

The engagement of Samoan fathers and male caregivers in New Zealand secondary school parent–student–teacher conferences

*E tu manu ae le tu logologo:
O Tamā Samoa ma fonotaga a matua, tamaiti ma faiaoga i
aoga maualuluga i Niu Sila*

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Abstract

Parent–student–teacher conferences (PSTs) are three-way interactions between a parent, their child and a teacher about a child’s academic learning and progress. Since 2011, an increasing number of New Zealand (NZ) secondary schools have been using PSTs to support home–school partnerships or as opportunities to involve parents and caregivers in their children’s education. However, minimal data available in NZ shows that fathers are less involved than mothers at secondary school PSTs.

This strength-based investigation utilised problem–based methodology and talanoa (a Pacific research methodology) within a case study research design to explore 17 fathers’ (recruited across three Samoan church communities in Auckland, NZ) involvement in PSTs. Triangulated data were also gathered from two deputy principals, a dean, a form teacher, and nine students from two multicultural secondary schools in Auckland.

Nine key themes relating to fathers’ involvement, factors that explained their involvement and the consequences of their involvement were identified. The themes relate to fathers’ overarching high aspirations for their children’s educational success, and the myriad of ways fathers were involved at home, school and in the community to support their children’s education.

One of the study’s significant contributions to practitioner knowledge is the father engagement evaluative tool (FEAT) to help critically explore how fathers are involved in their children’s PSTs through three dimensions—before, during and after. Second, this study contributes to educational policies and practices targeting Pasifika learners, parents, families, and communities by utilising problem–based methodology to illuminate the participants’ implicit theories of actions concerning their involvement in PSTs. Third, the study presents a unique (and long overdue) Samoan fathers’ account of their involvement in a school-based event.

Dedication

To the treasured and life-long learning lessons from the wisdom of my grandparents, Solonaima & Iafeta Touli. Thank you for inspiring us to pursue our dreams.



O lenei suesuega e momoli atu ai ō matou alofaaga mo matou matua peleina. E ui ina fai i lagi le folauga, ae manatua pea ā oulua galuega ola. Fa’afetai tele.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Figures	xiii
List of Tables	xiv
Translation and Use of the Samoan Language	xv
Glossary of Samoan Words and Phrases Used in This Thesis	xvi
Abbreviations	xviii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
My Personal and Professional Background	2
Student	3
Teacher	3
Facilitator.....	4
Father	4
Setting the Scene	5
NZ Education System and Parental Involvement	5
Early Childhood Education	5
Compulsory Education	6
Further Education	6
School Boards.....	6
Parental-Involvement Focus	7
Parent–Teacher Meetings.....	8
Subject-Specific Parent–Teacher Interviews.....	8
Parent–Student–Teacher Conferences.....	8
Research Focus (Problem of Practice)	9
Why Focus on Fathers and PSTs?	10
Problem-Based Methodology Framework	10
Research Questions	11
Research Design.....	11
Case Studies.....	11
PBM & Talanoa.....	11

Study Context	11
Researcher Positionality	12
Insider – Outsider Roles	12
Organisation of This Thesis	14
Chapter 2: Literature Review	16
Introduction	16
Section 1: Background Information	16
Literature Search Strategy.	16
Selected Literature and Rationale.....	17
What is a Father?	17
What is Father Involvement?.....	17
Involvement Versus Engagement.....	18
Pasifika or Pacific?	19
Section 2: Father’s Involvement (Actions)	20
Home-Based Involvement	20
School-Based Involvement.....	22
Academic Socialisation	23
Samoan Perspectives on Fathers’ Involvement.....	24
Fathers As Carers	25
Section 3: Explanatory Factors	27
Legislation	27
Father’s Self-Efficacy and Self-Belief	29
Productive Partnerships Between Schools and Parents, Families and Whānau.....	30
Work–Family Life Balance	32
Section 4: Consequences.....	33
Children’s Academic Outcomes.....	33
Parent–School Partnerships and Children’s Academic Outcomes in NZ	34
Fathers’ Identity as Providers.....	35
Limitations of the Review	36
Chapter Summary	36
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	38
Introduction	38
Section 1: Rationale for Qualitative Research Approach.....	38
The Importance of a Samoan/Pasifika Lens	38

Section 2: Methodological Frameworks	40
Problem-Based Methodology	40
Talanoa Framework	41
Rationale for a Dual Methodological Framework Approach	41
Research Questions	41
Section 3: Research Design and Methods	42
Study Participants and Recruitment	44
Church Communities	44
Recruiting Fathers for Study 1	45
Fathers for Study 2	48
Secondary Schools for Study 3	49
Deputy Principals, Form Teacher and Dean	49
Students	50
Data-Collection Methods	52
Data-Collection Phases for the Study	52
Study 1: Father Focus Groups	52
Study 2: Five Expressions of Fatherhood	56
Study 3: Two Secondary School PSTs	64
Procedure for Data Recording, Managing and Storage	66
Analysis of Qualitative Data	67
Constructing Theories of Action	67
Process for Developing a Theory of Action	68
Issues of Trustworthiness	73
Section 4: Reflection on the Research Processes	75
Embedding Samoan Values, Language and Cultural Practices in Research	75
Cultural Considerations Before Leaving the Site	76
Chapter Summary	76
Chapter 4: Findings From Father Focus Groups (Study 1)	78
Introduction	78
Group 1: Regular Attendees	78
Overview of Group 1	78
Actions	80
Explanatory Factors	81
Consequences	82

Group 2: Occasional Attendees.....	83
Overview of Group 2.....	83
Actions.....	86
Explanatory Factors.....	87
Consequences.....	88
Group 3: Nonattendees.....	89
Overview of Group 3.....	89
Actions.....	91
Explanatory Factors.....	92
Consequences.....	94
Chapter Summary.....	94
Chapter 5: Findings from Five Father Cases (Study 2).....	96
Introduction.....	96
Five Expressions of Fatherhood.....	96
Regular Attendees of PSTs.....	96
Case 1 – Levi.....	96
Case 2 – Isaia.....	100
Occasional Attendees of PSTs.....	104
Case 3 – Kenese.....	104
Nonattendees of PSTs.....	108
Case 4 – Tupu.....	108
Case 5 – Mataio.....	113
Chapter Summary and Reflection.....	117
Chapter 6: Findings from Kauri College and Totara College (Study 3).....	119
Introduction.....	119
Kauri College Case Study.....	119
School Background and Context.....	119
Totara College Case Study.....	125
School Background and Context.....	125
Chapter Summary.....	133
Chapter 7: Findings from Across-Case.....	135
Before PSTs.....	137
Finding 1: Regular Attendees Take the Lead in PSTs.....	137
Finding 2: Occasional Attendees Take a Supporting Role.....	139

Finding 3: Nonattendees Delegate Responsibilities to Mothers.....	142
During PSTs	143
Finding 4: Regular Attendees Engage to Identify How to Help Their Child.....	143
Finding 5: Occasional Attendees Learn About School Support Systems and Children’s Behaviour	145
Finding 6: Nonattendees Were Involved in Other Competing Priorities	146
After PSTs.....	148
Finding 7: Regular Attendees Identify Gaps in PSTs	148
Finding 8: Occasional Attendees Provide Targeted Support for their Children.....	149
Finding 9: Nonattendees Are More Involved After PSTs	151
Chapter 8: Discussion	155
Assertion 1: All Fathers Were Involved in Various Ways.....	155
Involvement Before PSTs.....	155
Involvement During PSTs.	156
Involvement After PSTs.	157
Fathers’ Involvement Strategies	159
Fathers’ Involvement at Church	160
Assertion 2: Fathers’ Emphasis on Motivation and Academic Socialisation is Desirable, Regularly Practised, but Insufficient for Effective Involvement	161
Parents’ High Aspirations for Success	161
Discussing Parents’ Educational Goals and Expectations.....	161
Academic Socialisation	162
Assertion 3: Work and School Barriers Constrain Fathers’ Attendance in PSTs	164
Father’s Work is a Necessity Rather Than a Choice.....	164
English Language and Education Knowledge.....	165
Lack of Father-Targeted Approach to PSTs.....	167
Assertion 4: Schools’ Focus on Parental Attendance Prevented more Father Responsive Inquiry	168
Are PSTs Opportunities for Learning or Something to Do?	168
Schools Want Student-Led PSTs But Fathers Wish to Talk to Subject Teachers.....	168
Lack of Robust PSTs Evaluation Processes	169
Assertion 5: Schools Should Learn More From Fathers’ Critical Reflection	170
Fathers’ Critical Reflection: Ua Fa’atamala Tamā (Fathers Are Negligent).....	170
Summary of Discussion	171

Limitations of the Study	171
Chapter 9: Conclusions	173
Introduction	173
Fathers and Families Decide How to Best Utilise their Resources.....	173
PSTs Are About Teachers Talking and Fathers/Parents Listening	174
Overarching Enablers for Fathers’ Involvement in PSTs	175
Significant Barriers to Fathers’ Involvement Still Exist	176
PSTs’ Focus on Attendance Had Unintended Consequences for Fathers, FTs and Schools	177
Context, Location, Cultural Inclusivity and Empowerment	178
Recommendations	179
Recommendations for Policymakers.....	179
Recommendations for Schools.....	180
Review and Design Robust Evaluation Process for PSTs.....	180
PSTs in the New Normal.....	180
School–Church Collaboration	180
Recommendations for Further Research and Interventions	181
Final Reflection	182
References	183
Appendices.....	201
Appendix A—Participant Information Sheets	201
Appendix B—Consent Forms	208
Appendix C— Interview Schedules	212
Appendix D—Fathers’ Engagement Log—Case Study Fathers.....	215

List of Figures

Figure 3.1 <i>Model for Data Collection Across Three Studies Converging to Across-Case Analysis</i>	43
Figure 3.2 <i>Approach to Developing Theories of Action</i>	68
Figure 3.3 <i>Father Engagement Analytical Tool (FEAT)</i>	72
Figure 4.1 <i>Regular Attendees' Theory of Action</i>	79
Figure 4.2 <i>Occasional Attendees' Theory of Action</i>	85
Figure 4.3 <i>Nonattendees' Theory of Action</i>	90
Figure 5.1 <i>Levi's Theory of Action</i>	97
Figure 5.2 <i>Isaia's Theory of Action</i>	101
Figure 5.3 <i>Kenese's Theory of Action</i>	105
Figure 5.4 <i>Tupu's Theory of Action</i>	109
Figure 5.5 <i>Mataio's Theory of Action</i>	114
Figure 6.1 <i>Kauri College Theory of Action</i>	120
Figure 6.2 <i>Totara College Theory of Action</i>	127

List of Tables

Table 3.1 <i>Exemplification of Samoan Values in this Research</i>	39
Table 3.2 <i>Summary Table for Study 1 Participants</i>	47
Table 3.3 <i>Study 2 Father Background Information</i>	48
Table 3.4 <i>Profiles of Teacher Participants</i>	50
Table 3.5 <i>Demographic Details of Students from Kauri College and Totara College</i>	51
Table 3.6 <i>Summary Table for Focus Group Interviews</i>	56
Table 3.7 <i>Summary Table for Study 2 Father Participants</i>	57
Table 3.8 <i>Father Engagement Logs</i>	60
Table 3.9 <i>Father Intervention Details</i>	61
Table 3.10 <i>Father Individual Interviews</i>	64
Table 3.11 <i>Summary Table of Teacher Individual Interviews</i>	65
Table 3.12 <i>Summary Table of Student Focus Group Interviews</i>	66
Table 6.1 <i>Totara College June 2021 PST Conference Participants</i>	132
Table 6.2 <i>Summary of June 2021 PST Conference Participants</i>	132
Table 7.1 <i>Theory of Action for Across-Case Analysis</i>	136

Translation and Use of the Samoan Language

Samoan words are in italics when first appeared accompanied by their English translation in brackets. The glossary provides a list of Samoan words used in this thesis. There are two forms of Samoan language commonly used by speakers of the language. One is often referred to as *Gagana T* (GT) or Tautala lelei (formal speech). Tautala lelei is normally associated with the use of the letters *t* and *n*. This is the type of language used for writing formal means of communication. The other is *Gagana K* (GK) or Tautala leaga (informal speech). Tautala leaga is often associated with the use of the letters *k* and *g*, instead of *t* and *n*, as in Tautala lelei (Lee Hang, 2011).

Formal and Informal

Both forms of the Samoan language use are acceptable means of communication. Speakers of Samoan often choose one or the other, or both. In this study, quotations are used in their natural forms as provided by the participants to retain their authenticity and authority. English translations are provided to capture the essence of the concepts and ideas expressed, rather than a word-by-word translation.

Glossary of Samoan Words and Phrases Used in This Thesis

Afio maia lau afioga le Makuaalii	Welcome honourable Makuaalii
Afioga	Honourable
Aiga	Family
Alagaupu	Proverb
Alofa	Love
Amata ma faaiu i le tatalo	Start and finish with a prayer
Aoaoga i Niu Sila	Education in New Zealand
Aoga a le Faifeau	Pastor's School
Aualuma	Daughters of the village
Auga o le mafutaga	Purpose of the meeting
Aumaga	Untitled men
E iloa le tama ma le teine Samoa i lau tu ma lau savali	A Samoan boy or girl is recognised by the way they stand and walk
E to mai mauga manuia o le nuu	The well-being and success of a family or village come from the top
Fa'aaloalo	Respect
Fa'afeiloa'i	Welcome
Fa'afetai	Thank you
Fa'aiu le talanoaga	End the discussion
Fa'asamoa	Samoan way
Fa'asologa o le talanoaga	Process for the meeting
Fa'afeagaiga	Church minister
Fa'alupega	Honorifics
Fa'atau	Discussion for the right to speak on behalf of the group
Fa'ataunuu	See that it is done for the sake of doing it
Fa'atulima	Official welcome
Faletua ma Tausi	In-marrying wives
Fesili ma Tali	Question and Answers
Fiapoto	Wanting to be a 'know-it-all'
Fotu o Mālama	Association for teachers of Samoan language at secondary and tertiary sectors in NZ.

Kau pagupagu	Broken
Mafanafana	Warmth
Malamalama i le NCEA	Understanding NCEA
Matai	Chief
Samoa	Country of Samoa
Measina	Treasures
Nofoalii	Village of Nofoalii in Samoa
O le fa'asoa lona lua	Second discussion
Sa'o/Sese	True/False
Susuga a le fa'afeagaiga	Honourable minister
Talaaga	Story
Talanoa	To talk
Talanoa Ako	Talk about education
Talanoaga	Discussion
Tali le sua	Refreshments
Tamā	Father
Tama/teine o le Rosa Pa'epa'e	Boys/girls of the White Rose
Tamaiti	Children
Tapui	Treat with care
Tatalo	Prayer
Tausi Matagaluega	Minister
Tautua	Service
Tofi	Inheritance
Upu	Word
Va fealoa'i	Relationships between people

Abbreviations

AOG – Assembly of God

APPE – Action Plan for Pacific Education

BES – Best evidence synthesis

CC – Church community

CCCS – Congregational Christian Church of Samoa

CF – Consent forms

CI – Cambridge International

DP – Deputy principal

ERO – Education Review Office

FEAT – Father engagement analytical tool

FT – Form teacher

KC – Kauri College

KSS – Key system shifts

MOE – Ministry of Education

MPP – Ministry of Pacific Peoples

NCEA – National Certificate of Educational Achievement

NELP – National Education and Learning Priorities

NZC – New Zealand Curriculum

NZCER – New Zealand Council for Educational Research

NZQA – New Zealand Qualifications Authority

PBM – Problem-based methodology

PEP – Pasifika Education Plan

PERG – Pasifika Education Research Guidelines

PIS – Participant information sheets

PLD – Professional learning development

PLP – Parental leave policies

PSTs – Parent–student–teacher conferences.

SB – School Board

SC – School Certificate

TC – Totara College

TES – Tertiary Education Strategy

ToA – Theory of Action

Chapter 1: Introduction

O lau matafaioi faaletamā, o se galuega pito sili lea ona taua. E taua atu i lou toalua, e taua atu i lau fanau, e taua atu i lau ekalesia, e taua atu i mea a le tou nuu. Ae a sa'o la le faiga o lau matafaioi lea faaletamā; e manuia lou toalua, e manuia lau fanau, e manuia lau ekalesia, e manuia le tou nuu. Ae amata mea le Atua ia oe.

Your role as a father is most important. More important than your wife, your children, the affairs of your church or your village. However, when you execute your role correctly, your wife, children, church, and village benefit. However, the Lord begins with you. (Pastor Iliafi Esera, Tama Tane Malosi, 2015)

Fathers matter. Fathers' engagement in their children's lives is critical to their children's well-being, development and educational success (Cabrera et al., 2018; Jeynes, 2015; Kim, 2020). However, the international father- and parental-involvement research consistently indicate that fathers and male caregivers are less involved than mothers in their children's education (Goldman, 2005; Kim, 2018a). In New Zealand (NZ), available data from Auckland and Northland secondary schools also paint a similar picture, showing that mainly mothers and female caregivers attended parent–student–teacher conferences (PSTs) (Hynds & Webber, 2015). PSTs are conferences or meetings that allow teachers, students and parents to discuss each student's academic progress. Currently, there is a paucity of research in NZ and the Pacific on fathers (Rouch, 2009; Tautolo et al., 2015). Research on how fathers (Samoan or other) are engaged in their children's education through PSTs, especially at the secondary school level, is negligible.

This research aimed to investigate the topic through a group of 17 Samoan fathers and male caregivers, asking why many fathers do not attend PSTs. As PSTs involve teachers and students, two deputy principals (DP), a dean, a form teacher (FT) and nine students across two secondary schools were also recruited to gain deeper insights into the topic. Parents' understanding of their children's progress enables them to make informed decisions about the support required for their children to achieve educational success.

From a Samoan cultural perspective, a father's leadership role, as captured by Pastor Esera in the quote above and other narratives (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1996; Meleisea, 1987), is critical to his family's success. Fathers, as *matai* (chief) or “heads” of their families, can be champions for their children's education. Fathers as leaders can ensure that their communities thrive in the face of multiple educational, social and health adversities that continue to

hamper Pacific progress in NZ (Wilson, 2017). Therefore, investigating how fathers are engaged at these events, the factors that motivate them to be involved (or not), and the impacts of their engagement can open doors to help demystify fathers' "absence" in PSTs. Currently, father involvement in education in Aotearoa¹ NZ is uncharted terrain. From a national policy perspective, this is important because, as a minority group, Pacific families, and their children, have been a national priority for over 2 decades in NZ (Wendt Samu, 2020).

This study is not about disregarding mothers. In Samoa, mothers' and female caregivers' contribution and importance are embedded in the culture, language and folklore (Meleisea, 1987). This study does not blame "nonparticipant" or "nonresident" fathers nor favour a particular group of fathers over other Pacific fathers. The main emphasis of this study was to capture a snapshot of an ethnic-specific group of Pacific fathers (Samoans) to ensure a deeper understanding and respect for the uniqueness of their involvement with their children at the secondary school level. In addition, an ethnic-specific focus ensured that the Samoan language and cultural practices were core parts of the methodological approach to the study. Much of the father- and parental-involvement literature, especially concerning ethnic-minority communities, has used deficit language to describe fathers and male caregivers (Goldman, 2005). This research project is empowerment focused, grounded in Samoan values of *fa'aaloalo* (respect), *alofa* (caring) and *tautua* (service). Due to limited studies in this area, this research aimed to explore, understand and, through a small collaborative father intervention, consider the lessons and implications for what could be done better to progress our learning on this topic. The knowledge gained from this research project could help school leaders and teachers, school boards (formerly known as boards of trustees), Ministry of Education (MoE) officials, and professional learning development (PLD) providers consider possible next steps to achieve the shared goals set out in the recent *Action Plan for Pacific Education*² (APPE) 2020–2030 (MoE, 2020a) for Pacific learners, families and communities in Aotearoa, NZ.

My Personal and Professional Background

Dewey (1938) posited that the reconstruction and reorganisation of one's past experiences can add more meaning to the experience and help inform the direction of

¹ Aotearoa is the Māori name for New Zealand. It means the land of the long white cloud.

² More information can be accessed here <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/action-plan-for-pacific-education/#Actionplan>

subsequent experiences. Similarly, Martin (2011) proposed a theory of “education as encounter” in which the broad range of cultural and learning experiences beyond the formal settings are valid forms of education and learning. Therefore, the critical role of shared experiences and “encounters” validated through my personal and professional journeys can help unearth and deepen understanding of the topic of this thesis.

Four perspectives shape my interest in fathers’ engagement in education: my perspective as a student, secondary school teacher, university facilitator and as a father. This study sought to compare, build and reflect on three of the four perspectives (student, secondary school teacher and father) via the groups of key participants involved in this research.

Student

I was born in Samoa and raised by my maternal grandmother in Samoa, who drummed the value of education into me from an early stage. At Year 8 at *Nofoalii* Primary School, we often had morning classes from 6 am–7.30 am, then normal school from 8 am–1 pm; afternoon extra classes from 2–4 pm; then a break followed by evening classes from 6–8 pm. School learning was exhausting, but the promises of a better life drove us through education. I later joined my parents and five siblings in NZ for my secondary education, where I was introduced to parent–teacher meetings. My parents took the opportunities to meet with my teachers very seriously. The meetings consisted of five to six (5-minute) meetings with different subject teachers. There was a formula for these meetings: teachers did the talking with my parents listening attentively with the odd smile or nod here and there. As for me, there I was alongside my parents waiting nervously, wondering whether my teachers were going to shower me with praises for the strengths I had shown in class, or whether I was going to explain myself later at home if any teacher decided to showcase my limitations at these meetings. However, I often wondered how much my parents understood from these meetings or whether all they wanted to check was that I was making good progress and behaving well at school.

Teacher

After 5 years of university studies and a year of teacher training, I was now on the “other side,” (as a teacher) “running” parent–teacher meetings. As a young teacher, I simply followed school processes and systems. At my first school on the North Shore of Auckland (predominantly European and Asian parents/caregivers), many parents came in to talk about their children’s learning. However, at my third school in South Auckland (predominantly

Pacific and Māori parents/caregivers), I noticed a significant drop in parental involvement at these meetings. Within the short time available, I tried to give a quick snapshot of the child as a learner in class, highlight their strengths, and, where possible, some areas for improvement. I did most of the talking and no parent ever questioned my ability or capacity to cater for their child's unique strengths and learnings needs. In addition, I had no idea how much of the discussion, especially at the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)³ level (Years 11–13), was thoroughly understood by parents.

Facilitator

After 10 years of secondary school teaching, I became a professional learning development (PLD) facilitator working at the University of Auckland. This new role allowed me to look at education and school practice critically, from the outside. I became conscious of the mismatches between educational policies and strategies and the realities on the ground for schools and parents (Hornby & Witte, 2010). It also opened my eyes to the wide disparity and inequities in the NZ education system, especially outcomes concerning Māori and Pasifika students (Fa'avae, 2016; Wendt Samu, 2020). As my work involves working with school leaders and teachers, my facilitator role was crucial in developing my leadership of school-wide PLD.

Father

As a father of seven children, from primary school to university levels, I have a much greater appreciation of the complexity of the topic from all four perspectives. I also understand that I am in a minority of fathers with the cultural capital – language, education background, skills and knowledge of the education landscape – to help cope with the challenges of these PSTs. I, therefore, understand some of the challenges and opportunities many fathers and parents may face, in balancing the multiple demands on their time, to engage in PSTs fully.

My interest in the topic is primarily motivated by a wish to find out how fathers are involved in a school-organised event, PSTs in this case, to contribute to national and school policies and strategies, including the father- and parental-involvement practices. Capturing fathers' voices and lived realities is a core and essential component of this investigation (Johnson, 2015). Towards the end of the first decade of this century, Rouch (2009) and Tautolo (2011) highlighted the paucity of father research in NZ. Regrettably, in 2022, we

³ NCEA is the national qualification for secondary school students in NZ: <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/>

have not made much progress. However, that should not stop us from trying, because we owe it to our children to find out how we could maximise fathers' influence to champion their children's education success in Aotearoa, NZ.

Setting the Scene

To set the scene, a brief overview of the NZ education system and parental involvement is provided, emphasising Pacific education, followed by an account of how secondary schools currently engage with parents and families in NZ through parent–teacher meetings. Next is the research focus of this current study's problem of practice, including a rationale for the focus on fathers. The topic is theorised as a “problem of practice” utilising problem-based methodology (PBM). A brief overview of PBM, the overarching framework, is then provided followed by the research questions. A snapshot of the case study research design, context of the study and rationale for a dual PBM and talanoa methodological approach is then provided. Next, I outline my positionality and then conclude with a brief overview of each chapter in this thesis.

Please note that Samoan proverbs and quotes are used throughout this thesis and were selected from those used or given by study participants. Proverbs and quotes are utilised in relevant sections to punctuate, strengthen or enlighten critical messages.

NZ Education System and Parental Involvement

Education in NZ is espoused by MoE policy to be child and family centred. Throughout each child's educational journey, they are meant to be supported to become confident, connected, actively involved lifelong learners (as articulated in the *NZ Curriculum* [NZC], MoE, 2007a). The NZ education system has three formal sectors – early learning (early-childhood or early childhood education [ECE]) (0–6 years), compulsory education (5–19 years), and further education (MoE, 2021).

Early Childhood Education

Although ECE is not compulsory, around 96.8% of children attend ECE (MoE, 2021). Over the years there has been a big push, especially in the Pacific communities, for greater participation through government subsidies. All work in ECE is guided by the *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) curriculum framework. Children can attend ECE at any age until they turn 5 or 6, when they progress to the compulsory education sector.

Compulsory Education

The second level contains the primary, intermediate and secondary schools. The education system is made up of 13 year levels (Years 1–13). Most primary schools start at Years 1–6 (around 5–10 years of age); full primary schools have students from Years 1–8 (around 5–12 years of age). Intermediate schools target Years 7–8 (around 10–12 years of age); while secondary education starts from Years 9–13 (around 13–19 years of age). Education is free at state schools (schools that are government owned and funded) for NZ citizens and permanent residents. At Years 11–13, students complete the NCEA, the national senior secondary school qualification across a wide range of courses and subjects. NCEA is a standards-based system established in 2002. The two parallel documents that guide education at this level are the NZC (MoE, 2007a) for English-medium schools and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* (MoE, 2007b) for Māori-medium schools. Also on offer at a small number of schools alongside NCEA, is the International Baccalaureate⁴ and the UK-based Cambridge International⁵ programmes.

Further Education

At senior secondary school level (Years 11–13), students can engage in a number of pathways including – technical and vocational. These further learning opportunities can be run through schools or by other providers. After secondary school, a number of private training establishments and tertiary providers such as universities provide advanced learning opportunities at certificate, diploma, and degree levels (MoE, 2021).

School Boards

Every school in NZ is governed by a school board (SB). Members of the SB consist of parents, students and teachers. The Education and Training Act 2020 describes two of the SB's key responsibilities as setting the strategic direction and targets for the school and planning towards and reporting on achieving those targets (MoE, 2021). Each SB is accountable to its parents, community, and to the government to ensure that students are well looked after and prepared for life-long learning. SBs are also expected to develop a school charter, outlining specific annual targets, long-term goals, and future direction as well as providing evidence of progress. Members of the SBs are elected by the parents of each school community every 3 years. (MoE, 2021).

⁴ International Baccalaureate - <https://www.ibo.org/>

⁵ Cambridge International – <https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/programmes-and-qualifications/>

Parental-Involvement Focus

Since 2000, numerous NZ studies have joined the international chorus in promoting parent–school partnerships and parental involvement as critical levers to level the academic achievement playing field, especially for Māori, Pasifika and minority students (Biddulph et al., 2003; Cunningham, 2019; Education Review Office [ERO], 2008a, 2015; Gorinski & Fraser, 2006; Hornby & Witte, 2010; Robinson et al., 2009; Trinick et al., 2014). Similar sentiments have been expressed in key NZ education policy documents and strategies such as the *NZC* (MoE, 2007a), *Ka Hikitia* (MoE, 2020c), and more recently, the *Action Plan for Pacific Education* (MoE, 2020a). These key documents promoted the idea of partnerships, where parents, families, whānau (extended families and communities) are engaged with schools to support their children’s learning (MoE, 2020a). In addition, the national curriculum for English-medium education, the *NZC*, identified “Community engagement” as one of the eight principles that must underpin curriculum design and “all school decision making” (MoE, 2007a, p. 9). In 2020, the release of the eight key priorities for schools and Kura (Māori-language immersion schools) from the *Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) & Tertiary Education Strategy (TES)* (MoE, 2020b) also reinforced the importance of collaborative partnerships with parents and whānau. For instance, NELP Priority 2 stated that all schools and Kura need to:

Have high aspirations for every learner/ākonga, and support these by partnering with their whānau [extended families] and communities to design and deliver education that responds to their needs and sustains their identities, languages and cultures.
(MoE, 2020b, p. 1).

However, while parental involvement and the school–parent partnership concepts have been widely scripted in the education canons and encouraged across the NZ education sectors over the years, their actual implementation has been far more challenging in practice (Averill et al., 2016; Hornby & Witte, 2010). Moreover, there is minimal guidance available to schools from the MoE on engaging with their parent communities. This gap no doubt is due to the decentralised nature of NZ education, which allows enormous flexibility to teachers and schools and the capacity to make appropriate professional judgements as schools are supposed to be better positioned to know their communities and respond accordingly. Parent–teacher meetings or parent interviews (or other terms schools might use) were developed as mechanisms to inform parents about their children’s progress and give insights into schools’ activities.

Parent–Teacher Meetings

In NZ schools, parent–teacher meetings are regular events in the annual school calendar. Although the meetings are optional, many schools treat them as crucial meetings to update parents on their child’s academic progress. Parent–teacher meetings provide focused opportunities for the teacher and parents to talk about a child’s learning and progress. In NZ schools, these meetings might be called parent–teacher interviews, parent meetings, parent–teacher conferences, student-led conferences, two-way conferences, or three-way conferences (MoE, 2021). There are two types of parent–teacher meetings commonly used in NZ secondary schools – subject-specific parent–teacher interviews and PSTs.

Subject-Specific Parent–Teacher Interviews

Subject-specific parent–teacher interviews involve 5 to 10-minute “speed-dating” type meetings where teachers are set up with desks in the school hall or classrooms, and parents are expected to move around seeing their children’s teachers at allocated times (Webber et al., 2016). The meetings are held twice a year after school, and they continue right through the evening, some finishing as late as 9 pm. Schools design the meetings, and very little feedback (if any) is sought from parents about their experiences at these events. At the meetings, teachers are expected to give feedback on students’ academic progress and areas for improvement – all within 5–10 minutes per subject. Overall, the parents’ participation rate is reported anecdotally by many secondary schools as poor, especially in lower decile⁶ schools (Webber et al., 2016). However, despite the poor attendance of parents (especially Pacific) at these meetings, many secondary schools continue to offer these opportunities to ensure that they meet government regulations and perhaps “tick off” that parental-involvement box.

Parent–Student–Teacher Conferences

PSTs are a variation on the parent–teacher interview. The basic concept of PSTs involves having a school adult (form teacher (FT), whānau teacher, mentor, academic advisor or other various titles used by schools) responsible for monitoring and tracking each student’s learning goals and academic progress (Kiro et al., 2016). Instead of the multiple shorter subject-based meetings with teachers, the new concept involves having one meeting (20–30 minutes long) with the child’s FT. PSTs are designed to be far more comprehensive than the

⁶ Deciles rank and fund schools according to the socioeconomic status of their pupils, with 1 being lowest and 10 being highest

previous subject-specific model. PSTs were promoted by the Starpath Project⁷ (2005–2017), a partnership for excellence research initiative led by the University of Auckland in collaboration with the NZ government to promote Māori and Pasifika students' university entry-level success rate (Webber et al., 2018). Since 2011, many schools utilising PSTs have reported significant parental participation shifts. For instance, in 2014 the median parental attendance for 30 schools' PSTs was 71.5% compared to a reported parental attendance for traditional parent–teacher meetings in 2010 of 23% (Kiro et al., 2016). Even more significant for the schools that had implemented PSTs was that parental attendance has remained consistent or improved over the years (Webber et al., 2016). However, the schools mainly reported increases in the number of parents and caregivers attending these conferences; there was a lack of evidence on the *quality* of parental engagement or any explanation of “who” attended these conferences (Hynds et al., 2015). A pilot study I conducted in 2018, to inform this thesis, with one multicultural secondary school identified that the school had not considered targeting fathers in PSTs. All the invitations were addressed to the parents and caregivers of their students. The study also identified a significant investment of teacher time and school resources to prepare for these events. However, the school was not clear about the level and quality of parents' involvement at their PSTs. This doctoral research builds on the 2018 pilot study.

Research Focus (Problem of Practice)

As indicated previously, the limited research available in NZ shows that many fathers are less involved than mothers in PSTs at secondary schools (Hynds et al., 2015). In addition, we do not know why this phenomenon occurs. International research (reviewed and critiqued in Chapter 2) shows that fathers' involvement in their children's lives is critical to their children's well-being and academic success. However, there is an overall paucity of research on fathers in the education literature, and even fewer studies are available on fathers from minority groups such as the Pacific. The desired state is for fathers to be actively involved in PSTs and be a champion for their children's success. However, fathers' absence and general silence on their involvement with their adolescent children make this phenomenon inviting and worthy of further research.

⁷ Starpath project: <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/education/research/research-networks-and-groups/starpath-project.html>

Why Focus on Fathers and PSTs?

The purpose of this research is to find out why fathers are less involved than mothers in secondary schools' PSTs. As there is little research available in NZ on fathers' (Samoan or other) involvement in education, I have decided to take a cautious approach and not use words such as "absence" or "disengaged" because I do not know for sure. However, this research can shed light on this phenomenon and help inform future studies.

Education is a priority for many Pacific fathers (and parents). In Samoa, fathers (and parents) are widely accepted as their children's first teachers. The general patriarchal nature of Samoan families places fathers as "*o le ulu o le aiga*" (head of the family). Samoan people believe *E to mai mauga manuia o le nuu* (the well-being and success of a family or village come from the top). Therefore, gaining insights into fathers' tacit beliefs and motivations for their involvement (or lack of), how they are involved in PSTs and the impact of their involvement on their children, themselves and families can help schools and other stakeholders plan culturally responsive practices to help fathers champion their children's success at school and home.

Samoan (and Pasifika) fathers are influential in their leadership roles in the families and within the community. Gaining insight into their involvement in education may open doors to improved knowledge to help curb a range of negative statistics in education, social, economic, and health outcomes for their children, families and communities in New Zealand (Tautolo et al., 2015).

Problem-Based Methodology Framework

This study utilised PBM (Robinson, 1993) as the overarching methodological framework. PBM utilises the concept of a *theory of action* (ToA) first put forward by Argyris and Schön (1974) to convey the idea that people have specific values, beliefs and understandings about how they plan, implement and review their actions (Robinson & Lai, 2006). Argyris and Schön (1974) proposed two types of theories of action – *espoused theory* and *theory-in-use*. The espoused theory is what people say they do; theory-in-use explains what people actually do (Robinson & Lai, 2006).

In the language of PBM, three concepts are introduced to formulate a ToA: *Constraints* – conditions that satisfy the actions or inactions taken by fathers and male caregivers; *Actions* – what fathers and male caregivers did or did not do; and *Consequences* – the intended and unintended results of fathers and male caregivers' actions or inactions (Robinson, 1993; Robinson & Lai, 2006; Sinnema et al., 2021). In this research, I have

decided to use *Explanatory factors* instead of Constraints to avoid the risk of deficit perceptions or the possibility of negative connotations and associations. Unfortunately, such perceptions are still embedded in discourses on Pacific education achievement in the NZ education system. In my view, explanatory factors give a more neutral and encompassing stance conducive to the promotion of researcher objectivity. Henceforth, I will be using the term explanatory factors. The three research questions below are directly related to each component of a ToA.

Research Questions

1. How are Samoan fathers and male caregivers engaged in PSTs?
2. What explains Samoan fathers' and male caregivers' engagement in PSTs?
3. What are the consequences of Samoan fathers' and male caregivers' engagement in PSTs for themselves, their children and families?

Research Design

Case Studies

The study utilised a qualitative multicase-study approach (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Study 1 explored the perceptions of 17 Samoan fathers and male caregivers from three church communities. Study 2 involved a deeper exploration of fathers' involvement with five participants purposely selected from the Study 1 sample. Finally, Study 3 investigated PSTs through the lens of two DPs, a dean, one FT and nine students from two multicultural secondary schools.

PBM & Talanoa

Alongside PBM, talanoa (Vaioleti, 2006), a widely used conversational approach in Pasifika and community-based research (Vaioleti, 2013; Wilson, 2017), was also utilised in this study. Talanoa offers a free-flowing and relaxed style that allows the participants more control over the direction and focus of the conversation (Fletcher et al., 2005). Talanoa, in concert with PBM, helped diminish the power imbalance between the researcher and participants while exploring the topic deeper.

Study Context

Data were collected in three Samoan church communities and two secondary schools in Auckland, NZ. Three churches: Assembly of God (AOG), Methodist, and Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS), were recruited for the study. In addition, two secondary

schools (Kauri College and Totara College – not their real names) were also recruited to give insights into how they organise, implement and evaluate their PSTs. The student populations of the two secondary schools are predominantly Pacific and Māori, making up over 90%.

Researcher Positionality

Insider – Outsider Roles

I come into this research with multiple “hats.” I am a father of seven children covering primary to tertiary sectors (ages 7-21). I have been a choirmaster for my Samoan church for 25 years, where I also co-ordinate our education-support programme for parents and students. I had 10 years of experience as a secondary school music teacher before joining the University of Auckland, where I have worked for 16 years as an education facilitator with expertise in literacy, languages and accelerating Pacific student achievement. In the languages community, I am the chair for *Fotu o Mālama*, the association for teachers of the Samoan language at secondary and tertiary sectors in NZ. As a matai *Niulevaea* from Fasitootai in Samoa, I also chair our village’s association for CCCS daughters and sons in Auckland, NZ. The multiple hats I wear are great opportunities for personal and professional growth and involve working with various educators, government officials, Samoan and Pacific peoples. However, they can also limit how one might access participants or understand their unique perspectives if I do not tread with caution and care. Therefore, reflexivity and being alert to participants’ perceptions of “power” is key to an inquiry such as the focus of this research. Below I outline my positionality utilising Holmes’s (2020) proposed three dimensions – the topic under investigation, research participants, and research context and processes. I, therefore, come to this study with certain ontological and epistemological assumptions that I need to put forward.

Topic Under Investigation. As a father and caregiver to several nieces and nephews, I come to this study with specific in-depth knowledge about being a father and caregiver. Growing up in Samoa many father figures from my extended family (all under the “uncle” label) were present in my life. Fluency in Samoan and English (both written and speaking) afforded many benefits when interacting with various participants. In addition, I have 10 years of experience as a FT running parent–teacher meetings. I am also a regular participant in my children’s parent–teacher meetings and PSTs. Therefore, it is likely that my knowledge as a parent and teacher can bring a particular slant on the topic. Arguably, having in-depth knowledge of the topic from multiple perspectives enabled me to go beyond the surface features of the topic to explore further and deepen my insights and understanding of the

subtle nuances concerning fathers' actions, the factors that influenced them, and the consequences of their involvement at PSTs.

Research Participants. My experience as a classroom teacher also drew my attention to parents who did not attend parent–teacher meetings. I often wondered what motivated some fathers or parents to attend and not others. I also noticed a connection between academic performance and parental attendance at these meetings. However, I also had students who did not perform well academically, but their parents still turned up to meet with me and talk about their children. At the early stages of my teaching career, I did not always know how to maximise the opportunities to utilise the information that parents shared with me about their children. As an education facilitator, I work with many school leaders and teachers across NZ on strategies to improve student achievement. Therefore, the two school leaders and the dean involved in the study are known to me through my work. Maintaining professional working relationships is a critical value in my work as a facilitator. All students were unknown to me at the time of the study. The Church Community 1 (CC1) participants are from my church, and I have known these fathers for over 20 years.

Having fathers from my church involved in the study was not part of the initial plan because of the perceived conflicts of interest. However, the more I thought about the topic, the types of fathers who were likely to talk to me, especially if they were nonparticipants in their children's education, the more I became convinced that effective relationships with people, especially in a Pacific research setting, is a strength (Anae et al., 2001). At CC2, there was one father known to me; and there were two at CC3. My current standing and involvement in the Samoan and Pacific communities in Auckland make it challenging to “fly” anonymously. However, I also knew that I had to gain fathers' trust for them to open up and share their stories. I have not taken lightly the implications for the design, processes, and protocols to ensure a robust and ethical research project. The focus on fathers, especially “nonattendees” of PSTs, was partially driven by the wish to hear the voices of this particular group. My assumption that schools were likely to give me the names of fathers who were already engaged in PSTs informed the motivation to source fathers through church communities instead of schools.

Research Context and Processes. As a member of one of the church communities involved in the study (CC1), I, therefore, come to the study with specific knowledge and expertise about how Samoan church communities work. Although three different church denominations are represented in the study, having first-hand insights into these church communities gave me an advantage, especially during the recruitment phases. Being a matai

and my fluency in the Samoan language and culture were significant assets because I knew the unwritten rules about the protocols and processes when working with church communities. I utilised Samoan protocols throughout every aspect of the study to the best of my knowledge and sought guidance from senior matai family members when required. Locating much of the study within each church community addressed the researcher–participant imbalance of power (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2010). Although one could never eliminate the power imbalance, I utilised empowering language and familiar Samoan processes to create a comfortable environment as much as possible. My relationships with the participants were warm, interpersonal and professional. Having insider knowledge enabled me to be on the outside critically. Having outsider knowledge also enabled me to be on the inside professionally. Being an outsider looking in gave me another lens through which to see myself in the mirror. Therefore, being a Samoan father educator-insider-outsider was a position of strength, enabling me to take on this challenge.

Organisation of This Thesis

This thesis is organised into nine chapters. Chapter 1: Introduction – presents the focus of the study and sets the scene and context for the topic under investigation. The problem of practice, purpose and its significance are outlined and framed in the research questions. Researcher positionality is also provided. Chapter 2: Literature Review – presents a critical review of the relevant literature in line with the study’s PBM conceptual framework to situate the study in relation to current literature and establish the framework for this investigation. Chapter 3: Methodology – outlines the study’s qualitative methodology, the methods used to collect and analyse data and the rationale for the overall research design. Chapter 4: Findings: Father Focus Groups – presents the key findings from Study 1 across the five father focus groups from three church communities. Chapter 5: Findings: Five Expressions of Fatherhood – presents five expressions of fatherhood from a sample of five fathers purposely selected from Study 1 participants. Chapter 6: Findings: School PSTs – presents the key findings for Study 3 from two secondary schools through the lens of two DPs, a dean, a FT and nine students. Chapter 7: Findings: Across Case – presents the across-case findings from Studies 1 and 2 (Chapters 4 and 5), triangulated with the school case findings (Study 3; Chapter 6). Chapter 8: Discussion – discusses and synthesises five key assertions made in line with the research questions, literature review, conceptual framework, and the problem of practice under investigation. Chapter 9: Conclusion – summarises the discussion through concluding statements and presents vital recommendations for schools,

fathers and communities, and implications for policies and further research. A final researcher reflection brings the thesis to a close.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Throughout the study, a critical review of the current relevant literature was carried out to understand the problem of practice and provide theoretical frameworks to help inform the data collection, analysis, and synthesis stages. This chapter is divided into four sections. Section 1 starts with background information about how the relevant literature was sourced and the rationale for its selection; key terminologies related to the topic are also explained. Next, the selected literature is critically reviewed and synthesised using the three overarching components of a ToA. Section 2: Fathers' Involvement (Actions), reviews the literature on how fathers are involved with their children. Section 3: Explanatory Factors, reviews the literature on factors that influence and inform fathers' engagement with their children. Section 4: Consequences, focuses on the impacts of fathers' involvement on fathers, their children and others. Each section is further divided into relevant subsections to explore the deeper features of the topic. Arguments explaining the need for this research and how this study contributes to current literature gaps are also presented. The chapter closes with limitations of the selected literature followed by a chapter summary.

Section 1: Background Information

Literature Search Strategy.

To conduct the selected literature review, a range of sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, reports, doctoral theses, books, videos and internet resources were accessed through various databases, including Education Research Complete, ERIC, ProQuest Education Journals, Google Scholar, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, nzresearch.org.nz, and Index NZ for relevant theoretical and empirical literature. Other relevant NZ studies and reports were sourced through the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) publications (for example Curriculum Matters, and SET: Research Information for Teachers), Education Review Office (ERO), Ministry of Pacific Peoples (MPP), and Ministry of Education (MoE). Writings in the Samoan language about fathers were sourced through books, the Bible and the Savali newspaper. A concept map was developed utilising the key terms of the topic to facilitate the search. Key terms include parent–student–teacher conferences, PSTs, parent–teacher meetings, parent interviews, parent evenings; father involvement/engagement; paternal involvement/engagement; fatherhood, fathering, parental involvement/engagement; high schools; secondary schools; college; adolescent. The terms

were used alone and in various combinations for maximum gain. The references of sourced articles were also utilised to identify other relevant literature.

The majority of the sources are from the last 6 years (2016–2021) to keep it current. Other key literatures were strategically sourced from the mid-1980s to the 1990s as they capture the early developmental stages of the father-involvement literature. Similarly, the 1990s and 2000s were significant stages in the NZ education landscape and a critical stage of increased activities and focus on Pacific achievement in NZ. Throughout the review, essential gaps and omissions, where present, are highlighted. Similarly, contested areas and issues are also highlighted and discussed.

Selected Literature and Rationale

As father involvement is multifaceted and multidimensional (de Santis et al., 2020; Hawkins & Palkovitz, 1999; Tautolo et al., 2015;), the theoretical, methodological and empirical literature were reviewed to gain a deeper understanding of the topic and its impact across a range of sectors and fields. Relevant research has been selected from the following related fields to this study: education, child development and care, Pacific studies, family studies, developmental and educational psychology, community, work and family, father and parental involvement/engagement.

What is a Father?

The term father or fathers, is used broadly in this thesis to refer to biological, adoptive fathers, as well as other male caregivers and father figures such as uncles, older brothers, grandfathers, stepfathers, and foster fathers who may be resident (living with child) or nonresident (not living with child). This is in line with the Samoan perspective of *tamā* (fathers), that includes all the positive connotations and relationships associated with being a responsible male adult in a child's life (Hawkins & Palkovitz, 1999). While acknowledging that some children may not have fathers or father figures, this thesis considers families and households with children who have a father or father figure in their lives. From here forward, I will use father or fathers to refer to all the aforementioned types of fathers and male caregivers.

What is Father Involvement?

The influential work of Lamb et al. (1985) in the United States (US) presented the earliest significant attempt to conceptualise father involvement. They proposed a tripartite model of father involvement consisting of three dimensions: *engagement* (direct one-on-one

interaction) with the child, such as playing or reading; *accessibility* (availability to the child, even if not directly interacting); and *responsibility* (assuming responsibility for the care and welfare of the child). Much of the father-involvement literature in the 1980s and 1990s relied extensively on Lamb et al.'s (1985) three-pronged model. However, there was no consensus on how to assess each component or empirical evidence of the importance of each component (Cabrera, 2020). Recent evidence has contributed to current understanding of father involvement as a multidimensional construct that includes affective, cognitive and ethical components (de Santis et al., 2020; Marsiglio et al., 2000; Palkovitz, 2019; Pleck, 2010).

Recent research has focused on the factors and spheres of influence that impact how fathers are engaged with their children (Cabrera et al., 2018; de Santis et al., 2020). Cabrera et al.'s (2014) Expanded Fathering Model is one example which “recognizes the diversity of family life and the changing patterns of fathering, the personal motivation to father, the parental characteristics that predict fathering, and the overall context of parenting within a family system” (Cabrera et al., 2018).

Building on Cabrera et al.'s (2014) Expanded Fathering Model, other researchers have called for a more comprehensive focus on the father–child relationship quality (FCRQ) (Cowan et al., 2019; Palkovitz, 2019). Focusing on the quality of the father–child relationships has the potential to better understand fathers’ motivations for engagement and their lived experiences in school-led activities such as PSTs (Jensen & Minke, 2017).

Involvement Versus Engagement

A significant number of studies have used the term involvement, especially in education research and government policies (Jensen & Minke, 2017). However, most of the father and parental involvement (or engagement) literature, including from NZ, has used the two concepts interchangeably (Boonk et al., 2018; Smith, 2021). Recently, there has been a shift in the use of the term engagement over involvement to reflect a shared responsibility between families and schools (Donald, 2020). One definition that captures the difference between the two terms picturesquely is that by Ferlazzo (2011):

A school striving for family involvement often leads with its mouth – identifying projects, needs, and goals and then telling parents how they can contribute. A school striving for parent engagement on the other hand, tends to lead with its ears – listening to what parents think, dream, and worry about (p. 1).

Ferlazzo (2011) clearly sides with the *engagement* camp and sees the goal of parental or family engagement at a much broader level, including the rebalancing of power through

strengthening the leadership capacity and capability of parents, families and communities in their children's education. Conversely, Kim and Hill (2015) referred to parental involvement as parents' interactions with schools and their children that promote academic success. Whilst both definitions appear to be converging on the same goal (improved outcomes for children and families), the processes and the underpinning philosophies could be several of the main differences between the two definitions. However, to complicate matters further, not all researchers have used the terms consistently concerning the ways I have defined them here (Donald, 2020; Smith, 2021). As the debate is clearly going to last for some time, I have therefore taken a "democratic" position by using both terms synonymously and interchangeably in this thesis. Such a stance is a position of strength to ensure more comprehensive coverage of the literature. As NZ takes a parental involvement/engagement stance, rather than a gendered approach (father or mother involvement), I have also adopted the following definitions:

Parental engagement is defined as a meaningful, respectful partnership between schools and parents, whānau and communities that focuses on improving the educational experiences and successes for each child. (ERO, 2008a, p. 1).

[*Parental involvement*] is conceptualized as the participation of parents or other significant caregivers in education-related activities expected to promote the academic and social/emotional well-being of children. (S. Park & Holloway, 2018, p. 10).

Pasifika or Pacific?

The terms *Pasifika* or *Pacific* are umbrella terms used in the literature and by the MoE to describe people who were either born in or culturally identify themselves with one or more of the Pacific Island countries such as Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Tokelau, Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu (Ferguson et al., 2008). Despite the multiple commonalities among these groups, it is important to note that Pasifika peoples are diverse and do not form one homogenous group (Gorinski & Fraser, 2006). Since 2018, there has been a shift in language use with the MoE's unexplained preference for the term Pacific or Pacific peoples, ignoring several decades of usage and socialisation across the education and community sectors (Wendt Samu, 2020). Henceforth, the terms *Pasifika*, *Pasifika peoples*, or *Pacific*, *Pacific peoples* are used interchangeably throughout this thesis. The next section discusses and synthesises how fathers are involved with their children.

Section 2: Father's Involvement (Actions)

Home-Based Involvement

Fathers' involvement in their children's education can be divided into two areas – home-based and school-based. Home-based involvement concerns fathers' activities to support their children's learning within the immediate family environment (Boonk et al., 2018). Some of the typical activities that parents carry out with their children involve helping them with their schoolwork, communicating with their child on school issues, talking with children about school, monitoring school progress and encouraging them to do well (Boonk et al., 2018; Camacho-Thompson et al., 2019).

Most of the father and parental involvement literature focus on fathers' and parents' involvement in the early years – early childhood education, primary or elementary schools (Lamb, 2000; Munro et al., 2021). Numerous studies have identified specific numeracy and literacy activities that parents can do with their children at home, especially young children (Clark, 2020; Dulay et al., 2019). Some of the practical activities for young children included practising writing, tracing or copying words on paper, asking about spelling, teaching basic addition and subtraction, and writing and drawing practice (Munro et al., 2021). The focus on literacy and numeracy was underscored by the concept of preparing children for formal education and a general belief that it was a pre-requisite for later academic success (Munro et al., 2021). However, a limitation of this NZ study was that the sample was not representative of minority groups, such as Māori, Pasifika and Asian cultures. Therefore, the study did not capture the cultural practices of these groups (Diniz et al., 2021). Also, regarding the interest of this current study, Munro et al. (2021) did not attempt to isolate the impact of fathers.

There is limited literature about fathers' or parents' home-based involvement with their children (Cunningham & Jesson, 2021; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Hornby & Witte, 2010). As students transition into adolescence, subject material content become more challenging, and many students are much more involved in the broader life of secondary schools, which may provide less time for father-child interaction. Harris and Goodall (2008) voiced their concern about the lack of support for parents for home-based involvement. Other researchers have concluded that what parents do at school and home makes the difference (Harris & Goodall, 2008; Sanguiliano et al., 2019). However, recent research has emphasised the *quality* of the parent-child interaction rather than the number of activities that count (Curtis et al., 2017; Jensen & Minke, 2017; Palkovitz, 2019).

Some of the home-based involvement practices of parents of high achieving students included: establishing routines for homework and bedtime, supervising TV viewing time, encouraging reading, talking with their children, and playing games (Hornby & Witte, 2010, p. 497). Parents also provide structure and control at home to ensure that work is done (Jensen & Minke, 2017). Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2014) and Jensen and Minke (2017) also found a positive relationship between home-based involvement and academic achievement. However, a recent study showed that many parents wanted support for their children's home-based learning (Clark, 2020). However, Clark's (2020) study only used surveys to collect data, which can be problematic when investigating critical issues such as parental involvement. To go deeper requires a suite of tools involving a mixture of quantitative and qualitative measures.

The literature is clear that mainly mothers are involved in children's learning at home and school (Goldman, 2005; Lee, 2019). However, the increase of stay-at-home dads has provided more opportunities for fathers' direct-care and home involvement (Livingston & Parker, 2019). Other research has also posited greater involvement of fathers and father figures at home than at school (Attar-Schwartz & Buchanan, 2018). Even more promising is the finding that it does not matter whether the father is resident or nonresident; as long as he is engaged, the fathers' influence is the same (Cabrera et al., 2018).

There is much going on in Samoan and Pacific families. For example, recent studies with Pacific families showed much discussion about school, homework, and goal setting within families (Cunningham, 2019; Wilson, 2017). Cunningham (2019) focused on a small sample of 10 students at the intermediate level (ages 11–12) and their parents. However, despite parents' efforts to support their children's learning at home, little is known about parents' impact on their adolescent children (Costa & Faria, 2017; Jeynes, 2015; Munro et al., 2021). Although the idea that fathers contribute to their children's education is widely acknowledged in the Samoan community, there is little evidence about fathers' beliefs about such role or the specific actions to ensure that any support fathers provide are complementary or further enhance their children's in-school learning.

Blandin (2017), Park and Bonner (2008) and others have called for exploring participants' faith and spiritual values as bridges to promote higher academic achievement. Going further, through his meta-analysis, Jeynes (2015) has strongly advocated for parents' use of their faith and values to help close the achievement gap. He also provided a strong rationale for his argument:

In reality, it only makes sense that faith and family are so closely associated with bridging the achievement gap because few social forces influence one's life more than faith and family. (p. 24)

As fathers in the study are from Samoan church communities where there is alignment between their Samoan and Christian values, this study may help shed light on how such values are enacted in fathers' interactions with their children. We may also find out how fathers see the three "worlds" – family, church and schools – concerning their involvement with their children. Enhancing Samoan fathers' home-based involvement may trigger fathers' interest in other community-based activities that they could engage in to support their children's success. Insights into fathers' home-based involvement may also improve fathers' school-based involvement.

School-Based Involvement

School-based involvement consists of activities designed by the school for parents to support them and their children's education (Boonk et al., 2018). Typical activities include attending school programmes such as parent–teacher meetings, parent–teacher association (PTA) meetings, volunteering at school, attending extracurricular activities, communications (Millar, 2018), or participating in school governance (Hill & Tyson, 2009). In NZ, parents can become members of the School Board, which oversees school governance (MoE, 2021). These positions enable parents to be actively involved with their schools and take a "hands-on" approach in the affairs of their schools. However, a 2018 MoE report indicated that across NZ in 2016, "61% of schools did not have enough Pacific members (58% for Māori) on their School Board to adequately represent the proportion of Pacific students at the school" (MoE, 2021, p. 43). Therefore, if mothers are the main participants in school-based involvement (Kim, 2018a; McBride et al., 2013), then it is highly likely that very few fathers would have been involved in such roles. However, without data on fathers' involvement, we risk doing a disservice to fathers by overgeneralising the study's findings.

Other types of in-school involvement include school ceremonies, celebrations, sporting events, volunteering in the classroom, attending parent–teacher conferences or communication with the school (Jensen & Minke, 2017; Jeynes, 2010; Tongati'o et al., 2016). Other activities commonly occurring at secondary schools include classroom volunteering and supporting co-curricular activities (S. Park & Holloway, 2018). For Pacific fathers, sporting and cultural activities held at school are activities many fathers enjoy, especially when their children are involved. The child's success in a particular event or field

can also enhance fathers' school-based involvement. However, school-based involvement depends largely on parent availability and willingness to take part (Kim & Hill, 2015). Although studies have consistently pointed out that fathers are less involved in school-based involvement compared to mothers (Goldman, 2005; McBride et al., 2013), what is often not discussed are the types of school activities that fathers are involved in (when they are present) and their motivations for involvement.

This study fills this gap by investigating fathers' involvement in one regular school event – PSTs, which are the primary means for discussions between parents, students, and teachers focused on each students' academic learning and progress. As most of the evidence of fathers' involvement (or lack of it) in NZ secondary school PSTs is mainly anecdotal, this study aims to shed light on this uncharted path. Through fathers, students and teachers' voices concerning PSTs, we progress our knowledge in this area and may provide possible solutions for maximising fathers' influence and leadership to support improved outcomes for Pacific learners, families and communities.

Academic Socialisation

Hill and Tyson (2009) proposed a third type of parental involvement – academic socialisation. They define academic socialisation “as parents' educational goals and expectations for their children, as well as their communication to their children about parental expectations for education, its value and utility” (p. 2). Clinton and Hattie (2013), and Wilder's (2014) synthesis of nine parental involvement meta-analyses, supported Hill and Tyson's (2009) claim. But they also revealed that the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement was weakest if parental involvement was defined as parents helping with their children's homework. Many recent studies (Boonk et al., 2018; Cunningham, 2019; Kim, 2020; Trinick et al., 2014; Yogman & Eppel, 2022) have also raised the profile of academic socialisation as the most effective type of parental involvement.

However, there are several concerns relating to fathers and Pacific communities. First, Pacific parents' high expectations for their children's success are well documented in the NZ literature (Clinton & Hattie, 2013; Fa'avae, 2016; Si'ilata, 2014; Wilson, 2017). Second, how Pacific parents communicate their expectations to their children, their teachers, or how parents muster their resources to achieve their expectations, are significant gaps in the current Pacific education literature. Third, how fathers (or parents) set their educational goals, what informs their goal setting, and how they monitor their child's progress towards their goals are

also areas lacking attention. These current gaps concerning Samoan or Pacific fathers are all worthwhile opportunities for further studies that could enlighten better strategies and policies to help fathers, parents, schools and students in their collective efforts to enhance outcomes for Pacific learners in Aotearoa, NZ. This current study aims to contribute to some of these gaps through a gendered, ethnic-specific focus with 17 fathers.

Samoan Perspectives on Fathers' Involvement

A Samoan father is shaped by his family, community and environment. Therefore, a father's purpose is to ensure the common good for his family (extended family) and the community (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2010). Fathers' perspectives and beliefs are shaped by traditional Samoan expectations of roles and responsibilities where fathers, as matai (chiefs), "heads of the family," represent the family in the village administration. Aumaga (untitled men) work in the plantation; faletua ma tausī (in-marrying wives) deal with domestic duties; aualuma (daughters of the village) are responsible for hospitality; and tamaiti (children) deal with general household chores (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1991). This broad division of labour is not fixed, but different family contexts may determine the distribution of work.

Fathers, as chiefs, have administrative and leadership roles (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1996; Wilson, 2017). Samoan fathers nurture their children while they are young as future inheritors of chiefly titles (Meleisea, 1995; Tavale, 2009; Vaai, 2011). According to Sauni (2013), the Samoan saying – O le tama a le tagata e fafaga i upu ma tala, ao le tama a le manu e fafaga i fuga o laau (The offspring of men are fed with words, but the offspring of birds are fed with seeds), captures fathers' nurturing and mentoring roles in the development of young children as future leaders. Samoa is predominantly a patriarchal community, and the matai (chief) system shows that over 80% of the matais in Samoa (or abroad) are male (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2010; Vaai, 2011).

Fathers' leadership capability is critical to the success of their families. Studies in NZ showed that fathers can take decisive action to champion the success of their children and families (Cahill, 2006; Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1996; Wilson, 2017). For instance, Wilson's (2017) study with five Samoan families showed how a father became a language champion for his family after learning about bilingual education. As a result, he was motivated to reverse the language drift within his family by attending a traditional Samoan church where the language and culture were nurtured. Similarly, Cunningham (2019) reported that talking about education after devotion and prayer time, where parents communicate their expectations and education goals was standard practice for Samoan families. Both studies gave valuable

insights into Samoan families' practices; however, Cunningham (2019) looked at students transitioning from Years 8–9 (12–13 years), where parents are still very much involved in their children's education.

Western ideals have influenced Samoan perceptions and beliefs about fatherhood. The arrival of European missionaries in the 1830s promoted particular behaviours and ideals that placed fathers as the heads of the family, charged with being the provider, and mothers as homemakers (Meleisea, 1987). Biblical references to fathers, mothers and children and the complex nature of the impact of their care are reflected in proverbs such as – O le tama potō e fiafia ai le tamā; ao le tama valea, e faanoanoa ai le tinā. (A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother) (Proverbs 10: 1). This proverb elevates fathers as the beneficiaries of a well-educated child; mothers are “demoted” to dealing with the disappointment of a less educated soul.

Fathers As Carers

Fathers prioritize the well-being of their families and are increasingly involved in childcare. Traditional beliefs and attitudes about fathers as breadwinners and mothers as carers were challenged in the 20th century (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999). Egalitarian gender role attitudes and beliefs changed, albeit slowly for some fathers, welcoming mothers' increasing presence in the workforce (Pleck, 2012) and fathers' active involvement in childcare (Knight & Brinton, 2017).

Cabrera (2020) and Bond (2019) have posited that the general assumption that women are more suited to primary caregiving than men also led to mothers picking up the “education portfolio.” A US study in 2016 reported that fathers spent, on average 8 hours per week (in comparison to mothers' 14 hours per week) taking care of their children (Livingston & Parker, 2019). Although, by comparison, fathers still lack in terms of the quantity of time spent with their children, the result for fathers above was three times as much as fathers reported in 1965 (Livingston & Parker, 2019). A telephone survey study by Luketina et al. (2009) with 1,721 NZ fathers indicated that participants spent an average of 40 hours per week with their children. Sixty-nine per cent of Māori fathers and 61% of Pakeha fathers reported being very involved in family chores. However, one must be cautious when equating time with the quality of care provided (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004). Also, spending time with their children does not say anything about what was done or the impact on the child or father. In addition, phone surveys are time-bound and can amount to participants overestimating their realities.

Several factors enabled fathers to spend more time caring for their children. First, the changing nature of the family structure from a single provider to a dual-earner has presented opportunities for fathers to care for their children (Pruett et al., 2017). Mothers' financial contributions ease the burden on fathers' tendency to take on overtime or find extra work to make ends meet, especially in low-income families. In addition, in two-parent homes, most Western countries' increasingly flexible working environments (Yogman & Eppel, 2022) allow mothers and fathers to co-construct their work schedules to ensure that a parent is with their children at all times. Such arrangements may result in a better redistribution of work among both parents, allowing time for childcare.

Other opportunities for fathers to look after their children are supported in other countries through government legislation such as parental/paternal/maternal leave. For instance, a study by Karu and Tremblay (2018) of 29 countries' (including NZ) parental leave policies identified that fathers' take-up of parental leave was encouraged mainly in a small number of Scandinavian countries which take the matter seriously. Figures showed that Iceland had a 92.7% father leave take-up (2012); Norway, 90% (2011); and Sweden, 88.3% (2004). The NZ father leave-take-up rate was 3% (2005/2006). Although data sources for the study may be outdated, and many improvements concerning "family-friendly" policies have recently been instigated in other countries (Yogman & Eppel, 2022), recent evidence from Canada shows that younger, more educated fathers whose partners were not in the labour force were more likely to take parental leave (Pettigrew & Duncan, 2021).

A recent study in the UK with 41 primary-caregiver fathers, 45 primary-caregiver mothers, and 41 dual-earner families found no differences in the quality of parenting between primary-caregiver fathers and primary-caregiver mothers (Jones et al., 2021). Although the Jones et al. (2021) study challenged the general assumptions that mothers are better caregivers than fathers, the study, like many others (Hawkins & Palkovitz, 1999; Lamb, 2000), only investigated the issues with young children aged 3–6 years.

In contrast, fathers' involvement in their children's education gradually declines as students move into adolescence (Blandin, 2017; Jeynes, 2015). Interestingly, very few studies have attempted to examine this phenomenon with adolescents. Fathers' engagement is not even considered or discussed in the NZ parental involvement landscape despite a large body of evidence linking fathers' involvement to a range of positive outcomes for the students (Jeynes, 2015; Lamb, 2000; Pruett et al., 2017). Many conflicting factors and constraints such as adolescents wanting more autonomy and independence, age group and peer pressure have been attributed as barriers to the complexity of examining this phenomenon (Jeynes, 2015;

Lamb, 2000). However, understanding this phenomenon may help enlighten us on the many challenges that educators, the MoE, government officials, and many other stakeholders currently face to improve outcomes for Pasifika peoples in Aotearoa, NZ. The following section discusses the factors that impact fathers' involvement.

Section 3: Explanatory Factors

Legislation

The increased interest in father involvement has been promoted through government legislation (Johnson, 2015). In the US, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act 1994, and the No Child Left Behind legislation (U. S. Department of Education, 2002) set a clear focus on parental involvement as a critical part of the plans to close the achievement gap between high-and poor-performing students (Epstein & Saunders, 2006; Johnson, 2015). The financial incentives attached to the legislations gave it momentum and reflected the general belief that parental involvement influences child outcomes such as academic performance and child development (Johnson, 2015; Mattingly et al., 2002; Pruett, et al., 2017). In the 1990s, interest in fathers' involvement with their children blossomed, especially in the US and UK (Jeynes, 2019).

Similarly, in the United Kingdom (UK), the achievement gap between “wealthy” and “poor” schools also triggered interest in fathers' involvement (Huat See & Gorard, 2015). The documents *Every Child Matters* (Department for Education and Skills, 2003) and the *Children's Plan* (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007) outlined the government's proposal to reform the delivery of services for children, young people and families (Goldman, 2005). In 2004, the Department for Education and Skills also issued a good-practice guide for teachers on ways to engage fathers better in education to help raise student achievement (Goldman, 2005).

In NZ, the *Tomorrow's Schools* reforms in 1989 dramatically changed the governance, management, and administration of NZ schools. The changes manifested themselves in greater parental and community involvement in the running of schools (Butterworth, & Butterworth, 1998). In 2020, the release of the eight key priorities for schools and kura⁸ from the NELP and the TES promoted the importance of collaborative partnerships with parents and whānau. For instance, Priority 2 stated that all schools and kura need to:

⁸ Māori immersion schools – immersed in Māori language and culture.

Have high aspirations for every learner/ākonga, and support these by partnering with their whānau and communities to design and deliver education that responds to their needs, and sustains their identities, languages and cultures (MoE, 2020b).

The NZC (MoE, 2007a) is the main document that guides all English-medium education in the compulsory schooling sector (Years 1–13). Community engagement is one of the eight principles for school curriculum design and decision making. Community engagement is defined as the establishment of “strong home-school partnerships where parents, whānau, and communities are involved and supported in students’ learning” (MoE, 2007a, p. 9).

In Pasifika education, “closing the gaps” between high-performing students (mainly European and Asian) and Māori and Pacific students was the “catch-phrase” which acknowledged the NZ education system’s failure to meet the needs of Māori and Pacific students (Tongati’o et al., 2016). To respond, six Pasifika education plans⁹ have been in place since 2001 (Wendt Samu, 2020). Each plan sets goals on engaging parents, families, and communities punctuated by three themes – *participation*, *engagement* and *achievement*. Two of the five key system shifts (KSS) in the current plan (*Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020–2030*), are connected with schools and learning institutions working collaboratively with parents, families and communities:

KSS 1: Work reciprocally with diverse Pacific communities to respond to unmet needs, with an initial focus on needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

KSS 3: Partner with families to design education opportunities together with teachers, leaders and educational professionals so that aspirations for learning and employment can be met (MoE, 2020a).

Around the world, the central tenet of involving parents in the education of their children was the underlying belief that there were significant benefits for teachers, students and parents alike (Biddulph et al., 2003; Hornby & Witte, 2010). However, clearly emerging from the international and local literature was that many countries’ education systems, despite the “bells and whistles,” were not serving all students well, particularly minority, indigenous, and students of colour (Bishop, 2019; Jeynes, 2015; Rimoni & Averill, 2019).

⁹ Pasifika education plans (PEP) are strategies to enhance outcomes for Pacific learners, families and communities in NZ. The six are PEP 1: 2001–2005; PEP 2: 2006–2010; PEP 3: 2008–2012; PEP 4: 2009–2012; PEP 5: 2013–2017 (then extended till 2019); and the current plan (sixth) renamed *Action Plan for Pacific Education (APPE) 2020–2030*

Father's Self-Efficacy and Self-Belief

A father's belief in his ability to meet specific outcomes enables him to flourish. Self-efficacy refers to one's belief in their capacity and capability to carry out a task to achieve specific outcomes (Trahan, 2018). While self-efficacy seems to put the onus back on the individual, the confidence one has in their ability to carry out a task is connected to a range of complex factors such as motivation, commitment and other environmental factors. For instance, a father's involvement may be related to antecedent conditions such as age, education, marital status and health conditions of both parents and the relationship quality between them (de Santis & Barham, 2017).

School characteristics also affect fathers' efficacy and beliefs about involvement at school, home, or not. Parents who perceive staff and school as welcoming will build a greater sense of belief and trust that schools are places for them (Epstein et al., 2018; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; S. Park & Holloway, 2018). Fathers with negative school experiences can become a battle for some schools; however, this should not discourage schools from seeking to understand each father and family context (Cabrera et al., 2014).

Understanding fathers and their settings is critical to forging school–family partnerships. How schools interact with fathers can affect the level and types of involvement a father has with their child (Cabrera et al., 2018). In addition, fathers' level of involvement can affect children's development positively even when they do not live with them (Cabrera et al., 2000). Although this is promising news for nonresident fathers, it is essential to note that the *quality* of the involvement matters most, not the quantity (Palkovitz, 2019). On the other hand, fathers who perceive that their involvement is viewed positively by teachers will continue to learn and thrive in the relationship they have with their children (S. Park & Holloway, 2018). Conversely, fathers who perceive their involvement negatively will either give up and resort to the comfort of their “safety roles” such as being the provider. Alternatively, fathers may take a more active role which may not be in the child's best interest. However, insights into fathers' contexts can help determine more responsive approaches to stimulate active father involvement.

Fathers' early involvement can also stimulate and promote later involvement (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004; McBride et al., 2013). McBride et al. (2009) and Jeynes (2015) also claimed that a father's involvement in a child's schooling might affect student achievement beyond the mother's influence, especially at the elementary level. However, encouraging some fathers to take the first step may be a hurdle. Pruett et al. (2017) recommended inviting fathers directly (not through mothers). Fathers' personalised invitation, whether from the

child or the teacher, may strengthen a father's belief that he has a critical role in his child's development success (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

One way to build fathers' self-efficacy and self-belief is through joint investment in co-parenting programmes (Pruett et al., 2017). Initiatives that focus on improving the quality of the co-parenting relationship between mothers and fathers can enhance fathers' parenting skills and develop better father-child relationships (Fagan et al., 2021). As many Samoan and Pacific families are intact families, co-parenting programmes that are responsive to Pacific peoples' language and cultural strengths can be the game changer (Si'ilata, 2014). However, such co-parenting programmes are rare events in the NZ education landscape. Holmes et al.'s (2020) comprehensive meta-analytic study of 24 fatherhood programmes found significant increases in fathers' co-parenting skills following men's participation in the programme.

Productive Partnerships Between Schools and Parents, Families and Whānau

There is a strong evidence base for the need to develop productive partnerships between schools and parents, families, and whānau (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Flavell, 2017; Gorinski & Fraser, 2006; Jeynes, 2010; S. Park & Holloway, 2018). The search for strategies and initiatives to develop and sustain powerful connections with parents and families has been a critical goal for the MoE and many NZ schools over the last 2 decades (Hornby & Witte, 2010; Wylie, 1999). The endeavour to engage with parents, families, and whānau can be observed in the aspirations of the series of Pasifika education plans since their inception in 2001 (Wendt Samu, 2020). However, little research exists that examines how such initiatives can be built and sustained over time and the ongoing effects on participants, particularly in NZ (Averill et al., 2016). Despite numerous reports by the ERO (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2015), MoE evaluation reports (Bull et al., 2008; Gorinski & Fraser, 2006), and recent research (Averill et al., 2016; Cunningham, 2019; Millar, 2018), promoting the importance of engaging Pasifika parents, families and communities in education, the parental engagement field in NZ has often been in the "too hard basket" for many schools.

Developing powerful connections with fathers takes time, effort and strategic planning. According to Epstein et al. (2018), the most effective school-family-community partnerships are those which recognise the complementary and interdependent aspects of the three primary spheres of influence. However, the reality on the ground for many parents is that one of the spheres (school) sets the tone and dictates the agenda for the partnership (Moreno & Chuang, 2015; S. Park & Holloway, 2018). The concept of schools, families and communities forming a partnership to support students' success is not new. However, there is

a need to reframe power relationships to enable school leaders and teachers to value Māori and Pasifika whānau engagement, ways of knowing and being (Biddulph et al., 2003; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Flavell, 2017; Siope, 2011). In addition, there is much more to learn about *how* schools and communities develop productive partnerships collaboratively using culturally sustaining practices to support student success (Bishop, 2019).

Evidence from two best evidence syntheses (BES) in NZ highlighted strong evidence for creating educationally powerful connections with parents, families and whānau (Biddulph et al., 2003; Robinson et al., 2009). The Family and Community Engagement BES (Biddulph et al., 2003) advocated utilising Pacific and Māori social networks such as churches and cultural connections to develop students' sense of belonging and well-being. The study also concluded that genuine home–school collaboration could significantly enhance student achievement. However, in the recent NZQA 2021 NCEA Annual Report, data between 2011 and 2020 showed that Māori and Pasifika students are still far behind their Asian and European peers.

The School Leadership and Student Outcomes BES (Robinson et al. 2009) also provided evidence supporting Biddulph et al. (2003) through a meta-analysis including 16 local and 21 international parental-involvement studies. The study identified significant effect sizes (in brackets) for approaches that involved school–parent collaboration: (i) parent and teaching intervention (1.81); (ii) teacher-designed interactive homework with parents (1.38); and (iii) strategy to access family and community funds of knowledge (.93). Robinson et al. (2009) concluded that:

there was great potential for school leaders [and teachers] to counter patterns of under-achievement by building school–family connections that are explicitly related to the core business of teaching and learning. (p. 143)

NZ does not have a shortage of aspirational education documents concerning parent, family and whānau engagement. What it lacks is the will and commitment to change current thinking and practice concerning what our parents and families can bring to school and learning. While the literature often seems to put the blame solely on parent factors such as socioeconomic status (Jeynes, 2019; Yogman & Eppel, 2022), education level or commitment to their children (Valdez et al., 2007), a true partnership cannot blame individuals when the going gets tough; nor take the credit when the grass is green. A true partnership rides the high waves and the low waves together.

Work–Family Life Balance

A key challenge for many fathers is balancing work and making time for their children or family. Many fathers see their provider role as central to their identity and parenting (Livingston & Parker, 2019). The importance of fathers' provisioning role is also "expected" and promoted by the mother and children as they see themselves benefitting from the income that fathers provide for their family (Goldman, 2005). The increasing number of mothers in employment (Pleck, 2012) and the challenges involved in living on a single income (Parker & Livingston, 2019) in the 21st century, have allowed more fathers to take on more nuanced roles such as childcare and homemaker, initially "labelled" as mothers' prerogative.

In the 21st century, many fathers are under tremendous pressure to meet the needs (and wants) of their children and families and their other obligations such as childcare and general housework. Statistics in NZ show that many Pacific fathers work in low-wage job categories such as driving and the labour industries (Stats NZ, 2018). These types of jobs require them to work long hours, and often fathers feel that they need to work overtime to earn extra money to support their families. For some fathers, extra income is earned through a second or third job. In such cases, it becomes difficult for fathers to be involved with their children when they are simply on a "work–sleep–work" rotation. In other families where both mothers and fathers are required to work to make ends meet, both parents become ships passing each other in the night or the early morning hours.

While the core focus of father's provider role is earning extra income to care for the needs and well-being of the family, no amount of money will ever replace the quality time a father spends with his child. Children who grow up with the luxury of having an involved father or father figure in their lives reap many benefits from the warmth and positive engagement they share (Pleck, 2012). Similarly, children nurtured in a two-parent home that is harmonious and engaging also reap positive benefits from having two involved parents (Jeynes, 2015).

Fathers' work–life balance is a complex issue. It involves balancing the perceived needs of each family and the multitude of other commitments and expectations they have or which are imposed on them by others. Complex issues require a better understanding of the nuances that exist around each family context (Cabrera et al, 2014). Understanding the complex dynamics of how Pacific families work to meet the various needs of their children, families (both in NZ and in the Pacific), and church commitments are fundamental for the design of better family and father policies. Of course, every father wants the best for their

child and family. However, the complexity of living in the 21st century and the multiple demands on fathers' time can become too overwhelming for some fathers. The next section discusses the consequences of fathers' involvement.

Section 4: Consequences

Children's Academic Outcomes

Fathers matter for student outcomes. Strong links between fathers' involvement and academic success are well documented in the literature (Bond, 2019; Hsu et al., 2011; Jensen & Minke, 2017; Kim, 2020; Whitney et al., 2017). Parental engagement in children's education is associated with gaining higher grades (Camacho-Thompson et al., 2019; Hill & Tyson, 2009); higher graduation rates (Fan & Chen, 2001); and improved school attendance (Averill et al., 2016; Biddulph et al., 2003; Curtis et al., 2017; Jeynes, 2007; Robinson et al., 2009). Children of engaged fathers with higher education levels also benefit directly from their fathers' knowledge of how the education system works, their social or professional contacts, or how an education system can be utilised to their advantage (S. Park & Holloway, 2018).

Recent studies show that parents who engage their young children in home learning activities such as basic literacy and numeracy activities, writing and drawing practice can support improved academic progress (Dulay et al., 2019; Munro et al., 2021). These studies also suggest that fathers' early engagement with their children can establish positive behaviours and attributes conducive to sustained academic success. For adolescents, although limited studies are available that examine fathers' influence on academic achievement (Faria & Costa, 2017; Jensen & Minke, 2017), research suggests that children who come from intact families in which parents discuss school events positively impacted academic achievement (Jeynes, 2005; 2007; Pruett et al., 2017; Whitney et al., 2017). Academic socialisation (Hill & Tyson, 2009), previously discussed in Section 2 of this literature, has also been widely researched and promoted as the most effective type of parental involvement. However, an interesting finding from Jeynes' meta-analysis showed that father involvement has a more significant impact on children's behaviour than it does on their academic outcomes (Jeynes, 2015). A further highlight from Jeynes' (2015) study was the positive relationships held for both White and minority students. However, despite the positive findings, effect sizes of .2 are considered small to make a significant impact (Robinson et al., 2009).

Despite the strong support for the links between parental involvement and child academic outcomes, other researchers claim that many studies fail to isolate fathers'

influence on children's academic outcomes (Cabrera et al., 2018; Kim, 2018a). Also, the findings in some studies have been mixed and inconclusive, some showing positive relations, negative relations and lack of relations between parental involvement and improved student academic outcomes (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jensen & Minke, 2017). Due to these conflicting findings, perhaps, the evidence from a Taiwanese study with 1043 adolescents can provide closing reassurance that fathers' involvement is vital for the overall well-being of adolescents (Su et al., 2017).

Parent–School Partnerships and Children's Academic Outcomes in NZ

In NZ, parent–school partnerships are widely discussed and encouraged in schools (Biddulph et al., 2003; ERO, 2008a, 2015; Gorinski & Fraser, 2006; MoE, 2018; Wylie, 1999). However, there does not seem to be a shared consensus about its purpose (Bull, 2009). Bull (2009) posited that parent–school partnerships were promoted for two purposes – to bring schools and their communities together and as a strategy to lift student achievement. She also argued that the NZ empirical evidence that supports the links between home–school partnerships and student achievement was “at best patchy” (p. 1). Reviews of NZ home–school partnership initiatives by Mara (1998), Gorinski and Fraser (2006), and Bull et al. (2008), all supported such claim and found little robust evidence that linked home–school partnership initiatives to improvements in student achievement. The three reviews recommended a total rethink of school practice to create educationally powerful connections with Pasifika parents, families, and communities. However, to be fair to those who worked on these programmes, the original purpose of many home–school partnerships focused primarily on encouraging families and whānau to attend school-organised events. In addition, the problem around attendance as the primary measure for success at these initiatives is historical and a fundamental challenge for the father and parental involvement literature.

According to the final report from the Starpath project that initiated PSTs in NZ, the involvement of whānau is critical to the educational well-being of Māori and Pasifika students (Webber et al., 2018). However, while the project has challenged school systems to engage with families and whānau and be more data-informed, evidence showed that schools and teachers were not always making good use of data to inform classroom practices (Webber et al., 2018). The report concluded by admitting that schooling improvement is complex (Robinson, 2018) and that despite the efforts to support schools to set ambitious targets for individual and groups of students, “the conversion of these targets into the strategies required to achieve the targets proved far more difficult” (Webber et al., 2018, p.

93). Perhaps, what lacked in the project was the critical engagement with teachers' and school leaders' theories of action about the current state of achievement for Māori and Pasifika learners and the robustness of the design of a theory for improvement (Robinson, 2018).

Despite the Starpath project's drive to increase Māori and Pasifika students' access to university, evidence from the 2021 NZQA report detailing NCEA achievement between 2011-2020 showed University Entrance (UE) rates for Pasifika and Māori students struggled to reach 30%. For Pasifika, the 30% milestone was only achieved in 2013 (31.6%), 2019 (30.3%), and 2020 (33.7%). For Māori students, UE pass rates only reached 30% twice in the last ten years – 2013 (30.6%) and 2020 (34.1%). The same report also showed that the Pasifika average pass rates for the ten years for Level 1 was 61.1%; Level 2 – 66.8%; Level 3 – 51.8%; and University Entrance – 28.5% (NZQA, 2021). Achieving UE is a testament to any student's perseverance and the effectiveness of their support systems and networks. However, in recent years, these are poor performances considering the investment and supposed focus on "priority learners." The argument here is not whether students go to university, or not. Gaining UE gives students more options moving forward, whether pursuing further studies, seeking employment, or other various endeavours. Without options, students may be locked in a narrow range of pathways, limiting their potential and aspirations to better support their families and contribute to the wider community.

Fathers' Identity as Providers

Father as the family provider is a dominant theme in the father and parental involvement literature. A significant body of research has trumpeted fathers' economic provision prowess as their primary contribution to their children and families (Henz, 2019; Jensen & Minke, 2017; Lamb, 2000; Rouch, 2009). Studies in England, Canada, Africa, Asia and Australia also found that many fathers had a strong affiliation with their breadwinner role (Goldman, 2005; Kim, 2018b; Lee, 2019; Martin, 2013; de Santis & Barham, 2017). Fathers' provider role helped them with their masculine identity and created a strong emotional attachment to their families (Livingston & Parker, 2019; Tautolo, 2011). However, some father studies in England highlighted that other family members (partners and children) were prepared to trade off other fathers' roles (for instance, being available for roles such as moral teacher or nurturer) for fathers to maximise their financial earnings (Goldman, 2005). The trade-off may reflect a consumer-oriented culture of the 21st century where the demands for material goods (from children and partners) reinforce fathers' beliefs about the fundamental

importance of their provider identity (Jeynes, 2015). Consequently, fathers' willingness to invest more time in their provider role may have impacted how they perceived their contributions to their children's education.

However, many fathers face much pressure to provide financially for their families. In a US father study, 76% of adults surveyed reported that men struggled to support their families financially (Livingston & Parker, 2019). In the same study, 49% of men claimed that they also struggled to be actively involved with their children. Competition for fathers' time and the balancing acts they make between work, their families and other commitments present multiple challenges for many modern fathers (Lee, 2019; Palkovitz, 2019). Today, it is increasingly difficult for many families to live on a single income in many Western countries (Livingston & Parker, 2019). However, mothers' entry into the workforce is a welcome relief for some families, providing extra support for fathers in two-parent homes (Pleck, 2012; Pruett et al., 2017). As a result, some fathers may have also felt the need (or pressure) to take on other roles such as childcare or housework in support of mothers or their partners (Rouch, 2009).

Limitations of the Review

I should acknowledge that whilst the focus was on a comprehensive review of current literature on the topic, some studies were likely missed as the search only included published studies within the searched databases. Therefore, any unpublished work was not part of this review. Also, involvement and engagement are the two key terms utilised in the father and parental literature; therefore, other studies that utilised any other terminology may have been missed. However, I hope the broader coverage across the globe has managed to get a "feel" for fathers' experiences in different parts of the world. The large sample of studies from North America and Europe is associated with the previous limitation. The literature sample size represents the current strength and maturity of the father-involvement literature in these regions (Jeynes, 2019). However, to provide some balance, studies from Asia, Africa, Australia, South America, and the Pacific have also been included to provide a different perspective to the conversation.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this review is to critically evaluate the literature in three parts: how fathers were involved in their children's education, the explanatory factors that explained fathers' involvement, and the consequences of fathers' involvement.

First, the current literature presents father involvement as a multidimensional construct consisting of various father attributes, including affective, cognitive and ethical components. Many studies in the review are from the US and Europe, and this shows the strength of the father and parental involvement fields in these regions, well supported through government legislation and tagged funding. However, there is little research about fathers' specific actions with their adolescents at home. Similarly, when fathers are at school, we have little insight concerning what they do in events such as parent–teacher conferences. Minimal work is available in NZ on Pacific or Samoan fathers. Therefore, this study will shed some light on fathers' educational involvement with their children.

Second, in Western countries, government legislation and funding enabled father-specific and parent-focused initiatives, which have helped gain a better understanding of fathers' contexts and developed fathers' self-efficacy and self-belief about the importance of their role as fathers. Father-specific initiatives also enabled insights into the enablers and barriers to fathers' involvement.

Third, it is argued that the purpose of fathers' involvement in their children's lives is tied to improving outcomes for children. Although the direct links between father involvement and academic outcomes are complex, fathers are involved because they want what is best for their children. Fathers' identity and main contributions as a family providers are also closely linked to enhancing the opportunities and outcomes for their children.

Finally, the paucity of studies with Samoan or Pacific fathers in education is one significant gap in the literature this study aims to contribute. Samoan (or Pacific) fathers have no voice in the father-involvement conversation, mainly dominated by researchers and social scientists from the US and the UK. In addition, deficit views of and about fathers may place many fathers at the crossroads of uncertainty and confusion, not just in how they conceptualise and carry out their roles but also in the complex web of expectations from school leaders and teachers about their in-school and home-based involvement with their children. In the following chapter, I describe and justify the methodology and methods used to answer the three overarching research questions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter sets out the methodology and methods utilised to investigate the topic. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section 1 describes and justifies the applied qualitative approach and the need for a Pasifika lens to study the topic. In Section 2, I introduce the two nested methodological frameworks (PBM and talanoa), the rationale for their use and the links to research questions. Section 3 discusses the case study research design and rationale for its selection and introduces the three church communities and two secondary schools as sites for the research, followed by information about how the participants were recruited. Next, data collection and analysis methods are discussed across the three studies. The chapter closes with strategies employed to ensure research validity and culturally authentic research

Section 1: Rationale for Qualitative Research Approach

A qualitative research approach focuses on an exploratory investigation and discovery, ideal for understanding and interpreting complex educational phenomena (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009). A quantitative approach typically starts with a theory (or theories) and a set of hypotheses to test these ideas through exploring the relationships between variables (Creswell, 2014). This research was grounded in a constructivist approach (Charmaz, 2006), which allowed me to enter the world of key participants involved in PSTs to gain a holistic understanding of this topic. Arguably, this research capitalised on the strengths of a qualitative paradigm with its emphasis on:

- discovery, developing a contextualised understanding of a specific problem of practice (Braun & Clarke, 2013),
- interactivity between researcher and participants (Creswell, 2014), and
- flexibility (Tracy, 2013) in order to gain a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

The Importance of a Samoan/Pasifika Lens

Since the renaissance of interest and critical examination of educational practice in NZ concerning Pacific achievement in the 1990s, many Pacific scholars have been calling for a paradigm shift and changes in the systems, processes, underpinning philosophies and conduct of researchers working in the Pacific space (Airini et al., 2010; Anae et al., 2001; Helu Thaman, 2019; Si'ilata, 2014; Vaiioleti, 2013). However, the call for this paradigm shift

has been much more challenging and slower to implement than expected. This study utilised a Samoan father/educator lens through the specific interpretation and exemplification of specific Samoan values of alofa (caring), fa'aaloalo (respect), and tautua (service), guided by the Pasifika Education Research Guidelines (PERG) (Anae et al., 2001). The utilisation of Samoan perspectives, protocols, values and practices throughout the different phases of the study ensures that the focus is on empowering and transforming the lives of Pacific peoples (Anae, 2016; Rimoni & Averill, 2019). The PERG capture this transformative approach:

[the purpose of] these guidelines is to establish research practices that ensure that the research outcomes contribute as much to improving educational outcomes and well-being and promoting and maintaining Pacific empowerment. It is hoped that such practices will become normalised within the research community. (Anae et al., 2001, p. 4)

By adopting a Samoan worldview and methodological processes throughout the research project, this study emphasised the importance of a “doing with” (collaborative) rather than a “doing to” approach. In addition, this study aimed to embed such understanding as captured by PERG:

the primary role of Pacific research is to develop, therefore, a uniquely Pacific world view that is underpinned by Pacific values, belief systems and ways of structuring knowledge, which will become core values and ideologies underpinning the development process and as well as the education system that is the crucial instrument in its promotion. (p. 8)

This research aimed to model the use of Samoan values throughout all aspects of the study. Table 3.1 gives a snapshot of how some of the selected values were exemplified in the study.

Table 3.1

Exemplification of Samoan Values in this Research

Value	Action	Exemplified in the study
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used appropriate form of address, language and terms of reference Used Samoan protocols throughout the study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Susu maia lau susuga a le faafeagaiga; afioga a le Maupu, mamalu i le Faleaana</i> (Welcome Reverend, orators of Faleaana) Use of <i>faatulima</i> (welcoming when greeting participants on arrival) All material translated in Samoan

Value	Action	Exemplified in the study
Reciprocity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared food with participants during or after focus group interviews Offered educational assistance to their children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food provided and shared with different groups based on location, venue, and time available Dropped off some food to one family with a father who lost his job during the pandemic
Gerontocracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus group meetings temporarily paused as we welcomed late arrivals Division in two groups – older and younger fathers Use of appropriate language and salutations, e.g., <i>faalupega, susuga a le faafeagaiga</i> (welcome Reverend) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One high chief was 10 minutes late in the second focus group meeting. So, on arrival, the meeting was paused and we (myself and other three fathers) welcomed him in the appropriate Samoan way, e.g., <i>Afio maia lau afioga le Makuaalii</i> (Welcome, honourable Makuaalii)
Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offered education support for church groups and parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offered to set up educational support programme at each of the three churches
Spirituality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attended church and spoke to congregation about study Started and closed all interactions with a prayer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledged participants' roles at their church Led by the minister or elder in group
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintained connections with ministers during and after the study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established and maintained contacts with the minister and secretary of church groups to organise support for parents and students
Humility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowered fathers to believe they have knowledge and expertise “Underplayed” the importance and significance of the study¹⁰ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledged high and talking chiefs' expertise e.g., language and culture

Section 2: Methodological Frameworks

Problem-Based Methodology

As described earlier in Chapter 1, PBM is a framework developed to help explain, evaluate, and improve practices in rigorous ways (Robinson, 1993). In PBM, the concept of a ToA (Argyris & Schön, 1974) is a powerful source of explanation to understand study participants' actions, the explanatory factors that led to the particular actions, and the

¹⁰ Samoan people generally respond well to people who do not blow their own trumpet

consequences of their chosen actions (Robinson & Lai, 2006). As some fathers may not be aware of the links between their actions, factors and consequences, PBM can help them make the links more explicit through discussion and critical reflection (Argyris, 1993). By making the links more explicit, fathers may then reflect critically and evaluate the impact of their actions on themselves and those they wish to influence.

Talanoa Framework

Talanoa (Vaiotei, 2013) was utilised to create a free-flowing conversation about the participants' experiences, allowing the participants more control over the direction and focus of the conversation (Fletcher et al., 2005). Moreover, fathers' familiarity with talanoa in action helped to diminish the power imbalance between the researcher and participants and gave them a sense of informality that allowed them to relax and interact with other participants and drew their attention away from an investigative (detective-type) approach not intended for this study (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2014)

Rationale for a Dual Methodological Framework Approach

The rationale for selecting a dual methodological approach was twofold. First, the flexibility of the PBM framework to accommodate a variety of qualitative research methods is a strength (Robinson & Lai, 2006). In addition, PBM provided a rigorous framework to help explain and evaluate participant and school practices (Sinnema et al., 2021; Welton, 2020)

Second, talanoa acknowledges the importance and presence of culture and the ways of knowing and being. There has been an increasing number of Pasifika learners in NZ classrooms interacting with a largely non-Pacific teaching workforce (Salesa, 2017). With the ongoing challenges to meet the learning needs of Pasifika learners and their families (MoE, 2018), any endeavour to work with and understand Pacific peoples must utilise and be inclusive of Pacific methodological philosophies and processes (Anae et al., 2001; Fa'avae, 2016). Talanoa, working alongside PBM, provided a safe, culturally sensitive (Vaiotei, 2013) single tool that allowed participants' discussion to explore the deep within a culturally safe and familiar environment.

Research Questions

As stated earlier in Chapter 1, the three overarching research questions are:

1. How are Samoan fathers and male caregivers engaged in PSTs?
2. What explains Samoan fathers' and male caregivers' engagement in PSTs?

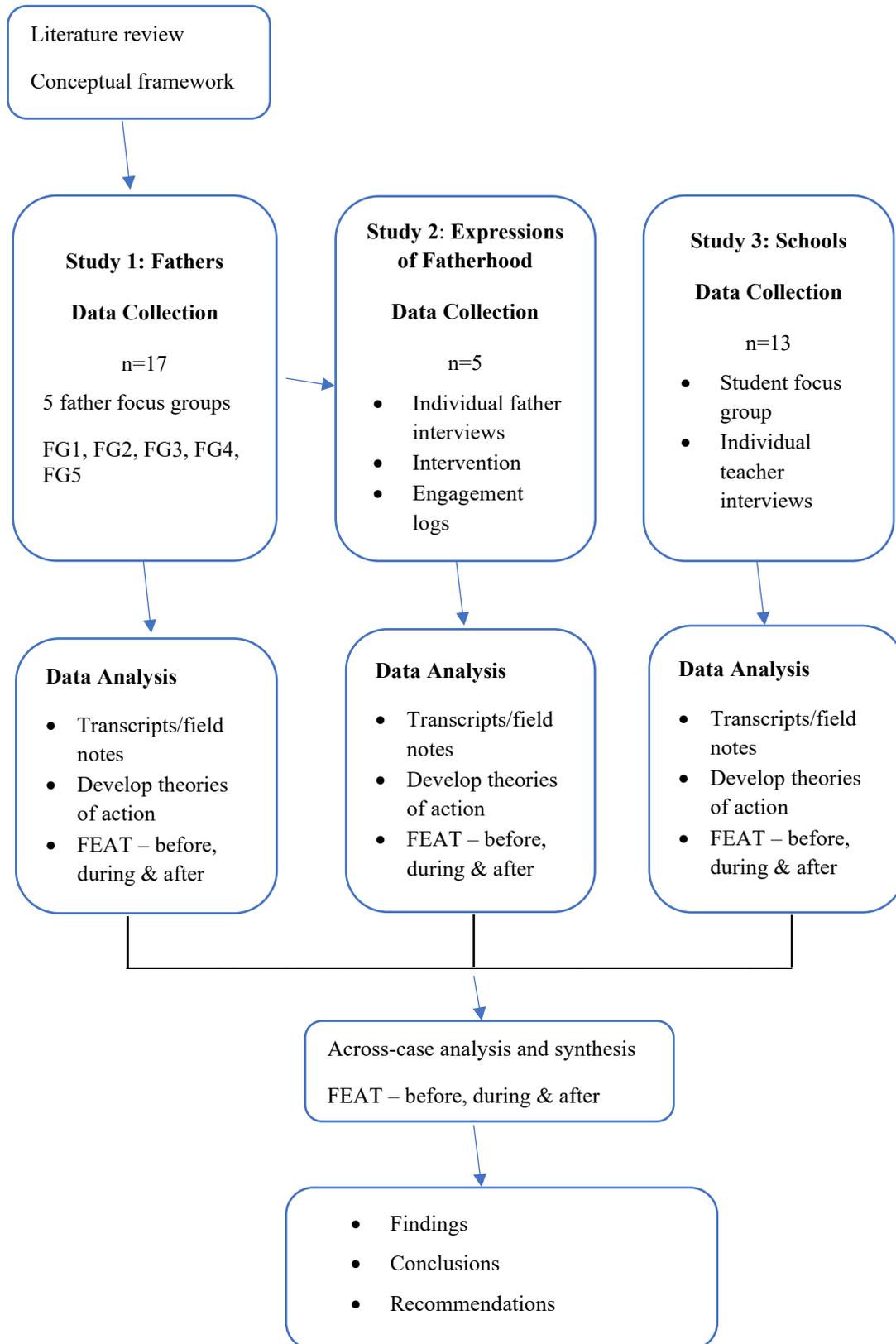
3. What are the consequences of Samoan fathers' and male caregivers' engagement in PSTs for themselves, their children, and families?

Section 3: Research Design and Methods

The research utilised a multicase study design supported by PBM (Robinson, 1993) and talanoa (Vaiotei, 2013) to answer the three research questions. A case study is a qualitative methodological design that allows for in-depth exploration of a particular individual, concept or event (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). The exploratory nature of case studies allowed me to probe various participants' perspectives to gain a holistic and detailed description of PSTs as experienced by fathers, teachers and students (Yin, 2009). Fathers' involvement in PSTs was investigated through three studies. Study 1 involved an initial probe with 17 fathers (5 focus groups) across three church communities. Study 2 explored five fathers' (purposely selected from the initial sample of 17) involvement in PSTs at a deeper level. Finally, Study 3 investigated how two secondary schools planned, implemented and evaluated their PSTs through the lens of two DPs, a dean, a FT and nine students. Figure 3.1 outlines how the three studies were framed to gain an improved understanding of PSTs.

Figure 3.1

Model for Data Collection Across Three Studies Converging to Across-Case Analysis



Study Participants and Recruitment

This section explains how the church communities, schools and study participants were recruited and selected for the research.

Church Communities

Recruiting. Three Samoan church communities in Auckland, NZ, were invited to participate in the study, all located within 2 km of Kauri College (one of the schools involved in the study). The churches were targeted because, according to the college's DP, a large number of their Samoan students attend these church communities. The recruitment process followed the Samoan protocols of seeking permission first through the church boards or ministers to check if there was interest in the study, or not. Fathers were recruited through the church communities strategically for several reasons. First, as the study aimed to understand the topic from a range of participant perspectives, including those considered regular, occasional and nonattendees at PSTs, I needed to locate an environment where such participants were more likely to "come out" and talk about their experiences – either positive or negative (Cahill, 2006). Second, the ability to discuss the topic in the participants' main language (Samoan), removed a significant language barrier for some fathers who may not have considered taking part in the study (Wilson, 2017). Third, the church is an integral part of many Pacific peoples' communal lives and spiritual well-being (Taule'ale'ausumai, 2019). Having the church communities as the locations for data gathering gave participants a "neutral" place (their place), where they felt that they could openly discuss their views without any fear of being identified or linked to their school.

For CC1, I had a face-to-face meeting with the minister and secretary to discuss the study. As I am a member of this church community, I emphasised the importance of voluntary involvement during the meeting. Both the minister and secretary saw the study as an opportunity to continue the church's focus on education. They decided to accept the study and to organise a meeting after a Sunday service with any interested fathers.

For CC2, the recruitment involved a visit to the church on Sunday morning and a phone conversation with the minister. The minister welcomed the study but asked for me to come to a meeting with fathers at church. The Covid-19 pandemic delayed engagement with CC2 until 7 months later. On a Sunday during November 2020, I finally had the opportunity to speak about the study in front of the whole congregation. The congregation decided to accept the study but allowed individual fathers to make their own decisions about whether to take part in the study, or not.

For CC3, after an initial phone conversation with the minister, a meeting with the church board and minister took place at church in February 2021 in the evening to discuss the study. The meeting was conducted using the Samoan traditional protocols: a formal welcome by the church secretary, then the minister opened with a prayer before our discussion of the study. I handed out copies of the participant information sheets (PIS; see Appendix A, in Samoan) and started talking through the sections of the study, pausing at times to check for questions or comments. We then discussed the study's time expectations before opening up for further questions. After an hour, the church board agreed to take part in the study.

Final Sample. The final sample included all three churches, which belong to three different denominations: AOG, CCCS and Methodist. My recruitment of fathers with children (male or female, 16 years and over) at senior secondary schools for Study 1 is explained below.

Recruiting Fathers for Study 1

Fathers From CC1. After an initial meeting with the minister and secretary, the secretary called a meeting after the Sunday service in January 2020. The co-constructed format for the meeting involved the minister introducing the purpose for the meeting, and then 15 minutes was given to me to inform participants about the study and answer any questions. About 20 fathers remained behind to listen to the talk. I went over the study requirements before inviting questions from participants. Three questions were asked relating to (i) criteria for inclusion, as some grandfathers wished to be involved; (ii) involvement expectations; and (iii) whether the study was compulsory for all fathers. PIS and consent forms (CF; see Appendix B) were made available the following Tuesday, during choir practice, and the following two Sundays for interested participants. Fathers were asked to hand in their CF within 2 weeks if they wanted to participate in the study. Seven participants expressed an interest in taking part in the study. However, two fathers were unavailable for the focus group interviews due to health and work reasons.

Fathers from CC2. On a Sunday in November 2020, I had the opportunity to talk about the study in front of the whole congregation. Speaking in formal Samoan, I acknowledged the minister, his wife and church leaders for the time and opportunity to speak to the congregation. I handed out the scaffolded PIS, all written in Samoan (an English version of the PIS was also available) and talked through each part, pausing and checking after two or three paragraphs for questions. After going through the PIS, I then invited questions from participants. No questions were asked, but this was understandable as I was

addressing the whole congregation, and some fathers or participants may not have wanted to ask questions about such a matter in front of a big audience. More copies of the PIS and CF were left at the church after my talk for interested fathers. On my second visit, the following Sunday, nine fathers handed in their CFs to me personally. I then worked with the minister to organise our meeting dates and next steps.

Fathers From CC3. After gaining approval from the church board, we met with a group of eight fathers after the church service in March 2021 to discuss the study. After going through the PIS and CF, I then invited questions from fathers. Five fathers showed interest and then we worked out a day and time for our first meeting that suited everyone. April 5, Easter Monday, was decided as the day for our first meeting at their church. I gave out folders to interested fathers containing PIS, CF and questions for Focus Group Interviews 1 and 2. I then thanked them for making time, knowing that our first meeting was on a holiday and they were willing to come in to talk with me. I sent text reminders to the church secretary on Easter Friday and Sunday, reminding fathers about our first meeting on Monday.

Final Sample. Five fathers were recruited from CC1, seven from CC2, and five from CC3. The average age for fathers was 53 years. Fourteen fathers had lived in NZ for 25, two for 20 (Tanielu and Mataio) and one for 11 years (Eperu). All fathers were married and had a child (biological or adopted), or grandchild, who was at secondary school or who had left secondary school within the last 3 years (2018–2020). Concerning PSTs, four fathers classified themselves as regular attendees, four as occasional attendees, and nine as nonattendees. Across the participants, the average number of people per household was six. For qualifications, four fathers had diplomas; six had school certificates; six did not have any qualifications; one did not say. Isaia and Kenese were born in NZ, and 15 fathers were born in Samoa. Table 3.2 gives an overview of the participants across the three church communities. More detailed information about each group of fathers is provided in Chapter 4.

Table 3.2*Summary Table for Study 1 Participants*

Father	Church	PSTs attende type	Age	Born	Secondary education	Highest qualification	Work	Number of children at secondary school
Eperu	3	NA	40	Samoa	Samoa	None	E	1
Esekielu	1	NA	74	Samoa	Samoa	Diploma	R	1-G
Filemoni	3	OA	52	Samoa	Samoa	Diploma	E	1-F
Iakopo	3	NA	62	Samoa	Samoa	SC	ACC	1-N
Ieremia	1	OA	56	Samoa	Samoa	Diploma	E	2
Ioane	3	NA	60	Samoa	Samoa	Diploma	E	1-G
Iopu	2	RA	63	Samoa	Samoa	DNS	R	1-F
Isaia	1	RA	41	NZ	NZ	SC	E	1
Kenese	1	OA	44	NZ	NZ	SC	E	2
Levi	2	RA	28	Samoa	None	None	E	1
Mataio	2	NA	36	Samoa	NZ	None	E	1
Mika	2	NA	56	Samoa	Samoa	None	ACC	1
Nofoaiga	2	NA	62	Samoa	Samoa	SC	E	1-F
Numera	2	RA	60	Samoa	Samoa	SC	E	1-F
Tanielu	1	NA	62	Samoa	Samoa	SC	E	2-G
Tito	3	OA	62	Samoa	Samoa	None	E	1-G
Tupu	2	NA	52	Samoa	Samoa	None	E	1

F: Child left secondary school between 2018–2020; G: Grandchild. N: Niece; RA: regular attendee; OA: occasional attendee; NA: nonattendee; E: employed; R: retired; ACC: accident compensation benefit

Fathers for Study 2

Recruiting. While the original plan was to select the five fathers from all three church communities, the uncertainties and challenges imposed by multiple Covid-19 lockdowns from 2020 to 2021, in Auckland especially, caused a delay in engaging with CC3. Therefore, to maintain study momentum, I proceeded with selecting five fathers from CC1 and CC2 only. As more than five participants “of interest” were available, the final selection was purposely selected to show diverse experiences and practices. Purposive sampling allowed me to select participants who best fit the purpose of the study (Tracy, 2013). Recent Pacific studies on Tongan fathers (Fa’avae, 2016), use of the Samoan language in Samoan families (Wilson, 2017), and effective literacy practice in primary schools (Si’ilata, 2014), have utilised purposive sampling successfully to ensure the “best-fit” respondents are selected to meet the purpose of the study (Tracy, 2013).

Final Sample. Five fathers with children currently at senior secondary school level were purposely selected to ensure that the conversation about PSTs was current and not necessarily relying on fathers’ recall of events in the past. The sample included two regular attendees, one occasional attendee and two nonattendees. The selected fathers’ ages ranged from 28 to 52 years. Two fathers were born in NZ; three were born in Samoa, but two came to NZ when they were teenagers. All fathers were married, and each represented either a unique or common pattern of Samoan fathering that may help progress our learning about the topic under investigation. Chapter 5 is dedicated to the five fathers in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Study 2 Father Background Information

Father	PSTs attendee type	Age	Born	Secondary education	Qual	Work	Children at secondary school
Isaia	RA	41	NZ	NZ	SC	E	1
Kenese	OA	44	NZ	NZ	SC	E	2
Levi	RA	28	Samoa	None	None	E	1
Mataio	NA	36	Samoa	NZ	SC	E	1
Tupu	NA	52	Samoa	Samoa	None	E	1

Note: PST: parent–student–teacher conferences; RA: regular attendee; OA: occasional attendee; NA: nonattendee; SC: School Certificate; E: employed

Secondary Schools for Study 3

Recruiting. I sent an email with a PIS and a form teacher CF to the principals of five schools that implement PSTs in a particular area of Auckland. As schools are busy organisations, I also requested a time to meet with each principal to discuss the study further and to answer any questions they may have had. After 2 weeks of silence, I decided to resend the study information again. One principal, just starting in her new school, called for more information about the study and then decided to decline, but wished me luck for the study. I sent out the information again (to four schools) and copied in a couple of DPs at two different schools. It worked. The two DPs replied to my email within a week, expressing an interest in the study. I quickly capitalised on my luck and organised face-to-face meetings with each school to discuss the specific details of the study.

Final Sample. The two secondary schools (Kauri College and Totara College) were recruited as they were in the vicinity of several Samoan church communities. For Kauri College, there were five Samoan church communities within a 3-km zone. Totara College had two Samoan churches within a 3-km range. Kauri College was closest to the three church communities recruited for the study. The student population of the two schools was predominantly Pacific and Māori: Kauri College had a Pacific population of 80%, and Totara College 85%. Samoan students made up the biggest proportion of the Pacific population at both schools.

Deputy Principals, Form Teacher and Dean

Recruiting. In NZ secondary schools, a DP oversees the PST conference portfolio. Therefore, recruiting DPs allowed insights into the thinking of the primary person responsible for the design, implementation and evaluation of PSTs. The two DPs who replied to my email accepted the invitation to take part in the study. Both DPs have been in their respective roles (at the same schools) for more than 10 years.

FTs are the backbone of PSTs. FTs are charged with mentoring groups of students throughout their journey at secondary schools and form a critical part of the triad (parent–student–teacher) for PSTs. For Totara College, two FTs were recommended by the DP to contact as possible candidates. As I only needed one FT for the study, I sent an email to the first FT with a PIS and CF attached. The FT replied to my email within a day expressing an interest in the study.

Deans are experienced and former FTs. Deans look after FTs at either particular year levels, for instance all Year 12 FTs (vertical form-class system); or look after a number of

FTs who have form classes across years levels (horizontal form-class system). The DP at Kauri College recommended an experienced dean for me to contact. I sent an email to the dean with a PIS and CF and invited her to a Zoom or phone meeting to discuss the study further. The dean replied within 2 days and after our phone conversation, she also agreed to participate in the study.

Final Sample. For Kauri College, one DP and a dean were recruited to shed light on the topic. The dean had over 10 years’ experience running PST meetings and 4 years as dean. For Totara College, the DP had been at the school in the senior role for over 16 years. The FT had mentored the same students for 4 years. Table 3.4 profiles the teachers from the two schools involved in the study.

Table 3.4

Profiles of Teacher Participants

Pseudonym	School	Age	Gender	Years at school	Ethnicity	Role	Experience in PSTs (years)
Ary	TC	28	F	5	Samoan	FT	5
Bree	KC	55	F	15	Samoan	Dean	11
Ema	TC	60	F	23	Samoan	DP	16+
Rose	KC	48	F	13	Samoan	DP	16+

Note: KC: Kauri College; TC: Totara College; DP: deputy principal; FT: form teacher.

Students

Recruiting. The DP at Kauri College invited 18 Year 12 students (17-year-olds) from a senior Samoan language class (all were of Samoan descent) to meet with me at school. For Totara College, seven boys at Years 12 and 13 were invited by the DP. All the meetings took place at the respective schools during allocated times set by the DPs. I adopted the same format for recruiting students at both schools. I started the meeting by checking their preferred language of communication (Samoan or English) and thanked them for agreeing to meet with me before I informed them about the purpose of my visit. Next, I introduced myself, making connections to all the villages on my mother’s and father’s sides. I then invited each of the students to tell me their names and any church or village connections (if known) that they identify with. As the students shared, I responded by making quick connections to some of the known aspects such as landmarks, known chief titles, or favourite cricket teams from their villages. For instance, anyone from the village of Nofoli’i, I would quickly reply, *tama/teine o le Rosa Pa’epa’e* (boy/girl of the White Rose), a famous band from Nofoli’i village. The short introductions helped me (and the students) establish

connection points through their villages, districts, or church connections, and to “humanise” and nurture the *va fealoa’i* (relationships) between a stranger (me) and their familiar surrounding peers (Anae, 2016).

PIS were then handed out and I went through each paragraph, checking for understanding. After the discussion, CFs were handed out, and each bullet point was addressed to ensure clarity for students’ involvement. After talking through the study and answering questions from students, I thanked them for their time, and reminded them to hand in their CFs to the DPs, if they wanted to participate in the study, within a week. I then invited students to enjoy some snacks my wife had prepared as acknowledgement for their time. It is customary to acknowledge people’s time through food or some form of *koha* (gift) in Samoan culture (Wilson, 2017). Before I left the school, seven students at Kauri College handed their CFs to me. The DP of Totara College informed me that all seven CFs were handed in within 3 days of our meeting.

Final Sample. Only five students were available at Kauri College during the meeting times proposed by the DP. Two students were unavailable due to clashes with out-of-school work experience on the same days our meetings took place. At Totara College, only four students were able to the focus group meetings from the seven who initially showed interest. Again, clashes between class and meeting times or student absence prevented three students from attending the focus group meetings. All students had a father or father figure in their lives at the time of the study. Table 3.5 profiles the students from both schools.

Table 3.5

Demographic Details of Students from Kauri College and Totara College

Pseudonym	School	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Born	Father/male caregiver	Parent attending PSTs
Ave	KC	F	17	Samoan	Samoa	Uncle	Mother
Manino	KC	F	17	Samoan	NZ	Father	Mother
Sina-Lei	KC	F	17	Samoan	NZ	Father	Mother/sister
Sui	KC	F	17	Samoan	NZ	Uncle	Mother
Tofi	KC	F	17	Samoan	Samoa	Father	Aunty
Dorian	TC	M	17	Samoan	NZ	Father	Mother
Eli	TC	M	17	Samoan	Samoa	Uncle	Aunty
Esria	TC	M	18	Samoan	NZ	Father	Father & mother
Kone	TC	M	17	Samoan	Samoa	Uncle	Aunty & uncle

Note: KC: Kauri College; TC: Totara College

The following section gives a short overview of the data-collection phases followed by a description of the methods and data collected for the research.

Data-Collection Methods

Data-Collection Phases for the Study

The first data-collection phase started in February to March 2020 with fathers at CC1 (Study 1). The Covid-19 pandemic lockdown at the end March 2020 delayed data collection for 6 months. During this time, I worked on testing some of my tools with two fathers and family members, including my children now adapting to online learning at home. The second stage took place in September to October 2020, when life returned to a different type of normality. This stage was motivated by the insecurity and potential for continuous lockdowns. I made contact with two fathers “of interest” from CC1 and explored individual interviews through Zoom (Study 2). The third stage took place during the November to December 2020 window. This phase focused on data collection with four focus group meetings with students and four focus group meetings with CC2 fathers. The fourth stage took place during January to May 2021. This phase focused on Study 2 with five fathers, and father intervention; CC3 participants (Study 1); and FT, dean and DPs (Study 3). The fifth stage took place from May to August 2021. This stage involved taking the data back to the participants to check for accuracy and give feedback. The following gives further details of the three studies. The methods used for data collection, their rationale, strengths and limitations are also discussed.

Study 1: Father Focus Groups

O le tele o sulu e maua a figota (Many lights shining in the same direction can bring a big catch).

Focus group interviews were one of the main tools utilised to gather data for this qualitative study. A focus group is a discussion on a single topic that maximises the strength of a group (Krueger, 2014). Underpinning the rationale for using focus groups is the assumption that fathers, whether regular, occasional or nonattendees in PSTs, have ideas about the topic worth knowing and understanding (Merriam, 2009). The Samoan fishing proverb above captures the essence of focus groups. As more light is shone on this uncharted terrain (fathers’ involvement), we may see a better way forward to help fathers, their families and schools in their collective effort to improve educational outcomes for Pacific students in NZ.

For this research, I utilised the concept of “mini-laboratories,” as described by Tracy (2013), where the aim is to have small groups ranging from between two to five participants

per group. Small groups allowed participants sufficient time to express their views and respond to others' ideas (Tracy, 2013). However, regardless of their flexibility and broad appeal in the qualitative field, focus groups also have certain disadvantages. Among these disadvantages is the assumption that all participants will contribute freely (Creswell, 2014). Another is the need for strong facilitation skills to manage the group dynamics and individual contributions (Krueger, 2014).

Two groups (younger and older fathers) were established based on language preference and to cater for the diversity of fathers. Younger NZ-born fathers tended to use mainly English, while Samoan was the preferred language for older fathers. In addition, the cultural dimension concerning relational positioning – *va fealoa'i* (Anae, 2016) – was another rationale for the division into younger and older father focus groups. *Va fealoa'i* refers to the subtle, respectful but complex and sacred relationships between people. For instance, *va fealoa'i* could impact the types and quality of responses as young fathers may simply agree with older fathers' stance on a topic as they do not want to be perceived as "*fiapoto*" (wanting to be a know-it-all). In each focus group, there was a range of fathers, from younger untitled fathers, to orators, high chiefs, ministers, lay preachers, and church board members. Managing this relational space and group dynamics were key factors that informed the division into two groups for CC1 and CC2. However, one of the limitations of this division was that younger fathers missed hearing and learning from more experienced, older fathers and vice versa.

Approach to Focus Group Facilitation. Two church ministers were involved in two older father focus groups. Before data collection, I discussed with the ministers the study's ethical requirements regarding fathers' voluntary participation and minimising their influence (perceived or real) during the interviews. Two strategies were agreed on to facilitate this process. One was a co-constructed and "disguised" seating plan that positioned the minister at the far end of the semicircle or table, which then allowed him (the minister) to ask the nearest person to me to start if fathers defaulted to him to respond first.

The other strategy was to ensure that the minister was the last person to respond to most questions. For most of the time, this was very successful, except for several incidents where it was more natural for the minister to respond to something directed to him by another father, or from me. Both language options (Samoan and English) allowed participants to move freely between the two languages when necessary. General prompts were used as starters, but participants took control of the conversation's direction, tempo, and depth. I played the central role of a facilitator and co-creator of knowledge, occasionally entering the

discussion to “fill in” or recommencing the conversation when it stalled, clarifying any misunderstandings, and answering any questions posed by participants.

Interview Schedule and Pilot. I first drafted a set of questions using the PBM framework’s three interrelated components – explanatory factors, actions, and consequences (Robinson & Lai, 2006). Guidance and feedback from my supervisors informed Draft 2 of the questions. I then translated the Draft 2 questions into Samoan and used two fluent speakers in my family to check for accuracy and clarity. Their feedback centred on being aware of fathers with limited knowledge of how education works in NZ, or about the topic itself. The questions (in English) were then tested with one father on Zoom. The review of the recording showed my tendency to overelaborate the questions, especially when there was a pause (which I perceived as lack of question clarity) before the participant responded. However, one limitation of the trial was that I needed more than one participant to see how the questions could be “tossed around” in a group situation (Krueger, 2014). Another limitation was the lack of trial using the Samoan language. However, the learning from the trial, and feedback from family members and supervisors, informed the final version of the interview schedule (see Appendix C).

Focus Group Interview Process. To reflect the culture and uniqueness of the participants and their settings, traditional Samoan protocols and processes were followed using the approach outlined below. All focus group interviews started and closed with a prayer by one of the group members, often by the minister, lay preacher, or someone of senior rank within each church. Although participants were given copies of the questions before each interview, I found it useful to go over the purpose of the study, and the questions, before the start of each interview, after the formalities. Going over the questions served as a reminder, prompted participants and also helped clarify any misunderstandings they may have had about each question. Spare copies of the questions and study information (in both Samoan and English), pens and writing pads were also available for each participant to make any notes for themselves if required. The conversation on the topic started with checking for fathers who had been to PSTs. Knowing who had attended PSTs, or not, gave me a better feel for whom to ask specific questions of and to prevent the “left-to-right” or “right-to-left” approach likely to emerge. I also used my knowledge of fathers’ involvement levels to break the Samoan cultural practice of getting the minister or most senior person to answer first, and then progressing, with the youngest person’s turn last. The process I adopted for focus group interviews is outlined below:

1. *Tatalo* (opening prayer)

2. *Fa'afeiloa'i* (welcome and acknowledgement of participant time)
3. *Auga o le mafutaga* (purpose of the meeting)
4. *Fa'asologa o le talanoaga* (process for the meeting, going over the questions)
5. *Talanoaga* (discussion of the topic)
6. *Fa'aiu le talanoaga* (end the discussion, ask for any questions, any administration for the study, signal next steps)
7. *Fa'afetai* (thank the participants)
8. *Tatalo fa'aiu* (closing prayer)
9. *Tali le sua* (refreshments)

The interview proper started with fathers' engagement – actions associated with PSTs. To capture fathers' experiences of these events, I asked them to retell what had happened when they arrived at the room or school. To gain insights into the factors that informed their involvement, or not, I asked probing questions about their motivations or reasons for attending and/or not attending these conferences. Questions about consequences and impact were generally asked last unless there was a natural progression due to participant's narrative. At the end of the first interview, 10–15 minutes were spent collecting demographic data and activities such as going over the plan for the next interview, negotiating a day that suited everyone for the next meeting, going over the plan for Interview 2, and answering any questions fathers had. The formalities closed with me thanking the participants for their time and expertise, followed by a shared meal prepared by my family. Our conversation continued during the shared meal, creating a closer bond and connection between participants and researcher. In Samoan custom, a *faatau* (discussion for the right to speak on behalf of the group) initiated by one of fathers, usually a talking chief, signalled an end to the formalities, where a group representative would speak on behalf of the group to acknowledge the meal before a closing prayer. Each focus group met at their church community, and each interview lasted between 90–120 minutes. Table 3.6 outlines the details of the father focus group interviews.

Table 3.6*Summary Table for Focus Group Interviews*

Church community-focus group	Interview	Meeting date	No of participants	Meeting duration (mins)	Allocated meeting time	Language used
CC1-FG1	1	23/02/ 2020	3	2.09	6.30–8.30 pm	Samoan
CC1-FG1	2	30/07 2020	3	1.30	6–8 pm	Samoan
CC1-FG2	1	9/03/ 2020	2	1.36	5–7 pm	English/Samoan
CC1-FG2	2	13/01/ 2021	2	1.36	5–7 pm	English/Samoan
CC2-FG3	1	29/11/ 2020	5	1.37	4.30–6.30 pm	English/Samoan
CC2-FG3	2	6/12/ 2020	5	1.55	5.30–7.15 pm	Samoan
CC2-FG4	1	28/11/ 2020	3	1.36	5–6.50 pm	Samoan
CC2-FG4	2	5/12/ 2020	3	1.55	5–7 pm	Samoan
CC3-FG5	1	5/04/ 2021	5	1.43	3–5 pm	Samoan
CC3-FG5	2	10/04/ 2021	5	2.06	11 am–1 pm	Samoan

Study 2: Five Expressions of Fatherhood

Five fathers from the Study 1 sample were purposely selected for Study 2. The purpose for Study 2 was to delve deeper into the topic with a small sample of fathers. The selected participants took part in three phases. Phase 1 involved two individual interviews; Phase 2 required them to complete a daily log for 7 days detailing their engagement with their child and any interaction with the school; and Phase 3 involved two 120-minute intervention workshops. The workshops included learning about education in NZ, NCEA, discussion of father-research findings, and practical tips and discussion on ways to support their children's learning at home and school. The five selected cases exemplified typical or unique expressions of fatherhood in the Samoan community, which may help shed light on the topic further. Typical expressions of fatherhood included hard-working fathers with high aspirations for educational success for their children. Unique expressions of fatherhood included those who showed active involvement in PSTs despite the challenges they encountered, or those who appeared disengaged on the surface but were actively involved in other ways in the lives of their children, families, or communities. The selected fathers' ages ranged from 28–52 years. The profiles of the selected participants are provided in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7*Summary Table for Study 2 Father Participants*

Father	PSTs attendee type	Age	Born	Sec education	Highest qual	Work	Children at secondary school
Isaia	RA	41	NZ	NZ	SC	E	1
Kenese	OA	44	NZ	NZ	SC	E	2
Levi	RA	28	Samoa	None	None	E	1
Mataio	NA	36	Samoa	NZ	SC	E	1
Tupu	NA	52	Samoa	Samoa	None	E	1

Note: PSTs: parent–student-teacher conferences; SC: School Certificate.

Two fathers were born in NZ and three in Samoa. The average age for fathers was 40 years and all had lived in NZ for 20 years or more. All fathers were married with children at secondary schools at the time of the research. Three fathers had attended PSTs before; Mataio and Tupu had yet to attend one. All fathers were employed mainly as labourers or in the services industry. Isaia, Kenese and Mataio had School Certificate as their highest qualification. Tupu and Levi did not have any formal qualifications. The three phases for Case Study 2 are detailed below.

Phase 1: Father Individual Interviews. Interviews were designed to gather rich information with a focus on participant behaviour, preferences, feelings, attitudes, opinions or knowledge about the topic (Creswell, 2014). As the study aimed to explore a range of participants’ perspectives (regular, occasional, or nonattendees in PSTs), individual interviews provided a means to hear the voices of specific participants, especially those who may have felt constrained by the impact of the focus groups (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004). Individual interviews were conducted face to face and using Zoom. Six face-to-face and four Zoom meetings took place and were organised around the times to suit the participants. The decision to meet online through Zoom, although tentative at first as most studies with Pacific participants have recommended face-to-face interaction (Fa’avae, 2016; Wilson, 2017), turned out to be a better compromise. The flexibility of online interviews fitted in with the busy lives of three participants and the constraints for face-to-face interactions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. More information on individual father interviews can be found on Table 3.10.

The first interview occurred after the focus group interviews, the second following the father intervention. The first interview explored participants’ involvement in PSTs and the

factors that explain their involvement, how they supported their children's learning at home, the impact of their involvement, and connections with their secondary school. The second interview focused on checking my summary of each father's ToA about their involvement in PSTs. The conversation was fluid. I also asked fathers to make corrections to my record on the day or after our final meeting, either on the phone or through email. The interview also explored events from participants' engagement logs (discussed in Phase 2). Mothers were invited to be part of the support team in the interviews. As this study was primarily focused on capturing fathers' voices, the invitation to mothers provided an opportunity to learn more about the father–mother partnership. One mother (Mataio's wife – Case 5) was involved in both interviews.

Approach to Individual Interviews. The semistructured interviews utilised talanoa (Vaiioleti, 2013) to create a relaxed and informal conversation. This study followed the approach outlined below, typical of many conversations with Samoan people, but allowed flexibility about the information being discussed and the direction dictated by each participant:

1. *Fa'afeiloa'i* (welcome and thanks for their time)
2. *Aiga* (family) and participant well-being check (check on the participant and family well-being/what is happening – anything of importance to the participant)
3. *Auga o le mafutaga* (purpose of the meeting)
4. *Fa'asologa o le talanoaga* (process for the meeting)
5. *Talanoaga* (discussion of the topic)
6. *Fa'aiu le talanoaga* (end the discussion, ask for any questions, any administration for the study, signal next steps)
7. *Fa'afetai* (thank the participants)

The flexibility of semistructured interviews allowed me to engage with fathers in the process of the research, where a legitimate way of generating data was through direct interaction with participants to capture their lived experiences and meanings of PSTs (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Phase 2: Father Engagement Logs. Engagement logs aimed to gain a snapshot of how fathers were engaged in their children's education at home and with their school. Participants were invited to spend up to 10 minutes per day to complete an engagement log (a one-A4-page template) for 7 consecutive days, in which they recorded: (i) up to three most meaningful interactions with their children that they hoped would be helpful to their learning, and (ii) any interaction they had with their child's school. Two options were available to

participants for recording their data: (i) hardcopy – which participants took after their first individual interview; and (ii) electronic copy – where the links were emailed to participants to complete online. The electronic copy of the log was a single-A4-page Word document consisting of seven links, one link per day, which participants clicked on to open up a document (in Google Forms) where they added their information (see Appendix D).

Rationale for Engagement Logs. Research shows that supportive parental behaviours contribute to enhanced outcomes for students (Newman et al., 2019). Engagement logs provided opportunities for fathers and male caregivers to “take stock” of the engagement activities that they had implemented with or for their child and any communications with their child’s secondary school. The logs were intended as tools to facilitate participant recall and help them to reflect critically on what they did the factors that informed their engagement, and any impacts of their engagement on their children, family, and themselves (Robinson & Lai, 2006). The logs also aimed to gain insights into possible communications that fathers make with their schools.

Several limitations of the log concept may have played a part in the quality of data received. First, as the natural tendency of some participants when discussing such a topic is to frame themselves positively (Goldman, 2005; Hornby & Witte, 2010), it may be challenging to validate the communications provided by fathers. Second, the limited timeframe (1 week) may not represent sufficient time allocation to capture more accurate data about the communication habits of the participants. Third, the limited timeframe of 1 week and my daily reminders to participants to record each daily engagement with the child and school may have distorted the participants’ “true” habits of engaging with their child and school. However, regardless of the limitations, the logs provided valuable insights into the actions and activities that fathers carried out with their child and their school. Therefore, to increase the accuracy and credibility of the data, the following steps were taken:

- After the first individual interview, I spent 10 minutes going over the engagement log and what participants were expected to do.
- An A4 sheet containing a written example and writing frame starters was provided to all participants (in both Samoan and English), which I talked through with participants at the end of the first interview.
- I sent text reminders to participants’ mobiles (and email reminders to those with email addresses) between 7 pm and 7.30 pm each day of the 7-day data-collection timeframe.

This strategy worked effectively, especially with younger fathers completing the log online. Four logs were completed online; one was completed manually (see Table 3.8).

Table 3.8

Father Engagement Logs

Father	PST type	Start date	Medium	Language
Isaia	RA	9/11/2020	Online	English
Kenese	OA	8/11/2020	Online	English
Levi	RA	28/11/2020	Online	Samoan
Mataio	NA	5/12/2020	Online	English
Tupu	NA	29/11/2020	Hardcopy	Samoan

Note: RA: regular attendee; OA: occasional attendee; NA: nonattendee.

Phase 3: Father Intervention.

Approach to Intervention. The intervention programme focused on knowledge and skills acquisition (Barker et al., 2017; de Santis et al., 2020). The sessions were run mainly in Samoan; English was used judiciously whenever necessary. The topics planned for the sessions were informed by participants’ needs gathered during the study as well as from the relevant local literature (Jensen et al., 2010; Kiro et al., 2016) that highlighted some of the well-known challenges for Pasifika parents in relation to the school system and NCEA. The workshops were run in a relaxed style, informal and interactive, with lots of laughter and stories, utilising Samoan protocols. Both sessions were run on Sunday evenings, from 5.00–7.30 pm, in the church hall, agreed to by all participants. Five participants attended each session. Table 3.9 gives details of the intervention.

Table 3.9*Father Intervention Details*

Date/time	Focus
January 31, 2021 5–7.30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Plan for Pacific Education summary of 5 shifts • NCEA • Resources available to support students’ learning and success • Review of study’s early findings
February 7, 2021 5–7.30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of father-involvement research findings. • Pasifika demographic and NCEA statistics • Asking good questions during PSTs • Q/A

Workshop Process. Each workshop started with a prayer followed by the acknowledgement of the participants’ time and expertise. I then discussed the purposes for the study, the intervention, what would be covered in each session, and the remaining components for their involvement in the research. The workshops were divided into two halves, with a 10-minute break after the first hour. The sessions were informal, fluid and intended to be conversational, focusing on giving information and answering any questions fathers had. A \$50 voucher was presented to each participant in recognition of their contribution to the study, and light refreshments were provided at the conclusion of the workshop. A faatau (exchange for the right to speak on behalf of the group) was followed by formal speeches, then the closing prayer signalled the end of the formalities, giving people the signal that they could leave. At the end of each workshop, the participants remained behind for 30–45 minutes talking about a range of topics, mostly related to the study or education in general. This extra time to talk provided further opportunities for me to know the participants better, gaining insights into their lives at home and at work, and elaborating on some of the topics previously discussed in the workshops. The following gives the workshop sequence for the two sessions.

Workshop Sequence.**Fa’afouina 1/Session 1**

- Tatalo/Prayer
- Fa’afeiloa’i/Welcome and plan for session
- Sa’o/Sese – True/false activity
- Talanoaga/Discussion sparked by the true/false statements
- Aoaoga i Niu Sila/Education in NZ – How is it different from Samoa?
- Malamalama i le NCEA/Understanding NCEA

- Talanoaga i mau mai suesuega i tamā/Discussing study's initial findings
- Tali ma Fesili/Question and answers
- le fa'asoa lona lua/Preview next session
- Tali le sua/Refreshments

Fa'afouina 2/Session 2

- Prayer
- Welcome and plan for Session 2
- Review Session 1
- Discussion of father-research findings
- Asking questions in PST meetings
- Voucher presentation and thank you
- Formal speeches
- Closing prayer
- Refreshments

Father Self-Rated “Before” and “After” Survey. All participants completed the same survey twice – one preintervention and the second postintervention. The survey consisted of 11 items which participants completed at the end of the final workshop. The items were intended as a reflective tool to check participant understanding and knowledge gained from the intervention workshop. The workshop's contents included checking for knowledge of NCEA as a system; requirements for gaining merit and excellence grades at NCEA level; the NZ University Entrance requirements; their child's strengths, their child's aspirations for the future, and the challenges their child was facing in his/her learning at school; confidence in supporting their child's learning at home; their ability to read and understand their child's report; and their confidence to ask questions of teachers during parent–teacher meetings. Each participant used a 5-point Likert rating scale to rate their knowledge or confidence level on the selected topics above. The following rating scale and definitions were projected on the screen (while fathers completed the two surveys) to help participants make a better judgement: *Very good* means you have in-depth knowledge of the topic; *Good* means you can accurately explain the topic to someone with confidence; *OK* means some knowledge of the topic/or some confidence; *Poor* means little knowledge of the topic/no confidence; and *Very poor* means having no knowledge/never heard about the topic/no confidence. All statements were in Samoan followed by an English translation. I went over the 11 statements to ensure that all participants were clear about the intended meaning of each statement. I then left

fathers by themselves for about 7–8 minutes to complete the task alone. The rationale for the reflective surveys was to encourage participants to consider their learning about each topic and how their learning could help them to support their child’s learning at home.

Father Cases. All data collated from the five selected fathers during their respective focus groups, individual interviews, engagement logs, and intervention were utilised to construct a case for each participant. The five cases aimed to capture the unique ways fathers were involved in their child’s PSTs, using the three components of the PBM’s overarching framework. Data from Interview 1 was used to draft each participant’s main “skeleton” for the case which was then shared during Interview 2 for fathers to check. I worked on the case and then shared them (four through email and one hardcopy) with fathers to check and make changes where necessary. When approval was given, I then moved the final version of the cases into the thesis.

Procedure for Preparing for Individual Interviews. Leddy and Ormrod (2015) recommended a systematic approach when organising and preparing for individual interviews. This study utilised the modified procedure below as suggested by Leddy and Ormrod to guide the preparation and processes for the interviews (face to face or online):

1. Contact participants and set up interviews 2 weeks in advance.
2. Give/send questions to participants 2 weeks in advance.
3. Ask for permission to record.
4. Confirm date for the meeting.
5. Send reminder to participants 7 days before the interview with questions reattached.
6. Ring or text participants 2 days before the interview to check and reconfirm time and venue.
7. Send reminder text on the day.
8. Arrive 30–40 minutes before the interview (if the venue is at the church) to set up.
9. At Interview 2, share summary of draft ToA with participants.
10. Share case study with participants for feedback before finalising case for the thesis.

Interview Schedule and Pilot. I used the focus group interview schedule as a model for the individual father interviews. With guidance from my supervisors, sample questions were aligned with each PBM component. Four to five topics for discussion were selected, and some prepared questions were mainly there as prompts, but I utilised conversational skills such as prompting, probing, clarifying and checking to create free-flowing talanoa. The interview schedule was also used as a model for the remaining participants (FT/dean, DPs).

Supervisor feedback and feedforward were incorporated in the revised version before the pilot interviews.

A pilot interview was conducted on Zoom with one participant (not involved in this research) from CC1. As the father was a regular attendee at PSTs and confident user of computers, the online trial was safe and comfortable for him. Perhaps, a limitation of the trial was that I did not have time to practise modifying my facilitation skills when interviewing a less involved father. However, one key lesson for me was that having good relationships with a participant enabled him to relax and ask for clarification when required. After reviewing the Zoom recording of the interview, the number of questions on the final interview schedule was reduced to allow for a more natural conversation style. Table 3.10 outlines the schedule for individual father interviews.

Table 3.10

Father Individual Interviews

Father	Interview	Date	Duration (minutes)	Language	Medium, venue
Isaia	1	5/08/2020	38	English	Zoom
Isaia	2	6/10/2021	42	English	Zoom
Kenese	1	6/08/2020	48	English/Samoan	F2F, church hall
Kenese	2	4/06/2021	59	English/Samoan	F2F, church hall
Levi	1	18/01/2021	97	Samoan	F2F, restaurant
Levi	2	6/10/2021	58	Samoan	Zoom
Mataio	1*	14/01/2021	78	English/Samoan	F2F, home
Mataio	2*	28/05/2021	73	English/Samoan	F2F, home
Tupu	1	23/01/2021	53	Samoan	F2F, restaurant
Tupu	2	18/10/2021	35	Samoan	Zoom

Note. *Mother involved in meeting. F2F = face to face. Times rounded to nearest minute.

Study 3: Two Secondary School PSTs

Phase 1: Deputy Principal, Dean and Form Teacher Interviews.

Deputy Principal. Each DP took part in two individual 60-minute interviews to shed light on their PSTs. The interviews aimed to reveal their school’s espoused goals for PSTs and gain insights into the planning, implementation and evaluation processes for these events. Interviews were carried out either face to face or on Zoom. The second interview started with checking my understanding of each school’s PST conference from the data collected in the first meeting. Then the conversation focused on the enablers and barriers to their parents’ involvement and areas for PSTs improvement.

Form Teacher and Dean Interviews. The FT and dean were involved in two 60-minute individual interviews. Both interviews were carried out on Zoom for the Kauri

College dean, while the Totara College FT's interviews were completed face to face at the school. The first interview started with the first set of questions, eliciting the actions as recommended by Robinson and Lai (2006). Talking about what teachers and schools do (actions) concerning PSTs provided an easier approach to get the conversation started. Therefore, the interview did not deal with questions in Set 1 and then Set 2 and so on. Instead, the interview was dynamic and more naturally occurring depending on the information being provided. We covered much of the questions in Sets 1, 2 and 3 to get an overall feel for each teacher's position. The second interview focused on checking my summary of the teacher's ToA about their perception of PSTs at their school. The second interview also focused on Set 4 – areas for improvement. Table 3.11 details the meeting schedule and timeframes for the participants.

Table 3.11

Summary Table of Teacher Individual Interviews

Data source	Interview	Date	Duration (minutes)	Venue	Method
Kauri – DP	1	3/03/2021	60	Online	Zoom
	2	6/09/2021	62	Online	Zoom
Totara – DP	1	27/05/2021	64	School	F2F
	2	7/09/2021	52	Online	Zoom
Kauri – Dean	1	22/06/2021	88	Online	Zoom
	2	6/09/2021	84	Online	Zoom
Totara – FT	1	1/06/2021	63	School	F2F
	2	18/06/2021	61	School	F2F

Note: Times rounded to nearest minute. DP: deputy principal; FT: form teacher. F2F = Face to face

Phase 2: Student Focus Group Interviews. Focus group interviews took place during school times selected by the DP of each school to minimise disruption to students' learning. Each meeting started with a short prayer before I went over the purpose of the study, the questions to be discussed and the protocols for answering the questions. I then reminded the students that they did not have to answer any questions they felt uncomfortable responding to. I also notified them that the conversation was being recorded and to let me know if there was anything they did not want to be recorded. I adopted a general-to-specific approach to the focus group interviews.

The first interview started with general questions about how their school communicates information about PSTs with parents. The second part discussed the roles that students, FTs and parents played in a recent PST conference and their experiences of those

meetings. The third part focused on the students’ perceptions of the purpose and consequences of PSTs. Part 4 focused on what their fathers did to support their learning/success at home. These questions were intentional to gather a feel for the types of practices or roles fathers take on at home.

The second interview provided an opportunity for students to check my summary from Interview 1. We then explored students’ role in the conferences and areas for improvement. To wrap up, I invited students to share a metaphor or *alagaupu* (proverb) or *upu* (word) that represented the importance of their father or male caregiver to them and why.

Student Interview Trial. The interview questions were trialled with my three children and niece (two boys and two girls) during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. All four were familiar with PSTs under investigation as they are also implemented at their schools. Their critical feedback around the clarity of the questions was invaluable in the rewording of four questions. For the questions they suggested changing, I first tabled what information I wanted to collect from students and then invited them to discuss the best way to phrase each question in “teenage speak.” Several minutes were spent discussing each question before arriving at their final decision, which I used for the study. Table 3.12 presents a summary of student focus group interviews.

Table 3.12

Summary Table of Student Focus Group Interviews

Data source	Interview	No of participants	Date	Duration (minutes)	Venue	Method
Kauri College	1	4	22/9/2020	60	School	F2F
	2	5	28/10/2020	70	School	F2F
Totara College	1	2	27/10/2020	47	School	F2F
	2	4	5/11/2020	70	School	F2F

Note: Times rounded to nearest minute. F2F = Face to face

Procedure for Data Recording, Managing and Storage

All interviews were audio-recorded using two password-protected mobile phone devices strategically placed to enable maximum sound clarity. A short soundcheck was always done at the start before the official beginning of each interview. For interviews on Zoom, the audio transcripts were used as starting point. At the end of the interview, the files were named, dated and backed up on a hard drive for security. As working online from home was the new norm for 2020–2021, all sound files were securely stored at home.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

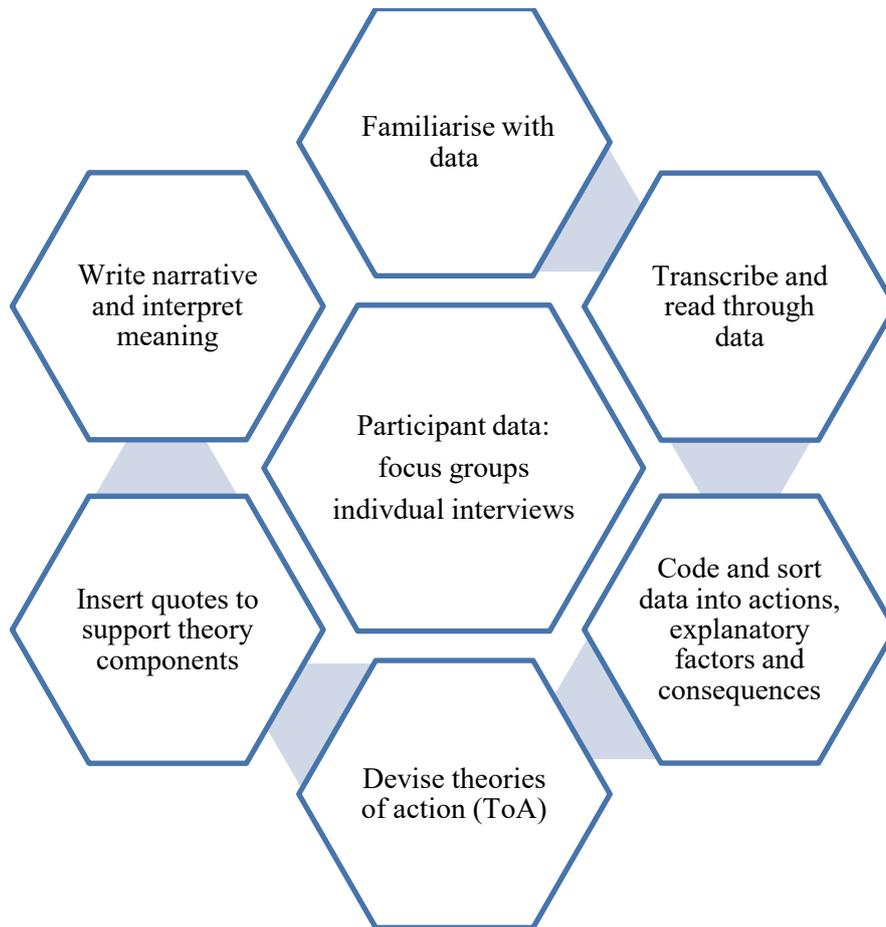
A typical challenge confronted by qualitative research is making sense of large volumes of data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). To address this challenge, the data collection and analysis phases were conducted simultaneously and iteratively (Merriam, 2009). Data were analysed using two approaches: constructing theories of action (Robinson & Lai, 2006), and the father engagement analytical tool (FEAT), designed for this study to delve deeper into how fathers were engaged in PSTs. Both approaches are further explained below.

Constructing Theories of Action

As explained earlier in this chapter, the concept of a ToA was first proposed by Argyris and Schön (1974) to explain the links between an individual's actions, the explanatory factors that guided their actions, and the consequences of their actions. Numerous applications of ToA have been used in NZ to help explain and, where necessary, improve educational practice (Robinson & Lai, 2006; Sinnema et al., 2021; Welton, 2020). A ToA was constructed for each of the following groups or individuals: five father focus groups in Study 1; five fathers in Study 2; and two student focus groups, two DPs, an FT, and a dean in Study 3. Figure 3.2 shows the inductive and iterative processes involved in constructing a ToA, from the data collected to its final synthesis through an interpretive story.

Figure 3.2

Approach to Developing Theories of Action



Adapted from Creswell (2014) and Robinson and Lai (2006)

Process for Developing a Theory of Action

A systematic process was utilised to ensure a robust approach to data analysis and constructing a ToA. For each focus group, I drafted an initial ToA (Version 1) after the first interview, then checked with the focus group in the second interview. I then used their feedback and information from the second interview for Version 2. A meeting to critique and provide feedback from my supervisors was then used to inform Version 3. After Version 3, I then constructed ToAs for the remaining focus groups and individual participants. ToAs were continually revised during the analysis and writing stages in consultation with my supervisors.

Constructing a robust ToA requires being alert to the links between the participants' actions or inactions, the factors that triggered them, and the intended or unintended consequences of their actions or inactions. I identified the key participant actions/inactions from the transcripts and then explored possible explanations for these by asking questions

such as: *Why did they do that? What explained participant actions/inactions? Are there other explanations for the actions/inactions?* Similarly, I then asked – because of the actions/inactions – *What were the consequences for fathers, their children and their mother?* Constructing ToAs is an iterative process, requiring going back and forth, checking to ensure that links across the three stages of the PBM provide a robust explanation for the actions/inactions taken by each participant. The six iterative stages in Figure 3.2 are further explained below.

Familiarise With Data. Familiarising myself with the data took various forms. As the interviews were recorded on mobile devices, I spent a significant part listening and immersing myself in the data. This immersion phase occurred during morning or evening walks around the block, quiet, uninterrupted listening such as study time, or creating productive moments during my long car travels to and from work. The familiarisation phase was critical to data analysis because it forced me to listen and get a sense of the whole, focusing on the relationship aspects of the data and what is being communicated by the participants (Robinson & Lai, 2006).

Transcribe Data. Listening and familiarising myself with the data facilitated transcription. I transcribed data verbatim (in both Samoan or English, or a combination of both languages) immediately after each interview and completed within 2 to 3 weeks of data collection. For individual interviews conducted in English through Zoom, I used the transcript provided through Zoom as a starting point and then edited through listening and checking over several times to ensure accuracy. The transcription of focus group and individual interviews data was completed alongside the initial processes of analysis (Merriam, 2009). This initial process involved classifying and categorising ideas using aspects of the study's PBM framework – actions, explanatory factors and consequences.

Code and Sort Data Into PBM Components. The coding and sorting of data into actions, explanatory factors and consequences were guided by three steps outlined by Robinson and Lai (2006). Information was categorised according to whether they:

1. Describe or evaluate actions
2. Provide a possible explanation of actions
3. Describe possible consequences of actions. (p. 144)

I used three different colours to manually code the three components above. Actions (1), or what participants did, were coloured green; explanatory factors (2), or factors that motivated participant actions, were yellow; and consequences (3), or the impact of participants' actions, were coloured purple. Some data could be coded in several ways, for instance, either as an

action or consequence. In such cases, I coded for both components at the initial stage, but the final decision involved going back to the data looking for corroborating or counter-evidence to support the final narrative written up for that participant or group.

Devise Theory of Action. Using a table consisting of three columns with headings: explanatory factors, actions and consequences, colour-coded data were allocated according to their respective places. The initial list for each component was large as it included information that was the same, for instance, information with the same intent but which could be expressed differently. The draft initial ToA was then iteratively revised throughout the study as new information came to light.

Insert Quotes to Support Theory Components. To help check, revise and strengthen the ToA, quotes from participants were inserted under each component of the ToA. Adding quotes gave voice to the ToA. Common themes, based on their frequency of occurrence, were given priority. At the same time, unique and contradictory evidence was also given high regard as it provided other possible explanations of current participant practices.

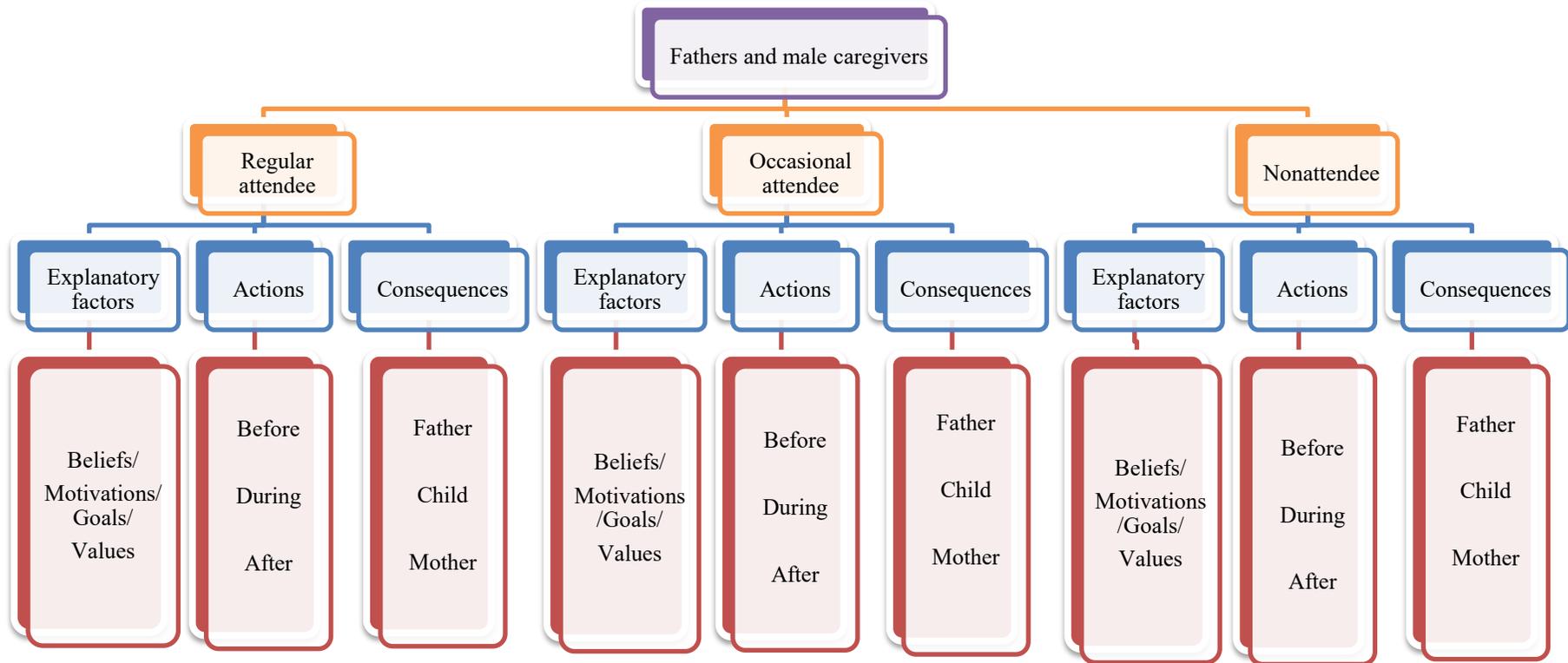
Write the Narratives. The final stage involved the write-up of a story (or stories) that made explicit the links across the components of the ToA. The story started with unpacking the actions and the associated factors that informed them. Quotes were used to exemplify aspects of the story and to give voice to the participants. The stories concluded with the consequences for the participants and their respective associates. One of the strengths (and limitations) of qualitative research is the researcher-as-instrument capability (Creswell, 2014). I therefore acknowledge that the participants' stories in this manuscript may be composed differently by other researchers.

Development of Father Engagement Analytical Tool. The father engagement analytical tool (FEAT) was developed to deepen the analysis of relevant data collected in line with the three overarching research questions. The analytical tool utilised the strengths of ToA (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Robinson & Lai, 2006), and research findings from the father- and parental-involvement literature and this current study, to synthesise and make sense of the voluminous amount of data. FEAT takes an exploratory and appreciative stance concerning the roles that fathers and male caregivers play in the lives and development of their children. During data collection and early analysis, the data showed that fathers were engaged in a variety of ways to support their children's education. "Showing up" to PSTs is only one dimension of some families' collective effort to fit in with their circumstances. The current binary approach (presence-absence) to the analysis of fathers' engagement is too

simplistic and fails to capture the rich tapestry of fathers' involvement with their children concerning PSTs (Cabrera et al., 2018; Palkovitz, 2019). FEAT enabled a more nuanced way through the three dimensions – before, during and after to explore how fathers were involved in their children's education around PSTs. Figure 3.3 introduces FEAT and how ToA and PBM are nested within its design.

Figure 3.3

Father Engagement Analytical Tool (FEAT)



FEAT Components. The first analytical level categorises fathers and male caregivers into three groups – regular, occasional or nonattende. For instance, fathers who had never attended a PST conference were classified as nonattende; those who claimed to have attended all PSTs in the last 2 years were put in the regular category; while those who attended sporadically in the last 2 years were in the occasional category. This initial stage was easily established as all participants self-identified during the interviews. The second analytical level is where participant or group data are analysed under the three components – explanatory factors, actions and consequences. The third analytical level includes the further breakdown of each participant’s actions into whether they occurred before, during or after PSTs, their alignment to consequences for each participant, and the explanatory factors that inform participant actions or inactions. FEAT can unearth fathers’ silent contribution to their children (Lamb, 2010).

Issues of Trustworthiness

The four measures for assessing the reliability and trustworthiness of qualitative studies – credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability – are discussed below in relation to this research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Credibility. This criterion aims to check whether the research has accurately represented what the participants think, feel, and do (Guba & Lincoln, 2000). First, the topic was investigated using data gathered from multiple sources directly involved in PSTs – fathers, students, DPs, a dean and an FT. Second, the study also utilised multiple methods of data collection through focus groups, individual interviews and father engagement logs to enable a fuller picture of the phenomenon under investigation. The use of multiple sources and methods for data collection provided triangulated information to enhance the credibility of the findings. Third, member checks provided opportunities for participants to review my summaries of their data through a ToA. Subsequent discussions of the findings and revisions of ToAs with my supervisors also provided another way to ensure that I had captured the reality of the lived experiences of the participants at these events (Merriam, 2009). Fourth, checking of the translations from Samoan to English was carried out by a Samoan language university lecturer, a talking chief with extensive experience as a former head of the languages department at a large secondary school. He was also a former dean and FT with experience in PSTs. According to Squires (2009), the credentials and experience of a translator can affect the quality of the translation and therefore the study’s rigour.

Dependability. In qualitative research, dependability asks if the findings are consistent and reliable with the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). In this study, several approaches were utilised to ensure dependability of the findings. First, understanding why fathers do not attend PSTs requires hearing both sides of the story – fathers who participated and those who did not attend these events. Therefore, ensuring a wide range of fathers was critical to understanding the topic. The selection of fathers through church communities increased the likelihood of including fathers who may not have attended PSTs before or may have had negative experiences of these events, whereas recruiting fathers through schools may have resulted in only getting fathers who were already engaged. In addition, recruiting through the church communities provided “safer” spaces for participants to come out and tell their stories without fear of connections to their school. Second, I used memos to document my thinking concerning the rationale for the decisions made during the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Using memos helped to isolate what was coming through in the data versus my assumptions. By constantly going back to the data as the final source for results and for settling any discrepancies, I established more transparent methods to ensure the reliability of the findings. Finally, some of the findings from this study are also consistent with other recent studies with Pasifika parents and families (Cunningham, 2019; Wilson, 2017) and fathers (Fa’avae, 2016; Tautolo et al., 2020); and the international father-involvement literature (Cabrera, 2020; Kim, 2018a; Yogman & Eppel, 2022).

Confirmability. The concept of confirmability calls into practice the direct links of evidence: from the study’s purpose to research questions, through to the design, data collection and analysis processes, to its findings and conclusion (Creswell, 2014). Audit trails involve the triangulation of various data and data sources to arrive at the drawn inferences and conclusions (Robinson & Lai, 2006). Meetings with my supervisors enabled opportunities to explain the logic of each finding and conclusion back to the original data source. Each key finding required multiple participant voices to back up claims made and went through a rigorous analysis process utilising a “consistency tool” recommended by Bloomberg and Volpe (2016). The tool enabled a deep critique of each finding through seeking a range of possible explanations, investigating why and/or why not, exploring researcher assumptions and possible blind-spots, researcher positionality and connections to a range of methodological or analytical issues. Seeking participant feedback on my summary of their account was another key strategy utilised in this study to increase the trustworthiness of the findings. My summary was a one-page ToA developed according to the three components

of the PBM theoretical framework. I decided that this was a more concise way of summarising the conversation rather than giving multiple pages of the running transcripts.

Transferability. According to Lincoln and Guba (2000), it should be the reader who decides the extent to which the phenomenon under investigation in a particular context could be relevant to their own setting. This study aimed to capture the involvement of an ethnic-specific group of fathers in PSTs at secondary school level. Therefore, the findings are directly relevant to the study participants' contexts and settings. However, Robinson and Lai (2006) postulated that the relevance and generalisability of research results may be best measured by investigating the ways in which the researchers capture the richness of the participants' ToA. The absence of fathers in PSTs, especially at secondary schools, is a common problem of practice in education across the globe. Therefore, there are likely to be overlaps between the ToA of fathers, parents, teachers, students and DPs here in NZ and other places around the world concerning this topic. Similarly, DPs and teachers may have common theories, beliefs and assumptions concerning the enablers and barriers relating to father or parental engagement. Although each case may be unique, the prospect of transferability in many qualitative studies should not be immediately rejected as it is also an example within a broader group of cases (Sinnema et al., 2021). Therefore, participants may be able to make better decisions if the same theories that operate within their context, or drive the problems they wish to solve, apply. As there is always an overlap in how common problems are solved in different settings, the trade-off between relevance and generalisability of research results may be best judged by the quality and types of ToA involved across these settings (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

Section 4: Reflection on the Research Processes

Embedding Samoan Values, Language and Cultural Practices in Research

The use of the Samoan language and cultural protocols throughout the study was vital to the success of this research project and was one of the most enjoyable parts of the study for me as a developing researcher. Every consultation meeting and focus group interview was immersed in Samoan cultural and linguistically appropriate practices (Si'ilata, 2014). For instance, I was always given the formal address and recognition in all our interactions either through acknowledgement of my role as a Samoan chief (*afioga*), or my role as an educator (*susuga*). In return, I showed reciprocity by acknowledging the minister (*susuga a le faafeagaiga/ tausi matagaluega*), lay preachers (*susuga*) and people with important roles within each church community. In Samoan culture, when a guest arrives at a group event, the

concept of faatulima (official welcome through acknowledging a person's title, stance, villages' honorifics) is performed. In this study, I learned and modelled being culturally responsive by temporarily pausing the conversation, and welcoming, through faatulima, those who arrived late and updating them on where the conversation was at. The Samoan values of respect and reciprocity help nurture the relationships through the va fealoa'i (Anae, 2016) between the participants and researcher.

Cultural Considerations Before Leaving the Site

One of the advantages of being on the "inside" is that you have access to information, contacts and knowledge of the routines and practices of Samoan church communities. Being on the inside also allows for multiple exposure and practice in terms of the language, culture, and understanding of the values that underpin *fa'asamoa* (Samoan way of doing things). For instance, when working with Samoan people (or Pacific people in general), one never "leaves the site." One becomes part of the participants' *talaaga* (their story), site and journey through life. As a Pacific researcher, I often have a dilemma between Western academic research that encourages researcher objectivity to the point where there is an artificial "distance" between researchers and their participants. In this study, it would have been very challenging to obtain such rich data including fathers' critical assessments of their involvement (or lack of) without nurturing the va fealoa'i (Anae, 2016). The va fealoa'i, in concert with the use of the Samoan language, cultural protocols and values, facilitated a deeper exploration of fathers' involvement in PSTs.

Samoan cultural values like tautua, fa'aaloalo, alofa, and va fealoa'i act as a lens that *tapui* (treat with care) the cultural spaces or va fealoa'i between the researcher and participants (Tamasese et al., 2010). These cultural spaces (va fealoa'i) are "nurtured and cared for" until such time as the mafanafana (warmth), allows the relationship to flourish through the building and maintenance of relational trust. When working with Samoan and Pacific peoples, understanding the participants' cultural values and how they play out in a variety of settings can help researchers forge long-lasting reciprocal relationships that ensure the well-being and safety of all participants involved.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a qualitative case study design to explore fathers' involvement in PSTs. Three studies were established to shed insights in the topic. Study 1 focused on fathers across three church communities; Study 2 delved deeper with five fathers; and Study 3 aimed to gain insights into schools' PSTs through DPs, an FT, a dean and

students. Focus groups, individual interviews, and engagement logs were the methods utilised to explore fathers' views and perspectives on their involvement in PSTs, the factors that explained their involvement (or lack of), and their consequences for their children, the mothers and themselves. The next chapter presents the findings from Study 1 with 17 fathers across three church communities.

Chapter 4: Findings From Father Focus Groups (Study 1)

Introduction

This chapter analyses and synthesises findings from three categories of fathers across the five focus groups. Findings are grouped according to the three father categories that emerged concerning their attendance in PSTs – regular attendees, occasional attendees, and nonattendees.

For each of the three categories, the findings are presented in this order. A brief overview of each category is introduced first followed by a ToA (Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3) that explain the relevant findings in line with the three research questions. As recommended by Robinson and Lai (2006), I begin by describing fathers' actions (middle column), then the explanatory factors (left column) that inform fathers' actions. Finally, I detail insights from fathers about the consequences (right column) of their actions for themselves, their children, and the mothers. Illustrative quotations are provided first in Samoan to respect the authenticity of the participants, followed by their English translation.

Group 1: Regular Attendees

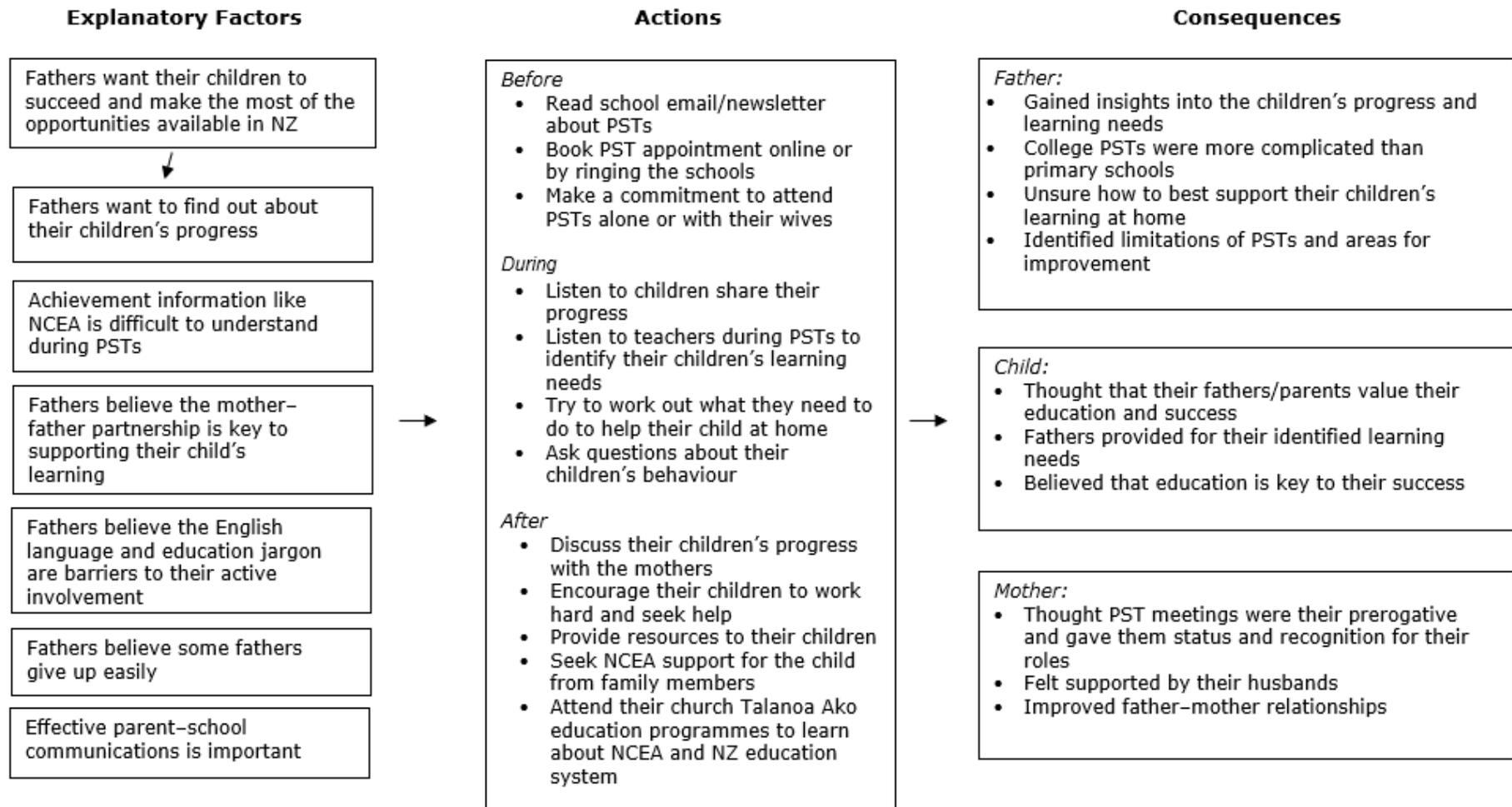
O au o matua fanau (Children are parents' treasures)

Overview of Group 1

Four fathers were in this category. They were Isaia, Levi, Iopu and Numera. More details about these fathers can be found in Table 3.2 in the methodology chapter. Other than Isaia, the other three fathers were born and educated in Samoa. Isaia and Levi had children at secondary school at the time of the study, while Numera and Iopu's children left secondary school between 2018–2020 (within the timeframe of 3 years stipulated for this study). Two fathers had School Certificate as their highest qualification; Levi had no qualifications, and Iopu did not say. Figure 4.1 introduces the regular attendees' ToA.

Figure 4.1

Regular Attendees' Theory of Action



Actions

Before their children's PSTs, several younger fathers read school email communications regarding the conferences and booked their appointments online. For two older fathers, their children came home with a note informing them about the conferences and booked their appointments by ringing the school. One father said, *Ou te fiafia tele i fonotaga aua e sau a ma le tamaititi le note mo fonotaga ia.* (I like these meetings because my child comes with a note about the meetings) (Numera). All fathers were involved in their children's education from the start. Fathers' involvement in PSTs and the mismatches they sometimes got between their expectations and their child's progress is captured by Iopu:

Iopu: Ia sa auai atu foi i fonotaga ia. A aumai foi lele le lipoti ae le tutusa ma lata expectations, ia pei ua ta ita.

I attended PST meetings. But when the report comes and it doesn't match my expectations, I get mad.

Despite their frustration, fathers saw PSTs as opportunities to learn about their children's progress. While most of the time they attended PSTs with their wives, they were also prepared to go alone at times when required.

During PSTs, fathers listened to the FT to identify their children's learning needs. They also tried to work out what they needed to do to help their children at home. Students often have a critical part to play in PSTs, informing parents about their progress across their subject. One father captured the moment in this way:

Isaia: Olivia [his daughter] had to do a little presentation when we came in. Her presentation on the first term [covered] the subjects she was taking, and this is why she wanted to take them, and this is what she wants to achieve by the end of the term. She was doing most of the talking, and we listened with the teacher. It was really good.

What was more pleasing for Isaia was that his daughter was usually a "quiet one" but she was leading the discussion about her learning at the conference. During PSTs, fathers also found out about their children's learning needs:

Levi: Sa faasoia mai le faiaoga o le gagaga e pei o le barrier lea i le va o faiaoga ma lo'u afafige. E OK i le Gagaga Samoa, ao isi faiaoga Palagi, e pei e fai ma auala e gogogofa ai. E k̄aua le fesili, e le mafai ona malamalama pe a le fesili. Kalanoa mai le faiaoga e magaomia le aveese o le ma ae fesili.

The [form] teacher said that the [English] language is a barrier to effective communication between my daughter and her teachers. She is OK in the Samoan language class, but she just sits there in other classes with non-Samoan teachers. It's important to ask questions, and one does not understand if they don't ask questions. The teacher said she needed to get over her shyness and ask questions.

As well as their children's learning needs, some fathers also noticed a dramatic shift in the complexity of language and jargon used by teachers to communicate their child's progress. The complexity of the language used at PSTs could have contributed to fathers' uncertainty about their child's progress and how to better support their children's learning at home.

After PSTs, fathers often talked about their children's progress again with mothers at home and provided the required resources for their children:

Isaia: I'm always making sure she's on top of stuff, you know. Not only making sure she has a laptop and all that. If they have all they need, they'll probably feel more comfortable learning.

Fathers also sought support for their children from family members and where possible, within their church communities:

Levi: O lo'u kuafafine o ia lea o loo kau faamalamalama mai le NCEA ma maka iga ia ausia. A o au ia, makuā ou lē malamalama a i le NCEA.

My sister is the one who is trying to explain NCEA and credits to be achieved. But for me, I have no understanding of NCEA.

All fathers encouraged their children to aim high, work hard, and seek God's counsel whenever they encountered any challenges in life. Utilising family and other community resources allowed fathers to focus on other roles.

Explanatory Factors

All fathers dreamed of educational success for their children. This dream is explained by fathers' commitment to ensuring that their children were better prepared for the future than they were:

Levi: O le moemikiga a makua Samoa ia iu lelei aoga, poo fea lava se mea e faamaguiaiga ai. O le faukuaga lava la e ave ma ku'iku'i i kamaiki – the sky is the limit.

Parents' dream is for their children to achieve education success, whichever area they are blessed in. My advice and ongoing encouragement to my children – the sky is the limit.

As well as encouraging their children to aim high, other fathers saw a much broader picture of education as a lever that can alleviate the adverse effects of poverty in Samoan families:

Iopu: Pau le olaga e sao ese mai ai ma le olaga mativa ma le olaga ausage, o le soifua aoaoina. O Niu Sila foi, o lea ua unai le fanau e tuli le sini o le faamoemoe. E pei o le mau foi lea, o Niu Sila o le atunuu o avanoa.

Education frees one from poverty and hardship. In NZ, we are pushing our kids to achieve their dreams. Like the saying – NZ is a land of opportunities.

Fathers also wanted to know how their children were progressing at school. While knowing their children's progress was essential, fathers noted significant barriers to their active involvement in PSTs. Fathers highlighted the English language, education jargon, and NCEA as key barriers for them:

Iopu: E lelei lava le primary [school] aua e faafeagai ma faiaoga. Ae o'o loa i le kolisi, ia ua sau lava le lipoti ta te lē malamalama i abbreviations. Ia faapea la e lē manino ma malamalama i le gagana la e faaoga e faiaoga, ia na ta faapea lava la e OK. Ae lelei le tilotilo i le gagana, aua o le Gagana Samoa lea ua lona tolu i gagana i Niu Sila. Aemaise lava matou Samoa, e manaomia a foi lou sau i le faasamoa ina ia malamalama ai matua.

It is good at primary school because you meet face to face with the teacher. However, at college you get the report, but you don't understand the abbreviations being used. And if you don't understand the language teachers use in the report [English and jargon], you think it's still OK [but that may not be the case]. But it's essential to look at the language. For example, the Samoan language is the third most widely used language in NZ. So, it will be good if you use Samoan so that the parents understand.

Consequences

Fathers gained insights into their children's progress and learning needs by attendings PSTs. However, most were unsure how to best support their children's learning at home. Fathers also identified several limitations of school practices and areas for improvement:

Iopu: E tatau ona tuutuu atu i luga le taimi. E lei umi lava ona talanoa ae uma, ua alu atu le isi tagata mo lana taimi.

There's a need to increase the time. It doesn't take too long before it's over because other people come in for their turn.

However, Iopu also raised some concerns about the use of “negative language” at the meetings. He thought some teachers were not good at presenting information to inspire, motivate or empower students. Instead, he said teachers tend to focus on students' current “limitations” rather than their potential:

Iopu: O le isi faiaoga e lē lelei le presentation o le lipoti a le tamaititi. Faataitaiga, e focus i vaivaiga [o le tamaititi]. Ia iai [i le faiaoga] le gagana e telē le potential, telē le lumanai o le tamaititi. E atamai, tusa a pe iloa e latou e lē o lelei tele... [Ia] aumai e latou se gagana e uplift ai le tamaititi.

Other teachers are not good at presenting[discussing] the student's report. For instance, they focus on the student's weaknesses. There needs to be language about the potential future success of the child. He is smart, even though they may think otherwise... There needs to be language that uplifts the students.

Despite the barriers to fathers' active involvement in PSTs, their main goal was to support their children by attending PSTs and to show them that they care about their success. Fathers' presence gave mothers' confidence about their husband's support and helped nurture the father–mother relationship. Fathers' presence also provided another pair of eyes and ears to understand the successes and challenges experienced by their children. Fathers' children may appreciate their fathers' involvement and support for their learning. Fathers' ability to provide for their children's identified learning needs also reinforced to their children that education is vital for their future success.

Group 2: Occasional Attendees

O fanau o tofi lea mai le Atua. (Children are parents' blessings from God)

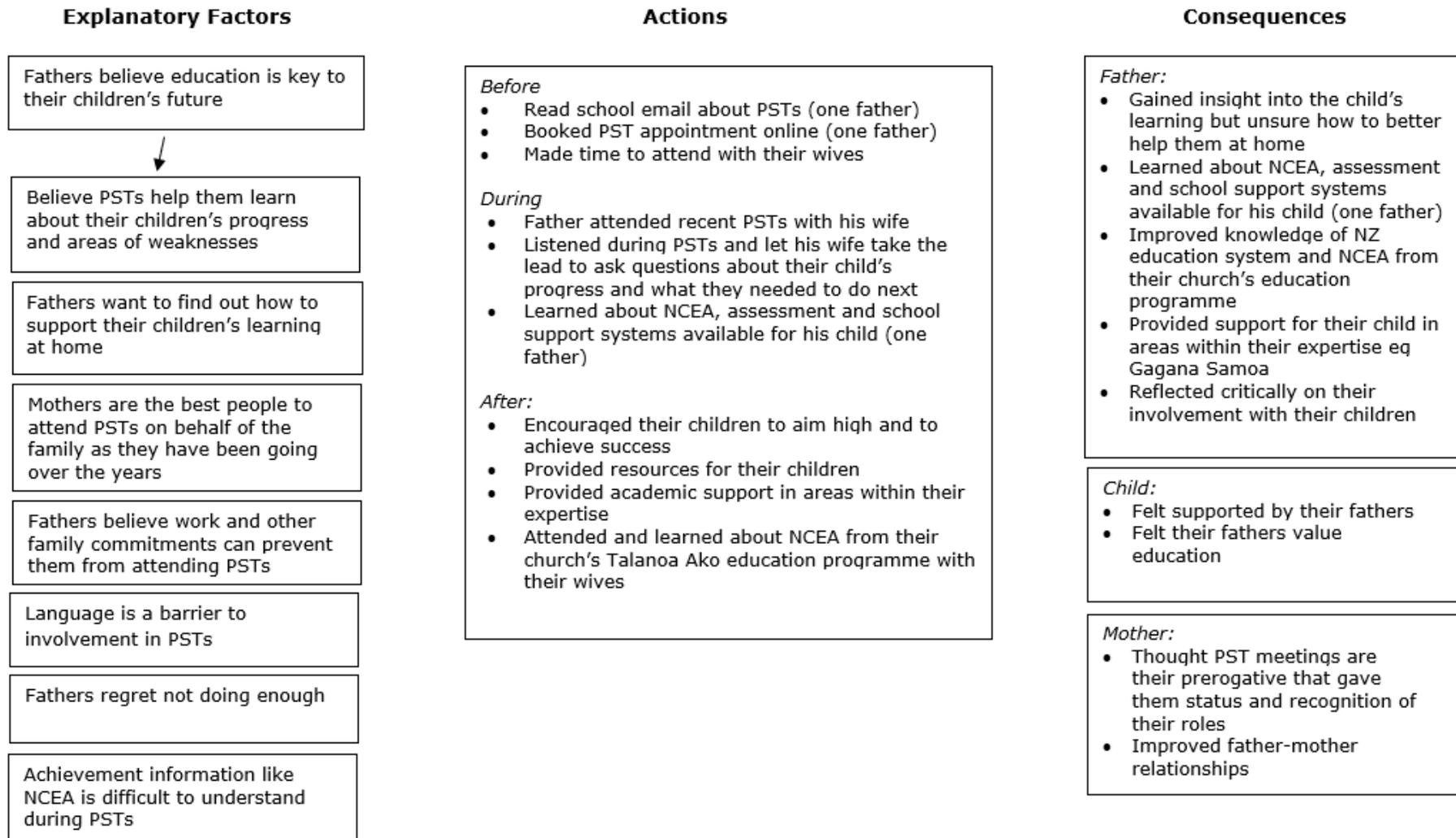
Overview of Group 2

Four fathers, two each from CC1 and CC3, attended PSTs occasionally. All fathers were married and had been in NZ for over 25 years. Kenese was born in NZ and the other three fathers were born and educated in Samoa. All fathers and their wives worked at the time of the study, Kenese and Ieremia had two children each at secondary school; Tito had a grandson at secondary school while Filemoni's child left secondary school in 2020 for

university study. Two fathers had diplomas, one had School Certificate and one had no qualification. Please see Table 3.2 for more information about the attendees. Figure 4.2 provides the ToA for occasional attendees followed by an explanation of its components.

Figure 4.2

Occasional Attendees' Theory of Action



Actions

The wives of three fathers - Kenese, Jeremia and Filemoni had been their family representatives in PSTs over the years. However, Tito was the main person in his family, although his wife joined him most of the times:

Tito: O le maua aiga i le kaimi ga kaunuu mai ai, o au lava e faafeagai ma pule aoga ma faiaoga. Ao le kele o isi kaimi ma ke o koalua.

When our family arrived [from Samoa], I was the main person attending these meetings. Most of the time, my wife also joined me.

Kenese read school email communications regarding PSTs several weeks before his son's conference in 2020 and booked an appointment for his son online.

During PSTs, fathers mainly listened and let their wives take the lead to ask questions about their children's progress and what they needed to do next. One father explained some of the contents of one conference he attended:

Kenese: I went to my daughter's conference when she was at Year 11. The form teacher went through the subjects she was doing, why she was taking those subjects. We went over the credits and subjects, discussed her options, where she wanted to go [university] and what she wanted and other things like that. So, for me it was a bit of an eye opener, because I hadn't attended these meetings before. To be honest, I didn't really understand some of that stuff. I didn't understand how the credits work. She was nice enough to go through it.

All fathers said that they found NCEA and achievement information difficult to understand during PSTs. However, attending together with their wives gave them a level of comfort knowing that their wives had a better grasp of their children's needs

After PSTs, fathers encouraged their children to aim high to achieve success, provided academic support in areas within their expertise, and any required resources for their children. Fathers talked about the high costs of resources their children required at college level:

Jeremia: E o'o a i le laptop ia ua taumafai a e fai. A faatau mai foi mea taugofie e le last. E tiga a le taugata o graphics calculator ae taumafai a e faatau aua e le mafai a ona tuua le mea e tatau ona fai.

Even the laptop, we try and get it for them. If we buy the cheap stuff, they won't last. Even though a graphics calculator is expensive, but we still bought it because it was a need.

Despite the high costs of stationery items, fathers prioritised the necessary resources their children needed to support their learning. Two fathers found extra support and free resources available through their church's Talanoa Ako education programme which they attended with their wives and children.

Explanatory Factors

All fathers believed that education was key to their children's future. This belief is explained by fathers' commitment to ensure that their children were better prepared for the future than they were:

Tito: Aua nei tou mulimuli mai i le mea lea ou te iai. O le expectation lea ia sili atu outou ia te au.

I don't want my children to follow where I'm at now. My expectation is that they should be able to achieve more and better than me.

Fathers saw PSTs as one way to support their children's future success. They all believed PSTs were important as they allowed them to know about their children's progress and how to help at home. However, all fathers described their focus in PSTs as opportunities to identify their children's "weaknesses" across their subjects:

Jeremia: O fonotaga ia lea e o ai e fesili ai i mea e vaivai ai tamaiti i ia mataupu ma lea mataupu, e iai mea ma te o ai ma le tinā o le aiga, e iai foi taimi e alu ai na o le tinā. Ae masani ona ma o ona e fia malamalama i mea e vaivai ai le tamaititi i ana mataupu.

We go to the meetings to ask about our child's learning needs across different subjects. Sometimes I go with my wife, sometimes she goes by herself. We usually go because we want to know about my child's weaknesses across his subjects.

Despite the importance of PSTs, fathers had been mostly "absent" from these conferences. They all believed that their wives were the best people to attend PSTs on behalf of the family as they had been going over the years. Fathers also explained that often their schedules were filled with work, sports and other social activities. Attending their children's PSTs was not a priority for them. As Filemoni explained: "Faakoa faalua oga ou alu i le fa

kausaga i le kolisi; makuā ova lava le short” (I’ve been to two PSTs in 4 years; way too short).

While all fathers could communicate in English, they all felt the English language and knowledge about education were barriers that prevented their active involvement and thorough understanding of what was discussed at PSTs. As Kenese summed up, some fathers and parents may have found the one-on-one meetings with teachers uncomfortable:

Kenese: But I think, for us Samoan parents, I think one of the reasons why some parents don’t go is because of the language. Some parents are embarrassed, and some Samoan parents feel uncomfortable. But I think that is one of the biggest reasons why they don’t want to have a one-on-one [meeting] with the teacher.

Fathers reflected on their attendance level at PSTs over the years and communicated a sense of regret. Fathers felt they did not do enough or made a “real” commitment to attend these conferences. In addition, the challenges around understanding NCEA, achievement information and PSTs formalities did not promote regular father involvement at these events.

Consequences

Fathers who attended PSTs gained insights into their children’s progress, but were often unsure how to better help them at home. Fathers also learned more about NCEA, assessment and school support systems available to their children. For several fathers, attending their church’s Talanoa Ako programme helped them improve their knowledge of the NZ education system and NCEA. One father provided academic support for their child around Samoan language. Another father’s challenge was that he felt his lack of knowledge about NCEA and current educational practice prevented him from giving his son proper advice or help:

Kenese: That was probably my biggest thing. Because I felt like I didn’t really understand the full thing [NCEA], so I can’t really tell my child what to do, gei kei ua faasao mai ka ika oka ika ai la ia (in case my child corrects me, and then I get mad).

Despite the challenges faced by fathers, they also reflected critically on their involvement with their children and believed that they could do better.

For the children, fathers’ presence gave them a strong sense that their fathers valued and were supportive of their education. However, when fathers were absent, they may still have believed that fathers had other equally important roles for their family well-being and success. Mothers felt reassured about being valued for their role as the primary contact

person for their children's education. They also gained a shared understanding and responsibility for their child's success that helped improve the father–mother relationship.

Group 3: Nonattendees

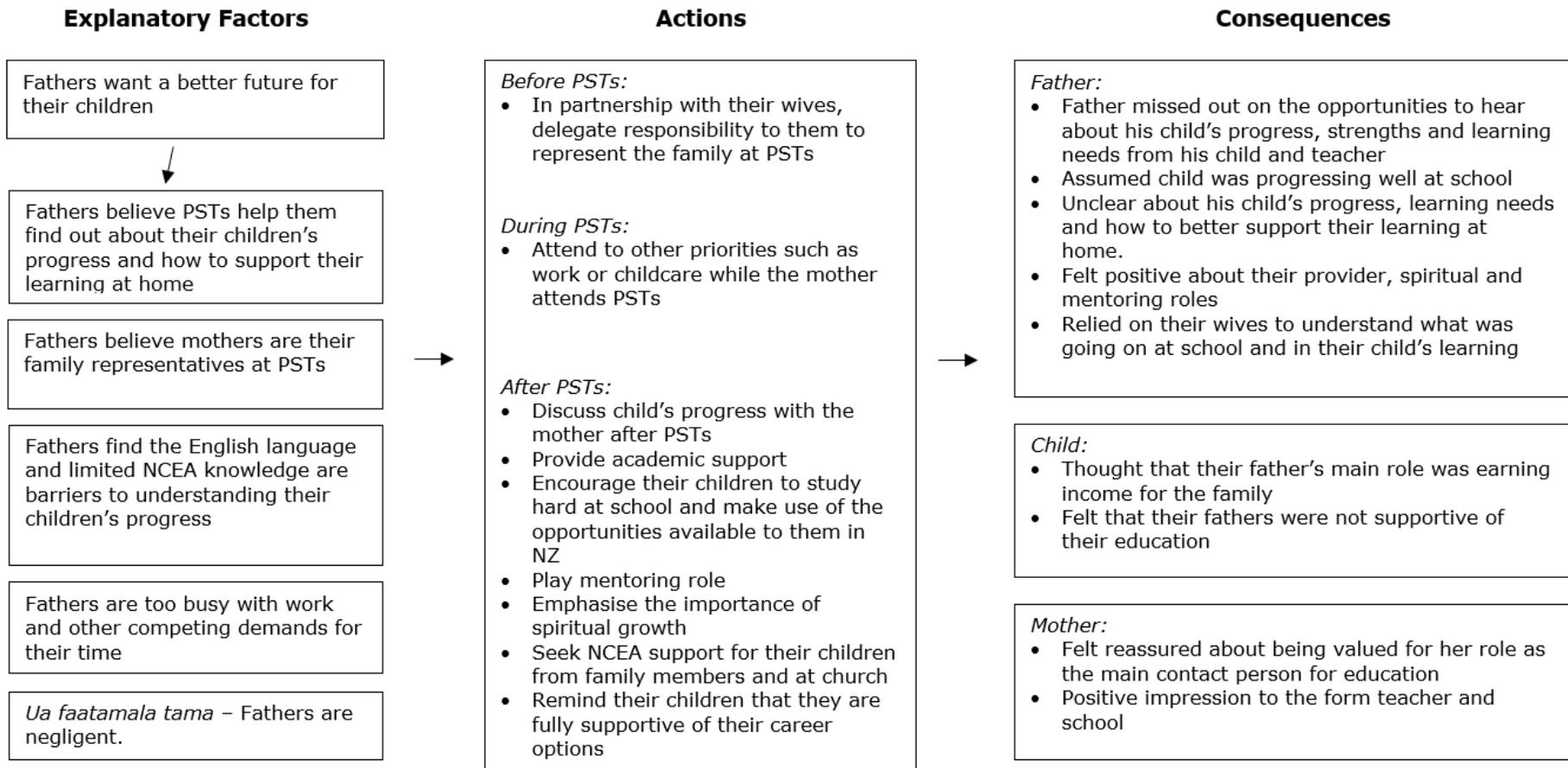
O le tamā o ia o se teuteuala i totonu o se aiga (A father nurtures a clear pathway for his family's success)

Overview of Group 3

Nine participants were in this group. The average age for the group was 56 years and all fathers were born in Samoa. Six fathers had been in NZ for more than 25 years, except Eperu (11), Mataio and Tanielu (20 years). At the time of the study, five fathers had a child at secondary school. Esekielu and Tanielu had grandchildren, and Iakopo had a niece. Two fathers had diplomas, three had School Certificate and four had no qualifications. Six fathers were in employment, two on Accident Compensation (ACC) benefit and one was retired at the time of the study. For specific information about these attendees, please see Table 3.2 in Chapter 3. Figure 4.3 provides the nonattendees' ToA followed by an explanation of its components.

Figure 4.3

Nonattendees' Theory of Action



Actions

Before PSTs, fathers, in partnership with their wives, delegated responsibility to their wives to represent their family at the PSTs. As captured by Mika, “E tele lava o le tinā e auai i fonotaga ia” (It’s mainly the mother who attends these meetings).

During PSTs, fathers attended to other priorities such as work or childcare. However, several fathers explained that other than work, the other reason why they did not attend PSTs was that they did not know when these conferences happened:

Mika: Ta te lei iloa foi taimi o fonotaga ia. O le galuega le isi mafuaaga [ou te le auai ai].

I didn’t know when these meetings happened. But work is the other reason [why I don’t attend the meetings].

After PSTs, fathers discussed their children’s progress with their wives. Where possible, fathers provided academic support within their areas of expertise, especially when asked by their children. One father discussed how his granddaughter often sought assistance from him instead of her parents, or other family members:

Esekielu: O la’u granddaughter laikiki a iai gi mea e lē malamalama ai, she always asks me, aemaise a la mea kau mathematics, science sometimes. Ia ga ou fai aku lea iai e alu i oga makua e fai ai le fesoasoagi. Fai mai le kala a lo’u afafige, you are better than them grandpa!

My little granddaughter always comes and asks me when she does not understand certain things, especially mathematics and science sometimes. I said to her, go and seek help from your parents. But she said, you are better than them grandpa!

Besides academic support, fathers encouraged their children to work hard at school and make the most of the opportunities available to them in NZ:

Mataio: Ou te fautua e toaga e fai meaaoga. Ou te talanoa foi ma faamalosia iai.

I encourage my child to focus on their studies. I talk with my child and encourage him.

Five grandfathers, Tanielu, Esekielu, Mataio, Mika and Ioane, saw their main role as mentors and encouraged their grandchildren to set goals and prioritise their education:

Tanielu: Ou fai aku i lou akalii o le a la se mea o e mafaufau iai? Fai mai, I want to be a faifeau. Ou fai aku, e lei kaikai a le mea lega. Faakoa e mafaufau a mulimuli iai. E

magaia, ae kakau ona fai muamua lau aoga. A lelei lau gagu, lelei lau kusikusi, lou mafaufau ia lelei, ia ga mulimuli age lea e alu eke sue faafaifeau.

I said to my [grand]son what is a goal that you are thinking of? He said, I want to be a church minister. I said to him, there's time for that. Think about that later. It's good, but you should prioritise your education first. When your English, writing and your thinking are good, then later on you can go and sit the exam to become a minister.

As well as goal setting, fathers emphasised the importance of God in their children's and families' lives. Besides spiritual enrichment, three fathers sought NCEA extra support for their children from family members and their church's Talanoa Ako programme which they attended with their wives and children. Fathers also reassured their children of their support for whatever career choices they made. However, they told them that they must give it their best effort:

Esekielu: O le a le mea ete manao e fai, fai ia lelei. Aua le faatagā faia se mea. Do it well and do it properly

Whatever you want to do, do it well and do it properly. Don't do anything for the sake of doing it.

Fathers' ongoing encouragement and reassurance reflected their commitment to their children's educational success.

Explanatory Factors

The overwhelming belief that fathers shared was that they wanted their children to succeed and make the most of the opportunities available in NZ. Fathers saw NZ as the land of opportunities, and their wish was that educational success would lead their children to a better future. Fathers expressed their dreams for their children in the following way:

Esekielu: O le mafuaaga na mafua ai ona malaga mai i Niu Sila nei ina ia maua e tamaiti le ola aoaoina lelei. E le faapea e leaga aoaoga i Samoa, ae e tele avanoa iinei nai lo Samoa

The reason why we came to NZ was for our children to be better educated. I am not saying that education in Samoa is bad, just there are more opportunities here in NZ than Samoa.

Connected with the opportunities that NZ offers, were the dreams and aspirations for their children to be happy and to have a successful future. A successful future was captured in a wider sense that included well-being, values and skills:

Tanielu: O moemitiga lava ia a tatou tamā, ia ola fiafia fanau, ma ia maua so latou lumanai manuia. E le gata i le ola aoaoina, ae ia ola i le soifua maloloina lelei, malosi, taua le usitai, faalogo, o mea taua na, tatou te naunau ia maua e tatou fanau. Tatou te mananao uma lava ia ola manuia ma ola fiafia a tatou fanau.

These are our dreams as fathers, for our children to be happy, and be successful. Not only in education, but their well-being, be safe, obedience, listen, those are the important things that we want our children to acquire. We all want our children to live good lives and be happy.

All fathers believed it was important to know about their children's progress at school. Finding out how their children were progressing at school could come down to who was available to attend. However, many fathers believed that their wives were the best people to attend PSTs on behalf of the family because they had been going over the years. Delegating the responsibility to their wives ensured that at least someone knew about what was happening at school.

Multiple barriers prevented fathers from attending PSTs. Many fathers talked about the English language and limited NCEA knowledge as barriers to understanding their children's progress and taking an active role in PSTs. Fathers shared about "being in the darkness" about NCEA. In addition, one father pointed out whether attending a meeting that he was not going to understand was a worthwhile investment of his time:

Mika: Ta te lē malamalama foi a i le nanu [Igilisi]. Ua iai foi le talitonuga, e maumau fua le taimi ta te alu ai ta te lē malamalama. Atonu a iai se isi e faaliliua le gagana, ia ua aoga ma faafaigofie foi lena mo matou e lē o lava le malamalama tele i le gagana.

I don't understand the language [English]. There is also a belief, it is such a waste of time when I don't even understand. Maybe if there is a translator, then that would make things easier for us who don't understand the language.

Fathers' provider role was vital to their family's success in NZ. However, work could also become a barrier to fathers' involvement in their children's PST conferences. Fathers also reported that the timing of the conferences could also prevent them from attending:

Tupu: O le mafuaaga ou te lē auai ai ona o le taimi ma tulaga i galuega. Tele o taimi o le fa, lima i le afiafi ao lei manava mai matua.

The reason why I don't attend is because of the timing [of the conferences] and work. Most of the time, the conferences take place at 4 or 5 in the evening, while we are still at work.

Many fathers also reflected on their involvement (or lack of) and claimed that they did not give PSTs a high priority. However, Iakopo's position, "Ua faatamala tamā" (Fathers are negligent), was generally accepted by many fathers in this group. Fathers' critical assessment of their involvement highlighted their commitment to support the high aspirations they had for their children to thrive in Aotearoa, NZ.

Consequences

Fathers who delegated responsibility to their wives missed out on hearing about their children's progress first-hand from the form teachers. Therefore, they may have assumed that their children were progressing well at school, especially when not brought up in the discussion with the mother at home. Fathers' lack of clarity about their children's progress and learning needs could have prevented them from knowing how to better support their children's learning at home.

As a result, fathers' provider, spiritual and mentoring roles gave them confidence about their contribution to their family. However, their overreliance on their wives to understand what was going on at school and in their children's learning could have prevented them from maximising their resources for their children's benefit.

For children, their fathers' absence may have strengthened their belief that their fathers' main role was earning income for the family. They may have also felt that their father was not supportive of their education. For mothers, being the main contact person for their children's education reassured them about being valued for their role. Attending alone could also give a positive impression to the form teachers and school that she was the main person supporting their child's education at school and home.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to "cast a net wide" among a group of 17 fathers across three church communities to find out about their involvement in PSTs. From the initial five focus group interviews, data have been analysed and were presented according to the three categories of participant involvement in PSTs – regular attendees, occasional attendees, and nonattendees.

Actions: Data across the three groups indicate that all fathers were involved in various ways before, during and after PSTs. Regular attendees took a leading role in the planning to attend PSTs, while occasional attendees played a supporting role to their wives. Nonattendees were more active after the conferences. Therefore, nonattendees' meaningful involvement was invisible to form teachers and schools.

Explanatory factors: Across the three groups, three dominant factors emerged. First, all fathers had high aspirations for educational success for their children in NZ. As a result, they all wanted to know how their children were progressing. PSTs provided a forum for them to gain insights into their children's progress. However, multiple barriers such as work, the English language and knowledge of the NZ education system prevented many fathers from attending or understanding thoroughly what was discussed in PSTs.

Consequences: Regular and occasional attendees gained some understanding of their children's progress. However, data from the study showed that while these fathers (and parents) tried hard to listen and understand what was going on in school to help them inform their support at home, many felt ill-equipped to support their children academically at home from the information from teachers shared. As a result, some fathers sought support from their families and church community networks.

Another key finding from this study to help inform future research was that providing fathers with the opportunities to discuss their involvement in familial contexts reawakened their curiosity to reflect and critically evaluate their own performance and that of their school. The following chapter reports five case studies (expressions of fatherhood) detailing a deeper level of fathers' engagement in PSTs.

Chapter 5: Findings from Five Father Cases (Study 2)

Introduction

Chapter 5 showcases the five selected cases (expressions of fatherhood) aimed at probing deeper into fathers' involvement in PSTs. Data sources that informed each case included two individual father interviews (pre- and postintervention), a 7-day engagement log, their respective focus group contribution, and pre- and postsurvey reflection from the intervention described in Chapter 3 (Study 2, Phase 3). Each case is framed using the study's PBM conceptual framework starting with the fathers' background information; then fathers' actions; explanatory factors that motivated their actions; and lastly, the consequences of their actions. The cases are presented in this order: regular attendees, occasional attendees, and nonattendees.

Five Expressions of Fatherhood

Regular Attendees of PSTs

Case 1 – Levi

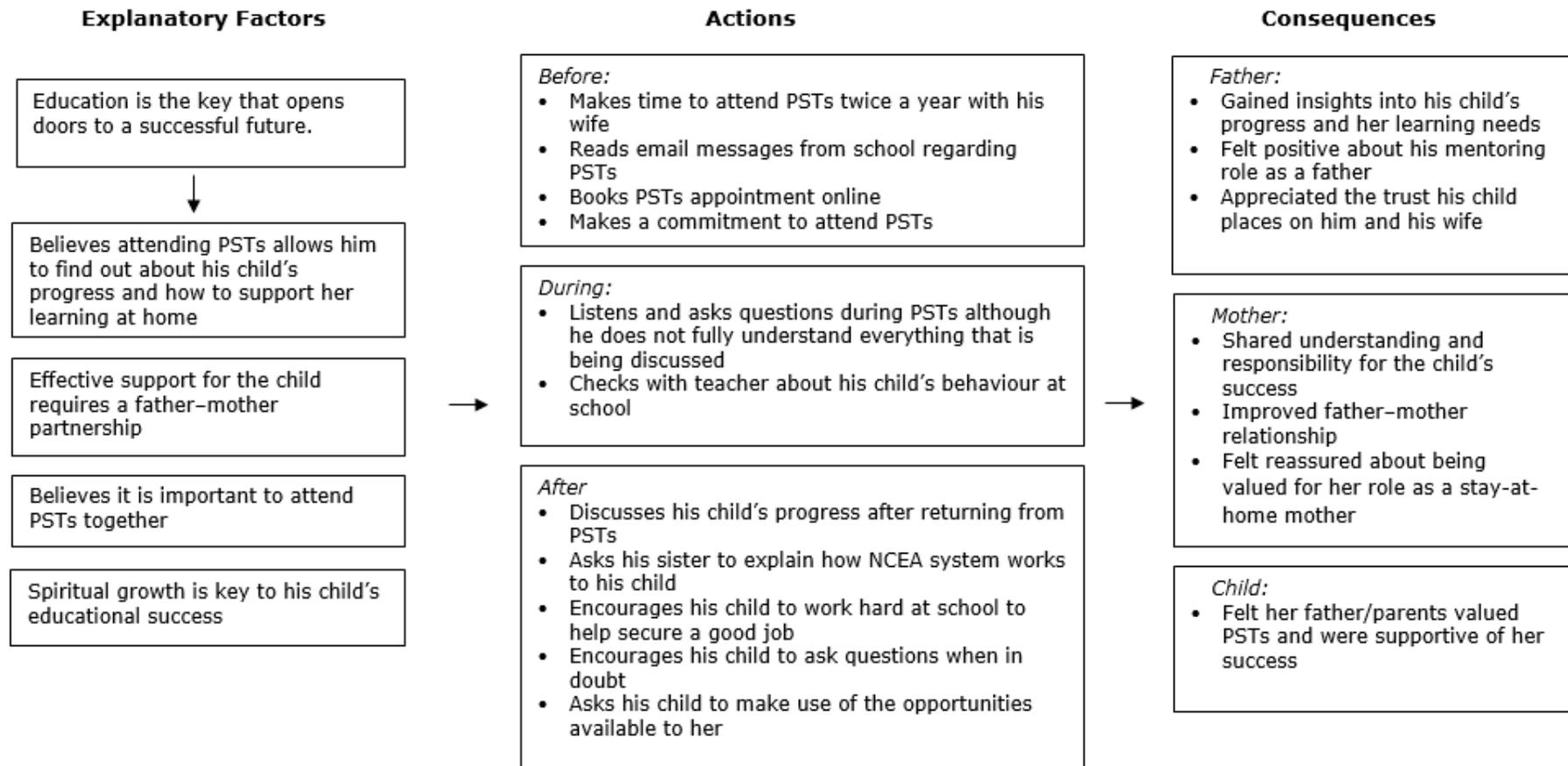
Alagaupu: *E afua mai mauga le manuia o le nuu* (A village's fortune comes from its high chiefs, orators and elders – From the top a village thrives)

Background. Levi is married and has three children of his own, has adopted three family members from Samoa and looks after four children from Oranga Tamariki¹¹ (also family members). Levi tells of his family's struggle with the NZ Immigration Department, lasting 8 years, that cost him vital years of his intermediate and secondary education. In the 8 years his family overstayed in NZ, they worked on farms picking onions and strawberries, and did menial jobs to make ends meet. These lessons have provided powerful learning opportunities for Levi to ensure that his children do not experience the challenging journey he travelled as a young person. Levi's education came in the form of Bible study classes. He is now a lay preacher at his church at the young age of 28. This case documents Levi's journey with his adopted daughter from Samoa at Year 12. Figure 5.1 introduces Levi's ToA about his involvement in PSTs.

¹¹ Oranga Tamariki: <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/>

Figure 5.1

Levi's Theory of Action



Actions. Levi attends PSTs twice a year with his wife. Several weeks *before* PSTs, he reads the school email messages concerning PSTs and makes the appointments online to suit their schedule. Taking a lead in making the appointments signals a commitment to supporting their child’s education by attending PSTs.

During PSTs, Levi listens attentively and asks questions about his child’s behaviour at school and on areas he feels comfortable with, such as the Samoan language. However, he claims that besides the Samoan language subject, he has little knowledge of what goes on in the other subjects or what to do to help his daughter:

Ou ke iloa ga o le Gagaga Samoa ka ke malamalama iai. Ia a o isi makaupu la e faamakala mai ele faiaoga, ka ke lē malamalama poo le a le mea e fai e fesoasoagi ai i le kamaikai lea.

I can only understand what is happening in the Samoan language [subject]. However, I don’t understand the other subjects that the teacher is explaining, nor what to do to help my daughter.

Although he does not fully understand everything discussed in PSTs, Levi tries to capture specific areas that he and his wife could help with at home.

After the first conference in 2020, he discussed his child’s progress with his wife at home and sought NCEA assistance for his daughter from his sister, who is at university:

Sa ou kalagoa i lou koalua, pau a le kagaka e malamalama ga o lo’u kuafafine lea i le iugivesike, aua sa ga ia faia le NCEA. Ou fai aku i lo’u kuafafine e kago e faamalamalama maka e ausia mo le NCEA i le kamaikai lea aua ma ke lei aooga iigei.

I said to my wife that my sister, who is at university, is the only person who understands NCEA because she has done it. So, I asked my sister to explain NCEA to my daughter because we were not educated here.

Although he attends PSTs regularly, he still finds NCEA and achievement information confusing. There is much discussion about their child’s progress after PSTs. Levi uses a range of communicative strategies to get his message across to his child. He often uses humour to encourage his child to work hard at school to help secure a good job. He also encourages his daughter to be brave and ask questions in class whenever in doubt:

E faukua a ma fai iai e kāua le fesili. A le fesili e lē malamalama foi. E magaomia le aveese o le ma ae fesili pe a lē malamalama. E magaomia foi poo le a le mafuaaga e ala ai oga lē fesili.

I advise her that it's essential to ask questions. If you don't ask, you don't understand. It's important not to be shy but ask for help when in doubt. I also want to know why she doesn't ask questions.

Asking questions is encouraged at home, and at school, to help his daughter, who was educated in Samoa, adjust to education in NZ. Levi reminds his daughter to make use of the opportunities available in NZ and to communicate with him what is happening at school and the resources she needs.

Explanatory Factors. Levi believes education is the key that opens doors to a successful future. He said, *O le moemikiga a, ia iu lelei aoga a fagau* (The dream is for our children to complete their education successfully). To support the dream for his child, Levi believes that attending PSTs allows him to find out about his child's progress and how to support her learning at home:

Ao fogokaga ia ma faiaoga, ou ke auai a o le fia iloa lava foi poo le a le kulaga o iai loka afafige i kokogu o le aoga, poo iai se alualu i luma pe leai. Ia poo le a se kulaga e fesoasoagi ai makua i le fale, e lualua faakasi ai ma faiaoga.

I attend the meetings because I want to find out about my daughter's progress, whether there's been any change or not. I also want to find out what parents can do at home to support teachers' work.

Levi believes that more effective support for his child requires a father–mother partnership. In addition, it is a positive message for their child seeing both parents at the conferences:

Kalagoa mai foi si o'u koalua, o le fialia foi o le kamaikiki o le vaai mai la ka ke kukū faakasi. Ma ke fialia ma ke ō faakasi. Pei o le agaga lava ia lagoga e le kamaikiki la ma ke kukū faakasi aku e support ia.

My wife shared that our child will be happy to see us standing together. We enjoy going together. We want our child to know that we are united in our support for her.

For Levi and his wife, attending together is their family approach to everything they do. The church plays an integral part in their family, and they see spiritual growth as key to their child's success. His adopted children have come from challenging family circumstances. Therefore, the church provides another form of education and discipline, something different to help shape their future.

Consequences. By attending PSTs, Levi learns about his child's progress and her challenges in adjusting to the NZ classroom:

Sa vaai a ma le fiafia i loga kaumafai i le aoga. Sa ma kalagoa ma le faiaoga ua iai si suiga i le kamaikai lea, ua confident e kalagoa i kokogu o le vasega. I le 2019 sa faigaka ona kaukala i kokogu o le aoga, ae sa mafai oga open up i ō lakou online i le 2020. Ua mafai ona kaukala ma open up i mea e lē o malamalama ai. E lē o se suiga kele, ao la e laalaa i luma le ola kaumafai.

I noticed with joy her growth at school. I talked with the teacher, and she noticed a difference; she is confident to talk in class. In 2019, she found it difficult to talk at school [language issue], but she opened up during her online learning in 2020. She now opens up and talks about the things she does not understand. It's not a big difference, but the main thing is that she tries.

Attending PSTs allows Levi to learn about his child's strengths and learning needs. He seeks further help for his child from family members and encourages his daughter to ask her teachers for assistance when required. He also feels optimistic about his mentoring role as a father and appreciates his child's trust in him and his wife. Levi's partnership with his wife and shared responsibility for the child's success has helped to improve the father–mother relationship. His wife also felt reassured about being valued for her role as a stay-at-home mother. For Levi's daughter, her parents' presence at PSTs and their ongoing support strengthen her belief that they are committed to her success.

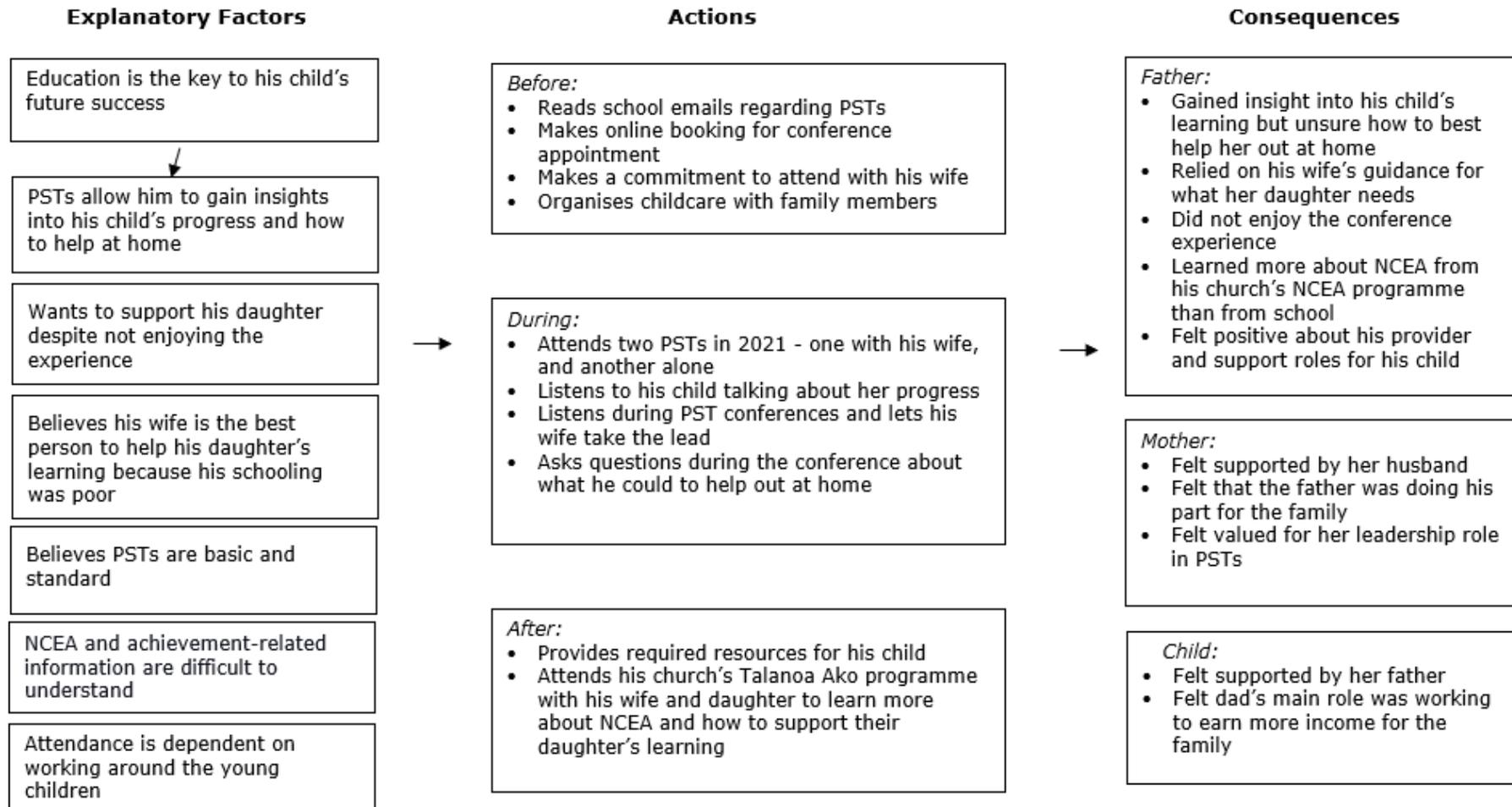
Case 2 – Isaia

Alagaupu: *E le tauilo fanau a tupu (Everyone knows an educated child)*

Background. Case 2 captures a NZ-born young father's journey with his oldest child, Olivia, at senior secondary school. Isaia is in his 40s and lives with his wife and five children (one secondary school, two at primary and two in ECE). Isaia completed Year 13 and worked straight away in the factory. Both Isaia and his wife work and juggle the balancing acts of daily childcare, work, family and church commitments. Isaia works 30 km away from home, and his daily routine involves leaving home early at 4.30am to avoid the Auckland traffic for a 6 o'clock start. He finishes work at 2 pm and picks up the children from school at 3 pm. Isaia also works as a security guard at the weekends to bring in some extra money to support his family. Figure 5.2 presents Isaia's ToA about his involvement in PSTs.

Figure 5.2

Isaia's Theory of Action



Actions. *Before* the recent PSTs, Isaia read school email communications informing him about the events and booked the conference appointments online. Making a commitment to attend his daughter's PSTs with his wife is a habit for Isaia. Attending PSTs together with his wife also requires organising childcare with family members. In 2021, Isaia attended two PSTs – one with his wife and another alone.

During one of the PSTs, his daughter, Olivia, led the conference by presenting her goals for the year, what she has achieved, and what she needed to improve on. As his daughter is a “quiet one,” Isaia thinks hearing his daughter talking about her learning was great because that is new to him:

Olivia had to do a little presentation when we came in. Her presentation in the first term was on the subject she was taking, why she wanted to take them, and what she wanted to achieve by the end of the term. She was doing most of the talking, and we were listening with the teacher. Then the form teacher asked if we had any questions. At PSTs, he prefers to listen to the teacher and let his wife take the lead to ask questions about their daughter's progress. He also sometimes asks how he can help her out at home but admits his ability to help is limited to his provider and advisor roles.

After PSTs, Isaia always makes sure that his daughter has everything she needs:

I'm always making sure she's on top of the stuff you know. I mean, not only making sure she has a laptop and all this and that. If they have what that need, they'll probably feel more comfortable learning. So, I think having those [resources] nowadays are compulsory.

As he finds NCEA information difficult to understand during PSTs, Isaia attended his church's Talanoa Ako education programme with his wife and daughter to learn more about NCEA and how to support their daughter's learning at home.

Explanatory Factors. Isaia believes that education is the key to his child's future success. He thinks PSTs allow him to gain insights into his child's learning at school. However, his primary motivation for attending the conferences is to support his child's learning. He says: “I like to go just to show my daughter that I care. That's it, basically.” Although he does not enjoy the experience, Isaia's support for his daughter is one way to acknowledge the tremendous assistance his daughter gives to their family at home through childcare. He says, “Olivia is really mature. She gives me a lot of support with the kids. She's just done so much with us, but she's also looking after the kids as well.”

Isaia believes his wife is the main person who leads their PSTs “campaign” and helps his daughter's learning at home. He believes his “schooling was poor,” and there are many

changes in the way he was taught compared to current school practices. However, he tries to help out wherever possible by “putting his 5 cents in.” Despite his earlier positive impression of PSTs, his recent experiences have been “basic and standard.” He recalled that the FTs “simply read out subject teachers’ comments,” but were unable to elaborate when asked for more specific information. While attending PSTs allows him to gain insights into his child’s learning, he struggles to understand NCEA and achievement-related information during the discussion. Isaia and his wife often go through a balancing act between work, family and school commitments to attend these meetings. Having young children requires the constant reorganisation of priorities concerning childcare. Isaia thinks that for their family, it comes down to whoever is available in the end:

Yeah, I think I attended a couple [of PSTs] this year [2021]. But it’s usually who is available at the same time. If I can make it, I’ll go; if she [his wife] can make it, she will go. Normally my wife can’t make it because she’s always working. So, when it comes to me, I try and do three, four stuff at the same time. But it all depends on who picks up the kids [younger children].

Consequences. Attending PSTs allows Isaia to learn more about his daughter’s learning needs and the resources she requires. However, he is often unsure how to better support his daughter’s specific needs. His insecurity has caused him to rely on his wife’s guidance for what her daughter needs, and, as a result, PSTs have become a less enjoyable experience. To help enhance his NCEA-knowledge gap, he attended his church’s Talanoa Ako programme with his wife and child, with other parents in a similar situation with him. He found the church environment comfortable and fun, and he learned practical tips to support their child’s learning at home. Although he feels optimistic about his provider and support roles for his child, his lack of enjoyment of PSTs has caused him to take a more passive role during the conferences. Isaia’s presence at PSTs provides extra support for his wife and their child. As his “wife is always busy with work,” Isaia’s attendance helps the couple share the load. His wife’s leadership role in PSTs has made her feel valued for her contribution and expertise. Isaia’s child feels supported by her father’s presence at these conferences. Moreover, when he is not there, she knows that it is because her father also has other competing demands, such as working to earn more income for the family or looking after the young children.

Occasional Attendees of PSTs

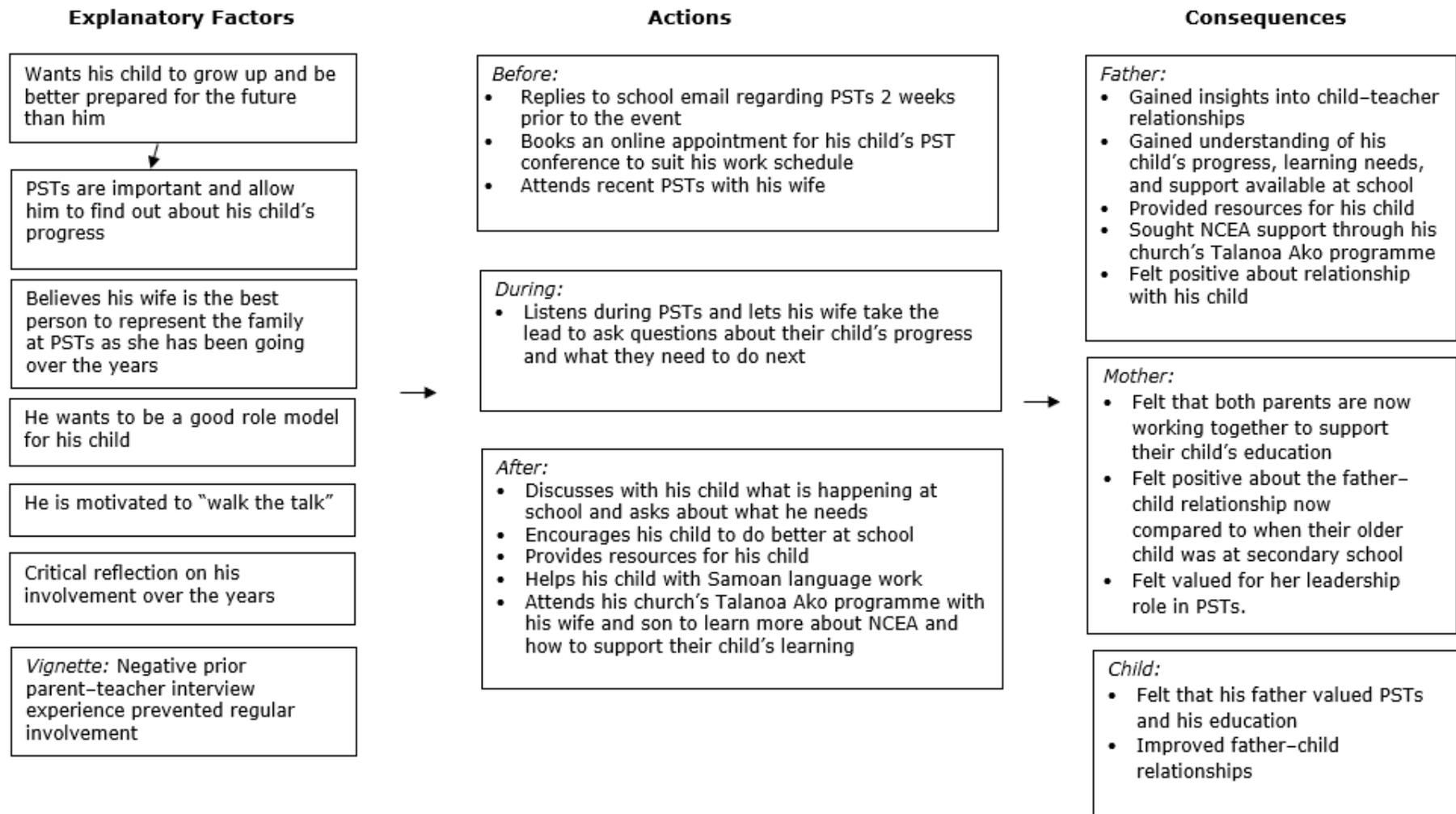
Case 3 – Kenese

Alagaupu: O fanau o ufanafana i lima o le toa (Parents encourage children to excel because they are the future leaders of their families, villages and country)

Background. Kenese is in his mid-40s, married with three children: one in tertiary education and two at secondary school. He is the eldest in a family of six, born and educated in NZ. Kenese lives in a household consisting of 10 people. He decided to work straight after Year 13 to help the family out. He is currently employed as a factory worker and takes shift work. He has been a member of CC1 all his life, and he takes an active role in the youth group, organising events throughout the year such as interchurch and interclub cricket tournaments and cultural events and he is also involved in the other areas of the church, such as the choir. Kenese is bilingual. This case captures Kenese's journey with his second child, Sani, a Year 12 student. Figure 5.3 presents Kenese's ToA about his involvement in his son's PSTs.

Figure 5.3

Kenese's Theory of Action



Actions.

Vignette: Kenese's first experience of parent–teacher meetings at intermediate school was a negative one. He said the teacher gave him and his wife his child's report to read on arrival, told them their child was doing OK and then asked if they had any questions. Then, in less than 5 minutes, the whole meeting was over. That experience has stayed with him all this time. The event also put him off from parent–teacher meetings.

Before 2020, Kenese's involvement with his child was restricted to attending sporting and cultural activities at school. However, several weeks before his son's first conference in 2020, Kenese replied to a school email signalling his intention to attend. He booked an appointment online to fit in with his work schedule and planned to attend with his wife. He said: "It just fit the timing [for my work]. To be honest, I was off work, so there was no excuse for me not to attend."

During the conference, he mostly listened and let his wife take the lead to ask the questions. The FT also introduced them to the school portal¹² where they could access their child's achievement information. The FT also informed them of extra help available through the after-school homework centre and showed them how NCEA assessment works. The couple wanted to find out more specific information about English and maths, but as the FT did not teach those subjects, he told them that they could organise a time to meet with the appropriate teachers at a later time:

My wife asked if we could see the English and maths teachers, but he said you have to make an appointment sort of thing. You know, it's hard to make an appointment. My wife tried to contact the maths teacher, but went straight to voicemail saying, please leave your number and that. You know some teachers are busy as well.

Despite their desire to get the information, they did not push for specific information from their child's subject teachers.

After the conference, he discussed what was happening at school with his child and asked him about what he needed. Then, with a better grasp of his child's progress, and learning needs, he encouraged him to work hard and do better at school. He also provided the necessary resources for his child as recommended by his FT and helped him with a Samoan language assessment. Kenese also attended his church's Talanoa Ako programme with his

¹² School-run database where parents can access information about their child's data e.g., academic, attendance, timetable, etc.

wife and son, where they learned more about NCEA and how to support their child's learning at home.

Explanatory Factors. Kenese's overall dream is for his child to be better prepared for the future. He also wants to make sure that his child receives the best support possible by taking advantage of the opportunities available to him:

I want him to grow up with a good future. Some kids don't worry about their schooling until it's too late. I often think about how I wish I could go back to high school. I say to him you have only one chance and you have to take your opportunity. You want them to grow up and have a good job or something, for him and his life.

Although he had not been an active participant before, Kenese believes PSTs allow him to learn about his child's progress and learning needs. He said, "parents need to know which direction their child is heading and if they are doing the right thing at home." He also reflected on the marked changes between his involvement with his older child, now at university, and his two younger children currently at secondary school. According to Kenese, when his older child was at secondary school, PSTs were unimportant to him:

When I look back, 3 or 4 years ago, when my older daughter was at school, it wasn't really important to me. But now, you are getting older as well, and after this meeting, it's important that us parents know which direction our child is heading.

Kenese believes that his wife is the best person to attend PSTs because she helps with the children's homework and has been going over the years. But, he said, "because my wife started involving with the kids from the start, I ended up following." Kenese wants to be a good role model for their son. He encourages him to work hard at school and makes sure that he feels supported to achieve whatever he aims to achieve. He said "I'm trying to be a good role model and encourage him in life. I want to make him feel that he can achieve, push him to strive for the best and make him happy." After the recent PST meeting in 2021, Kenese said that, along with his wife, he was prepared to walk the talk and follow up on some of the steps discussed. Kenese's views on the importance of education and PSTs have changed. He has developed a mindset that knowing about his child's progress and the challenges he is experiencing at school will enable him and his wife to seek and provide the necessary support required. He reflected, "It's always good to know which direction your kid is heading and what needs to improve, and what you could do to improve. Keeping in contact with the school is key." He also reflected critically on his involvement and how his priorities have changed in the past 2 years:

I think now as you get older, you tend to prioritise things – faamuamua mea e tatau [start with important things]. I think, to be honest, especially with my son, there were a lot of other things going on. I didn't have time for Ava [his older child]. I spent time with the kirikiti [cricket] team in the evenings. My wife would go to the conferences, and I would go to kirikiti. There's been a reorganisation of priorities.

Consequences. Kenese's presence at both 2021 PSTs enabled insights into his child's progress, learning needs and the relationships between his child and the FT. He found out from his child's FT (also his physical education teacher) that his son had been skipping rugby practice because he did not have a pair of rugby boots. So, he bought his son a new pair of rugby boots the next day. Although Kenese was unsure how to best help his child's academic learning at home, knowing about his needs has urged him to seek further support from his church's Talanoa Ako programme, which he attends with his wife and child. In addition, the recent changes in commitment and academic knowledge gained have contributed to a positive attitude about his relationship with his child. Kenese's engagement in PSTs assured his wife that both parents are now working together to support their child's education. She also felt more optimistic about the father-child relationship than when their older child was in secondary school. In addition, she also felt valued for her leadership role in PSTs. His child felt that his father valued PSTs and his education. His father's presence and follow-up actions also contributed to an improved father-child relationship.

Nonattendeers of PSTs

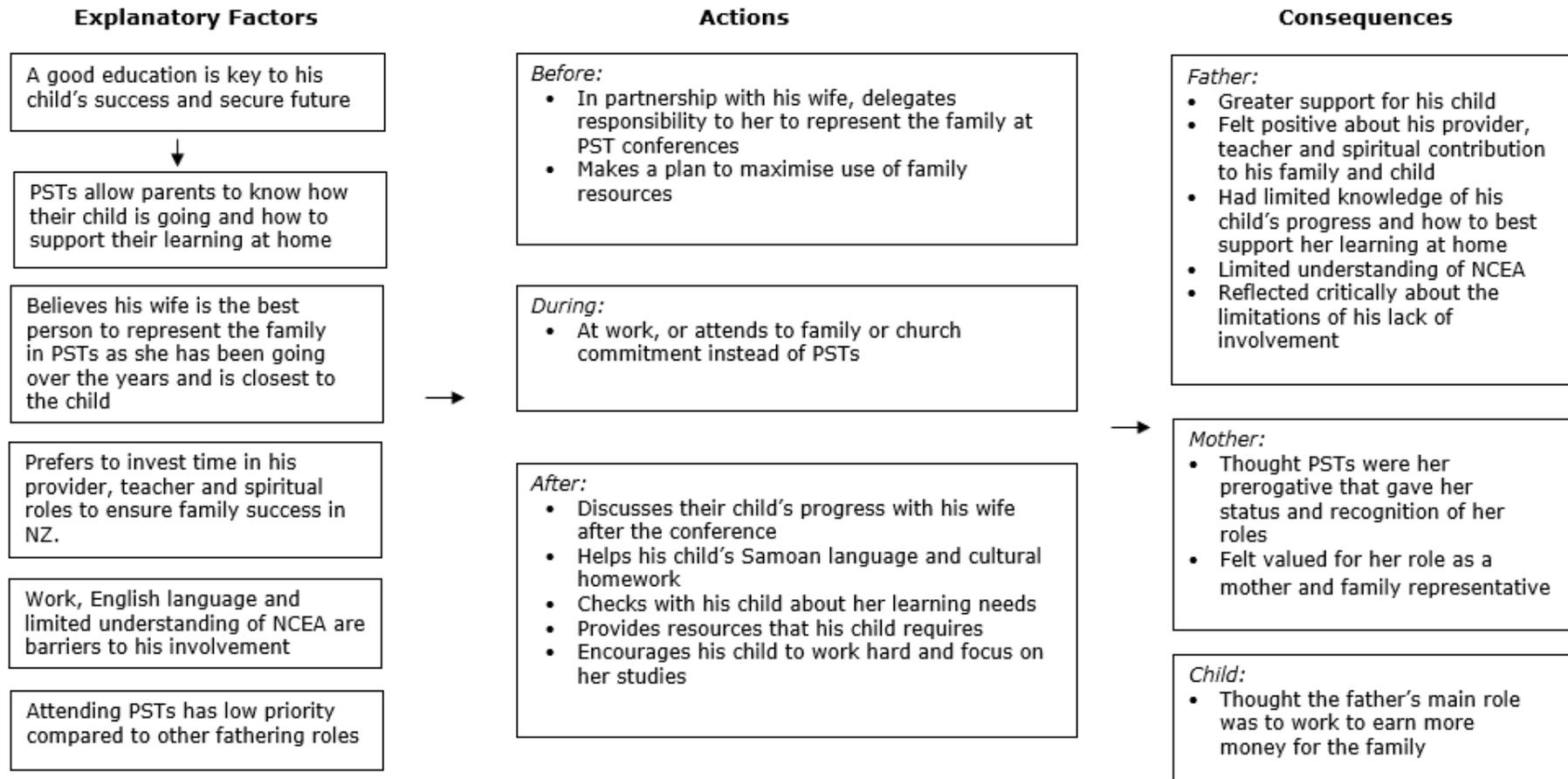
Case 4 – Tupu

Alagaupu: A lelei ona matimati a tatou fanau, o le faaputugaoloa lena mo le humanai.
(Caring for our children well will help enrich our lives for the future)

Background. Case 4 explores the involvement of a father who has not attended any school PSTs. Tupu was born in Samoa, and, at the age of 16, he decided (with his father) to leave school to help look after the family. Working on the family plantation under the guidance of his father laid the groundwork for his future. He arrived in NZ in the 1990s, got married and started a family. Tupu is 52 years old and lives with his mother, two children (aged 20 and 18), and wife at home. Figure 5.4 shows Tupu's ToA about his involvement in PSTs.

Figure 5.4

Tupu's Theory of Action



Actions. *Before* PSTs, Tupu, in partnership with his wife, delegated her the responsibility to represent the family at PSTs. This “agreement” was the family’s strategy to ensure the best use of their family resources. The agreement is also a recognition of the unique strengths that different parents have. He said, “A auai lava le tinā ole aiga, ia o maua uma na” (My wife attends on our behalf). Although he had attended parent–teacher meetings when his children were at intermediate school, his work commitment often prevents him attending PSTs.

During PSTs, Tupu is often at work, or attending to family or church commitments. As the main family provider, his work commitment often requires him to do shift work or be out of town:

E sefulu tausaga sa ou avepasi ai. O la’u sifi o le fitu i le taeao i le fitu i le afiafi, poo le afiafi mai le tolu i le sefulu.

I worked for 10 years as a bus driver. I worked the 7 in the morning to 7 at night shift, or late afternoon from 3 to 10.

During the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, Tupu lost his job, and the loss put an enormous strain on his family.

After PSTs, Tupu and his wife often discuss their child’s progress at home. Tupu gave an example of how they discussed and solved his daughter’s lateness issue:

Pei o se faataitaiga, fai mai le lipoti e tuai so’o lo’u afafine [i le aoga]. Matou talanoa lea iai poo ā mafuaaga sa tuai ai. Ae fai mai ona sa alu e piki mai lana feleni. Ma fai loa iai e aua nei toe alu e piki se isi ae alu sa’o i le aoga.

For instance, the report says she is always late [to school]. So, we asked her why she was late. She said that she went to pick up her friend. We then told her not to pick up anyone but go straight to school.

Tupu regularly helps with his child’s Samoan language homework and gives her practical knowledge of Samoan culture:

Ou te tago aoao iai le avega o le faatamaalii. A malotia, aua le tautala tu, nofo i lalo. E iloa le Samoa i lana tu ma le savali ma le tautala. E malamalama lo’u afafine i le vaega lena.

I teach her how to deliver the faatamaalii [part of showing respect to someone through the presentation of goods]. When we have visitors, don’t stand and talk, sit down. You know a Samoan person by the way they stand, walk and talk. My daughter knows about that.

He also checks with his child about her learning needs and provides the resources that she needs for her education:

Ou te fesili iai pe iai se mea o manaomia e faalelei ai meaaoga. Sa manao e aumai se laptop lelei e fai ai ana meaaoga. Tele o taimi ou te talanoa iai, a iai se mea e manaomia ai le fesoasoani, lea ou te toaga e faigaluega e maua ai le tupe.

I often ask her if there is anything she needs for school. For example, she wanted a laptop for her schoolwork. I talk with her most of the time, telling her that if there is anything she needs, I work hard to earn money for [her education].

Tupu encourages his daughter to work hard and focus on her studies. Knowing the significance of their daughter's final year at secondary school, he and his wife often pick up the chores to allow time for their daughter to study:

Sa tu'u le avanoa i lo'u afafine ona o le tausaga mulimuli leni. Sa taumafai aua nei tele ni feau ae tuu le taimi e fai ai meaaoga.

Because this is her last year [Year 13], we gave her time to focus on her studies.

Therefore, we tried not to give her too many chores but to allow more time to study.

Explanatory Factors. The importance of education and hard work was drummed into Tupu at a very young age by his father in Samoa. Tupu believes a good education is key to his child's success and secure future:

O taimi uma e manatua ai pea si o'u tamā. Fai mai le toeaina, toaga i le aoga. E lē nonofo ai pea tatou. Aua a ou toaga i le aoga, ia o a'u lava e paū iai le manuia. Afai foi ou te lē toaga, ia o a'u foi e paū iai lea mea.

I remember my father advising me to work hard at school. We do not live forever. If you do well at school, you will reap the benefits. If you don't, you will also reap accordingly.

Therefore, attending PSTs allows them to find out how their child is going and how to best support her learning at home. However, for his family, his wife has been the main person attending these conferences. He believes that his wife has a much closer bond with their daughter, and therefore, it made sense for her to be their delegated family representative at PSTs:

Talu na iai lo'u afafine i le kolisi, e lei iai se avanoa na ou auai atu ai ise fonotaga, na o le intermediate. O le isi mafuaaga o le tinā e latalata iai la'u fanau teine.

Even since my children were at college, I never attended any meetings, only at intermediate. Another reason is that my wife is a lot closer to my girls.

To achieve his aspirations for his child, he believes his provider, spiritual guide, and teacher roles are critical for his family's success. Providing financially for his family is vital, especially concerning living in Auckland, NZ, where everything relies on money. He said, "Ona e moi a foi i totonu o lenei atunuu o galuega e faalagolago iai i so'o se mea i totonu o le aiga" (In this country [NZ], all the family needs rely on work).

Critical barriers to his involvement at college PSTs include work and limited understanding of the English language. Despite the barriers to Tupu's involvement at PSTs, he also reflected critically and considered whether he had given low priority to attending PSTs compared to other fathering roles over the years.

Consequences. Tupu's greater general support give him confidence and positivity about being the provider, teacher and spiritual guide for his family and child. However, the negative consequences of Tupu's absence include limited knowledge of his child's progress and that he is not up to date with reporting and assessment practices at the NCEA level. After attending the intervention workshops, Tupu realised that he may have undermined his role in supporting his child's education by not attending these conferences. He began to reflect critically on his actions and wondered whether he did not give PSTs a high priority. He recognised his busy work and other social factors may have influenced the low priority he gave to these events:

Pei ua lē faataua le auai pe afai o loo auai le tinā i fonotaga. O le work schedule e pisi tele, [ma ua] leai se avanoa e tu'u mo ituaiga mea ia [fonotaga]. Ua tumu le taimi i le faigaluega ma isi mea. Poo le lē faataua foi [o fonotaga ia].

I may have given it [parent-teacher meetings] low priority when my wife goes. My work schedule is always busy, and I end up not making time for [these meetings].

Your time is filled with work and other things. Therefore, lack of priority is given [to these meetings].

Tupu's wife's regular attendance at the conferences gave her confidence, status and recognition of her leadership roles. For Tupu's child, her father's ability to provide for her educational needs may have given her the perception that her father's central role was working to earn more income for their family.

Case 5 – Mataio

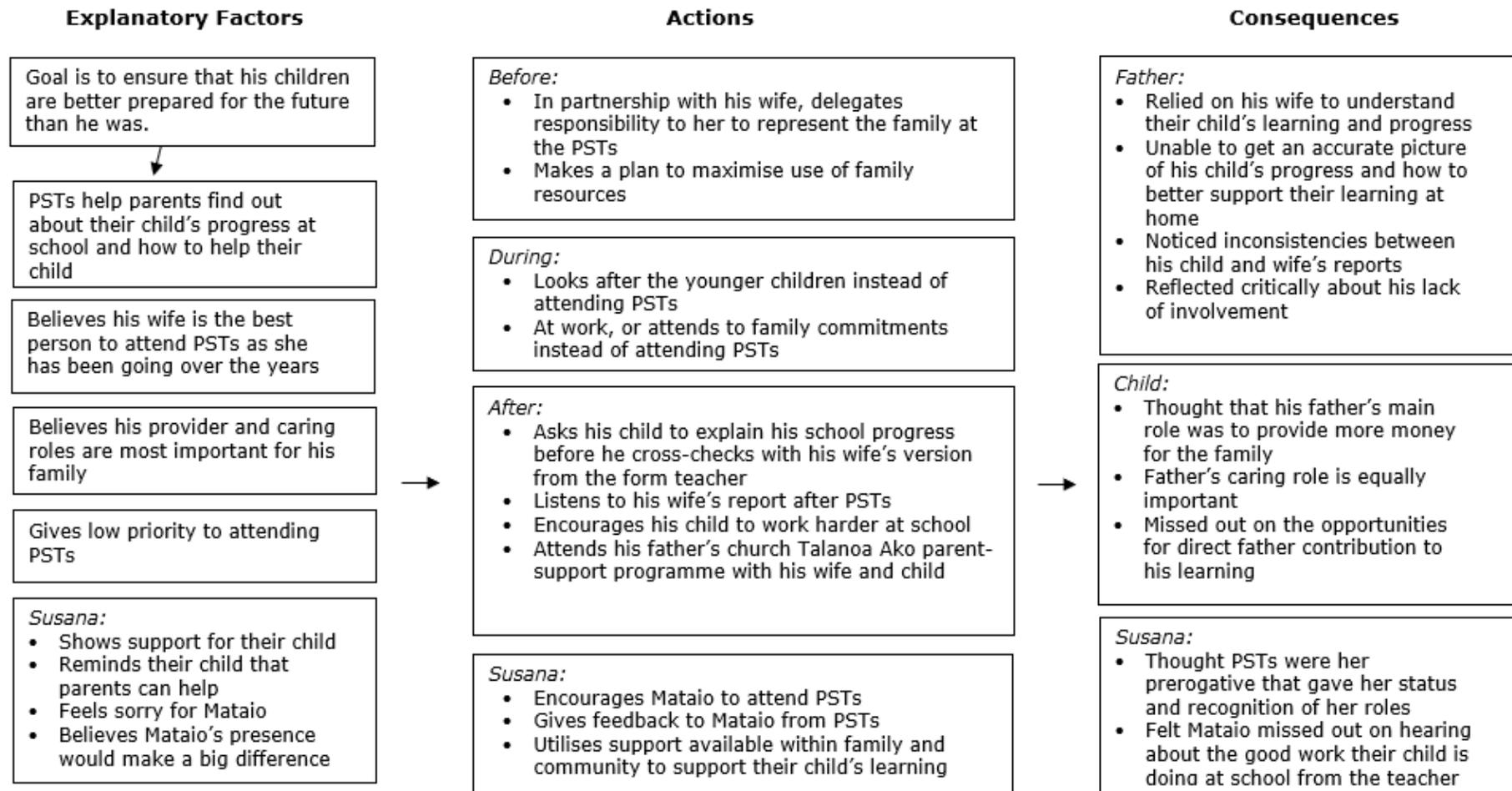
Alagaupu: *E tu manu ae le tu logologo* (Parents' role is to keep reminding their children about the importance of education and urgent family matters)

This proverb captures the importance of parent–child connections. Parents need to talk, remind, and share with their children constantly about the purpose of learning and why their children need to take advantage of the opportunities available at school.

Background. Mataio was born in Samoa and came to NZ when he was a teenager. He is the fourth oldest of nine children; Susana, his wife, is the second oldest of seven siblings. His wife was also born in Samoa and came to NZ when she was young. Mataio finished school in Year 12 and decided to work straight away. His wife started university and dropped out after the first year to look after her grandparents. Mataio and Susana are both in their late 30s and have five children (three girls and two boys), aged 17, 12, 10, 9 and 8. The following ToA (Figure 5.5) explains Mataio and his wife's involvement in PSTs with their son, Chris. As Susana is the “family representative” at these conferences, her voice has been included to reflect better the challenges faced by their family concerning PSTs and the strategies they employ to solve them.

Figure 5.5

Mataio's Theory of Action



Actions. *Before* PSTs, Mataio, in partnership with his wife, delegated her the responsibility to represent the family at PSTs. As Susana has been going over the years, the family has implemented this strategy to maximise their family resources. Mataio is the sole provider for the family. He works full time 6 days a week and takes on overtime whenever available to make extra money for the family. *During* PSTs, he is either at work, or home looking after the young children.

After PSTs, Mataio finds out about his child's learning and progress before his wife's "official" report in several ways. First, he asks his child directly – "*E muamua ona ou aumaia Chris e faamatala mai poo a mai le aoga, ona fai ai lea o le ma talanoaga ma le tinā*" (I ask Chris to tell me about his school progress first before talking with my wife). Second, he compares his child's version of progress with his wife's report from the conference. Mataio noticed that there were often inconsistencies between the two reports:

Ou fai atu ia Susana, ese ā le tali a Chris, ese le tali lea ete sau fai mai. Matua telē lava le eseese o le mea la e fai mai ai le faiaoga ma le mea lea e fai mai ai le tamaititi.

I said to Susana that Chris is saying something different from what you are saying.

There is a big difference between what Chris said and what the teacher reported.

The inconsistencies of the two reports motivated Susana to encourage Mataio to attend PSTs. However, at times, especially when he comes home tired from work, she feels sorry for him and suggests "that he needs to rest while it's best for me to go alone." Nevertheless, Susana feels confident about attending PST conferences alone for the family. She said confidently: "I know I can do it." Susana reported that teachers always ask for Mataio during the meetings. She replied that he was either at work or home, looking after the younger children.

Mataio encourages his child to work harder at school. He said, "*Ou te fautua e toaga e fai meaaoga. Ou te talanoa ma faamalosia iai*" (I encourage my child to focus on his studies. I talk and encourage him). Mataio and Susana also utilise the help available within their family and church community networks. Mataio's father provides Samoan language support for their son, Chris, learning the Samoan language at school. Their children sometimes receive social studies and maths support from their aunty. Mataio's father's church (separate from their church) runs an education programme for parents (Talanoa Ako), focusing on NCEA which the couple attended in 2020. Two years ago, they had a family camp, which introduced them to NCEA, and they have been picking up further information along the way. In addition, their church runs youth programmes, games, and *fono tatalo* (prayer meetings), providing leadership opportunities for their children.

Explanatory Factors. Mataio's overarching goal is for his children to be better prepared for the future than he was. Dropping out of school and early employment has taught him many lessons he wanted his children to avoid:

Ou te mana'o i lau fanau ia lelei aoaoga e maua ai se lumanai lelei, e tausi ai matua, aiga, ma le ekalesia.

I want my children to be successful in their education for a better future, to look after their parents, families and church.

These lessons have taught Mataio the value of a good education. Although he has not attended one yet, he believes PSTs are important as these meetings can inform him about his child's progress and what to do to support his learning and success:

E aoga tele fono ma faiaoga. E a'oa'o ai foi a'u le tamā i mea sa ou le iloaina, ma faasino mai ia te a'u le mea e tatau ona fai ina ia close mai le tamaititi ia te au.

Meetings with teachers are essential. I get taught about things I did not know, and teachers can tell me what to do so that my child is close to me.

Despite the importance of PSTs, Mataio believes his wife is the best person to attend PSTs as she has been going over the years. However, for Susana, the main reason she attends the conferences is to show support for their child and to remind him that the parents can also help them achieve their dreams. She explained:

Susana: I attend PSTs to show our kids that we are there to help their learning. No matter if they are not doing well, but they know that we are there to help; and to let the kids know that it's not only teachers who can help them. Parents can help out as well.

Mataio considers his provider and caring roles most important for his family. However, being the family's only provider does not allow him much flexibility to make changes to his work schedule to attend PSTs. The pressures of work take precedence according to Mataio: "O lenei atunuu [NZ], o le galuega lava e faamoemoe uma iai aiga" (In this country [NZ], all families depend on work). Although Susana relays information back to Mataio on her return from PSTs, she feels that Mataio's presence would make a big difference, especially for their children. At our final meeting, Susana reflects on the importance of having Mataio at their child's PSTs:

Susana: [He] needs to sacrifice some work time, and it's important that you be there for the kids. With both of us there, seeing us both there will just drive them to do better. For me, because Mataio is working, I just brush it off, I'll do it, I'll do it. I

always think that I can do it all. But inside of me, it will be nice to have him there, to listen to his kids' progress. Some of the stuff overwhelmed me. The feelings that I get, I just wished he was there. When you hear about things you thought your kids couldn't do, it would be nice for him to hear it for himself.

Mataio also reflected critically on his involvement with his child during the interview and claimed that he may have given PSTs a low priority over the years. As education is a vital part of his family's strategy for success, he also reimagines how attending together with his wife could influence better outcomes for their child.

Consequences. Mataio relies on his wife to better understand what is going on at school and with their child's learning. Unfortunately, his reliance has prevented him from hearing about his child's progress first-hand from the teacher and how he could support their learning at home better. The inconsistencies between his son's and his wife's reports are why Susana believes that Mataio needs to attend PSTs. She said "That's why it's best for him to go. Because sometimes me explaining it to him like it's different coming from me." However, he feels optimistic about the general support he provides for his child's learning and being the sole provider for the family. Despite Mataio's busy work schedule, he also reflects critically on the necessary adjustments to enhance his support for his son's educational success. He says, "E tatau ia te au ona faasao se taimi, vave manava ae alu i se fonotaga" (I must make time, finish work early and attend the meetings).

As a result of Mataio's absence from PSTs, his wife initially thought attending PSTs alone gave her status and recognition of her roles. Attending alone gives her the confidence that she can do it, which is *her role*. However, she also feels that Mataio misses hearing about their child's good work at school from the teacher. As Mataio is always working, his child may think that his father's central role is to provide more money for the family. When he stays home looking after the young children while the mother is at PSTs, his child might think that looking after his siblings is an equally important role for his father. However, the child also misses out on the opportunities for direct father interaction and contribution to learning through attending PSTs. Conversely, he may also consider that his father does not value PSTs.

Chapter Summary and Reflection

The purpose of this chapter was to delve deeper into five fathers' involvement in PSTs. Through fathers' (and one mother's) voices, we gain authentic accounts of their

actions, the factors that explained them and the consequences of their actions for themselves, their children and mothers.

Actions – Data from the five cases indicate the balancing acts fathers make between their wish to be involved and the reality for their families concerning fathers’ work. The cases also show that fathers can take the lead when equipped with the tools to help them champion their children’s learning. However, there is little evidence of fathers’ active or deeper engagement during PSTs. This gap may be explained by other structural constraints imposed by schools, such as duration and processes for PSTs.

Explanatory factors – Data from the five cases show dominant, overarching factors relating to fathers’ aspirations for educational success and wanting to know their children’s progress. However, fathers’ high aspirations for their children often face common barriers such as fathers’ lack of NZ education knowledge, language and beliefs about the “best” family representative at PSTs – often taken up by mothers.

Consequences – The impact of fathers’ actions is closely connected to the types of involvement they choose to take. Whereas regular and occasional attendees gained insights into their child’s learning and the support services available at school, this did not necessarily mean that fathers thoroughly understood them or took up all the opportunities available to them and their children. However, nonattendees have worked out a strategy that maximises their family strengths and resources – often resulting in fathers working or caring for children while mothers attend PSTs.

An important goal of this study was to find out how fathers were involved in PSTs at secondary schools. Data from fathers’ actions reveal that fathers are involved in many ways – before, during and after PSTs. Again, possible timing constraints of PSTs may have prevented more insights into fathers’ engagement *during* the conferences. However, fathers were committed to doing everything possible to support their children’s learning after PSTs.

The following chapter enlightens us on how two multicultural secondary schools organise, implement and evaluate their PSTs. We will also gain insights into the factors that inform their PSTs, and the consequences of these events for parents, students and schools themselves.

Chapter 6: Findings from Kauri College and Totara College (Study 3)

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from two school case studies. The purposes of this chapter are to gain insights into two schools' PST practices and to provide triangulated information to help understand the range of complex factors involved in PSTs. Data that inform the findings come from two DPs, a Form Teacher (FT), dean, and nine students. The findings for each school case are organised using the PBM framework. After each school's background information, a ToA (Figures 6.1 and 6.2) that describes each school's PSTs is presented. Similar to Chapters 4 and 5, the actions are explained first, divided into three parts – before, during and after PSTs, followed by the explanatory factors and the consequences (Robinson & Lai, 2006). Illustrative quotations from the participants capture the richness and complexity of the phenomenon under investigation. The chapter closes with a summary of the main ideas from both schools.

Kauri College Case Study

Alagaupu: *O le ala i le pule o le tautua* (The pathway to leadership is through service)

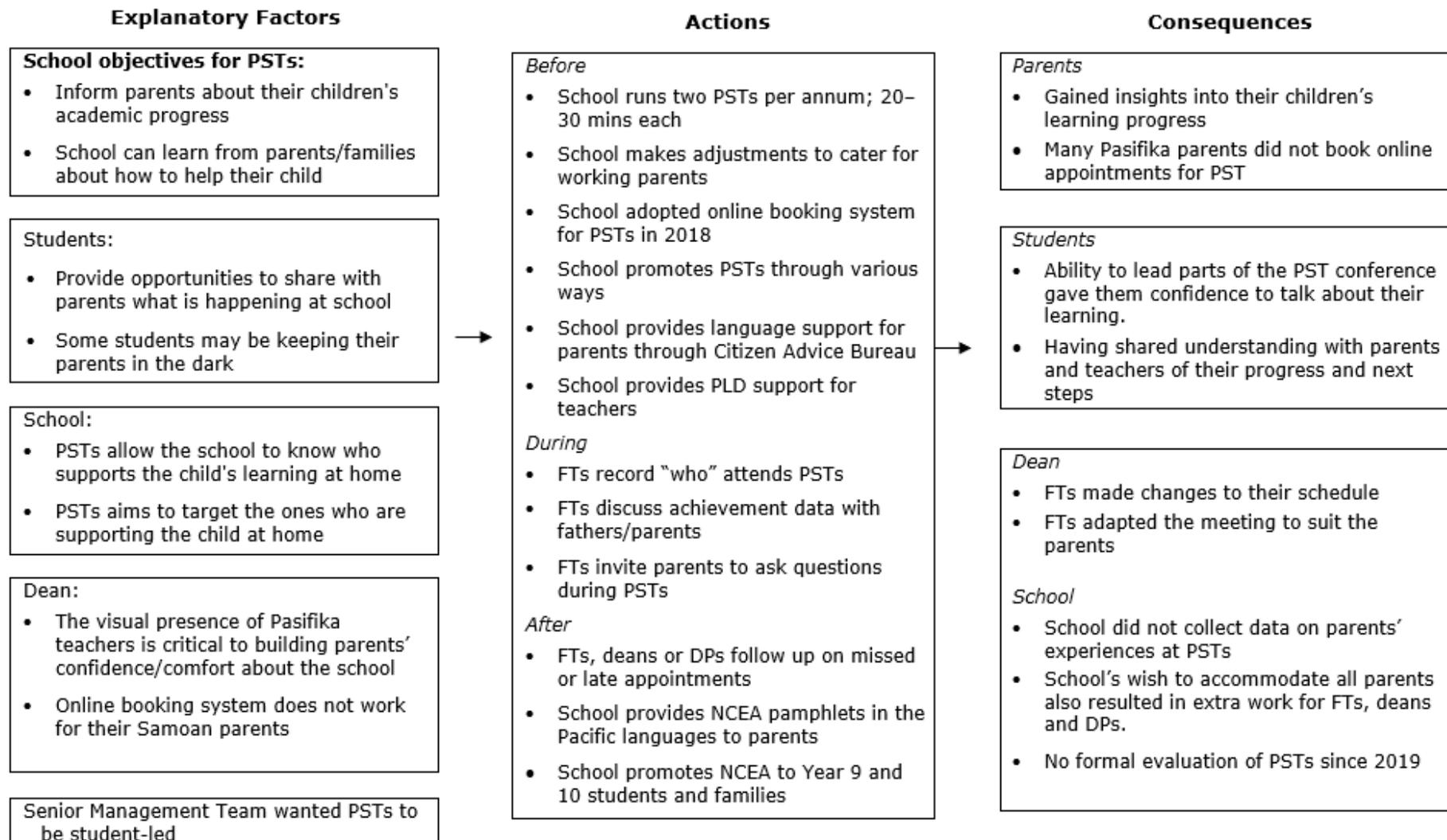
School Background and Context

Kauri College is a single-sex school catering to Years 9 to 13 students. The school has a current roll of about 600 students, of which 15% are Māori, and 80% have Pacific heritage. The three dominant Pacific groups are students from Samoa, Tonga and Niue. The school has a new leadership team, including two Pasifika DPs. According to Kauri College's 2019 ERO report, the "school recognises the positive impact that their partnerships with parents and whānau, and strong community engagement, have on student success" (ERO, 2019, p. 1)¹³. Kauri College's achievement data at the junior level (Years 9 and 10) shows that most Year 9 students start the school year below expected curriculum levels in reading and mathematics, and especially in writing. The majority of Pacific students achieve NCEA Levels 1, 2 and 3. However, the overall achievement for Pacific students at Levels 1 and 3 is declining (ERO, 2019). Figure 6.1 is Kauri College's ToA about its PSTs.

¹³ The Education Review Office (ERO) evaluates and publishes its findings about each school in NZ. Due to confidentiality matters, this reference is not in the reference list.

Figure 6.1

Kauri College Theory of Action



Actions. The school runs two PSTs per year. The first one occurs towards the end of Term 1; the second is in Term 3. Each conference takes 2 full days, where the school is closed for regular classes, but parents and caregivers book times that suit them to come in and discuss their child's academic progress. According to the DP, each conference has a particular purpose:

DP: Conference 1 is about progress reports. Conference 2 is mainly about the standards that the kids are doing, and the kind of thing that we talk about is what the parents can do to help the kids at home. Also, what the school can do to help the kids and any problems because it's one of the things that we talk about. Because we have allocated 2 days for these meetings, one of them is during the working time, and the other is more extended into evening time for those parents who can't make it during the day.

The school has made significant adjustments to their PSTs to cater to parents who work. Initially, PSTs took place after school, and parents booked in a time after work. However, they saw that many parents were rushing from work to the PSTs: "We noticed that the majority of the parents were still working and they were trying to rush from work to come and make the meeting" (DP). As a result, the school has encouraged more parents to attend by offering 2 full days to choose from for their child's conference and giving them sufficient "warning time."

According to the dean, the recent shift from a manual booking system to online appointments has negatively impacted parental attendance, especially Pasifika parents. She said "the online booking system does not work for our Samoan and Pasifika parents." Alongside issues with the online booking, the dean also provided possible explanations, such as parents' work schedules and features of their school's marketing and communication strategy, for the low parent turnout in their recent PSTs:

Dean: First, parents work. I'm not sure how effective our marketing and communications are. Also, some of our Pasifika parents are embarrassed to ask questions. Cultural shyness, language barriers and all that. As dean, I always put myself out there to help form teachers. Parents are not sure what to ask the teachers. That's why we say to the teachers, make sure you let the parents talk. Sometimes teacher talk puts parents off.

The school tries to meet its parents' needs by offering language support for their Pasifika communities on request. For instance, teachers could translate if available, or the

school can source translators through the Citizens Advice Bureau. However, parents need to request a translator before the PST day:

DP: We can go through the Citizens Advice Bureau [CAB] for our translators. The CAB usually gives us the ones who have been translating for schools for many years. If a parent comes in and wants to speak Niuean, we have to accommodate that and find someone.

As well as meeting the language needs of their community, the school prepares its teachers before the event using role-plays and conversation scripts to ensure a successful experience with parents. The DP provided some insight into their preparation for PSTs:

DP: Sometimes, we go through scripts and some of the stuff. So, most definitely at the beginning, it's greeting the parents – Hello, Mr and Mrs, because they've already had it written down. So, greeting the parents and the child and just making sure to thank them for taking the time out to come to the meeting and knowing that they are very busy at work and things like that.

During PSTs, the FT discusses achievement data and invites questions from parents. According to students, the questioning time is often challenging for them, especially when there are differences between their perception of progress in a particular subject versus a teacher's account on their school report, as captured by student Leila:

Leila: Like they [form teacher] will ask you, how do you think you did in this class? And when you say good, they will say, oh, but the [subject] teacher said [laughter]. Then the form teacher reads out the comments from that [subject] teacher.

The FT also invites parents to ask any questions they may have during the conference. However, according to the dean, “not many parents ask questions during the meeting. Most parents just listen, and then they will say thank you at the end.”

After PSTs, the FTs provide NCEA pamphlets and resources in the Pacific languages for the parents to take home to help them understand NCEA and the NZ education system. In addition, the DP described how they have made NCEA information more accessible for their parents:

DP: We get given those booklets in different languages. But even for me, looking at some of those books, it's so wordy, like you know, I don't know whether I even imagine our parents sitting down and being able to read through the whole thing. So, over the years, we have tried in the different languages to condense the information and try to get it down to the most vital information that the parents

need to know like exam time and understanding the NSN [National Student Number] numbers and also looking at the different meanings of the credits. So, I think we've tried to support them in that way, but we could do more.

In recognition of the possible challenges faced by some parents, the school started promoting NCEA to Years 9 and 10 students and their families:

DP: So usually, NCEA asks for the Years 11 to 13. But I did notice that when they do roll it out this year, they're asking for parents of Year 9s and 10s as well. So, we'll be putting it out to all parents to try and make it, just to get an understanding around NCEA.

In addition, the FTs were also expected to follow up on any rescheduled or late bookings.

Explanatory Factors. The Kauri College DP believes that PSTs are important because parents need to know their children's academic progress. In addition, the school can also learn from parents and families about how teachers could enhance their children's learning:

DP: A lot of the times you know we are dealing with families, and we don't get to meet them face to face, or we don't get to sit down and talk about the things they know, they could be doing all the things, because there are some really valuable things that the families [can] pass on to the school. You know things that aren't down on the enrolment form but are known by the parents. So these are the kinds of things that they share with us in terms of how we can help their kids.

According to Sina-Lei, a Year 12 student, PSTs provide opportunities to share what is happening at school with parents. However, she also suggests that some students keep their parents in the dark, especially when things are not going well at school:

Sina-Lei, Student: PSTs are important to let parents know about what's happening at school. PSTs keep track of what we are doing with assessment and results at school, especially now with our [NCEA] Levels 1, 2 and 3. 'Cause I know for a fact that some kids don't go home and tell their parents the truth, well what's really going on at school. They say, lea e lelei, lea magaia, (it's all good, it's fine). But really, when it comes to the interviews, the teacher tells them everything.

As well as informing parents about their children's progress, PSTs also allow the school to know who supports the child's learning at home. Therefore, targeting the "key" parent or adult at home is vital to the school's PST approach:

Dean: We don't go out to just target any person you know; we try and target the ones supporting the child at home.

DP: One of the things that we had spoken about quite a while back when we started with Starpath [project that promoted PSTs] was that we needed to as a school to know who it is that was supporting the child at home. You know, putting a face to the name was always a good thing. You know and even being able to email that person.

One way of increasing parental attendance at PSTs proposed by the dean was ensuring that Pasifika teachers are “seen” by parents. In addition, she said, “increasing the visual presence of Pasifika teachers is critical to building parents’ confidence and comfort about the school.” However, the online booking system for PSTs was a more significant barrier for their Samoan parents, according to the dean.

One of the dilemmas for the school was finding the balance between various approaches to PSTs. For instance, PSTs were initially led by teachers. FTs did most of the talking; parents and students took part when asking or answering any questions during the conversation. However, the school’s SMT wanted PSTs to be student-led, and the teacher was there to support the student:

DP: I’ve been told that the correct way of running these meetings is to be student-led. But I think one of the things that we always talk about us as teachers and in our senior leadership team is having the child own their learning, you know, own their data as well, and to be able to speak to it because they’re the ones doing it [the learning]. I think, for some of our Pasifika teachers, we always talk about wanting our kids to be much more involved in owning their learning.

Consequences. Parents who attended PSTs gained insights into their children’s progress. However, as the school did not collect data on parents’ experiences at PSTs, little is known about what parents found useful, easy or difficult to understand or how parents supported their child’s learning at home. In addition, the online booking system may have impacted negatively on the number of parents’ appointments made.

For students, their ability to lead parts of the PST conference gave them the confidence to talk about their learning. Having parents, teachers and students in the same conversation also created a shared understanding of their progress and next steps. For FTs, the senior management’s wish for student-led conferences versus their effort to inform parents resulted in a mixed approach, in which FTs adapted the meeting to suit the parents. Some FTs used their flexibility to adjust to what parents want to know, while some teachers

let students explain their progress to their parents. Therefore, PSTs were not always student-led as intended by the senior management team.

The online booking system for PSTs may have resulted in some “walk-ins” (turning up without an appointment). Parents turning up without appointments may have “forced” some FTs to make changes to their schedule, affecting other parents who have made appointments. Such last-minute readjustment may have resulted in some parental frustration. According to the dean, “some FTs ended up waiting for parents up until 8.30 pm, waiting for the families to come.” The school also made time for parents who rang up late for an appointment or wished to make an appointment after the PST conference. Where possible, on the day, they were slotted in. If not, the deans or DPs would take these appointments later when it suited parents. The school’s wish to accommodate all parents also created extra work for FTs, deans and DPs. Finally, as the school did not consistently collect feedback from parents, it prevented them from knowing about the experiences of its parents at PSTs. According to the dean, mainly mothers attended their PSTs. However, according to the DP, “a lot of the champions that come with the kids are fathers.” The lack of a thorough PST evaluation process may have contributed to the differences in opinion between the dean and the DP.

Totara College Case Study

Alagaupu: *E lele le toloa ae maau i le vai* (The toloa bird may fly away to greener pastures but it will always return to the water)

School Background and Context

Totara College is a co-educational Years 9 to 13 school with a roll of about 1,000 students, 10% of whom are Māori, and 85% of whom have Pacific heritage, with students from Samoa, Tonga and the Cook Islands making up the three largest groups. The remaining 5% are students from Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African countries. The school’s strategic plan is underpinned by a vision to promote “excellence in education for all its students.” Achievement targets are set for students at all year levels and include:

- all Year 9 and 10 students achieving at expected levels of the *New Zealand Curriculum*
- every student in every subject achieving 14-plus credits at National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Levels 1, 2 and 3

- University Entrance being gained by 35% of Year 13 students. (School Strategic Plan, 2021).

The school's achievement data shows that most Year 9 students start the school year below expected curriculum levels in reading and mathematics, and especially in writing. The majority of students in Years 11 to 13 continue to achieve well in NCEA. However, the school's University Entrance results and endorsement certificates are lower than results for students in other similar schools. The school's latest (2018) report identified two areas for improvement:

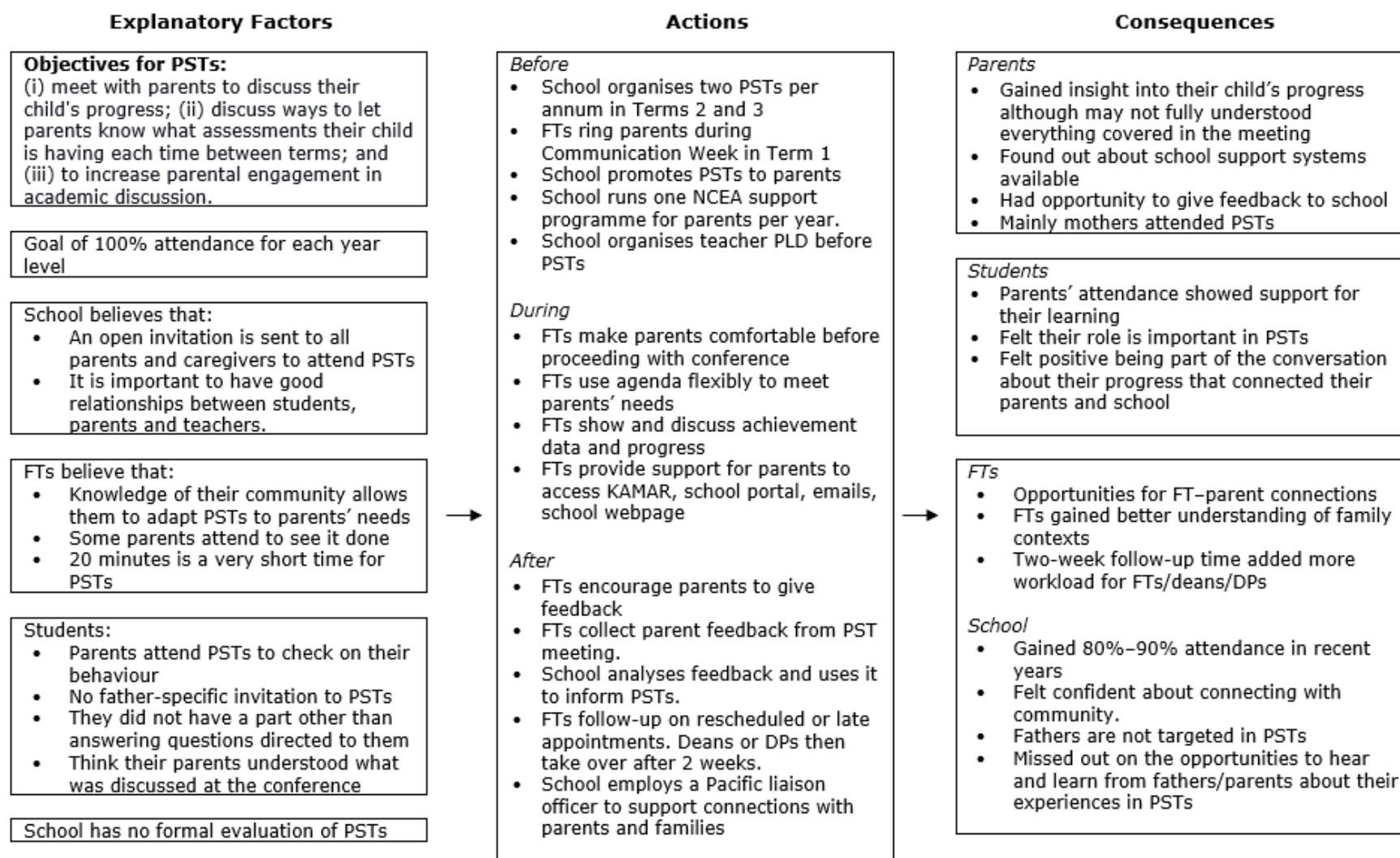
- strengthening internal evaluation to show the impact of initiatives and approaches in promoting positive outcomes for students
- enhancing the role of parents as partners in their children's learning. (ERO, 2018)¹⁴.

Figure 6.2 present Totara College's ToA for their PSTs.

¹⁴ Reference not in reference list due to confidentiality.

Figure 6.2

Totara College Theory of Action



Actions. Totara College runs two PSTs a year in Terms 2 and 3, and each conference takes 1 and a half days. Every year, before each conference, FTs contact parents in Term 1 during “Communication Week” to introduce themselves and check contact details such as phone numbers, emails, and addresses. According to the DP, the key to engaging parents in their PSTs is their preparation through Communication Week:

DP: In Term 1, we have a Communication Week. FTs ring home to meet the parents and check their home addresses. This information is then double-checked during the first PST conference as phone numbers tend to change from time to time.

This initial school–family connection sets the stage for more targeted communication. Totara College uses a variety of approaches to promote PSTs with their parents. Traditional methods used by the school include newsletters, messages on the electronic board in front of the school, website, emails, text messages, and the social media platform Instagram. However, according to the FT, Covid-19 opened new ways of connecting with her students and parents:

FT: Lots of young parents use social media, so they can’t really miss it. That way works. I call parents, but sometimes parents don’t reply. I also ask my students what time their parents are usually at home. Since Covid, I have had Instagram chats with my kids. Email doesn’t work with my kids. I always ask the kids what time do mum and dad come home? Then, I get my students to remind their parents to call the teacher.

The school also has a letter that parents could show to their employers, explaining the importance of PSTs, to encourage greater parental participation. According to the DP, many parents used the letter initially, but not now:

DP: There is a letter available for parents to give to their employers from the school to help them if they need time off from work to attend their PST meeting. The letter tells the time and importance of PSTs. Many parents asked for the letter at the start. However, we hardly hear anyone asking for the letter now. Maybe the parents are now adapting their work schedules when they know when the meetings are.

To prepare for PSTs, the school runs one NCEA support programme for parents per year to help them understand NCEA. In addition, all teachers ensure marks and grades are up-to-date and write student progress reports for every subject as the reports are also discussed at the PSTs. The school also runs teacher PLD (professional learning development)

several weeks before PSTs to prepare for the conferences. According to the FT, preparing for PSTs requires a collaborative team effort, and the PLD is compulsory for all teachers:

FT: Tomorrow, there is a PLD for how the day would look. Here is the script for us to use. No one is allowed to be excused from the PLD.

During PSTs, the FTs aim to make the parents feel comfortable first by asking them about their day before proceeding with the conference. Although there is an agenda to follow, flexibility allows FTs to cover much content by adapting the PSTs to suit the needs of their parents. For example, the FT shows parents their child's NCEA data and grades, updates on literacy and numeracy, University Entrance, career pathways, and answers any questions parents may have. In addition, the school also takes advantage of the opportunity when the parents come into the school by providing support for parents to access information about their child online through KAMAR (the school management system), the school webpage and school portal, and how to send emails to teachers or the school:

DP: It was also vital that we show parents how to send emails, access the school website, log in to the school management system [KAMAR], to help parents understand how KAMAR works. We also have a parent portal. When parents come to PSTs, we show them how to access information on the parent portal, such as student credits or lateness.

PSTs are intended to be student-led. Therefore, the student's role is critical in the conference. However, the amount of information to discuss within a short timeframe can often mean FTs take over the conversation to ensure parents get a broader picture of their child's progress and next steps. The following gives a snapshot of the complexity of information that can be covered within a 20-minute conference slot:

FT: The kids start the PST conference. They always talk about the good things. The kids that care about their education and know that mum and dad care talk about the good things. I then show NCEA grades and graphs, pie graphs and everything else. I always start with literacy and numeracy because that is the picture our parents usually miss. University Entrance is important as well. I would say you can get 80 credits, but if you do not get literacy and numeracy credits, you can't go to university. I break it down for them. I explain to them the five universities, then Internals – 1, 2 3, 4. With colours – Red, it's a no-no; Yellow, we want to see more of. I also push parents to understand merit and excellence endorsement as they look great on your CV [Curriculum Vitae], as a company can see that your kid can commit and achieve at a high level.

There is much information to cover within the allocated timeframe for parents. However, according to the students, their parents attend PSTs to check on their behaviour. The students' claim is also supported by the FT, who reported that most parents' questions focus on their children's behaviour at school:

FT: Parents always ask, are they well behaved in class? This is usually the first question asked by many parents. To me, that's good because to them, if they [their child] is not behaving well, how could they be passing? Parents are very genuine; they just want to support their children.

The students also claimed that they did not have much of a role to play other than answering questions directed to them by the FT. They also thought that their parents understood what was discussed at the conference. During the interview, the FT reflected on the challenges for their parents and possible ways of making their experiences better.

After PSTs, FTs encourage parents to give feedback on their experiences. The deans then collate the parents' feedback, and ideas from parents are discussed and used to inform school practices. FTs also have a 2-week follow-up time after the formal conference days to catch up on remaining parents, cancellations or changes. After the 2 weeks, the deans or DPs pick up any remaining appointments. The school also employs a Pacific liaison officer as an extra resource to support connections with parents and families that they can call on if required.

Explanatory Factors. According to the DP, the purpose of their PSTs is to meet and inform parents and caregivers about their child's progress. The DP outlined three main objectives for their PSTs:

1. meet with parents to discuss their child's progress,
2. discuss ways to let parents know what assessments their child is having each time between terms, and
3. to increase parental engagement in academic discussion.

The FT reflected the same intent, saying that "PSTs are important to their school because parents need to know where their kids are up to." The overarching goal for the school PSTs is 100% attendance for each year level. Such an ambitious goal raises the bar in terms of performance and planning. In addition, the school believes that it offers an open invitation to all parents and caregivers. Therefore, although fathers and male caregivers are not explicitly targeted, they are invited as parents:

FT: I think it's just general invites. Maybe it's just a common trend that mothers work during the day. In my form class, a lot of their fathers work from after school to night shifts. It's a really good question.

The school believes that it is vital to have good relationships between students, parents and teachers. As most of its parent community is Pasifika and Māori, the school ensures that their PSTs are fit for purpose. They also utilise their resources to help with any language barriers parents may have:

FT: We have a lot of Pasifika deans who can step in when teachers are unavailable. Sometimes parents come at random times. So, we work on a first-come, first-serve basis. More than seven Samoan and five Tongan teachers at our school could speak the languages.

However, the FT is also concerned that “sometimes you see parents who come to *faataunuu* it [see that it is done].” However, she believes that teachers should “never give up on a family.” She also warned about deficit thinking because in most cases, “you don't know about their context.” The school has no formal evaluation of PSTs. However, on reflection, the FT believes that 20 minutes is a very short time for a thorough conference.

Consequences. For parents, attending PSTs allowed them to gain insight into their children's learning and progress. However, the FT was unsure how much parents understood the conversation about achievement data. Parents' attendance also allowed them to learn about accessing their children's data through the school portal, school management system, and website. Parents' attendance gave them the chance to provide feedback or feed-forward about their school's PSTs. Parents also felt acknowledged for their role at home. However, according to the FT, “mainly mothers and female caregivers attend PST meetings.” She said: “Maybe it's just a common trend that mothers work during the day. In my form class, a lot of their fathers work from after school to night shifts.”

For children, their parents' attendance showed support for their school learning. They felt that their role, although limited, was crucial in PSTs. Being part of the conversation about their progress with their parents and FT connected their family and school. For FTs, meeting the parents offered opportunities to create powerful educational connections and relationships to understand family contexts better. However, the 2-week follow-up time after the formal PSTs to meet with parents that missed or rescheduled their appointments added pressure and extra work for FTs, deans and DPs. The school has consistently achieved high attendance rates of 80% to 90% in recent years, which gave them confidence in connecting with its parent community. The school took extra steps to try and meet with all their parents.

However, they did not specifically target fathers and therefore missed out on the opportunities to hear and learn from fathers and parents about their experiences in PSTs.

For this current study, I worked with the school to trial a new way to record their participation data for the June 2021 conferences. The new way involved recording who attended each conference for each student, for instance, whether it was the father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, aunt, uncle, brother, sister, or other. Table 6.1 gives a brief overview of the findings. During the final interview, the data were discussed with the DP to support school planning and any improvement plans. Table 6.2 gives a quick summary of the analysis.

Table 6.1

Totara College June 2021 PST Conference Participants

Year level	Mother	Father	Aunty	Uncle	Grandma	Grandpa	Sister	Brother	Other	Total
9	94	46	8	1	4	5	18	7	0	183
10	88	22	9	0	5	2	14	8	8	156
11	94	32	9	2	3	0	6	8	2	156
12	74	29	9	3	0	2	8	3	5	133
13	63	26	4	1	1	0	8	5	9	117
TOT	413	155	39	7	13	9	54	31	24	745

Table 6.2

Summary of June 2021 PST Conference Participants

Year Levels	ALL Males		ALL Females		Other (unclassified)		TOTAL
	No	% per year level	No	% per year level	No	% per year level	
9	59	32.2	124	67.8	0	0	183
10	32	20.5	116	74.4	8	5.1	156
11	42	26.9	112	71.8	2	1.3	156
12	37	27.8	91	68.4	5	3.8	133
13	32	27.4	76	65.0	9	7.7	117
TOTAL	202		519		24		745
Average (%)		27.0		69.5		3.6	

The data showed that about 70% (69.7 or 519/745) of mothers and female caregivers attended their PSTs in June 2021. Just over 27% (27.1 or 202/745) were fathers and male

caregivers. More females attended PSTs at the junior levels (Years 9, 10 and 11) especially. On the other hand, more males attended Years 12 and 13 than the junior levels. On average, 27% of fathers or male caregivers attended each year level conference. Mothers' average per year level was much higher than fathers at 69.5%. The "Other" option was selected by 24 cases (3.2%), but the teachers did not account for the gender or relationship of the attendants to the students. Therefore, 24 cases were not included in the analysis. According to the DP, this is a much richer way of recording data. She could see implications for her school, including discussion points for different year levels and across the school:

DP: I can see implications for my school. For instance, I did not know that we had many grandparents, aunts or uncles attending our PSTs. For the year levels I look after, I can also see many discussion points with my team of FTs. As a school, we only looked at the overall percentage of parents attending our PSTs. However, this is far more relevant and useful data for us. I can see how we could use this data to inform our PSTs and our collective effort to improve our communications with parents and children.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide insights into school conference practices. As PSTs are school-organised events, gaining insights into school activities and theories underpinning their PSTs can enlighten us on any links between school practices and their impact on key people involved – parents, students, FTs, deans, and DPs.

Actions: Data shows that the two schools took their PSTs seriously and invested enormous resources to prepare and implement them. However, there is minimal evidence from this study about the role of parents at these events. A key finding is that despite the schools' wish for PSTs to be student-led, the reality on the day was that FTs ended up doing most of the talking.

Explanatory factors: Both schools' main goal was to get as many parents to attend their children's conferences as possible. Parental attendance appears to be the main factor that impacted all schools' actions. It appears that the timing constraint of 20 minutes and FTs' wish to inform parents about their children's progress resulted in a rush of complex achievement information. Due to the complexity of achievement information involved at the NCEA level, both schools did not have sufficient data to learn about their parents'

experiences at these events. The complexity of information may have resulted in the students' and FT's claim that parents mainly asked about their behaviour at school.

Consequences: Parents who attend PSTs gain insight into their children's learning and progress. However, it is difficult to gather what exactly parents gained from PSTs due to the minimal data collected from parents. It also appears that schools took a casual approach to evaluate their PSTs, which stopped them from learning about their parents' experiences of the conferences. A "laid-back" approach to evaluation also prevented the two schools from using PSTs as opportunities to grow and enhance their practice.

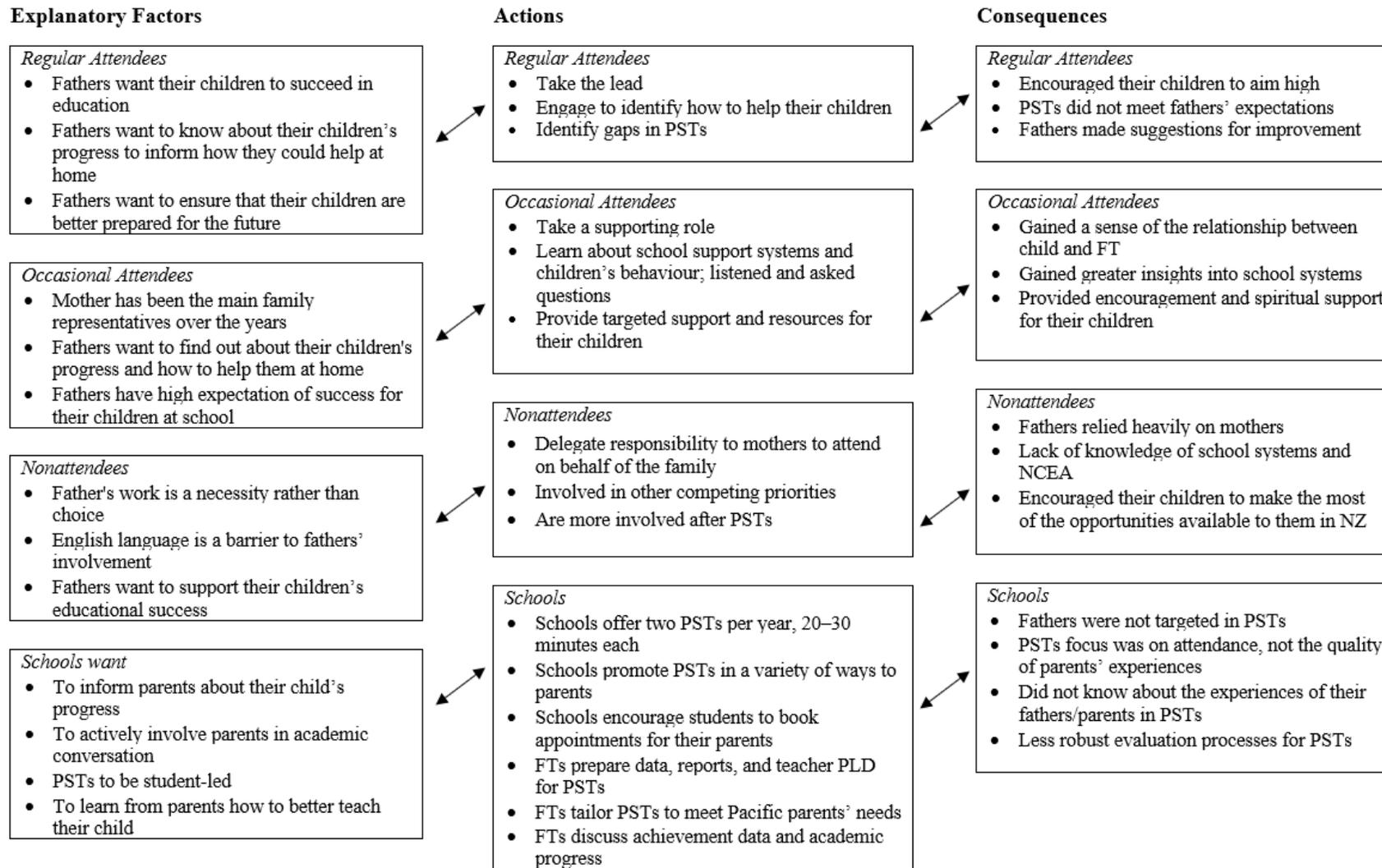
This study aimed to explore how fathers were involved in PSTs, the factors that informed their involvement, and their involvement's consequences. While the sole focus on attendance is a good start, these case studies show that simply attending PSTs is insufficient to meet parents' dreams and aspirations for their children. In addition, parental attendance alone falls far short of the goals in the *Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020–2030* to ensure Pacific success in Aotearoa, NZ. The following chapter shares the across-case findings from previously covered Studies 1, 2 and 3.

Chapter 7: Findings from Across-Case

This chapter presents the key findings across the previous three chapters (Chapters 4, 5 and 6). The findings are presented under three father categories concerning their attendance in PSTs – regular attendees, occasional attendees, and nonattendees. Nine key findings are presented using the three “time markers” – before, during and after PSTs. Within each time marker, each finding will be presented with a linked explanatory factor and consequence. While the findings for each father category focus on fathers, the school participants’ perspectives are also included at appropriate places to help triangulate and gain a better understanding of the topic. Table 7.1 presents the across-case ToA.

Table 7.1

Theory of Action for Across-Case Analysis



Before PSTs

Finding 1: Regular Attendees Take the Lead in PSTs

Four fathers who regularly attend PSTs took the lead by organising their conference appointments. Two older fathers read notes from their schools that informed them about the conferences and then booked their appointments through the school. Similarly, two younger fathers read emails from their schools and then took initiative to book their conference appointments online. For regular attendees, attending PSTs is about making a commitment to be physically present. For one father especially, he felt the need to *step up* as his wife, an air hostess, was always away from home on work:

Numera: Ao totonu o lo'u aiga, ua avea le malaga o lo'u toalua [teine faigaluega i luga o le vaalele], ua ou step up ai ma ou fiafia ou te galue ai. Fai mai lo'u afafine, dad o le vaiaso lea e fai ai le fono, ona faigofie ai lea ona fai fuafuaga.

In my family, my wife's job [air hostess] forced me to step up and I really liked doing it. My daughter said, dad next week is the conference, and then I started making plans [to attend].

Isaia and Iopu were involved in their children's education from the start. As well as PSTs, they often attended other school-organised activities:

Iopu: Ia sa auai atu foi i fonotaga ia. Tele a foi ona ou auai i latou field trips, mafutaga a atunuu, Polyfest¹⁵, ma nisi foi o fundraising.

I attended the conferences. I also attended field trips, meetings for different ethnic groups [Pacific], Polyfest, and fundraising events.

According to Isaia, attending PSTs is a priority for their family. He said "me and my wife always make time to go." For all four fathers, attending PSTs alone or with their wives was driven by their aspirations for education success for their children.

Schools. Both schools offer two PSTs per year to help keep parents informed about their children's progress. Each PST is about 20-30 minutes long and the schools take the lead in the organisation of these events. Both schools spend significant amount of time and resources preparing for PSTs. As well as their internal preparation regarding marking and entering grades in the schools' management system, report writing, meetings with students,

¹⁵ *Polyfest* is the name given to the annual Auckland Secondary Schools Maori and Pacific Islands Cultural Festival. It is the biggest event of its kind in the world. <https://www.asbpolyfest.co.nz/>

and teacher PLD support, schools also need to ensure that parents are given plenty of ‘warning time’ preceding the PSTs:

DP, Kauri College: We looked at making sure that the parents knew way in advance the timing of the two meetings and whichever one they could do. We also reminded them that if they needed a letter [that asks their employer for early release or time off], there was a school letter that was signed by the principal that goes out to the employers.

In addition to giving plenty of time for parents and families to make plans to attend PSTs, the schools also promote the conferences to their parent communities through a variety of ways:

DP, Totara College: We promote our PSTs through our school website, electronic board, our newsletters, and through our Facebook page – it’s connected to parents in the school. And also, we tell and remind the kids when the meetings are coming up.

All the promotional work was geared towards the main purpose for the two schools – to encourage greater parental participation in PSTs.

Explanatory Factor: Fathers Want Their Children to Succeed in Education. The overarching goal was that all fathers wanted their children to thrive and enjoy education success in Aotearoa, NZ. Fathers saw PSTs as a subset of the big picture of their support for their children’s educational success. This finding is highly significant not only because all fathers talked about it, but also of the historical connection to Pacific narratives associated with migration to NZ. Fathers used their humble upbringing and life in Samoa to motivate their children to aim high. They also wanted their children to take advantage of the opportunities in NZ:

Numera: Sa ou fai i la’u fanau, amuia outou lea ua outou ola ane i NZ nei e tele opportunities. O le vaivai lava o le tamaititi ia, pei ona fai mai le upu, heaven is the limit. Pei la o le tulaga na sa ou taumafai e faapupula iai, e tele avanoa latou te suea ai le lumanai. Ma e le gata ina maua le lumanai lelei ia faaeaina ai tatou matua, iloa le Atua ma tulaga e ola ai i totonu o nei atunuu.

I explained to my children that they are fortunate they have grown up in NZ with lots of opportunities. It’s up to the child, but heaven is the limit. I tried to enlighten my children that there are multiple ways to achieve future success. Your parents will be honoured, gain success, know God and how to live in this country.

Other fathers reinforced the importance of preparing for the future with their children. One father said that every morning, he reminds his children that their future starts today:

Levi: O kaeao uma a e kapega ai la'u fagau mo aoga. Soo se kaimi a ou ke alu ai e momoli i le aoga, always a ou ke faamagaku iai o lakou lumagai ga i o lakou lima. O le lakou lumagai e amaka aku i le kaimi legei.

Every morning I help prepare my children for school. Every time I drop them off, I always remind them that their future is in their hands. Their future starts now.

For fathers, education is a key part of preparing for the future. As a result, fathers encourage their children to work hard and set higher goals to achieve.

Consequence: Fathers Encourage Their Children to Aim High. Fathers used a variety of ways to encourage their children to aim high. Motivated by the opportunities to provide for their families and communities, many fathers viewed education success in terms of career prospects. In a form of reverse psychology, several fathers used their current factory jobs to inspire their children to achieve better than them:

Levi: Alu a poo le a lava le mea eke lelei ai, alu e pursue uma mea ga. Aua gei kei ua ou fai aku e alu i lea mea ma lea mea, ae lē o iai soga agavaa foi lele pe lē fiafia iai. A o le faukuaga sa ave iai, ia oukou faigaluega uma i kokonu o ofisa kou te gofogofo uma ai, fai o oukou suki foi lea, ma omiomi oukou computer. Ou ke lē fia vaai aku foi lele o kou faigaluega i galuega factory.

Follow your passion, pursue your dreams. Because I don't want to tell my child what to do in case they are not interested. My advice to them, I want you to work in the office where you suit up and play with your computers. I don't want to see you working in factories.

Fathers wanted their children to succeed and do well in their education. Fathers were also supportive of the career pathways their children wanted to follow. Their role was to support them to achieve their dreams.

Finding 2: Occasional Attendees Take a Supporting Role

Occasional participants played a supporting role when attending PSTs with their wives. At the conferences, mothers took the lead while fathers listened attentively for what their child needed to work on. Jeremia described an event at his last conference (over 3 years ago), where there was tension between his wife and the teacher. He explained the incident and the impact on their relationship with the teacher:

Ieremia: O lea ou te tau manatua le mea sa finau ai le tinā ma le faiaoga, ona o le ika o le tinā, pe aisea ga lē toe mafai ai ona toe resubmit le assignment a lou afafine. Ae o le faiaoga ia, fai mai a uma ā, ua le toe iai se avanoa. Pei ā la na le fiafia ai le tinā i lana finauga. Fai mai a misi, le ā le mea e le toe tuu iai se avanoa e fai ai? Ae pei o le ika i le kali a le faiaoga, o le mea la ga, na tau iai si tension ma le faiaoga i lena vaitau. Pei ā na uma loa lena, lē toe fia talanoa loa.

I remember when my wife argued with the teacher, because she [my wife] was mad about why our daughter was not allowed to resubmit the assignment. But the teacher said, when it's done, that's it, there's no other chance. My wife was not happy. She said, why not give her another chance to resubmit the assignment? My wife was not happy with the teacher's response, so there was a bit of a tension at that time. After that incident, we didn't want to talk anymore.

The incident left a negative impression of these meetings on Ieremia and his wife. When asked if they took the matter further with a senior school leader, he simply said that, after that negative reaction from the teacher, they stopped wanting to talk to the teacher altogether.

Despite some fathers' negative experiences at these meetings, fathers prioritised what was best for their children. According to Filemoni, after years of "neglect," he had an epiphany towards the end of his daughter's time at school and wanted to show his support for her and his wife:

Filemoni: E iai taimi ou te auai ai ae le tele. E iai taimi na ma o ai ma lou toalua, ae o le tinā a ia e tele ona auai [i fonotaga]. Ua ou alofa i lo'u afafine ma si o'u toalua. Ua o'o mai foi le musumusuga a le Agaga Paia ou te alu e vaai lelei.

I do attend sometimes, but not many. There was a time I attended with my wife, but my wife is the main person attending [PSTs]. I felt sorry for my daughter and wife. I received a whisper from the Holy Spirit that I needed to go and have a proper look [attend the conference].

Fathers' sporadic attendance in PSTs made them feel reserved and less forthcoming. Also, as their wives have been the main family representative at the conferences, fathers also respected that their wives had a better handle of the 'rules' and how the conferences work.

Explanatory Factor: Mother Had Been the Main Family Representatives Over the Years. As mothers had been the main family representatives at PSTs over the years, fathers were happy to take a supporting role during PSTs. According to Kenese, "Because my

wife started involving with the kids from the start, I ended up following.” Although mothers had been the main participants at PSTs, Jeremia presented a personal explanation for how some families may address attending PSTs:

Jeremia: E fuafua ā poo le a le trade a le tamā ma le tinā e lelei ai. E fai foi ma faataitaiga, o lo’u tamā sa asi asi aoga. O le tele o taimi, matou te faafesagai ma lo’u tamā i le faiga o aoga foi ia mo matou. O si ou tinā o ia lava o le tausiaiga.

It depends on the fathers’ or mother’s trade that they are good at. For instance, my father was a school inspector. Most of the time, we deal with him with our schoolwork. My mother was the homemaker.

Jeremia’s position indicates that for some Samoan families, the best person to attend PSTs may come down to individual expertise. He said, “it worked for his family growing up,” and he tries to model his practice on how he was raised by his father in Samoa.

Consequence: Gain a Sense of the Relationship Between Child and FT. As well as gaining insights into their children’s learning, fathers also gathered a sense of the types of relationships their children have with their FTs. One father observed his son’s exchange with his FT at the start of their conference:

Kenese: One thing that caught my attention was the way the teacher gave Sani a high five, and you’d never see a teacher giving a student a high five. Normally, it’s just a hello and things like that. But I think the way the form teacher welcomed us, and I was thinking, oh, he has a good relationship with Sani. I said to my wife that the form teacher was good.

Fathers who attended PSTs gained much more than insights into their child’s progress. Building effective working relationships between teachers and students is a key part of what schools do.

School. PSTs are complex activities. Although building relationships with parents and families is critical to the success of PSTs, the short timeframe can often prevent FTs from getting to know more about their parents’ experiences at PSTs.

FT, Totara College: You are making me think now that 20 minutes is a very short time. We ran out of time in all my meetings, but we still have not covered everything we wanted to talk about. I have always felt that with my parents’ interviews, time runs out quickly. Then we have other parents waiting, and you don’t want to keep them waiting.

Limited time available encouraged FTs to focus primarily on each child's academic progress. As a result, it prevented FTs from gaining insight into how families make decisions about attending PSTs.

Finding 3: Nonattendees Delegate Responsibilities to Mothers

Nine nonattendee fathers had delegated responsibility to their wives to attend PSTs on behalf of their families. For some fathers, there appeared to be a formal process of negotiation of roles based on availability and the needs of the family. This perspective is captured by Tupu who said, "A auai lava le tinā, ia o maua lava na" (My wife attends on our behalf). For some fathers, balancing work, childcare and attending school events could be a challenging activity. Therefore, delegating the responsibility to their wives was their preferred solution:

Mataio: Ou fai atu ia Susana [tinā o le aiga], lava ia oe e fai ma sui [o le tatou aiga], ao lea o le a ou faatali atu ma isi tamaiti.

I said to Susana [his wife], you go as our family representative while I wait home with the other children.

Fathers reflected critically on their lack of involvement in PSTs and pointed out the dilemma that many fathers faced between their endeavour to meet the needs of their family and attending their children's conferences.

Explanatory Factor: Father's Work a Necessity Rather Than a Choice. Fathers' delegation of PSTs to mothers was often motivated by other competing demands such as work. Many fathers described their provider role as a vital component to their family's success in NZ. Therefore, delegating the responsibility to mothers, especially when available while fathers work, was a strategy that satisfied both the family and school needs:

Tupu: I totonu o lenei atunuu, o galuega ā e faalagolago iai soo se mea i totonu o le aiga.

In this country [NZ], everything a family needs relies on work.

Despite the importance of fathers' financial provisioning, a few fathers (5/9) claimed that the delegation of PSTs and educational matters to mothers had encouraged fathers' dependency on mothers.

Consequence: Fathers Rely Heavily on Mothers. These participants believed that fathers had relied heavily on their wives to attend PSTs and to do everything, at home and at school. This perspective was captured by Iakopo:

Iakopo: O le talitonuga faatamā Samoa, e iai a le uiga foi lele, o le tinā o lona tofiga o le vaaiga o le fanau. Pei o le faavae lea ua masani ai o tatou mafaufau. Ua faamoemoe ā mea uma i tinā. O le manatu ā o le tamā ua ave le faamoemoe i le tinā. Ae ua avea ai lea ma mea pei ua leai ai se mafutaga a le tamā ma le fanau. Tusa ua faatuutuu le tamā, le manatu mamafa le tamā. Ua iai le manatu o tamā, faapea o ia e faafeagai ma galuega mamafa, heavy duties and physical work.

Samoan fathers believe that mothers are responsible for looking after their children. That is the way many fathers are used to. Everything depends on mothers. Fathers want to leave everything to mothers. However, that has provided few opportunities for fathers to involve with their children. Fathers are overly dependent on mothers; fathers are negligent. Fathers think they are responsible only for heavy duties and physical work.

Fathers' beliefs about their central role as 'manual labourers' may have prevented some fathers from attending PSTs, preferring to focus on their provider and other roles. For some fathers, delegating the PSTs' responsibility to their wives, especially when they are the "more capable" parent, is their preferred approach. However, schools needed to encourage more students to book appointments for their parents to promote greater parental involvement. Schools also promoted PSTs in various ways to entice more parents to attend.

Schools. Both schools spent significant amounts of time and resources preparing for PSTs. As well as their internal preparation regarding marking and entering grades in the schools' management system, report writing, individual meetings with students, and teacher PLD support, they also needed to ensure that parents were given plenty of warning preceding the PSTs.

During PSTs

Finding 4: Regular Attendees Engage to Identify How to Help Their Child

Fathers engaged during PSTs to identify areas needing development and how to help their child at home. While teachers were there to facilitate the discussion and clarify other important information for parents to know, for many fathers, they mostly listened to find out what was going on and how they could best help at home:

Iopu: E auai ā ona e follow up poo lelei ā latou aoga. E faalogo foi la i lipoti a aoga, e malamalama ai poo le ā le situation la e iai.

I am there because I want to follow my children's education. I listen to the reports and discussion to help me understand the situation that my child is in.

Despite fathers' wish to know how to help their child at home, achievement information is often quite dense and difficult to fully understand. Subject content can also be challenging for fathers, even those who were educated in NZ.

Explanatory Factor: Fathers Want to Know About Their Children's Learning Needs and Progress. To support their aspirations for their children, all fathers believed PSTs were critical opportunities where they could learn more about their children's progress across the curriculum and how they could help at home:

Numera: Ia tatau na iloa le standard la ua iai le tamaititi. Ia iloa mataupu la e lelei ai aga maka, ma le mataupu e lē lelei ai le tamaititi. Mea la ga ta te fautua iai ina ia toaga e fai lau Social Studies, lau Igilisi, poo lau Science. O lau vaai e te malamalama ai foi i le ituaiga faiaoga o loo aoaoina lou atalii poo lou afafine.

You must know the standard that your child is in. You should know which subjects your child is doing well and those they need help in. You can also find out about the type of teacher educating your son or daughter.

As well as knowing their children's progress and their teachers, fathers were also keen to explore the opportunities to collaborate with teachers:

Levi: Ou ke auai ā ona o le fia iloa lava foi poo le ā le kulaga o iai loka afafige i kokogu o le aoga. Poo iai se alualu i luma pe leai. Poo le ā se kulaga e fesoasoani ai le makua i le fale, e galulue faakasi ai ma faiaoga. Ou ke fia malamalama foi, pe iai se mea e magaomia ai le fesoasoagi a makua.

I attend the meetings because I want to find out how my daughter is progressing at school. Whether there has been an improvement or not. I want to know if there is something I can do at home in collaboration with the teacher. I also want to know if there is anything I can do to help as a parent.

Despite fathers' interests in collaboration, there was little opportunity other than the FT making suggestions for their children to work on at home.

Consequence: PSTs Do Not Meet Father's Expectations. Other fathers claimed that they did not get the type of information they needed to help their child at home. One father was critical of his recent experience. At the conference, there was a new FT they did not know about, and the FT simply read out what was on their child's report from her subject teachers:

Isaia: I was telling my wife it would have been better if we had meetings with actual subject teachers, not a FT. The FT got out Olivia's report and just read the comments from the other subject teachers, and she was instructing Olivia, oh, you should be doing this, not these credits, credits here, blah, blah. The form teacher was actually talking to Olivia until my wife started asking questions.

His recent negative experience had changed his views about PSTs. He said the FT could not expand on the subject teacher comments when they asked for specific information about certain subjects.

Finding 5: Occasional Attendees Learn About School Support Systems and Children's Behaviour

There is much to gain by attending PSTs. As well as acquiring insights into their children's learning and progress, fathers also learned more about the school support systems available to their children. In addition to knowing about school support systems, other fathers found out about their children's behaviour during classes:

Jeremia: O le vaivaiga foi lea o le mamao i tua o le mea e nofo ai. E tele ina faigofie ona distracted lo'u atalii i taimi o mataupu ma le talanoa. Pei la e fautua mai le faiaoga e fai se galuega ina ia tuu le talanoa ae concentrate i le mataupu.

One of my child's weaknesses is that he tends to sit at the back of the classroom. He is easily distracted during the lessons and likes to talk. The teacher advised us if we could do something to stop my son talking but to concentrate in class.

During PSTs, FTs discuss achievement data and each child's academic progress with parents. There is much to cover within the 20–30 minutes allocated, but the FTs aim to give as much information to keep parents fully informed.

Explanatory Factor: Fathers Want to Find Out About Their Children's Progress and How to Help Them at Home. Fathers wanted to know about their children's progress. Such knowledge would enable them to make key decisions about what help they could provide at home:

Kenese: I think I was curious to find out how much progress my child has made after Covid-19. I wanted to find out if there was progress. I think it's really important to us parents to know which direction our child is heading and if you're doing the right thing at home.

As well as gaining insights into their children's progress, fathers who attended PSTs also found out a lot more about school support available at school for their children.

Consequence: Fathers Gain Greater Insights Into School Systems. A key outcome for occasional attendees was gaining knowledge about the school support systems available to their children.

Kenese: That was probably the first time I saw it [parent portal] when he showed me, and my wife didn't know as well. She said to me, I didn't even know you can go into this. We weren't really informed about the portal, but the teacher said my son should have told us. I told him while my son didn't say anything and then he said an email was sent out. He went through his NCEA, he explained to us these are credits he didn't achieve. But he can resubmit. I didn't realise that he can resubmit. There was also Tuesday night once a week from 4–6pm. The kids stay back, they get fed and it's held in the library and like a catch-up session where most of the subject teachers stay back and help the kids. He said there is a lot of help there, and he said something like they're getting 10 extra marks because of the Covid-19. It was a pretty good meeting for me.

For Kenese, although he did not understand everything that was discussed, being there helped inform him how he could help at home.

Finding 6: Nonattendees Were Involved in Other Competing Priorities

As fathers had delegated the "PSTs portfolio" to their wives, their attention was focused on their work, or looking after the other children while the mother attended the PSTs. Fathers explained their position in this way:

Mika: O le galuega le isi mafuaaga ou te le auai ai. (Work is the other reason I don't attend the meetings.)

Mataio: O lenei atunuu o le galuega lava e faamoemoe uma iai. (In this country, everything depends on your work.)

As well as work, fathers also identified the English language as a key barrier to their involvement in PSTs.

Explanatory Factor: English Language: A Barrier to Fathers' Involvement.

Fathers reported many barriers to their involvement in PSTs. Their limited understanding of the English language was a significant barrier to involvement in PSTs for fathers. Seven fathers (7/9) explicitly highlighted the English language as a barrier to their understanding of

their children's progress and engagement in the meeting, or as a barrier that stopped them from making time to attend:

Tupu: O le gagana o le mea lena e lack ai tele a'u i le tulaga lea i fesootaiga ma faiaoga. E iai lava nai vaega laiti e malamalama ai, ae ona e fai si nenefu o le channel ona o le tulaga ia o fesootaiga. Ao a'u ia o le tulaga i le gagana.

The language [English] is a weakness especially when communicating with teachers. I understand a bit, but most of the time I find it difficult to understand the communications. For me, it's the language [English].

Several fathers noticed a higher value given to the English language in schools by their children compared to Samoan, and suggested translating the reports into Samoan to help them understand better:

Tupu: Manaia pe ana faapea e sau le lipoti i le faaperetania, ae faaliliu ai lalo i le faa-Samoa foi lea le mea e tasi. Faataitaiga, e manaomia e lou alo le faalelei o le tulaga lea...

It would be nice if the report is in English, but also translated in Samoan. For instance, your child needs improvement on these areas...

Consequence: Lack of Knowledge of School Systems and NCEA. As a result of fathers' absence from PSTs, fathers missed out on gaining knowledge about NCEA and any school support available that their children could take advantage of:

Eperu: Ou te faalogo i le system lea [NCEA] ae leai so'u malamalamaaga o iai.

I have heard of the system [NCEA] but I have no understanding at the moment.

All fathers mentioned NCEA as a challenge for them to understand. Although mothers' attendance may have helped solve the problem, Mataio's wife cautioned that hearing the report from the FT and being part of the discussion was quite different from Mataio (her husband) hearing her version of their child's report.

Schools. During PSTs, teachers also find out about the different perceptions and practices of parents. The FT at Totara College recounted an incident where a father, suspecting that his wife who normally represented their family at these conferences, was not telling him the truth about his child's progress. So, he decided to come in and check it out himself:

FT, Totara College: We went through his daughter's appointment. It was pretty long. Other parents did a no-show [did not turn up] so we kept going and we spoke

in Samoan. “My wife comes and tells me all the nice things. This is my youngest child and I want to make sure that she makes it to university.” He came and told me straight. He said his wife covers up for the kids and he is sick of it. We went through the whole plan and how kids get to university. I explained university entrance, her 2022 goals. Our focus is to turn three zeros into five [literacy credits], she can’t get into university without literacy and numeracy credits, and that is what he wanted to hear. Now he’s changed the main family contact person from his wife to him. I’ll remove his wife from the contact list and put him there. That was the “outstanding” from the list this year.

During PSTs, FTs gained insights into fathers’ and parents’ aspirations for their children and the balancing acts families made to ensure that someone attends PSTs.

After PSTs

Finding 7: Regular Attendees Identify Gaps in PSTs

Having attended many PSTs, regular attendees noticed several limitations of their schools’ PSTs. Fathers reflected on the significant differences between meetings at the primary and secondary school levels. According to Numera, his experiences at primary schools’ parent–teacher meetings were far better than secondary school:

Numera: I le primary school, manaia ia o le communications i le taimi lea. E faafesagai ma le faiaoga ma faamatala mai mea la e vaivai ai le tamaitiiti, ma mea e faaletonu ai. I le kolisi, na o grades foi gale e lafo mai ae lē o lautele se faamatalaga. Taimi i le primary school ta te malamalama lelei lava i mea o loo tutupu i lata fanau. A o le kolisi, pei ua faatagata matua le faiga o le mea. Na o le lafo mai lava o credits poo le a le mea ua oo iai lea matatupu, ae ta te lē malamalama poo le a lē mea ua vaivai ai le tamaitiiti, poo le mea ua augata e fai meaaoga, poo le lē malamalama foi o le tamaitiiti ia.

At primary school, we had good communication at the time. You meet face-to-face with the teacher, discussing your child’s learning needs and areas of concern. At college, they send you the grades but do not expand or provide explanations. At primary school, you’d know what was happening in your child’s learning. But at college, it seems like they are treating them as adults. They [college] just send you the credits or wherever you child is at in each subject, but you don’t know their

weaknesses, whether they're too lazy to study, or maybe the child doesn't understand.

Explanatory Factor: Fathers Want to Ensure That Their Children Are Better Prepared for the Future. Fathers wanted their children to be better prepared for the future. They also believed that a good education is a pathway to securing good jobs. As well as encouraging their children to make better career options, fathers also conveyed an expectation that anything was possible, and that they had unlimited potential:

Iopu: O lata tiute lea faamatua, ia make sure ā ia o tamaiti [but] are thinking the sky is the limit. E leai se isi e mafai ona taofia le fia ola aoaoina. O le manuia foi lea o latou.

My role as a father/parent, is to ensure that the kids are thinking that the sky is the limit. No one can stop someone who wants to learn. That will be their blessing.

Consequence: Fathers Make Suggestions for Improvement. While fathers acknowledged the good work their schools were doing for their children, the knowledge they gained from PSTs allowed them to consider what their school could do better to support their children's learning. Isaia suggested that one way that the school could enhance his daughter's learning was through tapping into her passion and areas of interests:

Isaia: Olivia [his daughter] enjoys music. So, I don't think she will ever miss a music class. If something like that involves maths class, English class and I say, man; I think it's just a matter of them enjoying it really. Because once she feels that something is hard, then she won't learn it.

Fathers' regular attendance enabled them to see the different approaches FTs use to run PSTs. They also observed some of the limitations of PSTs and what could be improved to support their children's learning.

Finding 8: Occasional Attendees Provide Targeted Support for their Children

Fathers provided targeted support for the children based on their needs and what was discussed at the PSTs. Despite the high costs of some items, such as laptops and graphics calculators, they still purchase them because their children's education is a priority. In addition to providing resources, fathers also talked with their children about their learning. Kenese highlighted two examples from his engagement log of the discussions he had with his son at home:

Kenese: [I] Had a talk to him about a matter at school his teacher had rung and said how he wasn't focusing and being easily distracted during class time from his friends and other students. (Example 1 from Engagement Log).

Kenese: [I] Had a discussion with my son about the subjects he was taking this year. I wanted to be sure what subjects he was taking and also wanted to hear from him the reasons he selected the subjects. (Example 2 from Engagement Log).

Alternatively, grandfathers such as Tito kept track of his grandson's progress by "checking in" regularly with his son:

Tito: O a'u ia pau lava la'u kala i lo'u akalii lea, o ā mai le aoga a le kama lea? Fai mai, ia la ua qualify aga maka e alu ai i le iugivesikē. O a'u ou ke lē malamalama i le system legā [NCEA], ae ou ke musu kele i le mea lea o le aoga aoga, sau gofogofo.

For me I often ask my son, how is my grandson going? They replied, he has qualified to go to university. I don't understand the [NCEA] system, but I don't want my grandson sitting around doing nothing after spending so much time at school.

Although Tito does not understand NCEA, asking about his grandson's progress keeps him connected with what he is up to and to show his support for his education. His expectation was for his grandson to take advantage of the educational opportunities in NZ.

Explanatory Factor: Fathers Have High Expectation of Success for Their Children at School. Fathers had high expectations of success for their children. They saw themselves as the first or second generation of pioneers who had come to forge a new life in NZ. Therefore, their expectations were that their children should be able to take advantage of the opportunities available to them in NZ:

Jeremia: Masalo e leai lava se matua foi lele e manao e ola faalōlō soga atalii poo soga afafine. O le tulaga foi i le unai o tamaiti i le aoga, o le avanoa ua maua ia faaaoga lelei. Ia, ma ia taunuu lava i se taunuuga lelei, taunuuga manuia, nei maumau le avanoa.

I think all parents want their children to thrive. All parents encourage their kids to make good use of the opportunities available to them. Furthermore, to achieve a successful outcome and not waste the opportunities.

Fathers aimed to inspire their children to take advantage of the opportunities NZ offers. Anticipating the challenges their children may face in their education, they also encouraged them to pray and ask God for assistance.

Consequence: Provide Encouragement and Spiritual Support for their Children.

Fathers encouraged their children to work hard at school. They also reinforced the importance of God and prayer in their lives:

Tito: Ia faamalosi, toaga e tatalo. Poo a lava mea uma, e te lē faasaga loa i le Atua, everything is nothing. Ao le tauloto i aso uma o le tatalo, e oo mai i le taimi nei la lava e fai.

Persevere, remember to pray. Everything is nothing when you do not look unto the Lord. But prayer is my daily reminder [to all my kids] till today.

Tito credits his religious beliefs for grounding his family. He also expected his grandson to follow the pathway he had set for their family.

Finding 9: Nonattendees Are More Involved After PSTs

After the conferences, fathers discussed their child's progress with their wives. Fathers relied on their wives' understanding of what was discussed with the FTs to gain insights into their child's learning and progress. One father explained a conversation with his wife after a conference where the teacher informed them about his daughter's character and habits:

Tupu: E masani ona faasoa mai le tinā pe a foi mai. Fai mai le faiaoga o si o'u afafine e filemu, e lē tautala a lou afafine, ma tuai soo si o'u afafine [i le aoga]. E faasoa mai foi le faiaoga i nisi o mea e faalelei ai lana aoga.

My wife always shares with me after the meeting. The teacher said that my daughter is very quiet, she hardly talks, and she often comes late [to school]. The teacher also shared about areas that need to be improved in her learning.

One father devised a novel way of learning about his child's progress. He asked his son (Chris) first about his progress before he checked with his wife's version. Often, there were conflicts between his child's version and the teacher's account:

Mataio: Ou fai atu ia Susana, ese a le tali a Chris, ese le tali lea e te sau fai mai. Matua telē lava le eseesea o le mea la e fai mai ai le faiaoga ma le mea lea e fai mai ai tamaititi.

I said to Susana, Chris is saying something different, different from what you are saying. There is a big difference between what Chris said and what the teachers reported.

Two grandfathers saw attending PSTs as roles belonging to their grandchildren's parents. However, they did help with their grandchildren's academic work, when asked. Tanielu provided regular Samoan language support to his grandson while Esekielu's granddaughter often sought assistance from him, and she claimed that her grandfather was a much better source of help than her parents:

Esekielu: O la'u granddaughter laititi, e iai mea e lē malamalama ai, she always, asks me. Aemaise a la mea tau mathematics, science sometimes. Ia, na ou fai atu lea iai, alu i ou matua e fai ai le fesoasoani. Fai mai le kala a lo'u afafine, you are better than them grandpa.

My little granddaughter always comes and asks me when she does not understand certain things, especially mathematics and science sometimes. I said to her, go and seek help from your parents. But she said, you are better than them grandpa!

To support their children's education, three fathers attended their church's Talanoa Ako programme, where they learned more about NCEA and the NZ education system. They also attended the programme with their wives and children/grandchildren and spoke positively about the impact of the programme on their children's learning. Fathers encouraged their children to work hard at school and motivated them to pursue better career choices:

Eperu: Ia toaga i le aoga ma fai meaaoga. O la'u tala na fai iai i le isi aso, a iloa e le tamaititi e lē fia o'o mai i le mea lea ou te iai [factory], ia aua nei folo mai i le mea lea ou te faia aua e palapalā. Ia toaga i le aoga ma maua se lumanai.

Persevere in your schoolwork. I said to them, if you don't want to be here at where I'm working [factory], then don't follow me because it's [labour-intensive] and dirty work. Work hard for a better future.

Fathers regularly "checked in" with their children about school. They also organised opportunities at home for their children to share about the things happening at school.

Explanatory Factor: Fathers Want to Support Their Children's Educational Success. Fathers' dream of education success for their children was the main driver supporting their involvement at home with their children. Besides knowing about their

children's progress and learning needs, fathers were also interested in how they could help their children at home:

Mataio: E aoga tele nei fono ma faiaoga mo ta ita e aoi ai foi au le tamā. E faasino mai ia te au le mea e tatau ona fai, ma se auala e mafai ai ona liliu ai le tamaiti e close mai ia ta ita. E aoga foi e aumai ai ni faataitaiga e fai i le fale.

For me, the meetings with teachers are important so they teach me as a father. They can show me what I need to do so that my child is close to me. It's also important so that they show me what to do at home.

Fathers' support for their children at home was guided by mothers' feedback from PSTs. Where possible, and within their means, fathers provided the required resources for their children. Many fathers encouraged their children to work hard at school and take advantage of the opportunities available to them.

Consequence: Fathers Encourage Their Children to Make the Most of the Opportunities Available to Them in NZ. Fathers referred to NZ as the land of opportunities. They often used emotive language and stories about growing up in Samoa to communicate their messages to their children:

Ioane: Faaaoga lelei le taimi lea e aoga ai. Amuia latou lea e maua avanoa i Niu Sila. Tatou i Samoa a maua a se fasi popo ma le fasi esi, alu i le aoga, savali. Faaaoga avanoa, aua e lē o se lelei mo le tamā ma le tinā, but it's for their own good.

Use the time wisely while at school. You are lucky you have numerous opportunities in NZ. For us in Samoa, if we have a piece of coconut or pawpaw, on your way to school, walk. Use the opportunities wisely, because it's for your own good, not ours.

Driven by their dreams of success, fathers talked about the value of education with their children. They also reminded their children that, in the end, when they are no longer around, they will appreciate the advice and guidance they provided.

Schools. After the 2 days allocated for PSTs, both schools continued to follow up on any last-minute changes, cancellations, or new parent requests. According to the Totara College FT, the "after-PSTs" time is the most challenging for them. At their school, there is an extra 2-week window to complete any remaining PSTs.

Both schools tried to gather information from parents after PSTs. At Kauri College, the FTs give parents a sheet with three questions to complete after the meeting to evaluate their

PSTs. The three questions were: *How did you find the PST conference? Did the time and date suit you? Any improvements?* At Totara College, parents could write comments and place them on the whiteboard outside of the meeting room, in the school hallway not far from the meeting area. This approach ensured parents' confidentiality and opportunity for honest feedback:

DP, Totara College: We have a board for parents to write about the positives, what needs improvement and any comment they want to make. There are also teachers [non-FTs] who encourage and remind parents to write their comments. There is a board and Post Its in the school corridor [outside of the conference room] where they can give feedback. Form teachers also remind parents before they leave to give feedback. They can do so in any language they choose.

Despite the schools' effort to gather feedback and feedforward from parents about their PSTs, many parents did not complete the evaluation forms. In addition, the feedback was also optional and that may have had an impact on the number of forms returned. However, any parent feedback handed in was then collated, analysed and shared with the staff at a later date.

Chapter 8: Discussion

The key findings of this study are summarised in Figure 7.1 in Chapter 7. This chapter provides a discussion of five assertions from this study outlined below: (1) all fathers are involved in various ways silently; (2) fathers' emphasis on motivation and academic socialisation is desirable, regularly practised, but insufficient; (3) family and school barriers constrain fathers' attendance in PSTs; (4) schools' focus on parental attendance prevented more father responsive inquiry; and (5) schools should learn from fathers' critical reflection.

Each assertion is first discussed through fathers' lens, followed by schools and the broader literature. The chapter closes with a summary of the discussion followed by the study's limitations.

Assertion 1: All Fathers Were Involved in Various Ways

This section will be discussed in two parts – first, a discussion using the three stages: before, during, and after PSTs; and second, a broad look at fathers' strategies and involvement at church.

Involvement Before PSTs

This research found that *all* fathers were engaged in various ways before, during and after PSTs. Regular attendees were deliberate about their involvement. Being deliberate is about deciding to be physically present at PSTs to support their children's education. Regular attendees went to PSTs with their wives as much as possible. However, there were several cases where fathers took a leading role prompted by mothers' unavailability. Four attendees were "in charge" of PSTs and were motivated to make conference appointments either online or directly through the schools. These fathers were inspired to lead their family's campaign to find out about their child's progress, learning needs and implications for their responsibilities at home. Overall, regular attendees had patterns of involvement from when the children were young (Munro et al., 2021).

Occasional attendees played a supporting role to their wives, who had been the primary family representative at PSTs over the years. So naturally, fathers showed respect for their wives' leadership by playing a supporting role. Generally, fathers followed their wives' lead but took a leading role when required. For instance, in a recent (2020) conference, one father, after reading an email from their child's school concerning PSTs, booked a conference appointment online for his son. For occasional attendees, playing a supporting role is a

critical part of serving his family. The Samoan proverb – *O le ala i le pule o le tautua* (The pathway to leadership is through service), captures fathers' position well. According to Tavale (1999), in Samoa, everyone, whichever category of the social order they belong to: aualuma (daughters of the village), aumaga (untitled males), faiavā or nofotane (in-marrying spouses), tamaiti (children), faletua ma tausī (wives of matai), or matai (chief), serves the needs of their families.

Nonattendees had delegated the PSTs responsibility to their wives. There was a high level of trust placed on mothers as partners in the children's education to represent the family for these fathers. This perspective was captured succinctly by Tupu, who said, "A auai lava le tinā, ia o maua lava na" (My wife attends on our behalf). Balancing work, childcare, and attending school events was a challenge for many fathers. Therefore, delegating the responsibility to their wives, especially when the mother was available and perceived to be the "more educated partner," while attending to other family priorities, may have been the best solution for their situation. The literature presents a deficit image of fathers as uninvolved and disengaged in their children's education (Goldman, 2005; Kim, 2018a), and absent in their children's lives (Pruett et al., 2017). Yet a large number of such studies used data from mothers, fathers' children, teachers and other father associates. This study took a respectful stance by asking fathers themselves to talk about their experiences in PSTs.

Involvement During PSTs.

The active involvement of fathers in their children's education is critical to their success. However, findings from this study show limited evidence of fathers' active engagement *during* PSTs. Despite the schools' framing of PSTs as a "discussion" of a child's progress, many fathers believed they were there to listen to the FT's account of their child's progress. Therefore, a more passive disposition was "preprogrammed" in fathers' minds for the conference. Only one father talked about his daughter's presentation when I asked about the idea of a student-led conference. The lack of father knowledge about students leading PSTs highlighted a gap in the school–parent communication concerning the procedures for these events (Kraft, 2017). Furthermore, the communication gap may also indicate mismatches between the schools' espoused goals for student-led conferences and the reality on the day for FTs.

Evidence from the FT and dean show that although there is a set process to follow in PSTs, they adapted their approach to PSTs based on parents' needs and what they thought was useful information for parents to know about their child's progress. However,

considering the amount of information to discuss in PSTs, both FT and dean admitted that it can be challenging to gauge parents' understanding of what was covered at PSTs.

Overall, there is little evidence to suggest that regular and occasional attendee fathers were actively engaged with what was discussed during PSTs. The lack of evidence does not mean that fathers did not grasp the gist of what was discussed in the conference; however, there is little evidence of any critical conversation, deep questioning or challenging of school or teacher practice outside of Ieremia and his wife's case mentioned earlier. Of the eight fathers who attended PSTs, only four fathers said they asked questions in a conference. The students, FT and dean also claimed that parents mostly asked questions about their children's behaviour in class. Previous studies have highlighted that despite Pacific parents' high aspirations for academic achievement, they mainly asked about their children's behaviour during parent-teacher conferences (Valdez et al., 2007). Parents' ability to ask questions is linked to their confidence in the language, content knowledge, and understanding of what is being discussed (Trahan, 2018).

Possible explanations for the lack of father engagement during PSTs are connected to their linguistic capability, education content knowledge, and respect for teachers. Parents' respect for teachers can be understood through the Samoan concept of *va fealoa'i* (Anae, 2016). *Va fealoa'i* is a "relational space" between two people in which issues of power, expertise, and knowledge of people also come into play. As teachers are traditionally held in high regard by many Samoan and Pacific parents, one negative consequence which can result from a lack of teacher understanding of this concept is the assumption that parents are disinterested in their children's education (Trinick et al., 2014; Valdez et al., 2007). The NZ Curriculum's (MoE, 2007a) principle "community engagement" gives an impression of "open schools" and partnerships where parents can ask for any information about their children's learning at any time. Similarly, many NZ schools also claim to have an "open door" policy where parents can come in and visit at their leisure (Smith, 2021). However, some Pacific parents' enactment of *va fealoa'i* (Anae, 2016) may prevent them from asking critical questions during PSTs, challenging school practice or reaching out to their children's teachers.

Involvement After PSTs.

After PSTs, all fathers were involved in various ways to support their children's success. Regular attendees sought guidance and assistance for their children's identified areas of "weaknesses" from within their family networks. In addition, regular attendees also

become critical participants, identifying numerous gaps in their schools' PSTs.

Unfortunately, fathers did not feel confident confronting or raising these issues with their schools at the time.

For occasional attendees, gaining insights about their children's learning needs focused their support on what was required. Support provided included checking their children's progress, following up on any identified actions after communications with the FT, purchasing stationery items, or whatever they felt was required within their means to support their children's education. Despite the high costs of some items, fathers' priority was to provide for their children's education.

Nonattendees relied solely on debriefing with the mother (or talking with the child) to understand their child's progress and identify required support. Having identified the learning needs of their children, fathers (alongside mothers) then reached into their pool of resources for home-based support.

Fathers sought support within their community networks and family members, mainly those who had completed NCEA and had gone through the secondary education system. Six fathers, their wives and children accessed further education support through their church's Talanoa Ako education programme. In some families, grandfathers were actively involved through children's invitation.

Benefits For Attendees. There were clear benefits gained for fathers who attended PSTs. For instance, regular and occasional attendee fathers did not necessarily require mothers' filter on their children's progress. Fathers' presence allowed insights into the school services and support systems available at school to help their children and the opportunity to ask questions to clarify their understanding of any pertinent issues of concern. One father claimed that attending PSTs also gave him an understanding of the "types" of teachers teaching his child. Positive and productive experiences can promote father engagement (Epstein, 2018; Millar, 2018). However, as signalled earlier, many fathers (including nonattendees) also highlighted numerous areas for improvement (S. Park & Holloway, 2018).

Utilising Family Resources. Some fathers utilised their family resources to support their children's success. For instance, Tanielu and Tito gave Samoan language assistance to their grandsons while other fathers sought extra support from their extended family, church or broader networks. Cabrera et al.'s (2014) expanded model recognises the complexities of factors that impact fathering practices, the development of parenting skills, and how fathers influence child development within a family system.

A significant and untapped advantage of Samoan (and Pacific) families is their intergenerational nature. Many children live with or have regular access to grandparents, aunts, uncles and other family relatives (Attar-Schwartz & Buchanan, 2018). Studies in Israel and the UK by Attar-Schwartz and Buchanan (2018) showed that grandparents are highly respected, valued and involved in adolescents' lives. In the Samoan and Pacific communities, grandparents are untapped resources. As many Pacific families still prefer to live together with their grandparents at home, fathers and mothers can ensure that grandparents are part of their children's learning. Their wisdom and guidance are often undervalued in a fast-paced technological world and sorely missed when they are no longer around. My journey in life was charted by my maternal grandmother.

Family members with wide-ranging experiences and knowledge can help socialise and immerse their children in linguistically and culturally sensitive and challenging ways to nurture their potential and bring out the best in them (Si'ilata, 2014; Wilson, 2017). By utilising fathers' *measina* (treasures) – language, cultural and historical perspectives – fathers can progress their involvement level in PSTs and type from a “passive” stance to a more critical level of engagement (Ferlazzo, 2011).

Fathers' Involvement Strategies

The literature presents an image of parental involvement with adolescence as a challenging stage of development in which adolescents generally want to avoid any interaction with their parents (Blandin, 2017). However, other fathers can address these challenges by learning the lessons from Isaia and Iopu by getting involved with their children during their early years. Research shows that early involvement sets up patterns and processes for ongoing engagement (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004; Munro et al., 2021; Sanguiliano et al., 2019).

Alternatively, fathers can also learn from Numera, who “stepped up” due to his wife's work as an air hostess, requiring constant travel. According to Numera, although his English was *kau pagupagu* (broken), he simply took a “no-care, no-worry” approach and liked it. As a result, he gained insights into how NZ schools worked and was motivated to participate in the Pasifika parents' committee. In Numera's case, family circumstances activated his leadership role in PSTs. However, Numera's approach takes courage and may not meet the needs and contexts of other fathers and their families. Schools, teachers, mothers, and other support systems can help build fathers' efficacy, self-belief, and confidence to focus on the “main *mahi*” (success of his child) (Lee, 2019). Tailored, empowerment focused, and

nuanced father-only interventions may help promote greater father engagement in their children's education (Pearson et al., 2020).

Conversely, Levi and his wife took a "together-we-go" approach. They credited doing everything together to their vows as a couple when they were married. Having "two pairs of ears and eyes" was also their strategy to ensure that nothing shared by the teacher was missed as English is their second language. However, their primary purpose for attending together was to send a strong signal to their daughter about their commitment and support for her success (Fischer et al., 2019; Pruett et al., 2017). These examples show that despite the challenges fathers face, fathers can take on a more active role at home in supporting their children through various ways, including utilising their language and cultural knowledge.

Fathers' Involvement at Church

Fathers saw churches as places of spiritual enrichment and education. Stats NZ (2018) showed that many Pacific peoples are still connected to the church. All fathers, being Samoans, also saw their church as their "village," where they could practise, nurture and maintain their language and culture (Taule'ale'ausumai, 2019). Churches are much more than places of worship. Samoan churches have a critical role to play in education. Many Samoan-born parents can relate to this finding, especially concerning formal education. Formal (Western) education was introduced in Samoa by European missionaries in the 1830s (Meleisea, 1987). Education in the form of literacy (reading and writing) and numeracy was established and nurtured in a pastor's school (*Aoga a le Faifeau*) and became the primary means of learning for many Samoan people (Tanielu, 2004). I was also a beneficiary of such education practice in the 1970s.

In this study, five fathers in CC1 and one from CC2 (whose father attends CC1) all attended the Talanoa Ako education programme offered at CC1. Talanoa Ako is a new education initiative where the MoE works directly with Pacific parents and communities. The focus of Talanoa Ako is on empowering parents, families and communities to champion their children's education. All fathers attended the Talanoa Ako with their wives and children. Fathers sought support for their children and themselves by learning more about the NZ education system, NCEA and school processes. Several fathers talked about the benefits of inviting DPs and teachers from their local schools to their Talanoa Ako programme to help them understand how secondary schools operate and the support systems available to their children. Some of the DPs and teachers were able to communicate in Samoan and that alone further enhanced parents' engagement with the contents of the workshops.

Research in NZ has highlighted the potential for schools capitalising on Samoan and Pacific churches' literacy and cultural practices as valuable tools for teachers' *kete* (basket) of strategies (Dickie, 2010; Si'ilata, 2014). In addition, there is strong support in the literature for parents' use of their faith and values to help close the achievement gap (Blandin, 2017; Gardner, 2020; Jeynes, 2015; Park & Bonner, 2008; Tautolo et al., 2020). However, there is minimal research to fully explore what it could look like for teachers and school leaders.

This study has shown that all fathers – regular, occasional or nonattende were involved in some way with their children, either at school, church or home. Motivated by the dream to see their children succeed, fathers carried out various roles such as providing resources, academic tutoring, language and cultural support, and encouraged their children to make the most of the opportunities at school (Newman et al., 2019). However, most of fathers' involvement was kept in the privacy of their homes (Cabrera et al., 2018).

Assertion 2: Fathers' Emphasis on Motivation and Academic Socialisation is Desirable, Regularly Practised, but Insufficient for Effective Involvement

The following section discusses findings in relation to academic socialisation. I argue for the removal of systemic barriers to realise the full potential of academic socialisation.

Parents' High Aspirations for Success

A common theme across all fathers in this study was their high aspirations and dreams for their children's educational success in NZ. Several fathers used the phrase, "the sky is the limit," and other similar variations to reflect their aspirations, and to encourage their children to fulfil their potential. Fathers were visionary, and very explicit about their dreams for their children. Education was a key part of the dream. Fathers encouraged their children to take advantage of the opportunities available to them, and their advice was always communicated in relation to the backdrop of "limited" resources they had growing up in Samoa, or the wish for their children to avoid what they had gone through. This was a dominant narrative across fathers and also reflected in recent studies with Pacific parents and families (Cunningham & Jesson, 2021; Fa'avae, 2016; Wilson, 2017).

Discussing Parents' Educational Goals and Expectations

Fathers provided opportunities to discuss school goals and career options with their children. They also made clear to their children that whatever career options they choose to follow, they would back them. However, as one grandfather disclosed, the main advice he gave his children was "to make sure you do it well and do it properly." Doing it properly

means persistence and perseverance until the goal is achieved or completing a task to the best of their ability, not to simply *faataunuu* it (see that it is done for the sake of doing it), as in the FT's perception of some parents attending their children's PSTs. While there was ample evidence of fathers' high expectations of success for their children, a weakness of this study is the limited data available on the details of fathers' discussion with their children. For instance: How did fathers start the conversation? What factors led to the discussion? Who else was involved in the discussion? How did the Samoan values of respect or family's religious context impact the quality of the father-child discussion? Was there a written plan of action? How did they monitor and evaluate their progress? Further research could illuminate these areas and enhance how academic socialisation can be best utilised to support their children's education success.

Academic Socialisation

Numerous studies have raised the profile of academic socialisation as the most effective form of parental involvement (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Kim, 2018a; Trinick et al., 2014; Yogman & Eppel, 2022). However, while this study supports the importance of academic socialisation in general, evidence from this study shows that academic socialisation may not be enough to make the kinds of impact we want for Pacific learners in NZ. In addition, there are also language, cultural and systemic barriers that need addressing to ensure PSTs are inclusive of fathers' strengths and are empowerment focused.

Fathers and many Pacific parents' and families' dreams of education success for their children have not changed since their arrival in the "land of milk and honey" (NZ) (Salesa, 2017). There is also strong historical evidence that Pasifika parents have always had high expectations for their children's educational success (Clinton & Hattie, 2013; Fa'avae, 2016; Si'ilata, 2014; Wilson, 2017). This study has presented evidence of fathers' consistent aspirations for their children's success – defined in various ways that include academic, social, well-being, and service.

Fathers took actions silently (out of sight and unreported) to support their aspirations for their children, whether through their provider, carer, leadership, spiritual, mentoring or other roles. Fathers also socialised their children in ways that conformed to their Samoan or church values, and other activities to support their children's development, education and well-being (Blandin, 2017; Tautolo et al., 2020). Fathers also sourced support for their children and themselves within their family and community networks to achieve their aspirations.

Based on the evidence from this study, I argue that fathers' focus on inspiring greater academic success for their children and socialisation will be in vain unless systemic barriers for fathers are addressed. Looking at the education system in particular, I will discuss several issues concerning PSTs and the big picture of Pacific achievement in NZ: First, two PSTs per year offer a maximum timeframe of 40–60 minutes *per year* (20–30 minutes per PST) for school–parent discussions about their child's progress. Considering the language, education knowledge and backgrounds of many Samoan (and Pacific) fathers or parents, it can be a challenging endeavour for FTs to keep parents fully informed about their child's progress in such a timeframe, by simply relying on these two events (PSTs) per year.

Second, the two schools' common purpose for PSTs was to inform parents about their child's progress. No data of significance were collected by the two schools to check on fathers' or parents' experiences or what was understood, or not, in the conversation. Third, for Kauri College, the DP espoused that the school also wanted to know about “other” information that parents may have to help them teach their children better. However, the amount of content to be covered in a conference made it near impossible to discuss anything else within the timeframe. In addition, no reference was made to any such data in our interviews.

Fourth, Totara College's third objective for their PSTs was to “to increase parental engagement in academic discussion.” Again, data from fathers showed a passive role, listening and trying to unpick the complexity of education jargon and the English language (Jensen et al., 2010). There are many other educational hurdles that fathers and Pacific parents are expected to overcome; however, within the confines of these four areas discussed, I conclude that a total rethink of PSTs is overdue. Unless there is a shared purpose and commitment to empowering parents, school leaders and FTs will continue to suppress PSTs' potential to significantly change the quality of parent–teacher interactions and experiences.

At the macro level, the achievement of Pacific learners has been a critical issue over many years (Wendt Samu, 2020). For instance, in the 2021 NZQA report detailing NCEA achievement between 2011–2020, (discussed in Section 4 of the Literature review), showed that although some gains have been made at NCEA level over the years, Pacific learners have been consistently far behind Asian and European students in the last 10 years. Pacific underachievement has been a focus of the MoE, and a concern of many Pacific parents and communities for several decades in NZ (Gaugatao, 2017). Successive Pasifika education plans, including the current *Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020–2030* have pushed for systemic shifts with little impact on the ground. However, little school investment or

commitment have been made to fully realise how to maximise the potential of fathers, parents and families to help address Pacific underachievement over recent years.

However, one needs to ask why Pacific peoples have been overrepresented in the negative statistics in education, health, employment, economic and other measures in NZ over many years (Stats NZ, 2018, Tautolo, 2011). This study shows that fathers can take the lead in supporting their children's education success. Fathers can also provide support to their wives, and where possible delegate the responsibilities, not for avoidance, but perhaps to maximise the strengths of the family and resources. This study is not about making excuses for fathers' absence in PSTs. After all, some fathers in this study critically evaluated (somewhat harshly) their current lack of involvement in PSTs and were upfront and honest about it. However, fathers cannot and should not be blamed for their lack of involvement in activities that are solely designed, evaluated and controlled by schools. Schools are not the neutral institutions that they espouse to be despite perceptions of openness and keenness to partner with parents, families and communities. Finally, the aspirations and dreams for Pacific peoples in Aotearoa NZ will not be fulfilled unless the systemic barriers (for instance language, work, school agenda etc) that continue to disempower and suppress Pacific potential are critically examined and addressed in ways that includes fathers and Pacific peoples as part of any proposed solutions.

Assertion 3: Work and School Barriers Constrain Fathers' Attendance in PSTs

Three key barriers are discussed below. They are fathers' work is a necessity rather than choice; English and education language and lack of father-targeted approach to PSTs.

Father's Work is a Necessity Rather Than a Choice

Fathers' beliefs about their roles and responsibilities were primarily informed by their parents' raising them. Fathers raised in Samoa shared extensively about their upbringing with clearly defined roles between men and women. As summarised by Iakopo, men were charged with *heavy lifting and physical work* and mothers were *homemakers* (Meleisea, 1987). Consequently, many fathers believed that investing time in earning money for the family was *their job*. Cabrera (2020) posited that the lack of attention given to fathers in the educational literature stems from the belief that mothers are responsible for their children's care and education, while fathers are responsible for being the breadwinner in the family. This demarcation of roles can be traced back to the arrival of the early European missionaries in Samoa during the 1830s, where the breadwinner-homemaker divide was promoted as the ideal for "civilised communities" (Meleisea, 1987). There is also extensive evidence in the

literature for fathers' strong affiliation with their breadwinner role (de Santis & Barham, 2017; Goldman, 2005; Kim, 2018a; Lamb, 2000; Livingston & Parker, 2019; Tautolo, 2011). However, this study has strong evidence that traditional beliefs can be shifted on contextual and environmental grounds. Many fathers talked about the need to adapt to their new surrounding (NZ) and adopting a more family-friendly environment. As a result, fathers carried out roles that were initially considered "mothers' roles," such as ironing, doing the laundry (at home or the laundromat) or cooking for the whole family (Rouch, 2009).

Secondly, while all fathers viewed their work as central to their identity and family well-being, it also became a barrier to their involvement in PSTs. Fathers saw their provider role connecting with the daily needs of their children's education and that of their families. Fathers aligned their financial support for their family with "necessity rather than choice" (Tautolo, 2011, p. 199). Furthermore, a vital aspect concerning living in NZ was that everything relies on money. Tupu, a nonattende, captured this feeling and cautioned that "[I] totonu o lenei atunuu, o galuega e faalagolago iai i soo se mea i totonu o le aiga" (In this country, everything relies on work). Tupu's feelings resonated with many fathers in the study, who also pointed out that fathers' work provided for families here in NZ and in Samoa. Their villages back home in Samoa and their churches also depended on their work. The local and international father-involvement literature supported fathers' claims and reinforced the criticality of fathers' provider role in establishing a strong sense of identity and commitment to their family (de Santis & Barham, 2017; Martin, 2013; Rouch, 2009; Tautolo, 2011). Similarly, recent studies in the US and UK have also shown that despite fathers' wishes to spend more time with their children (Yogman & Eppel, 2022) and beliefs about the importance of their active involvement in their childhood family life, work was the higher priority for many fathers (Donald, 2020). Consequently, fathers' focus on earning more income for the family may have also prevented them from prioritising learning about their children's academic progress in PSTs.

English Language and Education Knowledge

Fathers need a good command of the English language and the language of education to engage fully in PSTs. Limited understanding of the English language in conjunction with NCEA and education jargon provided significant barriers to fathers' understanding of their child's progress and active engagement in PSTs. For 15 fathers, English is their second language. All but four fathers explicitly identified the English language as a barrier to understanding their children's progress reports or engagement in PSTs. Interestingly, regular

and occasional attendees were equally vocal about the English language as a barrier to a thorough understanding or active engagement in the conferences. There is an extensive body of local and international literature that supports fathers' concerns (Clinton & Hattie, 2013; Fa'avae, 2016; S. Park & Holloway, 2018; Timperley & Robinson, 2002). Many immigrant families' wish to be more involved in their children's education is constrained by their knowledge of the "native language" of the school – which is predominantly English (Millar, 2018; See & Gorard, 2013).

However, many fathers in the study expressed a wish for PSTs conducted in Samoan. Several fathers also pointed out that Samoan is the third-most widely spoken language in NZ, representing nearly 50% of Pacific peoples (Stats NZ, 2018). Therefore, many schools in Auckland should be better prepared to meet the language needs of their parent communities. However, one father shared a much bigger issue concerning language use. He suggested that the dominance of the English language in schools has confused some children. As a result, students place a much higher value on the English language than Samoan. This finding is supported by Wilson's (2017) study with five Samoan families where many young people saw the importance of the Samoan language for communicative functions, compared to their parents, who viewed the Samoan language as their *tofi* – inheritance – that they were responsible for looking after and nurturing.

The two schools in the study partially addressed the language barrier by utilising their internal expertise – teachers who speak other languages (where possible), and by outsourcing the service using local providers such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau. However, despite the schools' efforts to meet the language needs of their parents, enormous challenges remain as sometimes, fathers (or parents) may not know what they need until the day. Similarly, it is almost impossible for schools to know what parents need without signalling their intention for a translator prior to the conference.

Therefore, one solution could be training on culturally sustaining practices for FTs to ensure that the approaches they use in PSTs, including the language they use during PSTs (and reports) are simple, understandable, and accurate (Timperley & Robinson, 2002). The lack of teacher training and support concerning parental involvement is a long-standing problem across the education sectors (Epstein et al., 2018). The lack of commitment in teacher preservice and in-service PLD support is visible. For instance, there is little support for teachers in many teacher training institutions in NZ on engaging with parents, families, and communities (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Despite its ongoing encouragement at the policy level, such as the NZC (MoE, 2007a), *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* (MoE, 2007b), *Te Whāriki*

(MoE, 2017), and *Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020–2030* (MoE, 2020a), many teachers learn about parental involvement “on the job.”

Another solution is the total revision of PSTs to ensure that they align with the shared objectives co-constructed with parents and families. Again, gathering fathers’ voices is vital for any proposed changes in PSTs (Flavell, 2017; Johnson, 2015). Currently, this is not happening in NZ schools in rigorous ways to make PSTs opportunities to grow and nurture the parent–school partnership espoused in our education policy documents.

Lack of Father-Targeted Approach to PSTs

Only two fathers reported getting an invitation from schools. One was for a school trip to Samoa, and when the school wanted to capitalise on his knowledge of being a former teacher in Samoa. The second was for the church minister to open a Pasifika school event. These examples show that schools strategically sought help from fathers when required to meet their needs. When fathers were asked if they would attend PSTs or any school event if personally invited, the response was an overwhelming yes. One father, a nonattende, even suggested the wording of such a letter in Samoan. Being invited formally and personally to an event is a “big thing” in Samoan culture. It shows that someone is interested in your presence at an event. It is also a formal gesture of respect (FitzGerald et al., 2019).

Three themes that drive Pasifika success as captured in the Pasifika Success Compass in Tapasā – Cultural competencies framework for teachers of Pacific learners are *participation, engagement* and *achievement* (MoE, 2018). These themes encourage schools and all stakeholders to ensure that while participation represents an “entry point” for Pacific peoples, the higher objectives are to engage critically in their personalised learning pathways, ultimately leading to improved social and academic outcomes. This study showed that nearly half of the sample (8/17) participated in PSTs. However, it is difficult to say how many were “engaged” in PSTs. If “engagement” is defined in line with Ferlazzo’s (2011) intention: “A school striving for parent engagement tends to lead with its ears – listening to what parents think, dream, and worry about” (p. 1), then clearly, there is significant room for improvement for both schools. By engaging fathers and parents critically in their children’s education, educators empower them to believe that they do have a vital contribution to the success of their children (Biddulph et al., 2003). Further studies can help establish any links between fathers’ engagement and academic achievement (or other outcomes), which were beyond the scope of this exploratory research.

Assertion 4: Schools' Focus on Parental Attendance Prevented more Father Responsive Inquiry

The following section focuses on three areas: whether PSTs are opportunities for learning or something to do; schools want student-led PSTs while fathers wish to talk to the teacher; and the lack of robust PSTs evaluation.

Are PSTs Opportunities for Learning or Something to Do?

The two schools' primary focus for their PSTs was parental attendance. Therefore, the schools did not see the need to target fathers as their primary goal was as long as someone came to these conferences. There is minimal evidence from this study to show that the schools utilised PSTs as learning opportunities, where they inquired into their practices with an improvement lens (Robinson, 2018). PSTs are complex operations requiring significant preparation and time before, during, and after the actual events. However, the simplistic focus on attendance provided the primary explanation for the schools' actions and constrained ongoing professional learning and growth opportunities for teachers and school leaders.

For the two schools, the shift to PSTs from subject-specific meetings showed a significant increase in parental attendance. However, both schools had not moved beyond attendance as the primary measure of success for their PSTs (Webber et al., 2018). While attendance can be one measure of success, overreliance on it as the only measure is problematic on many levels. Instead, schools can focus on capturing the *quality* of fathers' experiences in PSTs. By hearing fathers' voices, schools can gain a broader understanding of their contexts and gather appropriate strategies and tools that fathers could use at home to support their shared focus for children's success.

Schools Want Student-Led PSTs But Fathers Wish to Talk to Subject Teachers

Another exciting issue highlighted by fathers was that there was a gulf between the school's intention for PSTs to be student-led and fathers' wish to hear from their children's subject teachers. As some fathers shared, although they appreciated hearing their child's account of their progress, they preferred to hear about their child's progress from the teachers. It also appeared that fathers had some mistrusts about their children's account of their progress. Such feeling was captured by statements such as, "*O tamaiti e matua pepelo foi i le tele o taimi; a o le faiaoga e maua ai le mea sa'o.*" (Kids tell lies at times, but teachers will tell you the truth – Numerā). This lack of shared expectations showed several gaps. First, schools did not inform fathers/parents about the processes and *why* they preferred students to

lead the discussion in PSTs. Students leading the conversation about their learning was not an issue with fathers per se. The main issue was perhaps fathers not knowing the schools' processes, rationale and expectations for them around these conferences (Taylor-Patel, 2011).

The schools' rationale for having one school adult (FT or homeroom teacher) overseeing the academic mentoring of each student is a credible solution as secondary schools are large and complex operations (Webber et al., 2018). However, schools may not have anticipated fathers' wish for subject-specific information. According to Isaia, a regular attendee, in both of his daughter's PSTs in 2021, the FT simply read out what was in his daughter's subject reports, but she could not elaborate when they asked for more subject-specific information.

For fathers, knowing their children's weaknesses would help them make informed decisions about their support at home. Therefore, the fathers' wish for more subject-specific information was a valid request and perhaps a limitation of current PSTs. Such misunderstandings are not too difficult to sort out; however, they show the need for schools to pay attention to "small" details and hear their fathers' voices.

Lack of Robust PSTs Evaluation Processes

The two schools' primary focus on attendance also prevented them from investing in rigorous processes for PSTs. Evidence from the two schools, fathers and students showed a "relaxed" approach to evaluation. For Totara College, as their parent participation numbers had been consistently high (80–90%), there was probably no need to change anything as their focus was getting someone from each family in school for their children's PSTs. However, taking part in the study and trialling a new way of recording their participation data, that I recommended, presented a new way of looking at their data (please see Tables 6.1 and 6.2). According to the Kauri College DP, there had been no evaluation of PSTs in the last 3 years (2018–2020). However, taking part in the study reminded them about the unintended consequences of school practices, such as the shift to online booking of conference appointments which, both the dean and DP agreed, did not suit their Pasifika community.

Evaluation is a critical part of school practice. Without evaluation, how do schools improve what they do? Schools could explore a range of quantitative and qualitative measures to deepen their learning about their parents' experiences in PSTs. Schools could adopt a more inclusive approach to evaluation and use PBM (Robinson & Lai, 2006) and

talanoa (Vaiioleti, 2006) frameworks to facilitate the evaluation process. PBM allows schools to see the links between their actions, the factors that explain them and their consequences. Constructing a ToA for the current state of PSTs establishes a baseline to help schools redesign a new theory for improvement that includes fathers' and parents' voices.

Assertion 5: Schools Should Learn More From Fathers' Critical Reflection

The final assertion is discussed through fathers' reflective stance first, followed by implications for schools and the literature.

Fathers' Critical Reflection: Ua Fa'atamala Tamā (Fathers Are Negligent)

Finally, it is only fitting to learn one more lesson from fathers. A lesson about humility, and critical reflection, is not often gained in research without fathers' trust. An exciting but unexpected dimension that surfaced through every father focus group was the sense of guilt, or regret. Such feeling was voiced using Samoan words and phrases such as *Ua faatamala tamā* (fathers are negligent); *paiē* (laziness), *fa'atu'utu'u* (left to someone [mother] to carry alone), *Ua leai se faataua a tamā* (fathers do not prioritise PSTs); *Ua mua ona ave le faamuamua a tamā i tupe ma isi mea o le lalolagi ae le faamuamua le fanau* (fathers prioritise money and other "worldly" things rather than their children). This sense of guilt about "not doing enough" was a common denominator across the focus groups as fathers reflected on their participation and involvement with their children and grandchildren. Some fathers were aware of the challenges relating to Pacific underachievement in NZ for many years. Other fathers who remembered their negative involvement with their secondary schools due to their children's behaviour, or the lack of their children's ability to achieve better outcomes than themselves, reflected critically on their part in their children's current situation. Their inward reflection forced them to look in the mirror and talk about their role in the outcome. Fathers reflected on the reasons why they migrated to NZ and education success for their children was a top priority. However, in the land of opportunities (NZ), many of their children struggled to emulate their achievements.

Such a critical assessment is perhaps harsh, and it may reflect some fathers' honest assessment of their involvement. However, PSTs is about a parent–student–teacher partnership. Currently, the terms of the partnership are dictated by one member (the school/teacher). Schools can learn from fathers and critically investigate their "offerings" to parents and communities. Are schools negligent concerning the processes and systems they put in place to inform parents about their children's progress? Are PSTs fit for the purposes

they set out to achieve, considering recent social and cultural changes? Are PSTs *hard to reach* for fathers and many Pacific families and whānau? (Crozier & Davies 2007).

Schools can address the power imbalance in PSTs and NZ education. To help, schools are already familiar with inquiry approaches (MoE, 2007a; Timperley et al., 2014) in their day-to-day work. However, the same rigour and commitment to learning and improvement do not seem to apply to parental involvement and PSTs. Inquiry approaches start with the learners (and parents) in mind (MoE, 2018). Using the PBM framework (Robinson & Lai, 2006) utilised in this study, schools can take an improvement lens by investigating their actions and the factors that inform them. To review the impact of their actions, schools can use Talanoa (Vaiolleti, 2013) embedded in authentic Samoan cultural practices and processes to hear from fathers and parents. Fathers in this study are self-reflective, honest, and can give critical feedback to help co-design linguistically and culturally sensitive PSTs that empower fathers to champion their children's success.

Summary of Discussion

This chapter aimed to capture the nuances of fathers' involvement in PSTs, the factors that explain their involvement and their consequences. Findings show that fathers took the lead, played a supporting role, and delegated responsibilities to maximise family resources. Fathers who attended PSTs gained insights into their children's learning and the school systems and processes that facilitated or constrained their involvement. Fathers who did not participate in PSTs were also actively involved, silently, in the background. As I have tried to argue through this thesis, fathers are engaged in PSTs (and their children's learning) in many ways. This study has illuminated a path on a group of Samoan fathers' involvement in PSTs and the high aspirations of success for their children and families in Aotearoa, NZ. I hope that I have captured and represented fathers' dreams and actions to focus the conversation on the quality of fathers' actions, rather than whether fathers are present or absent in PSTs. This study has shown that there are more ways for fathers to be present in PSTs. This study has also provided insights to support previous research findings that fathers matter.

Limitations of the Study

The study contains numerous limiting conditions, some of which are related to the unique features of qualitative methodology, and some are intrinsic in the study's design. The first limitation of the study is that the experiences and practices of a small sample of 17 Samoan fathers involved in the research may not represent the experiences and practices of a wider group of Samoan fathers. Data were collected through focus group and individual interviews,

engagement logs and a small father intervention, but no observation data were gathered to help triangulate fathers' claims. Therefore, caution is required when considering the findings as they constitute the espoused theories of participants involved in the study.

Second, in an effort to hear the voices of "absent" fathers, the overrepresentation of this particular group (9/17) may have skewed the data. Only four out of 17 fathers considered themselves regular attendees at PSTs. However, the study has managed to achieve a good representation from this normally "hard-to-reach" group of fathers to better understand the enablers and barriers to their involvement. Also connected to sampling is the overrepresentation of Samoan-born fathers. This may have eventuated through the decision to source participants in church communities. Younger NZ-born Samoan fathers may be more prevalent in more charismatic English-speaking churches, and that may have contributed to the low number of these participants in the sample. However, the study has aimed to gather a range of participants from NZ-born versus Samoan-born, younger versus older, involved versus less involved, to provide useful baseline information to progress our learning on the topic.

Third, the study only investigated the topic through the eyes of two DPs, a dean, a FT and nine students from two multicultural secondary schools. Therefore, the perceptions of other school DPs, deans and FTs not involved in the study were not sourced for this research. The views of other schools that implement PSTs were also not sought in this study.

Finally, qualitative research positions the researcher at the centre. The researcher-as-instrument positioning therefore comes with potential biases and idiosyncrasies to influence the results and the story to tell. A range of tools were employed to reduce researcher biases. Member checks were utilised in various forms throughout the study. Besides member checks, I also cross-checked some of the early findings with participants. I also utilised the expertise of my supervisors, work colleagues and family members to critique and check my early findings. These opportunities to engage further with the data provided rich conversations for data checks and triangulation and to help verify the accuracy and validity of the claims made. The researcher-as-instrument, analyst and writer of this story is therefore open to the possibility that other researchers may have told a different story using the same range of data available in this study.

Chapter 9: Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter presents six conclusions outlined below that follow the three research questions and findings. The concluding statements below aim to synthesise and highlight this study's contribution to knowledge and areas that may progress our learning about Samoan fathers' engagement in PSTs. The conclusions address six areas: (1) fathers and families deciding how to best utilise their resources; (2) PSTs being about teachers' talking and fathers' listening; (3) enablers for father involvement; (4) barriers to father involvement; (5) PSTs sole focus on attendance having unintended impacts on fathers and schools; and (6) context, location and cultural inclusivity and empowerment.

Key recommendations for schools, policymakers and for further research are briefly outlined. A final reflection on the whole study journey concludes this research.

Fathers and Families Decide How to Best Utilise their Resources

The first significant finding related to Research Question 1 was that all fathers, whether regular, occasional or nonattendees, were engaged in various ways before, during and after PSTs. Fathers' leadership role was visible with regular attendees as they organised their appointments and committed to being physically present at PSTs. Occasional attendees took more of a supporting role in recognition of their wives' leadership over the years; however, fathers were prepared to step up when required. Nonattendees delegated responsibility to their wives as their preferred family representatives at PSTs but were more active after PSTs in supporting their children's success. The three groups of fathers utilised different approaches that fitted the needs and circumstances of their families.

A conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that fathers and families decide the best use of their resources to meet their goals. All fathers' shared goal was the success of their children. However, achieving education success can be a complex endeavour without all stakeholders' (parents, teachers, children, and others) support. Many fathers in this study believed their best investments for the well-being of their family lay in their provider role; therefore, although education is important, some fathers' overall assessment of their strengths and resources motivated them to delegate PSTs to their wives. As a result, some fathers may have underestimated the value of their attendance in PSTs and involvement in their children's education. Other fathers took the lead and saw attending PSTs as a critical part of the support for their children.

This study presents FEAT (Father Engagement Analytical Tool) – Figure 3.3, as its first contribution to practitioner knowledge. FEAT is embedded within a theory of action (Argyris & Schon, 1974) framework to track fathers’ actions *at three stages – before, during and after* PSTs. By investigating fathers’ actions in three stages, this study identified patterns and areas where fathers contributed (small and big steps) rather than the “simplistic” focus on fathers’ presence–absence bifurcate that has dominated the father involvement literature over the years.

Through FEAT, this study has contributed to the father involvement and educational research in several ways. First, the *engagement* concept proposed by Lamb et al. (1985) (conceptualised as direct one-on-one interaction), and further elaborated as multidimensional by Pleck (2010) and others, has been applied in this study in an educational context, with an ethnic-specific group of Samoan fathers. By identifying fathers’ actions, the factors that explain them, and their consequences, we gain gender and ethnic-specific insights into fathers’ perspectives about their involvement in PSTs. FEAT puts a focus on *what fathers do* and the *quality of their actions*. This study has provided strong evidence that rather than focusing on fathers’ absence, there are many ways for fathers to be present in their children’s education.

PSTs Are About Teachers Talking and Fathers/Parents Listening

The second significant finding connected with the first conclusion was the tendency for fathers/parents to be “passive participants” *during* PSTs. There is strong evidence from this study (and supported by the literature) that much of the conferences are about fathers or parents listening and teachers talking. In this case, one of the school’s objectives of “increasing parental engagement in the academic discussion” in PSTs still remains an espoused goal. Therefore, during PSTs is a crucial stage that further investigations could focus on as it may help explain fathers’ “real engagement” level with the content of the conferences.

A conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that fathers and parents have already been “programmed” into “their listening roles” before they arrive at school for PSTs. Such passive dispositions are not difficult to understand when one understands the social and cultural contexts of some Samoan (or Pacific) families. As discussed earlier in the literature review and the discussion chapters, multiple structural and cultural imbalances exist before fathers arrive at the school gate for PSTs. For many Samoan parents, the *va fealoa’i* (relational space) (Anae, 2016) between FTs, parents and students is “switched on” during

PSTs, resulting in a range of behaviours and expectations. Va fealoa'i is complex and plays out in various behaviours and attributes in alignment with Samoan values such as respect. Without understanding these cultural dynamics and the multiple barriers fathers face, father interactions in PSTs will continue to be passive.

Overarching Enablers for Fathers' Involvement in PSTs

Research Question 2 explored the factors that explained fathers' involvement in PSTs. Two overarching dominant factors were common across all fathers. Interestingly, these factors explained fathers' attendance and those who delegated responsibility to their wives. First, all fathers claimed their aspiration was for their children to succeed in NZ; therefore, whether they were present or absent at PSTs did not change anything for them. As reflected in fathers' narratives, education plays a critical role in their children's successful future. Therefore, as captured by Levi, a regular attendee of PSTs, future success is about today's actions.

The second factor was that all fathers wanted to know about their children's progress. Therefore, the method of knowing about their children's progress was secondary. However, as captured in fathers' narratives and further discussed in the following conclusion, multiple structural and personal barriers may prevent some fathers from gaining a better understanding of their children's progress and any implications for their responsibilities at home.

One conclusion from this finding is that schools may have underestimated the potential for aligning their support with fathers'/parents' vision for success. PSTs were established with the rationale of having a school adult (FT) overseeing each child's journey at school. However, evidence from regular and occasional attendee fathers showed that many fathers did not know the name of their child's FT; they only met with their children's FT twice a year, at best 40–60 minutes maximum. PSTs were established to help strengthen the parent–school partnership (Webber et al., 2018). This study suggests that there is much more strategic planning to ensure that we maximise PSTs as tools for better family–school engagement.

A further related conclusion is that achieving education success is more complex. Many factors relating to fathers, schools, family contexts and those further away from fathers, such as government policies, are involved. Therefore, many fathers may have placed high trust in schools and teachers to help them and their children achieve their goals and perhaps paid less attention to their home environment and contributions to their children's success.

To progress our knowledge on these long-standing issues, evidence from this study shows that some fathers were supported at their church, using their language and cultural practices, and learned more about NCEA and other NZ education information. The intervention study with five fathers from this study also showed how complex information such as NCEA was “soaked” up by fathers by removing the language barrier (please see Table 3.8 for workshop content). In addition, running programmes in Samoan or Pacific church communities gave them ownership and responsibility for the programme’s success. At the macro level, designing such a programme that explicitly shows fathers and parents how their linguistic and cultural knowledge could enhance their children’s success is perhaps what is lacking in the types of support currently provided to many parents, families, and whānau.

Significant Barriers to Fathers’ Involvement Still Exist

Another significant finding was that many fathers faced multiple barriers to engaging in PSTs. Fathers’ work is a well-documented barrier in the literature; however, other fathers in similar circumstances work and attend PSTs by themselves or with their wives. There is no question concerning fathers’ motivation and aspirations to see their children succeed at school. However, how fathers convert their dreams into tangible actions that positively impact and progress their ambitions needs further research.

In addition, the English language and language of education were also critical barriers highlighted by all fathers. Fathers asked for the possibility of having their PSTs in the Samoan language. Even regular and occasional attendees highlighted the significant shift in the complexity of the language used by teachers in the discussion of their children’s progress and the reports between primary and secondary schools (Jensen et al., 2010). However, this complexity was further exacerbated by their lack of NZ education knowledge and the grasp of the English language itself.

Considering the longstanding nature of these two challenges for parents at the secondary school level, a conclusion drawn from this finding is that schools believe that they are solely responsible for students’ academic achievement. Supporting evidence in this study highlighted these areas: First, if PSTs are important for parent–school partnerships (Webber et al., 2016), why do they happen only twice a year (40–60 minutes maximum)? Second, the PSTs’ purpose is to inform parents about their children’s progress and increase their active engagement in academic discussion. However, no observation data, formal evaluation survey, or rigorous evaluation processes were in place in either school. Three, the schools provided

one NCEA information evening for parents. Finally, it also appeared that fathers were not involved in the discussion of students' academic goals at the start of the year.

Understandably, schools are busy places. In the current pandemic climate, schools are further stretched to meet the various needs of students learning online and “isolated” face-to-face interactions in the classroom for some. However, could schools reach out to fathers to co-construct culturally sensitive and empowering ways to support their involvement in their children's learning? Could fathers be targeted and supported by maximising their leadership capacity as “co-partners” in their children's education? Conversations with fathers in this study about a special father invitation received positive responses, especially when the invitation was translated into Samoan. One nonattende father (Tupu) even suggested the wording of such a letter with a firm positive response to accepting such an invitation. Personal invitations in Samoan culture show respect and give special recognition that your presence at an event is essential. Schools can learn more about their fathers and may increase active father involvement in PSTs and possibly other in-school events through targeted invitation. Schools could utilise targeted invitations as additional armour in their kete of tools to help build productive and powerful connections with their Pasifika parents and communities. Currently, there is significant room for improvement in PSTs. Hearing fathers' voices is a healthy place to start.

PSTs' Focus on Attendance Had Unintended Consequences for Fathers, FTs and Schools

A significant finding of this study was that PSTs' sole focus on attendance had cascading impacts on fathers, FTs and school practices. The focus on participation may be a “natural” or default measure that schools use to gain a “feel” for parents' temperature about the activities they organise for them. However, evidence from this study shows that the two schools' primary focus was on participation data. No data of any substance were collected either from parents, students or FTs to determine how well the schools informed the parents on their children's progress, nor parents' capability to understand what was discussed or how to support their children's learning at home. Therefore, from the schools' point of view, more parents attending PSTs is a sign of success.

However, regular attendees, while acknowledging PSTs as opportunities to hear about their children's progress, also became critical participants of PSTs, pointing out areas for improvement (S. Park & Holloway, 2018). Occasional attendees gained insights into school support systems available for their children and considered implications for them and their

homes. Some nonattendees may have developed a sense of dependency on their wives and, therefore, may have felt challenged to take their first steps.

At one level, the Starpath project (discussed in Chapter 1), which promoted PSTs, may have succeeded in challenging schools to rethink their practices over 10 years ago (Webber et al., 2016). However, in 2022, it appears that the schools have not progressed beyond attendance data as the primary measure of success for their PSTs. This finding may also mean that the schools' narrow measure for all their parental engagement activities is participation.

A conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that schools need more robust and rigorous methods to evaluate the effectiveness of their PSTs. Schools need to go beyond quantity by exploring qualitative approaches such as father or parent focus groups, individual interviews, or other creative ways using the different languages available at their school where possible. A further related conclusion is that, unless they tailor PSTs to the strengths and needs of their parents and the current context, schools will continue to undermine the potential for PSTs as tools to empower parents and enhance parent–school partnerships.

This study has contributed two tools to progress our learning. First, FEAT (see Figure 3.3), discussed earlier; and a spreadsheet detailing *who* attends PSTs for each student (see Tables 6.1 and 6.2 in Chapter 6). Tables 6.1 and 6.2 can give meaning and purpose to schools' quantitative attendance data, while schools can use FEAT to identify, describe, and evaluate their actions using the three dimensions – before, during, and after PSTs. FEAT can offer a more rigorous approach to evaluation to help schools go beyond participation to ensure alignment with the objectives they set for PSTs.

Context, Location, Cultural Inclusivity and Empowerment

As I reflected on the study, one well-known Māori proverb lingered: He aha te mea nui o te ao? (What is the most important thing in the world?). The response echos – He tangata, he tangata, he tangata! (It is people, it is people, it is people!). This study is about people – Samoan fathers, their children, families, DPs, deans, FTs and students. Education is a people “business.” Much of the success in schools comes from the hard work of all people involved. While, on the one hand, evidence from this research may not show, on the surface, the full extent of all fathers' involvement, it does, however, allow us to gain rich insights into the “private” lives of 17 Samoan fathers involved in this study.

A key contribution of this study is the endeavour to be inclusive of fathers' language and cultural practices. Being an insider (father, Samoan, Christian), I utilised my insider

knowledge, language, and cultural strengths to nurture the *va fealoa'i* (Airini et al., 2010), building trusting relationships of care and respect. As a result, participants' quality and rich data can help inform future education and parental-involvement research. Some fathers likely shared information with me that they would not have divulged otherwise, as I removed the language barrier and was inclusive of their cultural and religious practices. These are some of the advantages and challenges posited by Tamasese et al. (2010) when engaging with Samoan and Pacific communities.

A conclusion from this study is that researchers who wish to work with Pasifika groups can reap the benefits when they take responsibility to build their language and cultural knowledge (Anae et al., 2001; Tamasese et al., 2010). As stated in Chapter 3, when working with Pacific peoples, the well-being and empowerment of Pacific participants are a priority. Being respectful of participants' cultures, ways of knowing and being are also critical components for researcher learning in this space. Table 3.1 exemplifies how I have tried to model some of the Samoan values throughout this research.

A further and related conclusion is that the merger of Western and Pacific methodological frameworks used in this study – PBM (Robinson & Lai, 2006) and *talanoa* (Vaioloti, 2013) – enabled a seamless and deeper exploration of the links between participants' actions, explanatory factors and consequences. This study has modelled one way of engaging with Samoan (or Pacific) peoples before, during and after, that ensure participants' language, culture and religious practices become essential components of the research experience.

Recommendations

This study offers the following recommendations based on the findings, analysis and conclusions. The recommendations are for policymakers, schools and for further research.

Recommendations for Policymakers

Previous research findings from NZ and overseas studies have established strong links between parental engagement and improved outcomes for students and parents (Cunningham, 2019; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Jeynes, 2015; Kim, 2018a; Lee, 2019; Robinson et al., 2009; Trinick et al., 2014). However, despite these results, there has yet to be a focus in NZ on the potential for fathers to lead or support their children's education. This study has presented evidence that fathers want their children to succeed in education. However, there are barriers to their involvement. Therefore, with the right conditions, programme content,

delivery and structure, we may be able to progress our learning about fathers' leadership and potential impact on children's outcomes (Glynn & Dale, 2015).

Countries such as the US, UK, and others strongly focus on fathers. Established policies and attached funding have allowed these countries to learn more about their fathers. While there is no national father involvement in education movement yet, there is room for the MoE (or a funding organisation) to fund an innovation fund initiative that targets fathers' involvement in education. Schools could then apply for funding to trial a project for a year. After 3 years, the findings from the successful projects could be collated and summarised to inform a nationwide support package for schools and communities.

Recommendations for Schools

Review and Design Robust Evaluation Process for PSTs

An area for improvement highlighted in this study was the lack of thorough evaluation processes for PSTs. An improved evaluation approach could include a review of PSTs through the lens of all the stakeholders involved. The review could include focus groups of parents who could be gender or ethnically differentiated to allow for language options facilitated by trusted external facilitators (where possible). Similarly, focus groups of students, FTs and deans could provide insights into the challenges and opportunities from school participant perspectives. Schools could then use this information to develop a ToA that explains the current state of their PSTs. By developing a ToA, schools could then explain the links between their practice, the belief systems that inform that practice, and the links to the various consequences. Schools could then decide which practices they need to keep and what to let go.

PSTs in the New Normal

For many fathers in the study, their work and language (English and education knowledge) were the main barriers. However, during 2020–2021, Totara College successfully trialled telephone and online PSTs with parents. Schools could trial, with a small group of fathers or parents, regular but short PSTs (for instance, twice a term, 10 minutes maximum per catchup) using the online space in the target languages (of the parents). The trial could help inform further development.

School–Church Collaboration

This study and others (Cahill, 2006; Dickie, 2010; Wilson, 2017) have provided insights into the practices of Samoan church communities. Talanoa Ako is a community-led education

initiative supporting parental engagement in their children's education. School and church leaders could meet to explore how they can partner to support improved outcomes for Pacific children and their families. They could also explore running PSTs in church communities or homes rather than schools.

Recommendations for Further Research and Interventions

As a result of this study, further research into the following areas could illuminate other pathways to progress our learning.

1. This research proposes FEAT to help investigate father involvement by looking at how fathers were engaged before, during and after PSTs. Further research could use FEAT to explore fathers' involvement with a larger group of Samoan (or Pacific) fathers. Research can also focus on tracking fathers' impact on their children across the three dimensions and triangulated with family and achievement data.
2. Samoan (or Pacific) fathers have much to offer their children's learning. However, there is still minimal ethnic-specific research about the enablers and barriers to fathers' involvement at secondary schools in NZ. Further studies could be taken with a large group of Pacific fathers, including non-church-going members, to check if the same barriers exist for them and explore possible solutions to ongoing barriers.
3. Minimal research is available on Samoan or Pacific fathers' involvement in their adolescent child's education. Therefore, a focus on understanding how ethnic-specific groups of fathers engage with their adolescent children at secondary schools can provide valuable baseline data to fill an existing knowledge gap in the current literature.
4. There is a need for father-targeted interventions. This study shows that Samoan fathers have high aspirations for their children's success; however, they are severely disadvantaged through information and knowledge gaps. Further studies into the types of interventions that enhance fathers' engagement in PSTs will guide fathers' endeavours to better champion their children's educational success.
5. This study has provided insights into two secondary schools' PSTs. Further studies into how secondary schools plan, organise, implement, and evaluate PSTs and their links to targeted outcomes for fathers or parents would help schools and parents gain maximum benefits from such an investment of time and resources.

Final Reflection

To close this chapter of my journey, I come back to the purpose of why a father of seven decided to embark on an ambitious adventure. This adventure set out to navigate the uncharted ocean of Samoan fathers' involvement in PSTs at secondary schools in NZ. A secondary motivating factor was to contribute a unique Samoan and Pacific voice to the conversation about their involvement in their children's education, which is sometimes misinterpreted and misunderstood. Along the journey, we also experienced unprecedented disruptions to education, work, businesses and life worldwide through the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, we all tried to meet the various external and internal demands for our time as fathers, parents, caregivers, employees/employers, and the various roles we take to ensure the well-being of our families.

My journey has been an enriching experience with life's peaks and troughs expected in such a venture. Moreover, I enjoyed every moment of it. *E tu manu ae le tu logologo* (this thesis) is my narrative of 17 fathers' perspectives on the current state of PSTs in NZ, complemented with the voices of four teachers and nine students. I hope this thesis has shed light on the path to disentangle and demystify PSTs as tools that can enhance the co-creation of powerful educational collaborations between schools, students, fathers, families, and communities.

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Appendices

Appendix A—Participant Information Sheets



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

LEARNING DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

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Participant Information Sheet: Church Board

Research project title: The engagement of Samoan fathers and male caregivers in parent-student-teacher (PST) conferences at secondary schools

Supervisors: Associate Prof Claire Sinnema and Dr Tanya Wendt Samu

Researcher: Siliva Gaugatao

Researcher Introduction

My name is Siliva Gaugatao and I am a doctoral student at the School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice (LDPP) at the University of Auckland. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project. This project is one of the requirements for my studies, to be a Doctor in Educational Leadership (EdD Leadership).

Project aims and description:

The study aims to understand more about Parent-Student-Teacher (PST) conferences at secondary schools, and in particular about what might make them more or less inviting to Samoan fathers. The study seeks fathers who have children in years 11 to 13 (children who are male or female, and 16 years and over). Fathers/male caregivers from three Samoan church communities will be invited, and up to 21 will take part.

What would your participation include?

If you agree to take part in the research, participants from your church will be involved in two 90-minute focus group interviews (up to 7 people per group). They will also be invited to spend up to 10 minutes per day to complete an engagement log for a week. A random sample of five participants (from the three Samoan church communities) will then be invited by the researcher to take part in two 60-minute individual interviews and four 60-minute workshop sessions to learn more about Parent-Student-Teacher conferences.

Anonymity and confidentiality

The name of your church or individuals will not be used in any reports or publications from this study. Pseudonyms will be used to ensure that participants are not identified in the research. Details that may identify you will be changed or removed. However, due to the relatively small number of Samoan churches in Auckland, it cannot be guaranteed that your Church group will not be able to be identified. The researcher cannot guarantee other participants will not reveal your identity. However, all church participants will be asked to give their assurance that they will not reveal the identity of your community to others.

Data recording, storage, retention and destruction

All the recordings, transcripts and the Consent Forms will be stored securely in my supervisor's office at the Epsom campus, University of Auckland, for 6 years. This information will be accessible only to my supervisors and me. After this period of time, paper data will be destroyed by shredding and digital audio and electronic files will be permanently deleted.

Presentation of findings and future use

A summary report of the findings will be made available to your Church Board and the participants involved in the study. The data from the research will be used in my thesis and may also be used in academic journals publications and/or conference presentations. The thesis will be submitted as assessment for the EdD degree at the University of Auckland and a copy will be available at the University of Auckland Library.

Acknowledgement of participation

For your church's involvement in the study, a koha of \$100 will be made to the Men's Fellowship Group (Mafutaga a Tamā) at the start of the study. Participants involved in focus groups and engagement logs will be gifted a \$20 supermarket voucher at their first meeting. Participants involved in individual interviews and workshop sessions will be gifted a \$30 supermarket voucher at the start of their individual meetings.

Right to withdraw from participation

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then I will look for another church community to take part in the research. However, if you agree to participate in this study, I am required by my University's research ethics procedures to seek your assurance that the participation or non-participation of fathers/male caregivers will have no effect on their membership, the participant's relationship with the organisation or access to its services.

Thank you for considering this invitation. If you have any queries about this research project, please contact me or my supervisors.

Contact details

Siliva Gaugatao

Phone: 9623 8899, extn 48134; Email: s.gaugatao@auckland.ac.nz

Supervisor contact details

Associate Prof Claire Sinnema. Telephone: 9373 7999 ext 46426; Email: c.sinnema@auckland.ac.nz

Dr Tanya Wendt. Telephone 9623 8899, extn: 48339; Email: t.samu@auckland.ac.nz

The Head of the School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice is: Dr Richard Hamilton (Phone 9235619).

Ethical concerns:

For any concerns regarding ethical issues you may contact the Chair, the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, at the University of Auckland, Office of Research Strategy and Integrity, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711.

Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on November 5, 2018 for three years. Reference Number 021808

Participant Information Sheet: Fathers and Male Caregivers

Fa'amatalaga mo le silafia o e auai i lenei suesuega: Tamā/Faatamā Samoa

Ulutala o le suesuega: O tamā Samoa ma fonotaga a matua, tamaiti ma faiaoga (PST conferences) i totonu o 'āoga maualuluga (kolisi) i Niu Sila.

Ali'i suesue: Tofilau Niulevaea Siliva Gaugatao

Faiaoga: Polofesa Lagolago Claire Sinnema & Foma'i o Tanya Wendt Samu

O le Talosaga

Talofa lava, malo le soifua ma le lagi e mama. O lo'u igoa o Tofilau Niulevaea Siliva Gaugatao ma o loo o'u sueina nei le fa'aailoga o le Fomai o le Fa'atufugaga (Doctorate) i le Lunivesite o Aukilani. O a'u faiaoga mo lenei suesuega o le tamatai Polofesa Lagolago ia Claire Sinnema ma le Foma'i o Tanya Wendt Samu. O lea ou te talosagaina ai lau afioga/susuga pe fa'amata e te fia auai i lenei suesuega.

O le a le autu o le suesuega?

O le autu o lenei suesuega o le sailia lea:

- Po'o a ni auala o lo'o fa'aoga e tamā/faatamā Samoa e lagolagoina ai taumafaiga a latou alo (tama poo teine) i totonu o 'āoga maualuluga (kolisi) i Niu Sila.
- O mafua'aga o auala o lo'o fa'aoga e tamā/faatamā Samoa e lagolagoina ai taumafaiga a latou alo (tama poo teine) i totonu o 'āoga maualuluga (kolisi) i Niu Sila.
- Po'o a ni a'afiaga (impact) o auala o loo fa'aaoga e tamā/faatamā Samoa e lagolagoina ai taumafaiga a latou alo (tama poo teine) i totonu o 'āoga maualuluga (kolisi) i Niu Sila.

Pe fa'apefea ona ou auai i lenei suesuega?

O loo faapipi'i atu se pepa o le "**Feagaiga o maliliega**" mo lou silafia. Fa'amolemole, faitau lelei i ai ma fa'afesootai mai a'u pe a i ai ni vaega e fia fa'amalamalama atili. A e fia auai i lenei suesuega, saini le "Feagaiga o maliliega" ona faafoi ane lea i le alii suesue. E mafai foi ona e fesootai sa'o i le alii suesue ma faailoa iai lou manatu. *E le faamalosiā lou auai i lenei suesuega.*

O a ni vaega o lenei suesuega?

E lua ni vaega o lenei suesuega e te ono auai ai ua faamatalaina i lalo:

Vaega Muamua (talanoaga a tamā/faatamā i totonu o Ekalesia)

- (i) O le a e auai ini fa'atalatalanoaga se 2 ma nisi o tamā/faatamā Samoa mai lau Ekalesia i totonu o le 4 vaiaso; (ii) Faatumuina o se pepa e faamau ai ni au galuega fai e lagolago ai le ola aoaoina o lo'u alo; (iii) ni au fesootaiga ma le Kolisi e 'aoga i lou alo i se vaiaso e tasi. E 10 minute (pe lalo ifo foi) i le aso mo le faatumuina o lenei pepa.
- O nei talanoaga fa'asamasamanoa (group discussion) ma isi tamā e le sili atu i le toafitu sui e auai.

- E fa'atino nei talanoaga i ni taimi ma se nofoaga e talafeagai ma sui o lo'o auai i lenei suesuega

Vaega Lua (5 tamā/faatamā filifilia mai Ekalesia e 3)

- Afai e filifilia oe mo le Vaega Lua o lenei suesuega, o le a e auai i vaega nei: (i) faatalatalanoaga taitoatasi se 2; ma (ii) auai i ni fa'afouina (workshop) se 4 (tasi i le vaiaso) ma le alii suesue. O faatalatalanoaga taitoatasi ma faafouina e faatatau lea i fonotaga a matua, tamaiti ma faiaoga e taua o *Parent-Student-Teacher conferences*, ma ni auala e faalelei atili ai le auai o tamā/faatamā Samoa i lea vaega o aoaoga.

Pueina ma le tusiina o talanoaga mo lenei suesuega

O nei talanoaga uma o le a pueina lea i se laau pue leo, ina ia mafai ai ona ou maua sa'o uma manatu eseese e faaalua. O nei foi talanoaga e mafai ona faaperetania, pe fa'asamoa foi, pe fa'aaogaina uma foi gagana e lua. Ou te tusitusiina uma le talanoaga ona tuuina atu lea o fa'amaumauga o le talanoaga e te faitau i ai mo lou foi silafia. E taua le tuuina atu le kopi o le talanoaga e te toe faitau ai ina ia aua nei i ai se nunumi, pe o se sese foi. O talanoaga ma fa'amaumauga uma o le a ou fa'aaogaina e fai i ai lau suesuega.

E i ai se vaega e ono faapopoleina ai au i lenei suesuega?

E leai se vaega e ono fa'apopoleina ai oe ona o lenei suesuega. E taua tele lou sao i lenei suesuega. O le a tausia pea le va fealoai, o se vaega taua lea o le aganu'u fa'asamoa.

E faapefea ona alofia nei popolega?

O lou auai i lenei suesuega e le fa'atauina ae fai i lou finagalo malie. E mafai ona e le taliina ni fesili, taofi le fa'atalanoaga, pe fa'ama'amulu mai foi ile suesuega i soo se taimi e aunoa ma le faamatalaina o se mafuaaga.

O ā ni aoga o lenei suesuega?

O se avanoa lenei e fa'asoa ai ni ou manatu i ni sao o tamā Samoa mo le ola aoaoina o o outou alo ma fanau (tama ma teine) i totonu o kolisi i Niu Sila nei. E tatau foi ona silafia e le Ofisa o Aoga i Niu Sila po'o a ni auala o fesootaiga o loo faaoga e kolisi o loo aoga, pe le aoga foi i fesootaiga ma matua. E ia te au se lagona vaivai, e taua se leo o tamā i lenei mataupu ona o loo faailoa mai i suesuega, o le itupa o tinā e tele ina fa'afeagai ma le ola aoaoina o le fanau i Niu Sila nei.

E faapefea ona puipuia lo'u tagata mai le silafia o le lautele?

O talanoaga, mea pueleo ma faamaumauga uma e taofi uma i le lunivesite o Aukilani seia maea le ono tausaga. Na o matou ma a'u faiaoga o le a vaavaai i nei faamaumauga. E maea loa le tolu tausaga ona faaleaogaina (susunu) uma lea o nei tusitusiga ma faamaumauga. A maea foi le suesuega, o le a maua se kopi o le aotelega o nei suesuega aua au faamaumauga ma lou silafia. O le a maua foi se kopi o le suesuega atoa i le faletusi a le lunivesite o Aukilani mo le fa'aaogaina e tagata lautele, faapea alii ma tamaitai polofesa.

E i ai se tau o le auai i lenei suesuega?

E leai se tau. Ae peitai, e fa'atauina lou taimi ua fa'aavanoaina mai mo lenei suesuega. Mo lou taimi, ua iai le voucher \$20 mo e e auai i le Vaega muamua. Mo sui auai i le Vaega Lua o le suesuega, e \$30 le voucher ua tapenaina mo lou taimi. E \$100 o le a tu'uina atu mo le Mafutaga a Tamā mo Ekalesia taitasi.

E i ai se avanoa e tu'u mai ou te mafafau ai i lenei valaaulia?

O lea lava. E taua lou malamalama i vaega uma o lenei suesuega. E 3 aso o le a tu'u atu e te filifili ai pe a uma ona faamalamalama e le alii suesue vaega o lenei suesuega. Afai e te fia auai i lenei

suesuega, faamolemole fa'afesootai le alii suesue i le numera o loo ta'ua i lalo pe saina le **"Feagaiga o maliliega"** ona faafoi ane lea i le alii suesue.

Se a se mea e ao ona ou faia pe afai e i ai ni mea e tulai mai e faapopoleina ai a'u i leni suesuega?

Afai e i ai se mea e faapopoleina ai oe i leni suesuega, faamolemole feso'otai muamua i le faiaoga mo leni suesuega, le tamaitai Foma'i ia Tanya Wendt Samu, Telefoni: +9 623 8899, extn: 48339; Imeli:t.samu@auckland.ac.nz

E mafai foi ona e feso'otai i le taitai o Komiti o Tulafono (Ethics) o le vaega o aoga a le Lunivesite o Aukilani, Dr Richard Hamilton. Telefoni: 923 5619.

Mo nisi fa'amatalaga, faamolemole fa'afesootai le ali'i suesue: Tofilau Niulevaea Siliva Gaugatao. Telefoni: 923 7999; Imeli: s.gaugatao@auckland.ac.nz

Ma le fa'aaloalo tele

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on November 5, 2018 for three years. Reference Number 021808

Participant Information Sheet: School Leaders

Research project title: The engagement of Samoan fathers and male caregivers in parent-student-teacher (PST) conferences at secondary schools

Supervisors: Associate Prof Claire Sinnema and Dr Tanya Wendt Samu

Researcher: Siliva Gaugatao

Researcher Introduction

My name is Siliva Gaugatao and I am a doctoral student at the School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice (LDPP) at the University of Auckland. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project. This project is one of the requirements for my studies, to be a Doctor of Educational Leadership (EdD Leadership).

Project aims

This project aims to understand secondary schools' current approach to parent-student-teacher (PST) conferences and in particular, Samoan fathers' experience of these conferences. We will gather perspectives through Samoan fathers, school leaders, teachers and students to investigate PST conferences further. The objective of the project is to improve father and male caregiver engagement in PST conferences, as well as schools' capability to design and implement culturally responsive conferences that empower and motivate fathers and male caregivers to attend.

I am seeking your consent to involve in this research project. If you agree to take part, your involvement will include the following:

- Two individual interviews. Time: 60-minutes per interview
- *Interview one:* The aim is to understand the links between your school's espoused goals for PST conferences and their implementation by teachers, school leaders and students. We will also explore participant experiences and perceptions of the value of these meetings, and the benefits of these meetings for students, parents and school.
- *Interview two:* Check the researcher's theory of action about your school's PST conferences and explore areas for improvement

I am required by my University's research ethics procedures to inform you of the following:

Anonymity and confidentiality

Your name will not be used in any reports or publications from this study. Details that may identify you will be changed or removed. As the researcher cannot guarantee other school participants will not reveal your identity, all school participants will be asked to give their assurance that they will not reveal the identity of other participants to others.

Presentation of findings and future use

A summary report of the findings will be made available to you either through email or hardcopy. The data from the study will be used in my thesis and may also be used in academic journals publications and/or conference presentations. The thesis will be submitted as assessment for the EdD degree from the University of Auckland and a copy will be available at the University of Auckland Library.

Acknowledgement of participation

The Principal/BOTs have given assurance that your choice to participate or not will not affect your employment or relationships with the school in any way. For your involvement in the study, you will be gifted a \$40 supermarket voucher at the start of our first meeting.

Right to withdraw from participation

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason. Data that you provide individually such as one-to-one interviews can be edited or withdrawn from the research up to one month after you have reviewed your transcript.

Data recording, storage, retention and destruction

All interviews will be recorded. All the recordings, transcripts and the Consent Forms will be stored securely in my supervisor's office at the Epsom campus, University of Auckland, for 6 years. This information will be accessible only to my supervisors and me. After this period of time, paper data will be destroyed by shredding and digital audio and electronic files will be permanently deleted.

Thank you for considering this invitation. If you have any queries about this research project, please contact me or my supervisors.

Contact details

Siliva Gaugatao

Phone: 9623 8899, extn 48134; Email: s.gaugatao@auckland.ac.nz

Supervisor contact details

Associate Prof Claire Sinnema. Telephone: 9373 7999 ext 46426; Email: c.sinnema@auckland.ac.nz

Dr Tanya Wendt. Telephone 9623 8899, extn: 48339; Email: t.samu@auckland.ac.nz

The Head of the School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice is: Dr Richard Hamilton (Phone 9235619).

Ethical concerns:

For any concerns regarding ethical issues you may contact the Chair, the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, at the University of Auckland, Office of Research Strategy and Integrity, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711.

Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on November 5, 2018 for three years. Reference Number 021808

Appendix B—Consent Forms



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

LEARNING DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Epsom Campus

Gate 3, 74 Epsom Ave
Auckland, New Zealand

T +64 9 623 8899

W www.education.auckland.ac.nz

The University of Auckland

Private Bag 92601

Symonds Street

Auckland 1135

New Zealand

Consent Form: Church Board

(This Consent Form will be held for a period of 6 years)

Doctoral research project title: The engagement of Samoan fathers and male caregivers in parent-student-teacher conferences at secondary schools

Researcher: Siliva Gaugatao

Supervisors: Associate Prof Claire Sinnema and Dr Tanya Wendt Samu

I have read the Participant Information Sheet (PIS), and I have understood the nature of the research and why my church has been invited to be part of the study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that:

- There will be two 90-minute focus group discussions with invited participants at my church one month apart.
- Participants will be invited to spend 10 minutes per day to complete a log for one week.
- A group of five participants selected by the researcher will be involved in two 60-minute individual interviews and four one-hour group workshop sessions for four weeks with the researcher.
- Participants will know the identity of others participating, but will be asked to give their assurance not to reveal their identities to others. The researcher will request, but cannot guarantee that participants will keep other participants' identities confidential.
- Recordings of focus group discussions and interviews will be transcribed by the researcher and/or a third-party person who will sign a confidentiality agreement.
- Data from my church participants will be securely stored for 6 years beyond the completion of the research and then destroyed by shredding / permanent deletion of electronic files.
- My church's name will not be used in the research report or any publication and conference presentations from this study.
- I give my permission to the researcher to invite Samoan fathers / male caregivers at my church to take part in this research.
- I give my permission to use my church facilities for data gathering and the workshop sessions with fathers/male caregivers if required.
- I give my assurance that the participation or non-participation of fathers/male caregivers will have no effect on their member status, the participants' relationship with the organisation or access to its services.

- I give my consent to participating in the research with the understanding that, participation is entirely voluntary and the Church Board and participants involved are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason. However, due to the nature of group discussions, only data participants provide individually such as one-to-one interviews can be edited or withdrawn from the research up to one month following the data having been gathered.
- I wish/do not wish to receive a summary of findings, which can be emailed to me at this email address: _____

I agree to take part in this research.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on November 5, 2018 for three years. Reference Number 021808

Consent Form: Samoan Fathers and Male Caregivers



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

LEARNING DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

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New Zealand

Feagaiga o Maliliega: Tamā/Fa'atamā Samoa (E 6 tausaga o le a taofia ai lenei pepa)

Ulutala o le suesuega: O tamā Samoa ma fonotaga a matua, tamaiti ma faiaoga (PST conferences) i totonu o 'āoga maualuluga (kolisi) i Niu Sila.

Ali'i suesue: Tofilau Niulevaea Siliva Gaugatao

Faiaoga: Polofesa Lagolago Claire Sinnema & Foma'i o Tanya Wendt Samu

Ua maea ona ou faitauina **“Fa'amatalaga mo le silafia o e auai i lenei suesuega,”** ma ua ou malamalama foi i vaega uma.

Ua ou malamalama:

- E ia te au le pule e mafai ai ona ou faamaamulu mai i lenei suesuega i soo se taimi, ma e le tau fa'ailoa foi se mafuaaga.
- O le a ou auai i ni faatalatalanoaga i vaega (group discussion) se lua (2) i totonu o le 4 vaiaso, e tai 90 minute i le talanoaga e tasi.
- O le a ou faatumuina se pepa e faamau ai galuega ou te faia e lagolago ai le ola aoaoina o lo'u atali'i/afafine, ma ni a'u fesootaiga ma le kolisi e 'aoga ai lo'u atali'i/afafine i se vaiaso e tasi. E 10 minute (pe i lalo ifo foi) i le aso o le a ou faaaluina e faatumu ai lenei pepa.
- Afai e filifilia a'u i le Vaega Lua o lenei suesuega, o le a ou auai i ni faatalatalanoaga taitoatasi se 2, ma ni faafouina e 4 (tasi i le vaiaso) mo vaiaso e 4 ma le alii suesue.
- E mafai ona ou faasa'oina ni vaega o a'u talanoaga taitoatasi, pe aveese mai foi i faamaumauga i totonu o le tasi le masina pe a maea ona ou siakiina faamaumauga. Ae le mafai ona ou suiina pe aveese mai a'u faamaumauga mai talanoaga lautele ma isi tamā ona e aafia ai le talanoaga atoa.
- O talanoaga i vaega (group discussion) ma talanoaga taitoatasi o le a pueina i le laau pueleo.
- O talanoaga uma o le faamaumau ma tusiina i lalo.
- E le tatau ona ou faailoaina suafa o e auai i lenei suesuega.
- O faamaumauga mai le suesuega o le a taofia i se nofoaga saogalemu i le Lunivesite o Aukilani mo le 6 tausaga. A maea le 6 tausaga ona susunu lea o faila uma ma faaleaogaina.
- E leai se vaega e aafia ai lo'u tulaga po'o le va fealaoai ma isi sui i totonu o la'u Ekalesia pe a ou auai, pe le auai foi i lenei suesuega.
- E leai ni faamatalaga e faailoa ai lo'u tagata e faaoga ini folasaga poo ni pepa tusitusia mai i lenei suesuega.
- Ou te manao / le manao e aumai se aotelega o le suesuega ia te au.

Ou te fia auai i le suesuega.

Suafa: _____ Saini _____ Aso: _____

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on November 5, 2018 for three years. Reference Number 021808

Consent Form: School Leaders (Deputy Principals)



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

LEARNING DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

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Auckland, New Zealand

T +64 9 623 8899

W www.education.auckland.ac.nz

The University of Auckland

Private Bag 92601
Symonds Street
Auckland 1135
New Zealand

Consent Form: School Leaders

(This Consent Form will be held for a period of 6 years)

Doctoral research project title: The engagement of Samoan fathers and male caregivers in parent-student-teacher conferences at secondary schools

Researcher: Siliva Gaugatao

Supervisors: Associate Prof Claire Sinnema and Dr Tanya Wendt Samu

I have read the Participant Information Sheet (PIS), and I have understood the nature of the research and why I have been invited to be part of the study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that:

- I will be involved in two 60-minute individual interviews.
- The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher and/or a third-party who will sign a confidentiality agreement.
- My data from the study will be securely kept for 6 years and then destroyed by shredding / permanent deletion of electronic files.
- Any identifiable information about me will not be used in the research report or any publication and/or conference presentations from this study.
- Assurance has been given by the Board or Principal that my participation or non-participation in the study will have no effect on my status, my relationship with the organisation or access to its services.
- My participation is entirely voluntary and I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason.
- I wish/do not wish to receive a summary of findings, which can be emailed to me at this email address: _____

I agree to take part in this research.

Name: _____ Signature _____ Date: _____

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on November 5, 2018 for three years. Reference Number 021808

Appendix C— Interview Schedules



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

LEARNING DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

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The University of Auckland
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 Symonds Street
 Auckland 1135
 New Zealand

Interview Protocols - Focus Group 1 [Fathers]

Note: The interview will be treated as a conversation about school PST conferences. The researcher will adopt a *General – Specific – Examples* approach. The starting point for the conversation will be the school actions focused on the three topics below. For all actions that are revealed in the discussion, I will probe for:

- the explanatory factors that help explain those actions.
- the consequences for various people. For example, positive or negative; long term / short term; and impact on different people - child, fathers, school, teachers.

Explanatory Factors	Actions	Consequences
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why did you attend those events? 2. What did you enjoy at a recent conference? 3. Why do you attend PSTs? 4. What stops you from attending? 5. What are your dreams for your child? 6. What is one lesson that you have learned from your father/father figure? 7. What is a proverb/metaphor that reflects/symbolises what a father is to you? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What school events have you attended so far? Why? 2. Who attends PSTs from your family? Why? 3. How many PSTs does your child have in a year? 4. How do you find out about your child's PSTs? 5. What happens during your child's conference? 6. Does your school encourage fathers/male caregivers in PST conferences? How does it do that? 7. What information do teachers share with you during PSTs? 8. What do you find easy/difficult to understand at these conferences? 9. What do you do after the PSTs? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you find MOST useful in these conferences? 2. What do you find easy/difficult to understand at these conferences? 3. What is something you discussed with the teacher at the last conference that you carried out after the PSTs? 4. What is your most memorable experience from these conferences?

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Individual Interview Protocols 1 – Study 2 Fathers & Male Caregivers

Note: The interview will be treated as a conversation about participant experiences, actions, explanatory factors and consequences in PSTs. The interview will start with eliciting actions (what fathers and schools do or do not do), and the researcher will adopt a *General – Specific – Examples* approach. As actions are revealed, the researcher will probe for the explanatory factors and consequences of those actions.

Explanatory Factors	Actions	Consequences
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have you attended any PSTs? Why? Why not? 2. Are PSTs important to you? Why? 3. Are PSTs welcoming for you? How? 4. What is your MOST important role in your child's education? 5. How could your school make PSTs better for you? 6. What helps/limits your involvement with your child? 7. What are your dreams for your child? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who attends PSTs from your family? 2. How many PSTs does your child have per year? 3. When do they happen? How long are they? 4. Does your school encourage fathers/male caregivers to attend PSTs? How does it do that? 5. How do you find out about PSTs? 6. What information do teachers share with you during PSTs 7. What information do you find easy/difficult to understand? 8. Does your school find out from you what you found easy/difficult to understand in PSTs 9. What does your school do to help you understand these difficult areas? 10. What does your family do to support your child's learning at home? 11. How do you find out about your child's school progress? 12. How are you involved in your child's learning at home/school? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me about a positive experience in PSTs 2. Any negative experiences in PSTs? 3. Tell me about something you carried out as a result of attending a conference. 4. What did you learn about your child's learning in the last conference that you attended?

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on November 5, 2018 for three years. Reference Number 021808

Interview Protocols – School Leader Interview 1

Note: The interview will be treated as a conversation about school PST conferences. The researcher will adopt a *General – Specific – Examples* approach. The starting point for the conversation will be the school actions focused on the three topics below. For all actions that are revealed in the discussion, I will probe for:

- the explanatory factors that help explain those actions.
- the consequences for various people. For example, positive or negative; long term / short term; and impact on different people - child, fathers, school, teachers.

Explanatory Factors	Actions	Consequences
<p>Sample questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why are PSTs important to you school? 2. What your school goals for PSTs? 3. What informs your school's PSTs? 4. Are fathers/male caregivers targeted in PSTs? How? Why? 5. What is a proverb/metaphor that reflects/symbolises what a father is to you? 	<p>Sample questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does your school do to connect with parents and whānau? 2. How do you promote PSTs with your parents? 3. How many PSTs do you have per year? How long are the conferences? 4. What are the experiences of your teachers and parents in PSTs? 5. Can you walk me through the processes that your teachers use in your PSTs? 6. What are the roles and responsibilities for: school leader; teacher; student; parents in PSTs? 7. What do parents find easy/difficult to understand in PSTs? 8. How does your school help parents understand NCEA? 9. How do you find out about the experiences of your parents in PSTs? 10. How do you adapt PSTs to meet your Pasifika parents' needs? 11. How does your school evaluate the effectiveness of PSTs? 	<p>Sample questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. What do you find MOST useful about PSTs? 6. What do you think fathers/parents find easy/difficult to understand in PSTs? 7. What is an example of something you have worked on as a school to improve from the last PST? 8. Any important events from previous PSTs that have had an impact on how your plan, implement or review PSTs?

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on November 5, 2018 for three years. Reference Number 021808

Appendix D—Fathers’ Engagement Log—Case Study Fathers



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

LEARNING DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

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 Symonds Street
 Auckland 1135
 New Zealand

OPTION A: FA’AMAUMAUGA A TAMĀ

Igoa/Name:

Aso Amata/Start Date: 9/11/2020 (aso/masina/tausaga)

Aso/Day	Fa’amolemole tusi i aso taitasi se/ni feso’otaiga se tasi, pe lua, pe tolu, ma lou alo e te silafia e aupito sili ona taua mo ia. <i>Please write up to three MOST meaningful interactions you had with your child that you hope will be helpful to them.</i>	Fa’amolemole tusi i le avanoa i lalo ni au feso’otaiga/galuega sa e faia ma le kolisi o lo’o aoga ai lou alo. <i>Write here any interaction(s) you had with the secondary school that your child attends.</i>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Fa’ataitaiga / Example prompts:

O a ni vaega sa e talanoa ai i lou alo? / What did you talk to him/her about?

Sa ou talanoa i le faiaoga o le Gagana Samoa a lou alo / I talked with my son’s/daughter’s Samoan language teacher.

OPTION B: FA'AMAUMAUGA A TAMĀ [Gagana Samoa/Igilisi] E-form

Please use the links below to record your interactions.

Email

Fa'afetai tele mo lou taimi ua fa'aavanoa mo lenei suesuega. Fa'amolemole tatala le upega (link) ua fa'apipi'i atu ona faatumu lea o avanoa mo aso taitasi mo le vaiaso (7 aso). Faamolemole tusi i aso taitasi ni feso'otaiga poo ni galuega se tasi (1), pe lua (2), pe tolu(3), ma lou alo e te silafia e aupito sili ona taua mo ia. I le pusa lona lua, fa'amolemole tusi i le avanoa ni au feso'otaiga ma le kolisi o lo'o aoga ai lou alo.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the research. Please click on the link below to open up a form for each day (1-7) to record your up to three MOST meaningful interactions/tasks per day with your child that you hope will be helpful to him/her. In the second box, please record any interaction(s) you had with your child's secondary school.

Links:

Day 1: <https://forms.gle/XHPTvdsawAmKjwru5>

Day 2: <https://forms.gle/XfGXz9k5aFoTGq6i7>

Day 3: <https://forms.gle/KpLKNudZPVED3Asp9>

Day 4: <https://forms.gle/a2vLtgQ3h959uBUt9>

Day 5: <https://forms.gle/s4fXZUGM2qxxRZ2d7>

Day 6: <https://forms.gle/QbyFs1pxWQbLsynd9>

Day 7: <https://forms.gle/18YzDku6wwYW7bW29>

Please let me know if you have any problems accessing the document.

Thank you

Tofilau Niulevaea Siliva Gaugatao

Email: s.gaugatao@auckland.ac.nz

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 5 November 2018 for three years. Reference Number 021808