bourdieu, 1992). Participants acquired, at home and at primary school level, a strong sense of competition and the valuing of a Western education. As participants were prepared for the national exam to enter THS, competing for a place there set the bar high for academic performance overall. In many ways the entry and examination process mirrored the historic and competitive Eleven Plus examination system of the United Kingdom of Great Britain. Parents and primary school teachers worked *together* to prepare the participants for the national exam. In that process, the seeds of high academic competition and value of Western education were planted and nurtured. It was a sense of the game that made participants aware of struggles for symbolic power and forms of capital (Bourdieu 1986, 1990b, 1996a;
Bourdieu & Passeron 1977, 1979) in the field of education. It was common knowledge that Tonga High School was the school to attend if parents and teachers envisioned further study abroad for their children/students (Focus Group, 2011; Participants, 2011). These participants had ‘the game’ of education instilled in them through home, family, and teachers at primary school.

The parents’ and teachers’ expectations of the graduates played an important role in instilling that sense of the game, and subsequent achievement of graduates at primary school level. The social networks of these graduates, parents and teachers together imparted this understanding to them, preparing them for further education in various ways: high expectations and a high value placed on academic competition and Western education. There were exchanges of forms of capital between teachers and parents in the process of instilling a sense of the game of education and how to succeed in education. Teachers at primary schools offered tutoring, and parents reciprocated with gifts to tutors for their services (see Chapter 4).

What is interesting to reflect on is the fact that, aside from teaching in the Tongan language, the local primary schools in Tonga did not offer what could be described today as a ‘culturally responsive pedagogy’. It appears that schools were formal and conservative, both in their choice of curriculum and pedagogical styles. The schools also did not seem to have close links to their communities; the boundaries between classrooms and home did not appear to be as fluid as Cummins (1986) and others advocate. Primary schools taught formal subjects with some teachers available for Po ako; Sunday schools and family interacted more with each other and they often focused their teaching on more religious, Bible based matters. Despite the seeming formality surrounding most aspects of their early education, these participants were successful learners, and they became well equipped for their ongoing education at THS. Perhaps research findings on effective teaching for minority students in
New Zealand cannot be assumed to be relevant for small nation states such as Tonga. The contexts are vastly different, as are national needs.

6.3.iii. Pō ako

Social capital, the network of relations and the associated forms of capital one can have access to through these sets of relations is a significant factor of success for students (Bourdieu, 1986, 1996a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979; Halpern, 2005). Pō ako was a manifestation of this social capital and associated access to forms of capital such as knowledge in education made available through social connections to primary school teachers. Parents hired the best tutors who had the knowledge to prepare their children to pass to THS, even if it meant going off home islands to be where the best teachers worked. Poverty did not affect access to tutors as parents saw it as their duty to educate their children by providing such knowledge. The trustworthiness of the structure of relationships between tutors and parents meant tutors did their best to prepare students and parents reciprocated in any way they could, but especially through the gifting of food. Families of graduates were poor in terms of cash in hand or Western valuables, but families were rich in the sense that there were plenty of foodcrops, fruit, poultry, pigs and fish. These were valuable gifts to tutors. Pō ako is still practised today, especially in the Tongan outer islands and rural villages. The human knowledge required to pass set exams is usually imparted by tutors to students and, in exchange, parents honour the relationship by reciprocating with gifts of money and food.

Pō ako therefore, through parents’ and their children’s social network with primary school teachers, worked well for everyone. Parents did all that they could to find the best available tutors. Whether the parents possessed the knowledge to prepare their children for the coveted place at Tonga High School, or not, parents ensured that the required social
capital they had access to (good teachers) was utilised to provide the necessary knowledge for the sole purpose of preparing their children to enter THS.

The preparation of the participants for success and further education therefore was not the sole responsibility of parents. Parents had to work alongside the primary school, particularly the teachers. This is consistent with Bourdieu’s theory that forms of capital can allow for success for some students (Bourdieu, 1986). For all participants, their tutors believed in them and encouraged them to sit the national exam for Tonga High School rather than for one of the church schools. According to participants, their tutors believed in their potential to secure a place at Tonga High School and afterwards, continue on for further studies overseas.

6.4. Conclusion
This chapter, in particular, discusses the central role of family (and church), primary school and participants, using a Bourdieusian framework. Key implications of the central roles of these in the success of these participants are that they: (1) prepared and supported graduates for formal education; and (2) established a strong Tongan identity in graduates. Family, primary school and participants, through the kaliloa process, transmitted and internalised Tongan forms of capital which formed and shaped a particular Tongan habitus. This Tongan habitus (identity) remained intact throughout the educational journeys of all participants and is undergirded by fundamental Tongan notions of māfana (warmth, love and compassion), vā (connection, bond), loto'i Tonga (inner strength, determination, daring, fierceness, courage), and manatu 'ofa (fond remembrance) that is instilled, and first nurtured in the home. The implications these hold for Tongans in education, as determined from the stories of these successful Tongan graduates, is that there are certain Tongan capital (koloa), habitus (kaliloa) and fields (mala’e) uniquely sourced from the Tongan home, that were highly significant, foundational factors in their journeys to success in education.
A central implication of these findings is that success in education for Tongans perhaps requires a return to what are considered important factors in the life and well-being of Tongans, from the vantage of a Tongan worldview. There is perhaps a need to revive the traditional Tongan form of education, *talanoa mei he kaliloa* by the family within the home. In this research it was the strongest foundation for these successful Tongan graduates in their educational journeys. Family, through the *kaliloa*, engaged in language practices, grounding individuals in values, principles, culture, worldview, skills and knowledge that was essentially Tongan. Consequentially participants’ Tongan identities strengthened and remained constant throughout the graduates’ journeys. As such family, through the *kaliloa* process, enabled participants to maintain their Tongan identities throughout their educational journeys, and prepared and supported them for formal education.

The next chapter discusses THS’s role in preparing students for further education overseas. Success in a Western arena, combined with family, church, primary school effects, and graduates’ own agency, ultimately led to the success of these graduates.
CHAPTER 7: TONGA HIGH SCHOOL

‘Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world’

Nelson Mandela

7. INTRODUCTION

A collaborative effort—between the families, extended networks, teachers and graduates—geared the graduates for educational achievement. In addition, the same social capital endowed participants with a strong foundation in their Tongan identity, culture and language in their earliest years. Participants’ social capital imparted significant Tongan values such as ‘aonga and tala, valuing and encouraging literacy and creativity, balancing lotu and ako, through to extra tutoring provided at pō ako. As explored in the previous chapter, kaliloa played a significant and ongoing role in contributing to the success of these graduates—and the kaliloa is underpinned by Tongan notions of success. However kaliloa was not solely responsible for the success of these graduates. There are other factors to which these graduates attributed their success, factors which were sourced from a Western field and underpinned by Western notions of success.

In this chapter the focus is on examining the influence of Western practices and notions of success on the graduates. In brief, this chapter examines the transitions into THS and total English immersion schooling, and the experiences that further shaped and influenced the participants’ journeys to educational success.

The key factors are grouped into four areas in this chapter: (1) THS’ English immersion language; (2) Western habitus which created fakatoukatea (bilingual, bicultural and bi-literate) individuals; (3) the production of a new class or culture; and, (4) the creation of globalised citizens. The conclusion of this chapter serves as the conclusion to both chapters 6 and 7, the discussion chapters; it discusses the interplay between Tongan and
Western influences and notions of success. The conclusion also articulates the argument of the thesis, which addresses the two research questions.

7.1. Language
Where the embedding of the Tongan language provided a strong foundation for the graduates in their identities (as discussed in Chapter 6), the acquisition of the English language added a key tool in preparation for success in studying abroad. The importance of acquiring the English language as a tool is examined here in five themes: total English immersion; language wars; double jeopardy; ideal SLA context; and, language is power.

7.1.i. Total English immersion
According to the 1947 THS regulation, “Whether the student has experienced much in English…he will be taught only in English” (Prince Tungi, 1946, pp. 53-58; THSGJM 1947-1997, p. 17). This policy was in effect throughout the time the participants studied at THS (1950s-1980s); a policy to which they partially attributed their success (Focus Group, Individual Interviews, and Paper Survey, 2011). All were taught the entire school curriculum with the English language as the medium—whether it was mathematics, science, social science, history or geography. In the earlier years, European teachers were seconded from abroad to facilitate the English-only policy. The first overseas-trained Tongan teacher was employed at THS in 1954 (Bloomfield, 1997, p. 9) and numbers of Tongan teachers increased as more graduates returned to Tonga. The Tongan teachers at THS continued the practice of teaching exclusively in English until the early 1990s (Manu ‘Akau‘ola, personal communication, 2011). The English medium of teaching extended to all activities at school, with students being forbidden to speak Tongan (Thaman, 1993) and, as participants shared, being punished if they did. One interviewee shared her experience of total English immersion at THS:
It wasn’t until I got to THS that...it was compulsory to speak in English and so you sunk or swam...My English teacher was from England and again they were very strict about proper grammar, sentence structure...yeah and it stood me well over time. And so you learn then to just get on with it. Like I said earlier the only time, when we were in school it was all in English. We walk out the school gate and it was all Tongan. But when we were having school activities like marching, we spoke in English. Some prefects overheard us talk in Tongan and when we went to school, we were punished for that. But you take that in your stride. (Lu'isa, 1960s)

THS’s total English immersion policy was difficult for these graduates at age 11 or 12, all of whom were first language Tongan speakers. They described particular stages of language learning within THS’s English immersion policy, including total incomprehension, shyness and silence, especially during their first term. The experiences of these graduates is consistent with SLA literature where all of these reactions are considered normal beginning stages of acquiring L2 for second language speakers learning English (Ellis, 2012). Participants gradually started speaking and communicating in English, then progressively their comprehension and usage of the language improved. Mele’s words capture the initial experience and the gradual progression of learning that was common to all interviewees:

Then in the first month, I could say that I had no idea what was going on, everything was in English and everything was in a fog...But after the first month it finally...cleared up and it suddenly clicked then that I could understand what was going on...in the school... So my English got better and better as I progressed...

The focus group also shared their initial experience of English language immersion at THS:

FG member 1: Tonga High School opened up opportunities to speak English and to go overseas. Speaking English was scary.
FG member 2: It was scary, you had to speak English. At assembly we all laughed when the senior students laughed. We didn’t know what was going on. We just copied what the older students did.

For these participants, despite the difficulty in learning a second language, their internalisation of having to learn English and use it effectively for academic ‘survival’ helped them to learn. They knew that conquering English was integral to success in school. English was required, and students were immersed in English. For all participants, it meant they had to learn English to progress in school. Male participants in particular, were adamant that if it were not for THS’s English-only immersion, they would not have developed, let alone learnt English to the level they achieved. The experiences of these THS alumni are consistent with Bianco’s (2010) view that the necessity of communication for practical purposes enables individuals to learn a language. Bianco (2010) provides the example of a Sri Lankan boy who was considered unable to learn a language, particularly English as a second language. However, when forced by poor circumstances to sell goods on the street, he was able to communicate with tourists in comprehensible English, at a fast speed. Similarly these THS graduates, thrown into a total English immersion context at THS, had to learn English fast in order to understand and make progress with their academic work. It was, as Lu’isa (1960s) mentioned earlier, a situation where they either had to ‘sink or swim’.

All of the survey respondents and participants in the focus group, in addition to eight of the 10 interviewees, agreed that THS’s English-only language policy played a significant role in their success in education. They perceived their experience of English language immersion as additive to their Tongan language.

7.1.ii. Indigenous vs English language wars
For Tongans and other non-English peoples, there is an ongoing debate over the language to be used as a school medium, and the type of curriculum, knowledge and
education that is appropriate (Bianco, 2010; Bishop et al., 2009; Grace Bunyi, 1999; Lourie & Rata, 2012; May, 2002; Ministry of Education, 2004; Smith, 2003; Thaman, 1993; Wendy Brady, 1997). The crucial difference between Tonga and countries abroad is that in Tonga, Tongan is L1, the main language, while English is the minor language. In contrast, for example, English is the major language in NZ while Māori, Tongan language and other languages are minority languages. Two issues are central to these debates. One is how to maintain indigenous language and cultures, and this usually involves arguments for the inclusion of minority languages and cultures. Secondly, mainstream language and culture, particularly English language, is the language of business, politics and formal education globally (Bianco, 2007, 2010). There is a perceived need to know a language with such global reach (Bianco, 2007, 2010; Dorian, 2008).

Tongan linguist, Taumoefolau (2011), refers to the exclusion of Pacific languages in the NZ context as ‘language imperialism’. May (2002) voiced similar views when he referred to language imperialism for Māori as ‘the legacy of subtractive bilingualism’ May states:

We also know that traditional approaches adopted towards second language learners in New Zealand, as elsewhere, have not served these learners well, to say the least. This is because such approaches have tended to adopt a subtractive rather than additive view of students’ bilingualism. That is, they have assumed that the first language of the students is an educational obstacle to be overcome—usually excluding the use of the language within schools—rather than as an educational social resource to be valued and used within the school. (p. 7)

The above view by May and others like McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010), and Ka‘ili and Ka‘ili (2006) have some validity. The devaluing of indigenous languages has not had a positive impact on indigenous peoples (Baer et al., 2008; Cummins, 1986; Denzin
et al., Durie, 2009; 2008; Fitzsimmons & Smith, 2000; Franken et al., 2008; May, 2002; McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010; Taufe‘ulungaki, 1992). As May (2002) claims, the devaluing of minority cultures and languages has contributed to failure in education. Lee (2004) is cited throughout this thesis. She maintains that those Tongans in the diaspora who have lost their language and culture tend to fail in education and other areas of their lives. It is possible that failure in education amongst Tongans abroad stems from the fact that many such Tongans have lost their kaliloa (including language). Within Tonga, Tongan language still plays a major role and it is the major language spoken. A loss of Tongan language in Tonga, although unthinkable at this time, would be destructive to Tongan culture and could ultimately contribute to failure.

In a short examination of the historical and current language situation and education in NZ, educator May (2005) notes that the historical colonisation of Māori involved assimilationist education of Māori by British settlers. This led to dire consequences such as language loss—throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. These are explained by May (2005):

The cumulative weight of this historical process has resulted in ongoing comparative disadvantage for Maori, up to and including the present day. The comparative disadvantages that still face Maori today can be illustrated by…their current educational status. Though increasing numbers of Maori have been completing school and pursuing tertiary education…60% of Maori aged more than 15 years still held no formal educational qualifications…. (p. 366)

Pacific populations in NZ, like Māori, face similar socio-economic issues. They, too, are ‘statistically’ ‘disempowered’ and ‘disadvantaged’ in education, and in other aspects of NZ society (May, 2005; Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2005, p. 481). The Māori case in NZ is important as it illustrates clearly the loss of the first language of a group of people when English dominates and eventually takes over another language. There is ongoing debate and
political tension surrounding whether English or bilingual/multilingualism is the best way forward for minority students’ education (Baer et al., 2008; Cummins, 1986; Durie, 2009; Fitzsimmons & Smith, 2000; Franken et al., 2008; May, 2002; McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010; Taufe‘ulongaki, 1992; Thaman, 1992).

There are those who maintain English immersion education for Tongans and Pacific peoples is harmful (Hunkin, 2012; McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010). NZ educator, John McCaffery (personal communication, 2011) and Tongan language activist, Tevita Ka‘ili (Facebook, social media, 2011) maintain that English immersion schools in Tonga devalue Tongan language and culture, and hence are detrimental to success (Facebook, social media, 2011).

In support of this there are concerns by Tagoilelagi-Leota et al., (2005) that English immersion schools for Tongans are a threat to Tongan language in the early years of a child. Tagoilelagi-Leota et al. (2005) advocate there is a potential threat to the maintenance of Tongan language when English is introduced too early on when the Tongan language itself is still in its infant stages. This is consistent with SLA theories in seminal work by Lenneberg (1967) (see Chapter 2) who states there is an optimum age range to acquire language. Similar views are held in important work by Lightbown and Spada (1993) (see Chapter 2) who state there will be subtractive effects on L1 if L2 is introduced too early.

Notwithstanding this very important concern, Tonga’s unique language situation and its particular history as a Pacific nation need to be kept in mind. Tonga is the only nation in the Pacific that has never been colonised by a foreign power. This means that Tongans have spoken Tongan through to the present day. Today, children in Tonga speak Tongan from birth as their first language. As adults, most speak Tongan a majority of the time, and continue to do so in other fields particularly in church, in the community and at home. From
all this study’s data, THS’s English-only policy seemed ideal to provide the necessary ‘acquisition’ (Krashen, 1981, 1982) context for the English language.

The participants, in their narratives and reflections, demonstrated cognisance of the politics of language learning in their reflections on the part THS’s English language immersion played in their own success. Two of the 10 interviewees expressed deep regret that THS was a total English immersion school during their schooling (1950s, 1970s). Mele (1950s) resented the fact that she could not learn her own language at high-school level. ‘Amelia (1970s) maintained that she and other THS students at the time could have been ‘different’ students had they been allowed to learn both Tongan and English. It appeared that for ‘Amelia, ‘different’ equated, in her mind, with ‘better’. In contrast to Mele and ‘Amelia’s views on THS’s English immersion, the rest of the interviewees, and in particular, Lu’isa (1960s), were adamant that the immersion policy was appropriate and beneficial. The male participants maintained that if it were not for THS, they would not have gone far in terms of tertiary level studies. Lu’isa explains why THS’s English immersion had relevance:

There is a big point there [establishing bilingual language policy in high schools in Tonga]—our language is important because we do not want to lose it, which is a valid argument. But the other thing is, we grew up in Tonga in homes where Tongan language usage was strong, so going to the [objective] in years gone past, we only spoke English when we entered [THS] in form 1. That was the beginning of English immersion. So by then, I would at least be 10 years... So you had a good grounding of Tongan. And primary school was age 5. So immediately the evidence says to strengthen your first language then it will be much easier to learn English as a second language and any other languages...so in a way, it makes sense not to use English until this foundation [of Tongan language] is strong. (Lu’isa, 1960s)

Tongan and English languages appear to be important for success of Tongans in education. The former is integral to the maintenance of Tongan culture. The fact that there are Tongans working in world organizations such as the United Nations on issues of
education, human rights, and the environment is largely due to their English language proficiency. As Lourie and Rata (2012) maintain, there is a need for students to acquire knowledge that is beyond the immediate, everyday, culture-based curriculum of home and everyday life. In this case, there is a need for Tongans to acquire proficiency and competency in English literacy. Bianco (2010) asserts:

...if other people learn English like the Chinese and the Indians and the Japanese and the Germans and retain their languages as they are all doing, it means that people who are English speakers are not actually made more powerful by the fact that other people learn English. They are actually made less powerful. That’s the irony in this in that it’s a disadvantage not to have English in the world, but it is also a disadvantage to have only English. (Bianco, 2010, p. 4)

Many maintain that for Tongans and minorities in education, there is a need to acquire both the indigenous or Tongan and English languages, and hence knowledge of both worlds (Coxon, 2010; Fusitu‘a, 1992; Mila-Schaaf & Robinson, 2010; Taufe‘ulungaki, 1992). Literacy in the language is important to success in formal education and Western success. The next section looks at what these graduates might have encountered in their lives if THS had not been an English immersion school.

**7.1.iii. Double jeopardy**

While native speakers of English (perhaps working-class people) can be excluded from academic success due to the level of English they speak and write, for non-native English speakers like Tongan students such a situation can be double jeopardy. May et al., (2004) maintain that there is a difference between academic and conversational English. The ability to speak English is not the same as having the prowess to use academic English. Academic English must be learnt (May et al., 2004, [http://www.delna.auckland.ac.nz/en/delna-for-students.html](http://www.delna.auckland.ac.nz/en/delna-for-students.html)). Tongan students in high
schools in Tonga often fail because they do not have academic English (Kata, 2006; Kilioni & Kupu, 2006). Tongan students can fail because formal education systems, policies and curriculum in Tonga and in English speaking countries such as Australia, the UK, Canada, the USA and NZ (Bishop et al., 2009; Scheurich & Young, 1997; Thaman, 1993, cited in Bishop et al., 2009, p. 2) benefit the dominant monolingual culture, with their use of English language for instruction. Bishop et al., (2009) and Taumoefolau (2011) refer to this process as ‘linguistic imperialism’ where there is unfair advantage for English speakers over Pacific learners, as English is imposed on the latter during education. Bishop et al., (2009) explain the same concept, sharing views of what NZ educational policies and practices reflect:

the controlling position of that racial group (while excluding the epistemologies of other races/cultures), and that this has negative results for people of color in general (Scheurich & Young, 1997, p. 13, cited in Bishop et al., 2009, p. 2)

Tongan students, similar to Māori in Bishop et al.’s (2009) studies, are perhaps excluded from success because they exist outside the mainstream culture of schools in NZ. This situation is similar for Tongans in Tonga and Pacific peoples in Pacific Island countries where curriculum and policies in education are Western oriented (Thaman, 1993).

Tongans studied in this thesis did not speak English as their first language. The task of acquiring academic level English language and literacy for Tongan speakers growing up in Tonga is arguably greater than that of working-class English speakers whose first language is English. Tongans who are mostly raised abroad, and those Tongans born abroad, also have difficulty succeeding in school despite the fact that they have been exposed to English more than Tongans born and raised in Tonga. Tongans are well represented in the long tail of underachievement in formal education in NZ (Fustitu’a, 1992; Nash, 2000; MacIntyre, 2008; ‘Otunuku, 2010).
Tongan students struggle with learning using the English language, and often revert to language switching between Tongan and English to learn subject content (Kata, 2006; Kilioni & Kupu, 2006; Vea, 2010). Performing on a par with native or first language speakers of English language would be equally challenging as in the case of Tongans in education abroad (Nash, 2000; ‘Otunuku, 2010). For Tongans who do experience the use of English language more, such as those living abroad in NZ, Australia, UK and the USA where English is the lingua franca (Cummins & Davison, 2007), there are differences in levels of English language knowledge between Tongan students and first language English speakers. This is consistent with Bourdieu’s findings regarding the language abilities of French students (Bourdieu, 1990, 1992; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979). That is, working-class French students did not all have the level of academic knowledge that is validated in schools as cultural capital. Furthermore, not all French speakers attained institutionalised capital, i.e., a qualification for the level of French language they knew. Between working-class French speakers and middle-class French speakers, it is the middle-class French language speakers who are more successful (Bourdieu, 1986, 1990b, 1992; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979); it is their level of French which schools validate and reward with qualifications and success. The varying language abilities of the French students in Bourdieu’s research are similar to those of English speaking students. In both cases, there are native speakers who themselves have working-class language only as socialised within their family background.

According to Bourdieu (1986) cultural capital (such as language) is embodied capital and is accumulated over time:

Most of the properties of cultural capital can be deduced from the fact that, in its fundamental state, it is linked to the body and presupposes embodiment. The accumulation of cultural capital in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of what is called culture, cultivation, Bildung, presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation, which, insofar as it implies a labor of
inculcation and assimilation, costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor. (p. 48).

Bourdieu’s theory and research on French schools can help to explain why Tongans and Pacific Island students fail in education. Differences in cultural capital (reading practices, knowledge of language) between the home and school have detrimental effects on Pacific students’ education. Furthermore, Pacific peoples arguably are historically oral in culture whereas Europeans historically have written cultures. There can be a wide difference in the academic English language abilities of first language English learners and Tongan students who grow up in Tonga or abroad. Academic university programmes such as Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment (DELNA) at the University of Auckland (see http://www.delna.auckland.ac.nz/en/delna-for-students.html) for example, determine students’ level of English ability at university level. The reality for many Tongan students in education is that there is a lack of English academic level ability which is not reflective of their true academic ability. Studies by Fasi (1999) and Manu (2005) in maths in Tonga maintain that, when the obstacle of English language was removed from maths testing, the Tongan students demonstrated greater comprehension of maths concepts. Despite these studies, the fact remains that English is the medium of higher education and academia, hence Tongan students’ lack of English academic language places them at a disadvantage in relation to those who have English academic language capabilities (Bauer, 1993).

According to Wolfram (1991) (see Chapter 2) who researched Tongan children in NZ, ages 3-4 from eight families and their reading socialisation practices at home, home reading practices were inconsistent with reading practices at school. This (reading practices) is a major difference in the transmission of cultural capital that is highly valued in formal education in Tonga and abroad—in literacy and language. Two of the causes of failure in education for Tongans and Pacific Island students, according to Bauer (1993), are the lack of
English language proficiency and lack of preparation in basic academic skills. Wolfgramm’s (1991) discovery of the incongruence between Tongans’ reading practices at home and at school perhaps points to why Tongans and Pacific Island students are still underrepresented in education. Tongans’ reading practices sometimes do not match practices at school, resulting in poor literacy, hence there is lower English language proficiency at academic level.

Research (Kata, 2006; Kilioni & Kupu, 2006; Vea, 2010; Spolsky et al., 1983) has shown that local schools in Tonga, even when they are supposed to be teaching English, often use the Tongan medium. Therefore students in local schools sometimes do not have adequate learning of the English language and so do not acquire the level of English proficiency required for high school success. According to Kata (2006), most high schools in Tonga during the time of her research (2003) did not follow educational policies to teach English using the English medium in class. Kata (2006) cites Spolsky et al. (1983) who wrote about teachers in Tonga portraying a ‘healthy disrespect for (this) official policy’ (Spolsky et al., 1983, p. 467, cited in Kata, 2006, p. 10). Kata explained that, although Spolsky et al.’s (1983) research was carried out twenty years earlier than her study, his findings that teachers in Tongan local high schools did not follow MoE language policy to use English as the medium while teaching English had continued (Kata, 2006, p. 10). Kilioni and Kupu (2006) found that the lack of English language use at St Andrew’s school in Tonga meant failure and underperformance in school exams. To combat underperformance of Tongan students in Tonga in terms of academic English language proficiency, one recommended solution is to use English as the language of communication (Airini et al., 2005). Airini et al. (2005) advocate:

Using English as the medium of instruction across the curriculum (except Tongan studies) is an example of the use of language as communication. For example, when a content subject
such as science is taught through English, the learner is simultaneously acquiring the language with the concepts. Using English as the medium of instruction in content subjects enables students to be immersed in English. (Airini et al., 2005, p. 20. Emphasis in original)

In view of evidence (Fua, 2001; Kata, 2006; Kilioni & Kupu, 2006; Spolsky et al., 1983; Vea, 2010) that teachers in Tongan local high schools teach in both Tongan and English, how much more difficult would it be for those students to matriculate overseas for further education? Tongan local schools, from the 1980s (Spolsky et al., 1983) to 2006 (Kata, 2006), provide evidence that teachers in Tongan high schools did not offer the same ‘natural approach’ for acquisition of English as demonstrated in seminal work by Krashen (1981) as the best way to acquire a second language. Discrepancies in using English medium language to teach subjects in Tongan local schools seem to have had consequences for academic performance. According Peni (1960s), he and alumni from other local Tongan high schools matriculated abroad to NZ for further studies. However, Peni shared that most of the students who did not attend THS found tertiary studies difficult, due to their lack of English proficiency. Peni reported that many failed university level studies and returned home. In a study by Glynn, Berryman, Loader, and Cavanaugh (2005), Māori students who were fully immersed in a small rural Māori-medium school in NZ were ‘highly literate’ in Māori, but found transition to mainstream secondary schooling with English as the medium quite difficult. The rural school, working alongside the home, implemented an English reading and writing programme for year 6, 7 and 8 students to assist them in their transition to an English-medium high school. It took only ten weeks for the Māori students to perform on par with others their age level in English literacy.

It is interesting to surmise why this study’s participants, who were born and raised in Tonga and then underwent full English immersion at THS, were more successful at university level than Tongans raised mostly in NZ, and Tongans who were born and raised in NZ (Nash,
Tongans who are born abroad, or who live abroad from an early age, are constantly exposed to the English language in countries such as NZ, Australia and the United States. Such Tongans are more exposed to English language on a daily basis than the participants in this research were. Why were THS graduates more successful in formal education than many Tongans who live and were born in NZ and are more exposed to English language? The next section looks at the role THS’s English immersion policy played in the success of these graduates.

### 7.1.iv. Ideal SLA context

THS, in providing a total English language immersion setting, offered second language acquisition to first language Tongan speakers. Krashen’s (1981, 1982) ‘acquisition’ versus ‘learning’ theory maintains that teaching content using the L2 target language will result in proficient L2 acquisition. Airini et al. (2005), advocate that using English as the language of communication will achieve English language proficiency. THS made English acquisition possible; participants acquired English through the learning of subjects such as science, maths and geography. Further to this, THS was the ideal SLA context. As bilingual theory advocates, “[t]he best way a bilingual student can achieve educational success and a high level of proficiency in a second language (L2) is through developing literacy initially in their first language (L1) and then going on to develop literacy in L2” (Franken et al., 2008, p. 2). Further to this, Terrell (1977, 1982, 1986) maintains that the acquisition of a second language is best done using a ‘natural approach’ setting where communication is the main purpose of using the language, rather than learning specific aspects of the target language such as grammar.

THS used this ‘natural approach’. At the same time the process of acquisition of English by the graduates reflected SLA theories and research. According to Terrell (1982):
The Natural Approach (NA) is not the only means of language teaching that results in students who can communicate with native speakers of a given language. Any approach in which real communication is the basis of class activities will produce students who, within a very short time, can function in communicative situations with native speakers of that language.

Although I make no claims for the NA which another communicative approach could not match, one can demonstrate informally that a communicative-based approach generally produce results superior to any cognitive or habit-drilled based approach. (p. 121)

THS’s English-only policy was ideal for these L1 Tongan language graduates who were well established in their Tongan language prior to attending THS. Research on second language acquisition (Franken et al., 2008; Lightbown & Spada, 1993; McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010; Taufe’ulungaki, 1992), found that second language acquisition is best achieved when the speakers are first proficient in their L1.

Poor English literacy in Tonga today is arguably due to a lack of academic proficiency training at teachers’ college locally (Airini et al., 2005) and a lack of English immersion at high school level to relay contents of subjects (Kilioni & Kupu, 2006). Lightbown and Spada (1993) along with May (2002), argue that, if individuals acquire a second language while not yet proficient in their first language, such a practice could result in the loss of L1. According to Lightbown and Spada (1993):

When the objective of second language learning is native-like mastery of the target language, it is usually desirable for the learner to be completely surrounded by the language as early as possible. However, in the case of children from minority language backgrounds or homes where language, literacy, and education are not well-developed, early intensive exposure to the second language may entail the loss or incomplete development of the child’s first language. This leads to so-called subtractive bilingualism, where one language is lost before another is fully developed (pp. 49-50).
In addition, Lenneberg’s (1967) seminal theory for the optimum age for learning of L2 advocates the best age to acquire an established knowledge of language is approximately 10 years old. This theory is relevant to the findings in this research. These graduates were fully immersed in Tongan language until approximately 12 years of age. The result after 5-6 years of schooling at THS was graduates who are fully functional Tongan language speakers, and also largely fluent in English.

The THS setting appeared to present a particular type of ‘bilingual education’ for these graduates. Upon entering THS they were involved in ‘consecutive’/‘sequential’ bilingual learning (Baker, 2011). This means, participants learnt their Tongan language first, then learnt English language second at THS. However, it was also ‘simultaneous’ bilingualism (Baker, 2011) as the graduates spoke and used English at school, while using Tongan simultaneously in all contexts outside of school.

**7.1.v. Language is power**

‘Language is power’ is central to Bourdieu’s views on language in relation to education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). As already indicated (see Chapter 2) schools reproduce, validate and reward the language of the dominant class. Language literacy, amongst others, is an aspect of cultural capital which, when appropriated by students, renders symbolic power. Language literacy is translatable into other forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 1992; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979) such as the attainment of tertiary qualifications, which in turn can lead to work, income and status. In education, the mastery of particular languages and literacies are keys to success. Allon Uhlmann (2008) explains why:

Language and literacy are elements of what Bourdieu has dubbed *cultural capital*, that is, knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are acquired through social interactions (Bourdieu, 1986). These are conceptualised as capital because they carry with them value, which is
ultimately interchangeable with other forms of capital. This value is not fixed. It depends on
the way social agents evaluate it, and this evaluation is a product of ongoing social and
political processes.

Pedagogical policy and practice carry profound implications for the differential valuations of
literacy and fluency. (p. 97)

Throughout world history the dominant power’s language is the language of business,
education and politics. For example, the English language has remained the *lingua franca*
(language of commerce, media and politics) in many countries and *lingua mundi* (global or
world language) despite the fact that Great Britain, whose language is English, is no longer
the number one power in the world (Bianco, 2007, 2010). According to Bianco (2010):

It starts from the very beginning of schooling in many, many societies and many societies like
Japan and Korea have actually debated making English an official language even though they
were never colonised by an English speaking country, either of those two states.

So English is unique in that it is the only language that has remained the dominant language
despite a shift of power. All transfer of power from one imperial regime in the world to
another has been accompanied by a shift in language. The decline of Latin meant the rise of
French or Spanish and English and Russian and so on in the European context and these were
then exported globally through imperial expansion.

The fall of one always resulted in the rise of another language of imperial reach, but when
Britain’s empire declines and America’s global commercial sway takes its place, you have a
shift in imperial power or reach of global influence, but a retention of the language through
which that’s done. That’s never happened in history before.

So English had benefitted by this unique circumstance that happened in the middle of the 20th
century. (pp. 3-4).
Tongans realised early the power inherent in Western education (Kavaliku, 1966; Paongo, 1990) and hence the importance of learning the English language. The general attitude towards English by Tongan society, as researched by Taufe‘ulungaki (1992) in the 1980s, is that English is essential for higher, tertiary studies and international communication. THS’s English-only policy gave these THS graduates symbolic power—English language proficiency. In doing so, THS’s English language immersion created individuals with a *fakatoukatea habitus*—biliterate, bilingual and bicultural individuals who were able to traverse both worlds.

7.2. Habitus

Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* as discussed in Chapter 2 is criticised by critics (Giroux, 1983a) as leaving little or no room for individual agency. In opposition, Diane Reay (2004) argues that Bourdieu’s *habitus* maintains both—limitations and agency. Reay (2004) states:

…*habitus* has been subject to widespread criticism, mainly on the basis of its latent determinism. This is ironic in view of Bourdieu’s rationale for developing the concept…

Bourdieu sees habitus as potentially generating a wide repertoire of possible actions, simultaneously enabling the individual to draw on transformative and constraining courses of action…the addendum in Bourdieu’s work is always an emphasis on the constraints and demands that impose themselves on people. While the habitus allows for individual agency it also predisposes individuals towards certain ways of behaving (pp. 432, 433).

Bourdieu’s use of *habitus* is limiting, but it allows for agency in individuals (Harker, 1984). While *habitus* (behaviour, dispositions, and thinking) can be automatic as a result of socialisation over time, *habitus* can also be the result of socialisation within additional fields.

THS added and nurtured particular *habitus* in the successful graduates. As Bourdieu maintained, *habitus* is not the work of one aspect of the individual’s past, but a compilation
of the sum total past or history of the individual, including family upbringing, classes and the cultures an individual encounters in a lifetime. Bourdieu explains (1990a):

> The different classes of systems of preference correspond to classes of conditions which impose different structures of perception, appreciation and action. An individual habitus is the product of the intersection of partly independent causal series. You can see that the subject if not the instantaneous ego of a sort of singular cognito, but the individual trace of an entire collective history. (1990a, p. 91).

Lute, an interviewee, echoed Bourdieu’s words above in her personal narrative when she explained who and what factors contributed to her success in education:

> I think all that enormous variety which are a part of your background, and part of what you picked up on the way, because no one’s background has it all. Heh. Then luckily if life enables you to encounter other strengths heh and to encounter principles, encounter people who broaden things for you, who deepened things for you and who protect you. (Lute, 1950s)

The kind of *habitus* inculcated and added to by THS is explored here in four areas: creating a critical habitus and possibilities; THS’s motto and a lifelong *habitus*; curriculum, teachers and culture and reinforcing a *habitus* of excellence; and, the impact of the non-traditional THS uniform.

### 7.2.i. Creating critical habitus and possibilities

THS inculcated in these graduates a critical *habitus* and a *habitus* of possibilities. Prominent critical theorists, Paulo Freire (1970) and Henry Giroux (1983), alongside others, maintain that at the heart of critical theory are the conscientious efforts for emancipation generated towards social justice, equity and equality for all, particularly for those on the margins in education. Henry Giroux states:

> In opposition to dominant forms of education and pedagogy that simply reinvent the future in the interest of a present in which ethical principles are scorned and the essence of democracy
is reduced to the imperatives of the bottom line, critical pedagogy must address the challenge of providing students with the competencies they need to cultivate the capacity for critical judgement, thoughtfully connect politics to social responsibility, and expand their own sense of agency in order to curb the excesses of dominant power, revitalize a sense of public commitment, and expand democratic relations. Animated by a spirit of critique and possibility, critical pedagogy at its best attempts provoke students to deliberate, resist, and cultivate a range of capacities that enable them to move beyond the world they already know without insisting on a fixed set of meanings. (Giroux, 1983b, p. 20)

According to participant interviewees, THS was unique because it socialised its students to become critical thinkers, beyond the established norms of society, through its teachers and the culture of THS. Tēvita maintains:

I think the greatest contribution of THS to the formation of those people is training them to be open-minded, teaching students to think freely, and I think that is the major difference between Tupou College where Tupou the IV was...his creation of THS is to allow for a more free space for Tongan students to think freely, to be open to other ideas with no tough discipline like teachers you used to get in Toloa. And despite what others say, ‘THS is fiepālangi’, that independent mentality is what I got from THS. Working in the Church environment for almost 20 years now. It is a very restricted space. I hate to be restricted. (Tēvita, 1980s, emphasis in italics represents that of interviewee).

This is consistent with research on successful schools (Coxon, 2007; Gray, 2012; Kay, 2008; Lipine, 2010; McKinney, 2007; Te Hau, 2006; Vaa et al., 2003). Literature on successful schools provides evidence of how schools become fields of promise inculcating particular habitus in its students. St George’s (2004) study of St Catherine’s school in the USA for instance, showed how that school became a field of ‘possibility’ for its female students. The school created and re-created its female students’ identities. Rather than reproducing class and identity, as some critics saw Bourdieu’s theory and work on French
schools maintained that schools do, St George (2004) used Bourdieusian theory and work to re-view the school not as a field of reproduction of class and identity, but as a field of promise which re-negotiated its students’ identities.

St Catherine’s school possessed clearly defined success values, agendas and expectations for its twenty students in the study, as did THS with its philosophy and objectives. School in St George’s (2004) work was a field that enabled students as agents. Agency in its students was activated by the school itself so the students could as to acquire capital and a form of habitus that defied traditional expectations of girls as educated only for domestic work. St George (2004) argued that schools are “spaces where socialization occurs, often reflecting the larger social structure”, but that schools like St Catherine’s could also be sites of possibility (p. 3). St. George posited that “It is important to examine these alternative educational spaces to determine what messages, expectations, opportunities and limitations are (re)presented and legitimized” (p. 3).

THS, like St. Catherine’s, arguably inculcated a habitus of possibility for female and male, poor and rich, commoners and nobility. Female graduates saw themselves on an equal par with their male counterparts; male graduates acknowledged their female counterparts could compete with them and even surpass them academically at THS. There were few pre-conceived ideas or stereotypes by students that one’s class, gender, or socio-economic background predetermined academic ability. According to the participants, at THS all students were seen treated the same, all were believed to be academically capable.

However, there was an indication in the data that the Tongan government, through the awarding of overseas scholarships, directed female participants towards careers closely resembling female domestic jobs such as nursing and education. This was also the case in Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1979) study. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1979):
Educational disadvantage is also expressed in the *restricted choice* of disciplines reasonably available to a given category of students. Thus, the fact that the chances of university entrance are much the same for males and females of the same origin must not allow us to forget that once they enter, the two sexes are unlikely to be studying the same subjects. In the first place, and whatever the origin, Arts subjects are always the most likely ones for female students and Science subjects the most likely ones for males: here we see the influence of the traditional model of the division of labor (and the distribution of ‘gifts’) between the sexes... Female students' choices are more limited, the more disadvantaged their social background. (p. 6)

According to participants, THS females, especially the first scholarship awardees, were sent to New Zealand mainly to study nursing and education, areas seemingly aligned with traditional ‘domestic’ roles occupied by Tongan females in Tongan society. In a sense, the Tongan government mirrored practices of other countries (see Fry, 1985, for the NZ scenario). In Nicole Stelter’s (2002) examination of gender discrepancies in leadership roles in the U.S. and other overseas countries, she highlights the fact that women occupied more traditional positions rather than leadership posts in the work place. Graduates in this research follow successful careers that are both traditional and non-traditional (gender wise) partially due to the form of education they received at THS.

Schools are indeed avenues of possibility, especially if those on the margins such as women are accorded equal opportunity to be educated at the best level within schools, with the intention of women becoming future leaders. If Tongan women, especially women of commoner status and from low socio-economic backgrounds, are to be truly successful, there could be more women in politics as well as other areas such as law and other disciplines. THS offered an education that led to equity, equal access and change for Tonga’s young females (Focus Group, 2011; Individual Interviews, 2011). For the five women in the individual interviews, THS, combined with their *kaliloa* equipped them to step outside the
norm of Tongan society and exercise their own agency in their education and career pathways.

THS took women’s traditional roles as caregivers within the domestic sphere in the locality of Tonga, and opened doors into careers not particularly considered the ‘norm’ or particularly ‘traditional’ roles for women. THS women, including the five THS female graduates in this study, now lead worldwide in various areas. Government positions in Tonga, traditionally occupied by Tongan men, and in particular Tongan men of nobility, are now accessed and available to Tongan women, regardless of social background. However, there is still room for more change, as expressed by Lute (1950s). She maintains that although Tongan women are more qualified in different areas, within the Tongan government she senses a tendency to favour men in leadership roles as opposed to Tongan women.

There is still a long way to go in terms of advancement and development in the role and advancement of Tongan women, but THS was instrumental as a starting point for transformative change in the education and changing roles of Tongan women. THS was a site of possibility, for not just Tongan males but also for Tongan females. Lute captures the focus group and individual thoughts on this:

> When we entered THS as females and males we were equal. We were all there to attain a Western education, equally as citizens of Tonga and to give back to the people and build up Tonga once the education was successfully completed. There was no difference between the THS boy and THS girl. As women and men, we were there equally pursuing an education. (Lute, 1950s)

THS provided the field to inculcate and nurture women who worked hard to acquire the Western capital required to have symbolic power over their own destiny, to choose family and/or further education and later a career, a combination of these, or all of these. THS also provided the possibility for Tongan students of commoner ancestry to acquire symbolic
power that could lead to leadership roles for the benefit of the people of Tonga. Participants from the focus group, individual TMK and paper survey concur that the history of THS is in part the history of the development of Tonga and of women. THS socialised a *habitus* and provided forms of capital that integrated THS students into the Western world of education, with capital valued and sourced from the Western world but received within the context of Tonga.

### 7.2.ii. THS's motto: A lifelong *habitus*

THS was a school for the most academically able students in Tonga. Therefore, THS nurtured a *habitus* of academic excellence directed towards Western success for high-performing Tongan students from across Tonga.

Firstly, THS’s culture of excellence was primarily practised through a process of selection, using the local entrance examination for primary school students. In doing so, THS chose the highest-performing academic students to enter the school. According to the findings, students and their parents recognised the culture of excellence epitomised in THS’s culture. One alumnus remarked:

> When you passed to THS, it was a huge thing. When your name was called out on the radio or read in the newspaper by people from all across Tonga, depending on which decade you entered whether the radio or the newspaper, or both was established, it was as if you were *poto* [wise] already. To be labelled as a THS student ‘matematika’⁶ meant that you were already wise. Everyone at home, in the church and everyone who knew you treated you as if you were already wise! A THS student was a wise student. (THS, alumni 1980s, 1965, 1966 THS double anniversary, July 2013)

---

⁶ *Matematika* meaning mathematics was a term first coined by James Egan Moulton for the highest academic class at Toloa College, scholars who demonstrated distinction in the college exams, high enough to warrant a university degree (see J. Egan Moulton 1921, p. 47). In 1947 when THS was established, matematika was then used for THS students as only the top scholars from primary school entered THS. THS is commonly referred to by Tongans and in Tongan society as the *Ako Matematika*, the school for scholars.
‘Amelia expressed the same notion that a THS student was considered wise just by
being selected as a pupil:

THS represents honour and THS detached our minds, to view that you are better than most
people in Tonga. And in the village and so on. Entering THS was like, it was as if you were
wiser than everyone else. This idea of poto [wise/wisdom] which is a value in the way we
live, is with you and about you. You haven’t even learnt anything [laughter]. (‘Amelia,
1970s)

These testimonies by alumni illustrate that the THS entrants negotiated the process of
selection of the elect, through the entrance examination process. However, while it is true
that these students were now the top academic students in the country, it was the surrounding
networks—community, society, parents, family, peers, government, and THS combined—
which nurtured a habitus of academic excellence for participants. These graduates
internalised this culture of excellence as habitus. Bourdieu maintains that agents within
fields validate ‘the norm’ by internalising and accepting that this is the norm—that THS
students are wise. Here, there is a two-sided process—people in turn perceive and expect
excellence from the students who have passed the entrance exam to THS and it becomes
student habitus. This is habitus nurtured and added to by outside influences. Teachers at
THS, the THS culture, the families, the society, and the church added to the students’ habitus
of excellence by validating them through perceptions and expectations that the students
would pursue excellence at all times. Perception and expectation, as part of the inculcation
process, is best explained by Bourdieu’s notions of sense of the game and internalization (of
habitus). Craig Calhoun (2003) explains:

The confidence that defines greatness is largely learned, Bourdieu suggested. It is learned in
a thousand earlier games. On playgrounds, in high school, and in college, basketball players
imagine themselves to be Michael Jordan—but they also learn that they are not…One of the
most important points Bourdieu made is that this is precisely how our very experience of
struggling to do well teaches us to accept inequality in our societies. We learn and
incorporate into our habitus a sense of what we can ‘reasonably’ expect…The games I play
more seriously are ones I learned early I was better at, games involving words instead of
balls, requiring more speed of thought and less of foot. I play these for greater stakes; my
salary, my sense of career accomplishment, my belief that through my work I make a
contribution to others. Then there are games that matter so much to us that most of us play
them whether we are good at them or not—love and marriage, raising children and trying to
help them prosper, acquiring material possessions, or seeking religious salvation. It is our
desire for the stakes of the game that ensures our commitment to it. But we do not invent the
games by ourselves; they are the products of history, of social struggles and earlier
improvisations, and of impositions by powerful actors… (pp. 276–277)

The culture of success as part of these participants’ *habitus* was externally placed
upon them by surrounding networks of THS, family, home, society and peers who, upon
witnessing these graduates’ ‘selection as the elect’ to enter THS, assumed that they were
intelligent, and that they would continue to pursue academic excellence. Participants learned
from primary school that they were top students, at THS this was endorsed by the networks
which surrounded them. This is consistent with literature on factors of success. Fletcher et
al. (2005, cited in Fletcher et al., 2009) reveal parents and school’s high expectations for
students lead to success in education. Carmen Mills and Trevor Gale (2010), looking at
education in disadvantaged communities in Australia, state:

As some of the most strategically placed people to effect change in the lives of children,
teachers have a central role to play in attempting to redress…injustices. The academic
literature suggests that holding high expectations of students and engaging in ‘visible’
pedagogical practices with high ‘intellectual demandingness’ (Newmann & Associates, 1996;
Lingard, Mills, & Hayes, 2000) may be some of the keys to making a difference for
disadvantaged students, letting them know that they are expected to meet them, and providing intellectually challenging lessons corresponding to these expectations, teachers can have a considerable impact on achievement (Sammons, Hillman, & Mortimore, 1995). (Mills & Gale, 2010, pp. 60-61)

THS, families, community and church demanded these graduates, upon entry to THS, pursue excellence, not just in the classroom but at all times. All participants spoke of the demands of all their surrounding networks: The demand on students to pursue the school motto—To the Best—was a call to embody excellence in all areas of life, but especially in school.

7.2.iii. THS curriculum, teachers and culture: Reinforcing a habitus of excellence

The fact that the curriculum was highly academic and the teachers were qualified Western, and later Tongan teachers, added to THS students’ *habitus* of excellence. All students had access to ‘the best’ teachers, employed at THS, who taught academic knowledge. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977, 1979), working-class students in French schools tended to be streamed into subjects which taught less knowledge, thus perpetuating and directing them to working-class jobs similar to those that their fathers before them took up, while the dominant class were taught higher learning skills and channelled into higher learning subjects resulting in careers reflective of their fathers’ in law, medicine, and business. This is consistent with the correspondence theory in the seminal work by Bowles and Gintis (1976). They found that in the capitalist country, the USA, schools were reproducing communities. School practices varied, and they corresponded to workplace demands expected to be placed on students. Students from working-class homes were prepared for working-class jobs, while higher-class students were challenged in schools in ways which prepared them for upper-class jobs (Bowles & Gintis, 1976).
Similar findings are in the seminal work by Alison Jones (1991) on Pacific Island students and European students in an Auckland girls’ school. Jones found that Pacific Island working-class students were taught in a less challenging way and their teachers had lower expectations of them compared to their European middle-class counterparts. The latter were able to co-construct their own learning through the use of questions, and they were encouraged to initiate discussions during class. In contrast the Pacific Island girls were treated by teachers as students to be taught, rather than encouraged to participate in their own learning. Work by the Brazilian critical educator, Paulo Freire (1970) argues against such harmful and denigrating pedagogical practices which treat students as ‘empty vessels’ to be filled with the teachers’ knowledge (Freire, 1970). Rather, Freire advocates that pedagogy be geared towards building on the knowledge students bring from home, particularly for minorities (or the oppressed) who exist on the margins of society.

THS’s teachers’ attitudes, through the curriculum and their expectations and pedagogy, fostered a *habitus* of excellence by teaching academic knowledge and expecting students to be the ‘best of the best’. These graduates, who were first language Tongan speakers and often from poorer backgrounds, were put into a foreign education system, with a foreign language and a foreign culture and a curriculum, but they succeeded in large part due to the high expectations of the school, the teachers, their families and a society which viewed them as the ‘matematika’. Internalizing high expectations and alongside the receipt of high quality academic knowledge from talented teachers and curriculum, nurtured, formed and added to the *habitus* of excellence. All participants maintain that the THS motto became deeply embedded in their formation at THS. To this day the motto continues to inform their actions and behaviour. While it is a fact that schools validate certain *habitus*, as Bourdieu’s work showed, THS did not invalidate the Tongan *habitus* of these graduates as formed from
the culture-based informal education they brought from home. THS simply added a Western *habitus* as the school’s main focus was Western success.

7.2.iv. THS uniform

Another significant aspect of habitus which the participants named as influencing their success was the wearing of the THS uniform. According to archival research, in 1947, girls wore khaki, pleated gym frocks, white blouses, ties, panama hats; boys wore khaki trousers, white shirts, and ties. Both sexes wore sandals. The uniform changed in 1950. Girls wore jackets, a maroon gym frock, white blouse, maroon tie with the panama hats and sandals. Boys wore jackets, grey shorts, white shirts and maroon caps with sandals. In the 1960s, the ties and hats were removed. In 1987, a major change in the uniform was made. The girls’ pleated gym frock was changed to straight frocks, as is the uniform today. The boys’ uniform was drastically changed from a Western type uniform to a more Tongan traditional uniform. Boys no longer wore grey shorts, they now wore grey *tupenu* (traditional Tongan wrap-around skirt for men) and *ta’ovalas* (Tongan traditional mat wrapped around the waist with coconut husk rope) (*THSM, 1987, cited in THSGJM 1947-1997*, p. 36).

From 1947 to 1986 these graduates wore Western uniforms which were typical of what students were wearing to school in NZ and other Western countries at the time. This Western uniform outwardly set apart these students as unique in a traditional Tongan society where there are codes of traditional dress. Participants felt special wearing the THS Western-style uniform. It was a cultural marker of respect because the uniforms stood for Western academic ability and Western *habitus* in Tongan society. Participants shared the pride they felt wearing their THS uniform. According to sentiments expressed by one focus group member, “It was a huge thing, you know, to wear the THS uniform. Our uniform reflected success, high academic ability achieved locally. We were the top students. And when you walked down the street, people would say ‘Ah, she/he is a Matematika [THS] student!” Lute
(1950s) (see Chapter 2) affirmed that THS was more than just an English speaking school; it prepared graduates to dress like Westerners, and acquire a Western mentality.

The changes in the THS uniforms were noted by one interviewee who remarked that:

The tupenu and the ta‘ovala was a real shock to me because when I entered the original uniforms had changed, the girls initially had hats, ties, and ties for the boys, when we entered there were no more hats and no more ties. Yes, when we entered it had ended. But returning to Tonga [now] the change to tupenu and ta‘ovala…it was like it was strange to see. The tupenu and ta‘ovala are not strange, but it was strange to see them wear them. It’s like giving mixed messages eh. It is supposed to be an English immersion school but our Tongan wear appears...Perhaps the thinking was valid. [I] don’t know what the reason was. [The] reason being there is importance placed on valuing of Tongan things. But then there is no change to the girls’ uniforms! Only the boys are of Tongan, the girls still palangi! And so, that is what I mean. So it’s a real mixed outfit eh. Girls wear palangi, boys wear Tongan. The boys wore shorts in those days, that’s what we knew and it was fitting. So I don’t know what the view is on the tupenu and ta‘ovala. To me, it was a real shock to see boys wearing ta‘ovala and tupenu! (Lu’isa, 1960s)

Perhaps Lu‘isa’s views on the drastic change of the boys’ uniforms from Western-type uniforms to more traditional Tongan uniforms reflects the general views on which direction THS is now heading. Prior to the change in the boys’ uniforms to a more Tongan style, these graduates felt special dressed up in Western-style uniforms. Participants felt set apart as unique from the rest of the students in other schools. It was as if the THS Western uniform alongside the THS mantra with its English-only speaking policy set them higher from the rest inwardly (academically) and outwardly in uniform. THS gave these graduates a Western cultural capital and habitus. As Lute (1950s) argued, the Western uniform, prepared them for further education abroad.
THS as a field inculcated a *habitus* of possibility for the students (female and male), and the people of Tonga, from its inception in 1947. The school legitimated and validated the use of English language at all times, maintained the daily wearing of a Western uniform, offered a school motto that required one maximise one’s potential in all areas of school life, and nurtured a Western mentality in its students to work towards and acquire a Western education for its students to the highest possible level—grounded in *kaliloa* and a Tongan *habitus* which could subvert and challenge Western notions of success and norms, yet beginning to exercise agency in challenging some Tongan norms and expectations. It was a mentality of liberal proportions that transcended limitations alongside boundaries of gender and class. THS was indeed ahead of its time as it also facilitated the rapid advancement and development of future women leaders. Although women held high prestige in Tongan society through the *fahu* system where the eldest sister holds symbolic power and prestige in a Tongan traditional world, women once married (as shown in the background of all participants’ mothers) would often have to give up their educational aspirations and careers to care for their husbands, children and the wider collective family. This was the trend with all participants’ mothers. In view of these Western *habitus* and the cultural capital THS gave to these graduates, one can see how THS was instrumental in creating a new class and culture for the successful graduates.

### 7.3. Producing New Class and Culture

This *habitus* and culture was added on to the pre-existing informal and non-formal education of graduates from home. In addition, there was the more formal foundation at primary school. These combined with the Western objectives and cultural elements at THS produced a new class and culture for the students. THS’s Western objectives within a Tongan society and educational system allowed for a new agency and offered a new language and culture to its Tongan students.
The above was the founder’s vision and agenda—in Mele’s (1950s) words ‘a full laboratory’: Western in objective and transforming Tongans into future Western-educated leaders able to traverse both worlds—traditional and new. Mila-Schaaf and Robinson (2010) used New Zealand’s first national secondary school health and well-being survey to ascertain the relation between culture and education achievements of Pacific students in NZ. Mila-Schaaf and Robinson coined the term ‘polycultural capital’ using Bourdieu’s theory of social space to describe the power of Pacific students who were NZ-born second generation, and had access to two separate social spaces: Pacific and Western. They maintain these Pacific students have dual advantages due to comfort levels in two social spaces, Western and Pacific:

It is theorised that having Pacific forms of capital, as well as capital sourced to dominant social spaces, puts participants in a stronger position to have agency to dip in and dip out, opt in, opt out, adjust to cultural contexts. Polycultural capital is associated here with cross-cultural resources, knowledge, skills and agency to potentially realise cumulative advantage.

The term polycultural capital shadows earlier ‘doubling’ concepts, such as double consciousness (Dubois, cited in Zuckerman, 2004) and double vision (Wright, cited in Gilroy, 1993). Polyculturalism captures the ‘more-than-one’ doubling dynamic, but unlike the term ‘bicultural’ it is not limited to just two. As Margaret says above, ‘sometimes it's the best of many’.

Polycultural capital also encompasses the promise of hybrid synergies—that which is more than the sum of its parts. Kelley (2003) argues that the term polycultural captures cross-cultural interrelationship, overlap, fluidity and shared spaces, rather than reified multi-cultural differences. Not all invocations of ‘multicultural’ reify difference, but the term polycultural is more open to new incarnations of meaning and provides a pun on the word Polynesian’. Here, the term ‘polycultural capital’ also encompasses agency and ability to efficiently
reference more than one knowledge tradition; to choose selectively or respond effectively—dependent on context and purpose. (Mila-Schaaf & Robinson, 2010, p. 12)

THS transformed these top primary school students, who had access to Tongan social space at home, church, and in the community, into students who were nurtured to gain access to Western social spaces and cultural knowledge. The graduates gained ‘polycultural capital’; they possessed Western academic/disciplinary knowledge from THS, added capital through total English immersion—the ability to speak, write, and think like Westerners when relevant—and yet retained a strong foundation in their Tongan language, cultural knowledge, non-formal and informal education inculcated at the kaliloa by family, primary school and church.

Ultimately, THS produced new cultural capital for these graduates by adjoining white middle-class values, capital and habitus to traditional values, capital and habitus. In doing so THS, alongside participants’ kaliloa, provided graduates with access to Western tools to effect change in their socioeconomic backgrounds and choice over their own academic and career pathways. That is, THS produced a new class and culture by providing the graduates with, what Audre Lorde (1996) terms the ‘master’s tools’ (in this case, English language, disciplinary and academic knowledge, Western disposition and so forth) with which to pursue tertiary formal education abroad.

At the time of the field research (2011), all participants had achieved excellence at tertiary level—Western educational success which was the founder’s anticipated vision for the young people of Tonga. According to the official eulogy of the late founder, His late Majesty had ‘an abiding love for Tonga and his people’:

His love for his people was boundless. We loved him in return.

He was called to serve us through his chiefly destiny, his sense of responsibility and patriotism and by his instinctive calling in his heart.
To the very end, his thoughts were of the people and their welfare. He wanted more than anything, that we should keep our culture and basic unity intact. This would preserve our identity and sense of worth as Tongans. (Government of Tonga, 2006, p. 29)

In creating a Western school established locally, the founder paved the way towards creating a new class in Tongan society, a class of highly educated Tongans who not only could lead the nation but who also could provide examples of upward mobility in a highly stratified and hierarchical society. All participants except one indicated they came from a commoner family background. THS provided the opportunity for these Tongan people to create new socio-economic identities for themselves. THS’s gift of Western knowledge gave them the added ability to engage and exist in the international arena where Western academic knowledge and English language is highly validated due to the Western foreign powers who dominate the world socio-economic arena and politics. It is important to note that this gift of education was for all classes in Tongan society, commoners, nobility and the royal household. Former Tongan Prime Minister Sevele maintained that THS was His late Majesty’s “most brilliant and forward-looking initiative” (Government of Tonga, 2006, p. 36).

As Haber and Mncube (2012) note, schools can indeed transform nations, from being less democratic to more democratic where equality and equity can be fostered and nurtured for all. A key highlight of Huber and Mncube’s work is what actually takes place in education of developing nations. Education can be democratic yet can also be undemocratic (Haber & Mncube, 2010). Tonga’s cabinet members are mostly THS alumni (Public Service Commission, personal communication, 2013) who are commoners. THS served also then as a beacon of democracy, giving Tongan students from all walks of life the tools to be able to stand on a more level playing field.
While it is true that Bourdieu’s work highlights the ‘reproductionist’ nature of education as proposed by many of his critics, (Giroux, 1983), it is still fair to say that schooling in THS’s case nurtured agency in graduates by enabling a new culture for its students. Harker (1984) argued that Bourdieu’s work and theory on schooling allows for:

…human agency. He [Bourdieu] achieves this through an exploration of the tension between the conservative aspect of schooling (the preservation of knowledge and experience from one generation to the next), and the dynamic, innovative aspect (the generation of new knowledge). (Harker, 1984, p. 117)

THS, during the years attended by participants, generated new knowledge and encouraged agency which meant students strove to achieve success. THS accomplished this by weaving together two *habitus*. One, a strong foundation of a Tongan cultural-based knowledge system provided within the home (at the *kaliloa*) to navigate the second, a more academic/disciplinary Western system (Lourie & Rata, 2012). THS thus produced students who are *fakatoukatea* (well versed or knowledgeable in two spheres, in this case Western and Tongan, including also ability to be bicultural, bilingual, and biliterate) *habitus*.

Navigating these two systems to create a new class and culture in such a dynamic way begs an examination though of whether symbolic violence was enacted on students and families or if this was modified or mitigated by there being a strategic distinction at play in THS role in the success of its graduates.

**7.4. Schools Reproduce Class and Culture**

Education serves to either produce or reproduce systems, class or culture (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979). Reproduction in schools in Tonga and abroad often means the exclusion and failing of minority students, including Tongans. Indigenous people therefore often call for a more culture-based focus in education (Gray, 2012; Lipine, 2010; Kay, 2008; McKinney, 2007; Te Hau, 2006; Thaman, 2002). This is in line with efforts to increase
academic success that are in tune with maintaining the cultures and ensuring the survival of
groups of peoples, particularly those on the margins (Freire, 2005; Smith, 2003). This is
perhaps in parallel with UN educational aims, specifically UNESCO’s initiatives for
education such as its Decade for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), Education for
Education for All movement (EFA) (http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/) all of which aim to implement education for all peoples and countries in a way that is sustainable economically, socially, politically, culturally and environmentally (http://en.unesco.org/themes/education-21st-century).

Moving in line with UNESCO efforts to build the capacities and increase success for all in ways that are sustainable for nations and different cultures, Pacific educators, Thaman (1993, 1995, 2003), Nabobo-Baba (2004) and Pene et al., (2002) emphasise that education in its various aspects, for Tongans and Pacific peoples in many countries including NZ, are too Western in values and focus. This has led to detrimental effects on Pacific peoples’ knowledge, language and culture. In the words of Tongan educator, ‘Ana Taufe‘ulungaki, “[t]he failure of education in the Pacific can be attributed in large measure to the imposition of an alien system designed for western social and cultural contexts, which are underpinned by quite different values” (Taufe‘ulungaki, 2002, p. 15).

There is a tension between the effects of education on cultures and peoples, and what education can achieve for the same. If Western education in the form of THS became predominant in Tonga and in other Pacific Islands, what impact could it have? The following
section therefore discusses THS’s role in the success of these graduates under two aspects: (1) symbolic violence; and (2) globalisation.

7.4.1. Symbolic violence

Using Bourdieusian theory, THS’s predominantly Western focus, selection of the elect through an academic-oriented entrance exam, an English-only language policy, Western uniform and lack of Tongan culture focus could be described as symbolic violence. These practices were, arguably, an attempt to devalue Tongan knowledge, culture, worldview and language, at least on a surface level. It appears that THS’s Western agenda was following in the tradition of historical colonisation and imperialism in the Pacific through education, through monolingual hegemonic practices such as the deliberate exclusion of the use of Pacific languages. Looking across at fellow Pacific neighbours who have undergone historical colonisation, such as NZ Māori, Australian Aborigines, Hawaiians, Tahitians and others, it is understandable that there could be fear surrounding the possible loss of Tongan language by the introduction of an English immersion school like THS.

Some key points must be considered in view of the above. Tonga has never been colonised and Tongans have maintained autonomy to the present day, especially in terms of using their own language in education and society. Although there is far more contemporary exposure to English via increasing use of social media, television, internet, and new technologies, the fact remains that in Tongan homes, the majority of Tongans still speak Tongan—alongside the strong presence of the church, a field which continues to use Tongan language throughout the islands.

There may be more Tongans speaking English when it comes to welcoming tourists and foreigners at public gatherings and events. However, this level of English is not the academic level of English required for success in education or in corresponding careers. If THS is no longer offered as the site of possibility where the young of Tonga can be given a
head-start in terms of preparation for further studies, and preparing second language speakers to compete with native English speakers in education particularly at tertiary level, what will the consequences be? How do Western and Tongan notions of success play out, alone or together? And an equally important question to discuss in terms of THS’s role in the success of these graduates is what was THS’s role or relation to global education in Tonga, especially in the education of these graduates.

7.4.ii. Globalized or cosmopolitan citizen
The effects of globalisation in the 21st century indicate that THS, on the one hand, played a central role in the success of these graduates. Globalisation has made islands such as Tonga very exposed to foreign, and particularly Western influence (China has an increasing presence). The Tonga that was once only a dot on the world map, unknown and mostly isolated, is now more renowned. To survive economically, Tonga must produce globalised citizens who are able to participate in international politics, and in a range of socio-economic and cultural platforms. Perhaps this places THS’s establishment in 1947 in a greater perspective in terms of its role, not just for these graduates, but for the nation of Tonga.

Half of the interviewees and the majority of the participants (when survey respondents are included) are now living abroad. THS’s Western focus in terms of curriculum and the English-only language policy prepared participants not just for formal education and work in Tonga where there is a need to be proficient in English, but for life abroad. In other words, THS enabled the participants to become global or ‘cosmopolitan citizens’ (Beck, 2002). According to Beck’s (2002) notion of the cosmopolitan citizen, such an individual has both ‘roots’ and ‘wings’. This means the individual is rooted in the local environment through a sense of belonging, contributes to the collective by engaging in community and neighbourhood, yet is highly adaptable to change, is innovative, and works well with others.
THS enabled participants to exist and live well in today’s globalised world, through attaining not only the disciplinary knowledge and proficiency in the global language (English), but the *habitus* and cultural capital to exist in a globalised world. For all of these graduates, the University degrees which they now hold, helps them gain employment in the international market. As Seini (1980s), the youngest, shared, her doctoral degree in Economics and the Public sector with honours, has meant top Pacific Universities and international organisations offer future job possibilities. Seini has chosen to remain in Tonga and ‘give back’ to her home country, but the doorway to a prospective international career was opened by her upbringing at home, and at THS.

It is important to note that every institution that contributes positively to the education of individuals inevitably has some shortcomings. Despite the positive stories shared in this thesis, THS is no exception. Anecdotal evidence (from other Tongan high school alumni) signals that, according to some, THS’s Western model of schooling means that some THS alumni are less Tongan. In other words, some THS alumni are seen by other school alumni to be less respectful, less religious and less collectively-oriented. Due to THS’ globalisation ‘effect’, THS alumni are seen as ‘colonised’ and therefore more ‘Western’ and individualistic. In response, the participants in this study would perhaps argue that being ‘globalised’ and ‘Western’ does not mean a forsaking of their ‘Tonganness’. As the majority of these participants argue, their *kaliloa* from home and within the family strengthens their Tongan identities and will continue to do so; they feel they are able to move and exist in one world and the other, simultaneously.

Globalisation is complex and multi-layered (see Nicholas C. Burbules and Carlos Alberto Torres, 2000). Neoliberalism, an important aspect of globalisation with its emphasis on ‘marketisation’, ‘competition’, ‘less state intervention’, has arguably had dire consequences for education worldwide. Many theorists contend that education has suffered
due to both globalisation and neoliberalism (Peter Roberts & John Codd, 2010; John Codd, 2008; Peter Roberts, 2008). With neoliberal agendas, education such as that offered at THS has the potential to become more about the interests of the individual rather than the collective. Again, here is when the previous kaliloa formation of participants in this research is crucial. The kaliloa of future Tongan students will hopefully ensure that the negative aspects of globalisation, through forces such as neoliberalism, will be faced head on. Strong kaliloa may ensure that neoliberalism is kept in check and controlled so that ‘Western’ education at THS is balanced by students’ kaliloa from within their homes. In an ideal future world, Tongan values such as loving service to others, and respect which contributes to more democratic and nurturing communities, will continue alongside the Western education received at THS. Both have potential for nurturing ‘balanced’ global and locally-oriented young Tongans.

Despite the positive impacts of globalisation as set out in the UN Decade of for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) in education, global education theorists (Altbach, 2004) note that poor countries, including Tonga, will still be struggling to compete in the international arena commercially, technologically, socio-economically and politically. This gloomy yet realistic view of globalisation and education (Altbach, 2004) highlights the pivotal role THS has played not only in making these graduates globalised citizens but also in enabling the nation to engage in the global world. The global Tongan successful graduate now not only has habitus and cultural capital nurtured and accessed at the kaliloa, but also a habitus and cultural capital nurtured and formed at THS (refer to Figure 1 below). The founder’s vision to establish THS seems to have anticipated globalisation and set out to create Tongan global citizens.
7.5. Conclusion

Through the lens of Bourdieusian theory and a parallel Tongan framework, it is evident that the successful graduates attribute their achievements to the weaving together, through different stages, of two distinct factors: kaliloa and THS. In the previous chapter, it was demonstrated that the success of these graduates was initially due to the foundations laid at home through the kaliloa, alongside other fields using the medium of Tongan language and culture with a central emphasis on Tongan notions of success. In particular, the family was at the centre of kaliloa; it established the primary foundation of knowledge for the graduates,
and continued to be the matrix from which graduates engaged with the church (Christian belief, prayers, and practices), and more formal learning at primary school. It was the transmission of Tongan language, culture, values and knowledge through the kaliloa of the family, lotu, the efforts of the graduates themselves, and experiences at primary school which: (1) prepared and supported graduates for a formal education; and (2) established and maintained a strong Tongan identity in participants which enabled them to then negotiate new fields, incorporate new and additional habitus, and work from a base already geared towards success in a Tongan framework. With Tongan success as its ultimate goal, kaliloa in all these aspects, therefore, was instrumental in its role in laying the foundation for all future success; gearing the graduates to envision success and equipping them with the tools to attain it even when thrust into different spheres.

What followed was an important interlocking of graduates’ habitus and cultural capital harnessed at the kaliloa with that on offer at THS. Although kaliloa and THS have been examined as two fundamentally important factors across distinct lines, and they are set apart by Tongan versus English language, Tongan versus the Western world, and Tongan notions of success versus Western notions of success, there is a strong intersection between them. Kaliloa demonstrated that these graduates had a huge amount of support from their families. The family value of ako and the pursuit of excellence through the school motto, is where both habitus of excellence intersected. Most THS students who have emerged from the school, at the risk of generalising would say, even if they do not reach high academic excellence, whatever they will do in life it has to be done to the best; a habitus of excellence that was nurtured at the kaliloa and THS. While most graduates were poor in terms of economic capital they also possessed a valuable form of cultural capital prior to entering THS, in that they were proficient and literate in the Tongan language, alongside possessing
other values such as *lotu*, ‘*aonga* and *tala*, which were conducive to their success in formal education—capital that was increased and strengthened while at THS.

The intersection and the interfacing of *kaliloa* and THS shaped a distinctive type of education for these graduates which is somewhat in contrast to the schooling of indigenous and Pacific peoples in Western systems. The graduates’ strong Tongan habitus, identity, formation, dispositions and worldviews meant assimilation to Western culture could not, and did not, fully take place. Their *kaliloa* was the foundation and that meant their kind of success in education was firmly rooted in their Tongan upbringing. If these graduates had attributed their success in education to their education at THS only, then that would have meant they had assimilated the Western culture and worldview fully, having attained only Western success and naming their success only along Western lines. *Kaliloa* and THS together enabled, nurtured and transformed the graduates to be different. These graduates maintained their connection with Tongan culture, hence their Tongan identities remained, i.e., are lifelong identities/habituses. They were not like the working-class students in Bourdieu’s French schools who had to assimilate, and reject their working-class identity, in order to succeed (Bourdieu, 1986, 1990b, 1991, 1992; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979). At the very core of this *fakatoukatea habitus* and cultural capital are biliteracy, bilingualism, and biculturalism and the ability to negotiate and claim success in both spheres, while letting each inform the other.

THS then, served to play an integral role in the journey of the graduates through its policy on English language and Western values; presenting new *habitus* and producing a new class and culture with a strategic distinction—to gear the graduates to develop the skills and sense for a different game, played by different rules, to achieve success on a different, even bigger stage. By combining education at the *kaliloa* and at THS, the graduates became cosmopolitan or global citizens with roots in Tongan culture and language, and wings from
THS’s inculcation of Western culture and English language. To have roots (and wings) underpins a notion of successful education that is more congruent with the educational aims of Pacific Island nations including Tonga. A similar notion was advocated by Thaman (2002): to re-think better alternatives of education for Tongans and other Pacific Island nations.

Success in education for the graduates meant achieving Tongan notions of success alongside those of the West. It seems that, without a strong, ongoing, and initial foundation in their own culture, language and identity, i.e. their kaliloa, the outcome for these graduates may not have been so successful. The strong foundation of kaliloa set the scene for graduates to negotiate and acquire what was on offer at THS and then to use that to attain educational success abroad. It was the successful marriage of these two significant factors which combined and fundamentally contributed to the overall success of these graduates in formal education (as seen through their own eyes in conversation with relevant scholarship).

What, therefore, are the implications of the above argument to this thesis—that it was the unique combination of kaliloa and THS which led to their success in education? What are interested parties in the education of Tongans locally and abroad to make of this finding? How valuable is kaliloa to the success of Tongans in education? Is THS’s Western agenda, and the pursuit of Western success the answer to Tongans’ continued success in education? What are the implications of the fact that these graduates attributed their success in education to their kaliloa and THS? These questions are explored in the following chapter, the conclusion to this thesis.
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8. INTRODUCTION

This thesis set out to determine what selected THS alumni attribute their success to, and what role THS played in that success. Throughout, the culturally sensitive practice and methodology emerging from *talanoa mei kaliloa* was utilised as a powerful indigenous means to give voice to the successful Tongan graduates’ personal experiences, understandings, and worldviews of the factors to which they attribute their success. As such, the graduates have been treated as ‘positive deviants’ (Berggren & Wray, 2002) in the interest of defining through their experiences, and through this research, better pathways in education to increase success for Tongan students—particularly for those living in Tonga.

As Tu‘itahi (2009) and Vaden (1998) have argued in the field of Tongan development, balance needs to be brought where research often emphasises negative performance by Tongans to justify that truly transformative change needs to take place, i.e., change that has the potential to make a difference, and change that will empower Tongans for the better. Tongans arguably will continue to underperform and perpetuate the cycle of underachievement if researchers’ findings continue to dwell on negative statistics, or even construct arguments in areas where it can be hard to negate or avoid the implication that underachievement is the only or overriding story. Tu‘itahi (2009) advocates:

The study of those models of [success] and of the processes which are adopted in these successful sub-groups can contribute to a more balanced and complete story of Tongan[s]...and provide a counter-balancing academic narrative. The resulting insights and understandings can also inform future policies on social and economic development for Tongans... (Tu‘itahi, 2009, p. 3)

This chapter summarises the main research findings. It also articulates the contribution this research makes to knowledge of Tongans in education, schooling in Tonga,
particularly THS, and Tongan research methods. Further, this chapter addresses the implications of the research findings for THS, policy initiatives in Tonga and the Tonga Ministry of Education, the language situation in New Zealand, and minority groups. A brief reflection follows on the use of the meta-theory, the Bourdieusian lens which frames this study. The chapter concludes by highlighting the limitations of this research and identifying possible avenues for further research.

8.1. Main Findings
The graduates attributed their success to two significant factors: their kaliloa (socialisation within the home) and their Western style of education received at THS. Each, in turn, contains several vital elements.

8.1.i Kaliloa
The fundamental importance of the participants’ kaliloa in their success highlights the unique and central role of the Tongan family in their education. Family was important in that it imparted Tongan language, culture, knowledge, values, lotu and ways of being. In addition to being sources of forms of capital, these elements became part of each participant’s strong habitus, a foundation for their Tongan identities, and strong motivators. The Tongan language learnt at home carried Tongan values and culture which informed and became integral to the participants’ habitus, preparing them for further education. Even as the graduates ventured out into Western spaces, and into higher education institutions abroad, their Tongan habitus remained with them, guiding them, motivating them and acting as a strong foundation from which to negotiate a Western habitus. It not only created and maintained strong Tongan identities for participants—Tongan habitus provided a strong platform for acquiring a Western education. Following on, Western forms of capital such as English language empowered them ultimately to function across two different spaces—Tongan and Western.
8.1.ii. THS

With a strong foundation in their own language and identities, and already primed by their families and early schooling for success, THS then provided the Tongan graduates, as students, a space of transition into a Western *habitus*. This was done in a number of ways encompassing, from the outset, Tāufaʻāhau Tupou IV’s vision in establishing THS to prepare future leaders, and its motto *Ki he Lelei Taha*: ‘To the best’. THS’s English-only language policy, Western staff and curriculum, and Western uniforms, introduced the students to significant (for future success) forms of capital, and ingrained in them a Western *habitus* which was complementary to their already ingrained Tongan one. Indeed, THS provided knowledge of the English language in a natural—if somewhat alien—setting, which enabled the graduates to acquire English and become proficient English language literate students. As a result of both their early grounding in a Tongan context with Tongan notions of success, and their experience at THS, the Tongan graduates were given a particular and unique platform to stand upon, along with a pride in who they were and what they had achieved. Through various and complementary life and educational experiences, these THS alumni acquired an important mix of skills, knowledge and understandings which set them up for life.

8.2. Contributions to Knowledge

This research contributes to knowledge in several ways. Integral is this study’s use of Bourdieu’s theory, and adapting this to account for concepts and values sourced from a Tongan worldview. The use of Bourdieusian theory highlights factors of success sourced from a Western world, such as the exploration of the THS model of schooling as a model of success for a developing nation. While this was made possible by Bourdieusian theory, the theory itself allowed for highlighting factors of success from a Tongan world. The result was the exploration and employment of a Tongan-Bourdieusian lens. These and other contributions that this research has made are explored below. The Tongan–Bourdieusian lens
has allowed for the consideration of factors of success that are Tongan, particularly *talanoa mei he kaliloa*, the Tongan socialisation process.

In general terms, this research makes contributions to knowledge on Tongans and education. In particular, with its focus on success, this work may be inspirational for some readers.

### 8.2.i. Bourdieusian–Tongan lens

Bourdieu’s theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1986, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1996a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1989) identifies success factors in French education. Aspects of Bourdieu’s thinking and theory were set out in the literature review and utilised throughout the research process. Some understandings have been viewed and theorised from a uniquely Tongan perspective, using a Tongan–Bourdieusian lens. ‘*Otua mo Tonga ko hoku Tofi’a* (God and Tonga are my inheritance) identifies Tongan language and culture, in essence the *kaliloa* process, Tongan values, family and *lotu* (Tongan spirituality, Christian beliefs, prayers, *Bible*), were significant contributing factors to the success in the graduates’ educational journeys.

It is important that any Western theories used by researchers for research among indigenous peoples are contextualised in a way that respects and builds the capacity of indigenous peoples, and highlights important aspects of indigenous culture (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 2004). This has been attempted in this study. As a result, notwithstanding well-researched theories that schools reproduce society (Bourdieu, 1990b, 1992, 1996a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1989; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Jones, 1991; Milne, 2009), this study found that reproduction was not the outcome for the participants. All bettered, and some to a great extent, the achievements of their parents.
Tongan forms of capital, particularly those sourced through the social capital found in family and church, were fundamental to the success of Tongan graduates. It seems that any reflections about success in education for Tongans must include the maintenance of, and continued formation in, Tongan *habitus* and forms of capital sourced from the *kaliloa* and home, such as the valuing and use of Tongan language in homes (Ka‘ili & Ka‘ili, 2006). Success for Tongans does not entail academic achievement solely. Indigenous educators have emphasised this fact (Taufe‘ulungaki, 1992, 2002; Thaman, 1997, 2002).

**8.2.ii. Kaliloa method**

This research contributes to literature on Tongan qualitative research methods through its use of the *talanoa mei he kaliloa* (TMK or *kaliloa* for short) as a data-collections tool. TMK, a Tongan individual interview and focus group method, respects Tongan ways of being while engaging with Tongan individuals singly or in a group to address research questions. TMK sets out respectful and ethical ways of engaging with Tongans in ways that show respect and maintains participants’ integrity and mana during research processes. TMK was outwardly and inwardly shown in the researcher’s dress, demeanour, values, and expressions of gratitude through gift giving whilst conducting the research. The eventual sharing of the research findings, in multiple ways and venues, will also follow appropriate TMK protocols.

**8.2.iii. Language debate**

This study also makes some contribution towards the ongoing debate on how the nature and order of the acquisition of language leads to success or otherwise. These educational debates affect Tongans, particularly within Tonga, but they also impact on the educational philosophies impacting on Tongans and other minorities abroad. In this regard, the findings identify the fundamental importance for Tongans of acquiring Tongan language in Tonga, where it is the majority language up to intermediate age, and then total English
immersion at high-school level prior to tertiary education abroad. If education is to be sustainable, relevant and life-giving for Tongans whilst preparing them for Western contexts, Tongan language maintenance, and the maintenance of strong Tongan identities and culture should ideally be factored into education curriculum.

8.2.iv. Successful school model
This study contributes towards the identification of appropriate school models at high-school level for Tonga. THS’s vision of creating future Tongan leaders through the provision of a full English language immersion, Western academic curriculum, the secondment of Western-qualified teachers, THS’s lifelong motto to pursue excellence in all aspects of life and other aspects of THS life proved the ideal model of high-school level schooling for the time (1950s-1990s). THS’s model added significant Western habitus and forms of capital to its students which prepared the graduates for success in education and beyond.

THS’s Western replicated school model was never intended to devalue the Tongan habitus and forms of capital which the graduates brought from home. Instead its mission was to add important Western habitus and forms of capital to prepare students for further education abroad and for success. This total Western immersion model of schooling was highly successful in creating high achievers at that historical time. However, this is not to say that the THS immersion model is ideal for the 21st century, or for all people. Aspects of THS’s 20th century Western school model, however, might be useful to consider when reflecting on the best educational ways forward for Tongans, in Tonga, in the 21st century.

8.2.v. Importance of Kaliloa
Of equal importance is the contribution this research makes to research on Tongans, an under-researched group. This study adds to research on Tongans in education and highlights important aspects of Tongan culture, specifically the fundamental importance of kaliloa as a socialisation process. Whereas Bourdieu’s research on education in France
maintains that success in education there involves assimilation or acquisition of middle-class *habitus* and having access to middle-class forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 1990, 1991, 1992; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979), this research clearly found that Tongan *habitus* and forms of capital, specifically through the Tongan graduates’ *kaliloa*, contributed to their success in education. This moves against the dominant view that a mismatch in the *habitus* and forms of capital at school (THS) and those which Tongan students bring from home leads to failure in education. This research found that the Tongan graduates’ *kaliloa* was a vital ingredient in their educational success. The findings, in a sense, trouble Bourdieu’s theories. Assimilation was never required or expected by THS, and success came about with ‘minority identities’ intact.

As previously indicated, in a world that is highly globalised, Tongan culture, society and people are at the risk of the negative effects of neoliberal forces. A strong informal education at the *kaliloa*, combined with Western-model schooling like THS, has potential to prepare Tongans for the possible adverse effects of neoliberalism. As the world becomes more homogenised, and arguably more ‘Western’, *kaliloa* will ensure the survival of Tongan culture, values, worldviews, and ways of being.

Here lies the essence of *kaliloa* for Tongans in Tonga, as well as Tongans abroad. *Kaliloa* will ensure the survival and maintenance of Tongan ways of being, language and culture. This is the education that non-Westerners may benefit from best—an education where people are empowered to exist beyond their world, but also an education that maintains and nurtures indigenous cultures and languages. This type of education can first be nurtured at the *kaliloa*, and then extended by schools like THS.
8.3. Implications

8.3.i. For THS

This research was conducted with a specific focus on the experiences of 10 THS graduates from the 1950s to the 1990s. It also included a paper survey of 48 participants and one participant focus group in NZ. As specified in the introduction, from its inception in 1947, and covering the decades from the 1950s-1990s, THS was highly Western in orientation, particularly in its implementation of an English-only language policy and Western curriculum. While some Tongan teachers were introduced from the 1960s onwards they were overseas trained. The findings in this research highlight the arguable importance of introducing total academic English language immersion during early adolescence for first language Tongan learners. This model, despite its apparent success, is no longer the norm at THS.

As noted in the Introduction chapter, in 2010 the Ministry of Education in Tonga introduced a new language policy for schools (Matangi Tonga online, 2012; Vea, 2010). The most significant change with regards to the findings in this research is a break with the THS English-only language policy. In contemporary times, THS is using 50% English and 50% Tongan language in classrooms. What this means for students who entered THS in 2010 and since that time, is that the THS school model experienced by the research participants is no longer an option. It remains to be seen what effect this change could have on the education and success of THS graduates. Interviewees indicated their concerns about the policy changes.

It is safe to surmise that there may be differences in outcomes between current THS students compared to the graduates’ experiences. Although technological advances and globalisation mean Tonga is increasingly less isolated, it is now exposed to different factors than those that were in play during the research participants’ childhoods and time at THS. Tonga remains the home and hub of the Tongan language and culture. This begs the
questions of how Tongan students who use Tongan language the majority of the time will go about becoming proficient in the English language, and how Tongan students will learn to negotiate a Western *habitus*. As is evident in research on Pacific peoples and minorities’ entering university level in NZ (Read, 2008), the lack of academic English language proficiency is a major stumbling block to performing at the same level as others who are first language English learners. The findings herein point to the importance of providing an avenue for young Tongans to achieve the successful acquisition and negotiation of English language and the Western habitus, while at the same time staying Tongan, with all that the latter involves.

### 8.3.ii. Policy initiatives

The combination of participants’ education at THS combined with their pre-*kaliloa* education in the success of the graduates has implications for policy initiatives in Tonga and the Tongan Ministry of Education. Findings of this research highlight that the unique combination of forms of capital and *habitus* from Western and Tongan worlds led to the success of the graduates. Of course, the THS situation and the Tongan *kaliloa* situation within the homes of students have not remained static throughout the years. Globalisation and Westernisation are becoming increasingly more visible and tangible in the islands of Tonga. In turn there are increasing foreign diplomatic relations between Tonga and global powers such as China which highlight issues surrounding the entry of people and ideas from other foreign nations to Tonga (Gibbons, 2014; Langa’oi, 2010).

Nevertheless, the majority language in Tonga, both spoken and written, remains Tongan. The lived culture is still Tongan. Despite immigration changes in Tonga, English proficiency is required if Tongans are to succeed in education abroad (Airini et al., 2005; Read, 2008). This is still recognised in that high schools in Tonga continue to teach English subject content, however teachers are more likely to use Tongan language as the medium of
instruction (Kata, 2006; Kilioni & Kupu, 2006). There still exists a tendency in classrooms to switch between Tongan and English languages while teaching some subjects (Vea, 2010). Again this begs the question of how schooling in Tonga intends to train and prepare students for success in arenas where proficiency in the English language and familiarity with a Western *habitus* are required. There is a multiplicity of arenas which require Western *habitus* in an increasingly ‘globalised’ and interconnected world. But, at the same time, there is a need for Tonga to maintain and source from its own *habitus*, forms of capital and Tongan world. Here lies the challenge for 21st century Tongans and educators in general.

The above challenge is perhaps one of many facing the Ministry of Education and Government in Tonga with regards to education and institutions like THS. While Pacific educators question an emphasis on Western paradigms for Pacific peoples, this research perhaps shows that the former THS model and others like it such as Samoa College (Barrington, 1968; Coxon, 2007; Vaa et al., 2003) and Te Aute College in New Zealand served to accelerate the acquisition of English language and prepare their alumni for success. If Tonga is to remain a key player in its own independence and have a say in its welfare, there is a need for a kind of schooling that furnishes students with the capital which enables success abroad.

### 8.3.iii. For the language situation in NZ

It appears important for Tongan children to embed the Tongan language and culture up to intermediate age. The findings herein highlight the importance of the ‘acquisition’ rather than ‘learning’ of Tongan and English languages. This is consistent with SLA research—particularly evident in the seminal work by Krashen (1981). This study’s findings have relevance for the language situation in NZ where Tongan and Pacific children are being failed by the education system (Havea, 2011; Kalavite, 2010; Milne, 2009; Nakhid, 2003; Nakhid et al., 2007; ‘Otunuku, 2010; Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2005; Vaioleti, 2011).
importance of *kaliloa*: Tongan language, values, culture in the success of the graduates in this study perhaps indicates the need to maintain and impart the same aspects of the Tongan world to young Tongans in NZ. Literature on transnational Tongans (Hansen, 2004; Lee, 2002; Taumoefolau, 2011) shows there can be drastic consequences including loss of Tongan identity, lack of ties to the homeland, crimes, alienation and failure in education due partially to the loss of aspects of the Tongan world (including language) in Tongans abroad.

This study highlights the need for the NZ government, Tongan parents and communities, if they are serious about providing quality education for young Tongans to consider offering space for Pacific languages to be taught across all levels of education. As indicated earlier, an important bilingual education study by Amituanai-Toloa (2010) concluded (see Chapter 2) that bilingual education is vital to PI and Māori success. She also indicated that the current NZ government has failed to recognise the importance of home language as a pathway for PI success in education.

The Tongan *kaliloa* (including Tongan language, culture, values, and upbringing) was an important factor of success for the graduates. What form Tongan and (Pacific languages) may take in schools in NZ in future is an ongoing debate (Franken et al., 2008; McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010). Academic and linguist John McCaffery (2011) maintains that the NZ government has left the important responsibility of maintaining Pacific languages (and cultures) in the NZ context to the respective communities, and has failed to make the teaching and inclusion of Pacific languages an integral part of the NZ curriculum. Despite research and theory (Franken et al., 2008; May et al., 2004, 2006; McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010; Tagoilelagi-Leota et al., 2005; Taufe‘ulungaki, 1992; Taumoefolau, 2012) supporting the success and other advantages of implementing and providing education for Pacific peoples in their own languages and culture, May (2012) and others maintain the NZ government has abdicated their responsibility.
If the above is the case, in what ways can Tongan *kaliloa* be imparted within Tongan homes and made significant and visible in NZ schools, and in NZ MoE policies? Language research in NZ (May et al., 2004, 2006; Tagoilelagi-Leota et al., 2005; Franken et al., 2008; McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010) demonstrates there have been bilingual and immersion initiatives in efforts to incorporate Pacific languages (Ha'angana, 1999; Finau, 2000; Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2005); however, there needs to be greater effort by the government in making these much-needed Pacific language nests visible and accessible within NZ schools. Tongan families and homes in Diasporas are perhaps the immediate and major players who can effect change in terms of Tongan language and cultural maintenance (Ka’ili & Ka’ili, 2006; MacIntyre, 2008; Tu’itahi, 2009). As advocated by Māori language nest proponents (Spolsky, 1983) parents and grandparents can make conscientious choices around what language to use within the home (Ka’ili & Ka’ili, 1999, 2006) to impart the *kaliloa* that is important to the educational success of young Tongans, particularly abroad where Tongan is a minority language. Parents and relatives can also ensure that Tongan children are more actively involved where Tongan language is used, such as in Tongan communities and church activities. It is imperative, as this research indicates that Tongan students are proficient not only in English but also, foundationally, in the Tongan language. In fact, success in the latter (in this study’s case) led to a more successful acquisition of the former.

**8.3.iv. Pacific peoples**

The findings of this study are perhaps also useful for other indigenous or non-Western peoples who, as minorities, may wish to pursue academic success in Western arenas. What cannot be denied is that informal education of these graduates in their own languages and cultures by the family within the home and continuing on through primary school was a good foundation for more formal, ‘foreign’ language total immersion schooling at secondary level.
Kaliloa and THS’s total immersion school model prepared students for further education and success in Western institutions and contexts. How the same situation can be re-created for minorities rests on minority groups and what types of education they each envision for their students. What is important to note here are the fundamental roles of family, home language and culture, combined with total foreign-language-only immersion. Home was the first field of learning for these graduates and school, by extension, offered valuable foreign forms of capital and *habitus* which contributed to their success in those foreign arenas and in their indigenous contexts.

**8.3.v. Reflections on using Bourdieu’s theory**

This research inquiry used French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s *theory of practice*, and specifically his theoretical tools: *habitus*, forms of capital, field, selection of the elect, and symbolic violence to frame the entire research project, with its parallel Tongan–Bourdiesian framework, ‘*Otua mo Tonga ko hoku tofi’a* (God and Tonga are my inheritance). Employing Bourdiesian theory has allowed for the enquiry into important Tongan aspects such as culture and language in the success of these graduates. A Tongan–Bourdiesian framework highlights what these graduates perceived were significant in their success, not just from what was specifically offered at THS (a Western paradigm), but also from their Tongan homes within Tonga (a Tongan paradigm). These two lenses were used throughout the research process. This theoretical framework enabled the highlighting of both Western and Tongan cultures, and aspects of language in the success of the graduates. The relevance, applicability and insight offered by Bourdiesian theory facilitated a sourcing from a Tongan world to research Tongans, by a Tongan in order to empower (young) Tongans in a way fit for research endeavours that study indigenous peoples (Nabobo-Baba, 2004; Smith, 2004; Toetu’u-Tamihere, 2012; Chilisa, 2012).
8.4. Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. Research was based on individual interviews with a small sample of people, specifically 10 successful Tongan graduates who are alumni of THS, one focus group, a paper survey of 48 respondents, and archival research at the palace office and THS. With the paper survey, only 46 were usable. Furthermore only one focus group took place, amongst only the NZ participants. THS archival material was minimal and so was material available from the palace office archive.

Due to the small nature of the study, generalisations cannot be made from findings. It is of course possible that those who shared their views have unique or isolated perspectives which some or many other THS alumni do not share. Networking indicates that the latter is unlikely. The findings from the study provide an opportunity to reflect on some very important issues in Tonga at this time. This study addresses the serious question of what place do English language, Western curriculum, and Western staff hold in the preparation of future Tongan leaders. In addition, this research examines the place of Tongan forms of education (particularly talanoa mei he kaliloa, Tongan language, culture and values) within the home and church. These elements, both Western and Tongan played fundamental roles in the success of the graduates in this study. How do these elements, sourced from different worlds, fit into the scheme of education that is offered in Tonga for young Tongans today is an ongoing debate. But what is important to note is that both Tongan and Western languages, cultures and worldviews are required for the education of informed Tongan leaders of tomorrow, able to maintain and function as indigenous language individuals while allowing for engagement in an increasingly globalised world. Despite the limited number of participants, this research and its findings have important implications for Tonga’s education system and nation. This study has demonstrated that, for the participants, English language was vital to their success in education and that Tongan indigenous language and culture was also important.
A further limitation was in the criteria for choosing ‘successful’ graduates. The criteria were limited to Tongan graduates who had attained postgraduate degree status and who were first language Tongan learners. This study was also confined to individual interviewee participants from Tonga and NZ, however there are many successful THS alumni elsewhere in the world. Although some of the survey respondents were from the United States of America and Australia, the paper survey questions did not allow for in-depth storytelling as was the case with the 10 participant interviewees. Furthermore, there are other graduates who are not first language Tongan speakers and who attended the English-only speaking government primary school, Tongan Side School. Moreover, this study focused specifically on THS graduates, not those graduates who attended other Tongan high schools. These are the core limitations of this study.

Notwithstanding these limitations, a total of approximately 60 people’s views on their success are shared in this thesis, and their perspectives as THS alumni are recorded and analysed herein for the first time. The voices of the participants matter, and through this study they have a voice.

**8.5. Future Research**

In view of the above points, future research could be conducted on successful Tongan graduates using a more quantitative sampling process, which could then be used to generalise from. In addition, further research could be conducted by widening or changing the definitions of success to include for example, THS alumni who have obtained jobs in various areas regardless of whether or not they have attained any formal higher education qualifications, perhaps those who started private businesses or those who have successful careers in law, pastoral care, foreign affairs or social work. Future research might also include non-Tongans and Tongans who are alumni of THS but who are not first language Tongan speakers. In addition, future research could involve a more comprehensive survey of
THS, similar schools and the roles of schools in general in Tonga. Moreover, future research can explore *kaliloa* as a pedagogy of hope using Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire’s theory. Lastly, future research could compare successful Tongan graduates from other local schools in Tonga with successful Tongan graduates from THS on their views as to what they attribute their success to, and what role their schools played in their success in education.

### 8.6. Conclusion

*Talanoa mei he Kaliloa*, the traditional Tongan socialisation process played a fundamental role in the success of the graduates. This highlights the importance of the Tongan family, language and culture in the education and success of Tongan students. As the world becomes more globalised, less confined geographically, linguistically, economically, politically, and socially and the world changes in view of technological advancement, it is vital in the education of indigenous peoples that their indigenous languages and cultures survive. Success in education must involve the continued imparting of Tongan culture and language in addition to the acquisition of proficient academic English language and Western knowledge as was acquired at THS.

It seems to be the case that the differentiating success factors of success between THS students and other students, as determined from a literature search, using the two research questions as a basis for inquiry, is THS’s pivotal role in creating a space for the acquisition of English language. Without THS, the interviewee participants, focus group participants and the survey respondents would perhaps not have been as successful. There is no question of the importance of *kaliloa*, the Tongan language, and core principles such as the *faa‘i kavei koula* (see Chapter 2), and Tongan culture. These elements create strong identities in us as Tongan people. The *kaliloa* is a fundamental right for every Tongan child’s ‘education’ or socialisation; to become useful, contributing members of society. However, it remains true that THS’s Western model of schooling was the differentiating factor in comparing these
THS alumni to alumni from other local schools in Tonga (for this, see Kata, 2006; Kupu & Kilioni, 2006). THS made an exponential difference in the success of the graduates, expediting their preparedness for education abroad. Education remains a game changer, a catalyst of transformative and profound proportions for Tonga (Kavaliku, 1966). As Nelson Mandela maintained ‘Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.’ THS’s Western immersion school model offered transformative education for the graduates in this study.

This study set out to study in depth ‘positive deviants’ (Berggren & Wray, 2002); a group of successful Tongans who are THS alumni. Partly the aim was to counter deficit theories of Tongans in education. Therefore, the focus of this thesis was on ‘pockets of success’ (Tu’itahi, 2009; Vaden, 1998) of Tongans who have achieved highly in their educational journeys. Such people are models of success and they can provide positive narrative incentives for young Tongans. This balances out the deficit model where Durie (2003), with regards to Māori, insists:

> The balance between a deficit model and a model of positive development needs to be struck (a move towards the positive is required if real progress is to be made) otherwise there is a risk that policies will be formulated only on the basis of Maori being a marginalised minority.

(Durie, 2003, p. 160, cited in Tu’itahi, 2009, pp. 3-4)

Furthermore, in the move towards privileging indigenous epistemology and ontology (Nabobo-Baba et al., 2004; Denzin et al., 2008; Smith, 1999, 2004) Tongan theoretical frameworks were used alongside the main Bourdieusian meta-theory. Tongan values, culture and knowledge were incorporated along the research journey to safeguard and maintain the integrity of all the participants’ gifts of participation in this study.

It is hoped that by identifying and following the stories of successful Tongan academics’ *kaliloa*, young Tongans will emulate the models of exemplary Tongans. It is
possible young Tongans will identify with and relate to participants’ stories in a way that they would not if these stories were those of the people from the dominant culture and ethnicity—pālangi. There is likely to be a much stronger connection amongst young Tongans with stories by other Tongans, rather than people of other ethnicities. By providing these kaliloa stories it is hoped that their stories will empower young Tongans everywhere to aspire to work hard and succeed in education. Future success in education for young Tongans will benefit our people and our homeland, Tonga. Success in education will mean an increase in the pool of Tongan researchers and writers of our own stories, carrying out our own research on our way of life and our cultures, from our own indigenous perspectives. In turn these successes in education will enhance Tongan life and progress in all avenues of life, economically, socially, and politically (Tu‘itahi, 2009).

Education, as critical educators such as Paulo Freire (1970) have advocated, is an ethical and political endeavour—it requires that we empower those who exist on the margins of society. As critical educators we must seek to create opportunities and open doors for our students (Quicke, 1999).

In establishing THS with its total immersion model of schooling for all Tongans, Tonga’s Prince Tupouto‘a Tungī gifted his people and nation with the agency to transform their own lives and serve their nation, the Kingdom of Tonga, as equipped global leaders able to function in both Western and Tongan spaces. Prince Tungī realised that the children of Tonga were the key to creating a nation able to stand on its own; that the children were the nation’s greatest capital. The King expressed this sentiment clearly (1951, cited in Kavaliku, 1966):

The true wealth of a nation is its children who will be the men and women of tomorrow—not coconuts, bananas and peanuts. The kind of training and care bestowed upon the children will determine the kind of adult who will be playing his part in running the country and as a
producer in ten or twenty years' time. If he is poorly equipped for the task, his country will be
so much the poorer. No matter what vast sums are spent in the development of the material
resources of a country, this finally comes to nothing if there is not a continuous stream of men
and women well enough equipped physically, mentally and morally to be able to make use of
this expenditure. The great nations of today are those which have cared for the welfare of
their people, particularly the children, because what is done with the children can make or
mar a nation in 20 years. (Prince Tupouto‘a Tungī, Ministry of Education Report, 1951, cited
in Kavaliku, 1966, p. 154)

Prince Tungī is remembered for his far-sighted vision and establishment of THS for Tonga’s young. THS enabled the nation’s children not only to have access to education but
to good-quality education which had the potential to make transformative differences in their
lives and in the lives of all Tongans. This is the mark of a great leader who cared for the
welfare of his people, tu‘a and ‘eiki alike. It is now up to the Tongan government, Tongan
educators, and the Tongan people to maintain and build this legacy; employing the power of
such cultural practices as kaliloa to maintain strong Tongan identities and Tongans grounded
in their language and culture—motivated and primed with Tongan notions of success—who
can then also negotiate foreign fields, epistemologies and habitus to attain success in Tonga
and abroad.

I would like to end this thesis with my own kaliloa (guiding words) for all our young Tongans as my mother imparted her kaliloa to my brother Bruce and me:

I continue to hear the gentle whisperings (fanafana) of my mother as I laid my head upon her
arm as a child. My mother’s kaliloa is carried in my heart and memory to guide me always in
life. The stories of these successful THS alumni are hoped to be that light that shines on in
your journey in education, with its dark moments—its own struggles, tensions and
contradictions. Hold fast the talanoa mei kaliloa of these successful Tongan graduates
alongside the kaliloa of your ancestors; let both these kaliloa be an inspiration to your journey
in education. Be empowered and strengthened as you pursue your educational pathways.

Journey on and endeavour to pursue ‘Ki he lelei taha’ in all that you do in life…
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Glynn, T., Berryman, Mere., Loader, Kura., & Cavanaugh, Tom. (2005). *From Literacy in...*


Hau’ofa, E. (2008). *We are the ocean: Selected works: Epeli Hau’ofa*. Honolulu, Hawai’i: University of Hawai’i.


Department of Pacific and SouthEast Asian History, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University.


Smith, G. H. (2003, October). Indigenous struggle for the transformation of education and schooling: Keynote address at the Alaskan Federation of Native (AFN) Convention, Anchorage, Alaska, USA.


St. George, K. (2004). *Rethinking reproduction: The role of one private, Catholic, and all-girl high school in the identity development of the young women who attend*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). The State University of New York, Buffalo, USA.


Education. (pp. 4-20) Suva, Fiji: Institute of Education, University of the South Pacific.


APPENDIX A: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet 10 Participants

Re: Important information regarding this research project.

Supervisors: Dr. Vicki Carpenter and Dr. Melenaite Taumoefolau

29 November 2010

Dear Sir/Madam,

I, ‘Alaimuloua Toetu’u-Tamihere am currently a Doctoral student at the School of Education, University of Auckland. My research topic is *Talanoa mei he kaliloa: Narratives of successful Tongan graduates*. I am researching the following questions:

1. To what do successful Tongan graduates attribute their success?

2a) What influence did THS have on their success, if any?

The aim is to weave together *talanoa* of success with the final product—a thesis (*kakala*)—a gift for all young Tongans.

The stories at the heart of this intended study will be the narratives of successful Tongan graduates who possess a postgraduate degree and are alumni of THS. I ask humbly that you participate in my research, in the following ways:

1. A one-to-one *talanoa* (interview) lasting one and a half hour and subsequent interviews if required and as negotiated between the participant and the researcher;

2. Two focus group *talanoa*, each of two hours, at a venue to be arranged. If necessary I will contribute towards your travel costs.
The above methods of data collection are designed to collect your narratives. Your narrative(s) will be audio recorded, transcribed and returned to you for confirmation. Your talanoa will be stored safely at the School of Education for a period of six years, at which time, all data pertaining to this project will be destroyed.

It is anticipated that the talanoa you gift to this study will form the central focus of the Doctoral thesis as mentioned above. These stories may also be used for conference proceedings or published in academic articles, journals, or books. These narratives may also be presented to young Tongans within communities, schools, or church as part of the gift to academic scholarship for the benefit of young Tongans, and for building Tongan research capacity and research.

Possible risks to Participants

It is my duty to ensure that your welfare as the participant is maintained at all times. Possible risks involved in this project are minimal such as confidentiality and anonymity. It is my responsibility to allocate pseudonyms to the participant so as to protect your real identity in the event of publications in academic articles, journals, symposiums and conferences. As mentioned earlier, all data collected will be stored at a safe and secured location at the Faculty of Education, for the period of six years and then destroyed.

Due to the involvement of focus group interviews, I cannot prevent the possibility of a participant sharing information to others. However, at the beginning of the focus groups, I will inform all participants of the need to maintain confidentiality with all matters discussed and/or pertaining to this research project. In addition, the sample of participants being small (ten), might likely lead to the identification of a participant. As mentioned earlier, pseudonyms will be used when data is used for academic purposes such as publishing in books, journals, or presentations at conferences or symposium.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this research is voluntary and you, the participant, may withdraw only up to the point of confirming the transcript. You may also refrain from answering any question during the talanoa (interview) if you so choose.

You are invited to kindly participate in this research project on successful Tongan graduates.

I am aware of the fact that your time is of great importance but I ask humbly that you please kindly consider participating in this academic endeavour.

Please find attached herewith a consent form to fill in if you decide to participate in this research project. We will negotiate a time and place via phone, email or in-person, that is convenient for the above talanoa (individual and focus group interviews) should you decide to participate. Your participation will be greatly appreciated and valued.

If you have any concerns/questions, please contact either of my Supervisors, Dr. Carpenter and Taumoefolau, or my Head of School, Dr. Airini.

Dr. Vicki Carpenter     Dr. Melenaite Taumoefolau     Dr. Airini
Alaimaluloa Toetuʻu-Tamihere
Auckland University PhD
Student ID 3191711
Faculty of Education
1/9 Houghton Street
Meadowbank
Auckland
New Zealand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor:</th>
<th>Supervisor:</th>
<th>Head of School:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Vicki M Carpenter</td>
<td>Dr Melenaite Taumoefolau</td>
<td>Dr Airini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Lecturer</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>Head of School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Education</td>
<td>Pacific Studies</td>
<td>Critical Studies in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Auckland</td>
<td>Faculty of Arts</td>
<td>Faculty of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09 6238899 ext 48511</td>
<td>University of Auckland</td>
<td>University of Auckland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:v.carpenter@auckland.ac.nz">v.carpenter@auckland.ac.nz</a></td>
<td>09 6238899</td>
<td>09 6238899 ext</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:m.taumoefolau@auckland.ac.nz">m.taumoefolau@auckland.ac.nz</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:airini@auckland.ac.nz">airini@auckland.ac.nz</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For any queries regarding the ethical concerns, please contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, Telephone 09 373599 ext. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on
beginning 28/03/2011 ending 28/03/2014 Reference 2011/086
Re: Consent to participate in the research study

Title of Research: *Talanoa mei he kaliloa*: Narratives of successful Tongan graduates

Supervisors: Dr. Vicki Carpenter and Dr. Melenaite Taumoefolau

Student Researcher: ‘Alaimaluloa Toetu’u-Tamihere

To whom it may concern:

I, have read the Participant Information Sheet and hereby consent to participate in the above research on this the (Date:) Day /Month /Year.

I understand the risks that may be involved in participating in this research specifically the sharing of information or my identity disclosed from the focus group interview, and am entering the research study with full knowledge of these. I am fully aware that I can also withdraw from the project only up to the confirmation of the individual interview transcript.

I understand also that I am able to contact the supervisors, the Head of School, the University of Auckland Ethics Committee or the appropriate authorities at the University of Auckland if I feel that my rights as a participant are not respected.

I hereby give consent to participate in the following events:

1. A one-to-one *talanoa* (interview) lasting an hour and a half;

2. Two focus group *talanoa* of up to two hours;
I also understand that the interviews, both the individual and the focus groups, will be audio-recorded and transcribed. Only the individual interview will be returned for confirmation, at which time I can withdraw and after which time I can no longer withdraw from participating in the said research.

Please print your name clearly here:

Please give full contact details:

Please sign here:

Date:

For any queries regarding the ethical concerns, please contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, Telephone 09 373599 ext. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on beginning 28/03/2011 ending 28/03/2014 Reference 2011/086
APPENDIX C: Indicative Questions for the Focus Group

Focus Group Interviews Tonga and New Zealand

Indicative questions:

1. How do you define success in your life?

2. What do you attribute your success to?

3. What role has THS played in attributing to that success?

4. In the individual interviews, a theme which emerged is...would you like to comment on that?

5. Can you please discuss the role of the English language in your education at THS?

6. What are your thoughts on how the English instruction of THS contributed to your success in life?

7. Could you talk amongst yourselves, on how education may have changed at THS and how this may have influenced your success?

8. Is there anything that you might want to add with regards to the main and sub-questions of this research?

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on beginning 28/03/2011 ending 28/03/2014 Reference 2011/086
APPENDIX D: Paper Survey Questions

Paper Survey to be administered at the Tonga High School 64th Anniversary Reunion
Auckland June 2010

Please note that by completing this survey you are signalling consent. Please also know that this response will remain confidential to the researcher and no attempt will be made to link findings to any particular individual.

Age:
Gender:
Religion:
Year of Entry and Exit from Tonga High School:
Highest Qualification attained:
Job/Profession (current/most recent):

Please answer to the best of your knowledge:

1. How do you define success in your life?
2. What do you attribute your success to?
3. What role has THS played in attributing to that success?

Additional comments:

For any queries regarding the ethical concerns, please contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, Telephone 09 373599 ext. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on
beginning 28/03/2011 ending 28/03/2014 Reference 2011/086
APPENDIX E: Application to the Tonga Prime Minister's Office to undertake research in Tonga

Prime Minister’s Office
Nuku'alofa
Tonga

Re: Application for Approval to Undertake Research in Tonga

November 29, 2010.

To whom it may concern:

This is to seek your kind assistance in soliciting approval from His Majesty's Cabinet for the above-cited application.

I am a Tongan citizen residing in Auckland, New Zealand, and I am currently studying for the degree of PhD in Education at the University of Auckland. My research topic for the PhD thesis is Talanoa mei he kaliloa: Narratives of successful Tongan graduates. The objective of this study is to research:

(1) To what do successful Tongan graduates attribute their success?

(1a) What influence did THS have on their success, if any?

Participants will be successful graduates with a Masters or Doctoral degree, and THS alumni. The aim is to collect their narratives of success for the benefit of all young Tongans in education. A key assumption held by the researcher is that a focus on the success stories of Tongans will better inform future endeavours of Tongan students and education policies.

Financial Situation

There is no substantial funding for this project except for the small grants available to me as a PhD student from the Faculty of Education under which I study, and from the College of St. John the Evangelist, who is my scholarship sponsor.

Proposed Starting and Finishing Date for the Project
It is estimated that data collection will be completed in 2011. Methods will include:

1. Individual interviews with ten participants;
2. Focus Group interviews;
3. Archival research at (Palace Office, Talafakafonua Archives, Ministry of Education & Tonga High School)

Please find enclosed a supporting letter from the Head of Faculty of Education, University of Auckland.

I hereby pledge to submit two completed copies of the PhD thesis to the Prime Minister’s Office and to the Office of the Minister of Education free of charge.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this regard. Should you need further information, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned. Also included below are the contact details for my two supervisors, and the Head of School in our Faculty.

Malo ‘aupito.

Yours sincerely,

‘Alaimaluloa Toetu’u-Tamihere.
PhD Student
University of Auckland
1/9 Houghton Street,
Meadowbank
Auckland 1072
New Zealand
+64 9 578 0787
+64 1 253 3518

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor:</th>
<th>Supervisor:</th>
<th>Head of School:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Vicki M Carpenter</td>
<td>Dr Melenaite Taumoefolau</td>
<td>Dr Airini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Lecturer</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>Head of School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Education</td>
<td>Pacific Studies</td>
<td>Critical Studies in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Auckland</td>
<td>Faculty of Arts</td>
<td>Faculty of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09 6238899 ext 48511</td>
<td>University of Auckland</td>
<td>University of Auckland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:v.carpenter@auckland.ac.nz">v.carpenter@auckland.ac.nz</a></td>
<td>09 6238899</td>
<td>09 6238899 ext</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:m.taumoefolau@auckland.ac.nz">m.taumoefolau@auckland.ac.nz</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:airini@auckland.ac.nz">airini@auckland.ac.nz</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For any queries regarding the ethical concerns, please contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142, Telephone 09 373599 ext. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on
beginning 28/03/2011 ending 28/03/2014 Reference 2011/086