Proceedings of the
Samoa Conference IV, 2018

“Our heritage, our future: Fostering sustainable development through leadership, innovation and collaboration.”

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Proceedings of the Samoa Conference IV, 2018
: our heritage, our future: fostering sustainable development through leadership, innovation and collaboration.

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FOREWORD

The Sāmoa Conference IV proceedings in this volume are an engaging sample of the broad range of topics covered by the theme of Sāmoa Conference IV, ‘Our Heritage, Our Future: Fostering Sustainable Development through Leadership, Innovation and Collaboration’ which engendered lively debate and discussion and augurs well for future research and progress in all fields pertaining to Sāmoa and its development in the 21st Century. The topics also echoed and continued conversations around the broad themes of the United Nations Small Islands Developing States 2014 Conference held in Apia and looks forward to the plans underway for Sāmoa 2040.

The keynote speakers presented on the legacies and opportunities of Sāmoa’s material and cultural heritage, revisiting gender with a focus on the feagaiga and the va for sisters and wives as well as an examination of Sāmoa’s unique but threatened fauna. These framed the variety of topics covered in 74 papers under the general headings of heritage, literacy, well-being, leadership, gender, policy and research, education, climate change, innovation, health and media. The fourteen papers submitted for publication in these proceedings will give the reader a taste of the talkfest which resulted from the broad range of subjects offered for research and enquiry.

The aim of most international conferences is to provide a platform to share research and current, ongoing scholarship with a view to publication and further dissemination of findings to the broader global community. The Sāmoa Conference series is also focussed on fostering a network of researchers across the disciplines to acquire new and relevant knowledge about all aspects of Sāmoan society, whether locally or abroad in the Sāmoan diaspora which impacts on the direction of Sāmoa’s journey of development as a nation amongst the family of nations in the global community of the 21st century. Looking to the way forward in the future demands resilience for Pacific nations such as Sāmoa, especially facing the challenges of warming oceans, rising seas and sinking islands and all other related threats of climate change. Cultural concepts need to be interrogated for Pacific Island societies to be sustainable, innovative and creative to meet such challenges and of course, leadership is crucial to survival, balance and world peace.

Whilst we look ahead to the next Sāmoa Conference, the 2018 gathering left participants in no doubt that there are still many vital research areas for exploration ahead of us, given the explosion of change on all fronts that we are experiencing as Pacific communities and as peoples of the global community across the world.

I extend my warmest congratulations to the editing team for this publication and best wishes for learning and research journeys in the future!

Silafau Professor Sina Vaai (Acting Vice Chancellor)
CONTENTS

FOREWORD

POLICY AND RESEARCH

MICROFINANCE CLIENTELE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC ATTRIBUTES, SMALL BUSINESS PROFITABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY: EVIDENCE FROM SĀMOA
Romalani Leofo, National University of Sāmoa and Wood Salele, National University of Sāmoa

TELECOMMUNICATIONS REFORM IN SĀMOA: THE INTRODUCTION OF COMPETITION LAW PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECT
Bridget Crichton, National University of Sāmoa and Folototo Seve, National University of Sāmoa

HERITAGE

A PAN-PACIFIC SYNTHESIS OF NATION-BUILDING: SĀMOAN, HAWAIIAN, TONGAN AND AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIRST CONSTITUTIONS OF SĀMOA, 1873–1875
Lorenz Gonschor, 'Atenisi University, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

KNOWING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY IS CRUCIAL
Diana Betham-Scanlan, National University of Sāmoa

EXPLORING THE LITERATURE ON COMMUNITY MANAGED SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT, WITH REFERENCE TO APOLIMA ISLAND, SĀMOA
Lenara Tuipoloa-Utuva, National University of Sāmoa

CLIMATE CHANGE

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF FRESHWATER CARBONATE DEPOSITS AT FALE O LE FE’E: IMPLICATIONS ON CULTURAL AND GEO-HYDROCLIMATE SIGNIFICANCE IN SĀMOA
Shaun Williams, National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), Christchurch, New Zealand.

STRENGTHENING NATURAL HAZARDS RESILIENCE THROUGH EVIDENCE-BASED RISK INFORMATION: PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS RESULTS OF THE PARTNER PROJECT, SĀMOA
Titimana Simi, Disaster Management Office, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), Apia, Sāmoa.

Anita Latai-Niusulu, National University of Sāmoa

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCE OF SĀMOAN COMMUNITIES

SHENG-LIN LIN, GNS Science, Wellington, New Zealand.

INNOVATION

NEOLIBERAL COMPETITION AND LOCAL ADVANTAGE: A CASE OF A MULTINATIONAL CAR PARTS FACTORY IN SĀMOA
Masami Tsujita Levi, National University of Sāmoa

LITERACY

IMPLEMENTING THE PROFICIENCY ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST (PELT) IN HEN 100 - BUSINESS ENGLISH
Judy-Anne Alexander-Pouono, National University of Sāmoa
LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND MATHEMATICS SĀMOAN MATHEMATICS - STARTS AT INFANCY  
Lupe Mageo Gates, National University of Sāmoa  
THE IMPORTANCE OF READING: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE  
Peniamina Skido Ropati, National University of Sāmoa  

LEADERSHIP  
TRANSNATIONAL FAAMATAI: DECOLONISING AND RE-INDIGENISING 'DEVELOPMENT'  
Melani Anae, University of Auckland and Falaniko Tominiko, University of Auckland  

HEALTH  
STRESS RESPONSES OF SĀMOAN STUDENTS AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SĀMOA (NUS): FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS  
Helen Tanielu, National University of Sāmoa and Minerva Taavao, National University of Sāmoa
POLICY AND RESEARCH
MICROFINANCE CLIENTELE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC ATTRIBUTES, SMALL BUSINESS PROFITABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY: EVIDENCE FROM SĀMOA

Romalani Leolofo, National University of Sāmoa and Wood Salele, National University of Sāmoa

Abstract

Increasing discussions and debates in recent years about the impact of microfinance on the socio-economic well-being of vulnerable people are divided between two competing views. On one hand, microfinance is a key development tool in poverty alleviation and improves livelihood opportunities for low-income and financially excluded individuals. On the other hand, microfinance does not improve clients’ socio-economic situation but leads to over-indebtedness. Although the two arguments are compelling, microfinance clientele characteristics is largely unexplored and hence be viewed an important area. This study examines and describes the characteristics of microfinance clients in order to gain valuable insights about the effectiveness of existing microfinance programmes and schemes to suit the client’s attributes. Our results show that clients are predominantly unemployed female victims of violence, earning extremely low levels of income and have many children. Age, gender and social group involvement are associated with business income and sustainability. These results reveal the important attributes of an average client which should not be overlooked by Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) and policy makers in order to design more effective microfinance services and regulations. Our results further support the argument that a one-size-fits-all approach adopted by most local MFIs fails to “adequately serve the market” (Banthia, Tyroler, & Schoeffel, 2013).

Key words: microfinance, sustainability, small-island developing countries

Introduction

In recent years, discussions and debates on the impacts of microfinance and its effectiveness to the socio-economic wellbeing of vulnerable people in developing countries increased immensely. On one hand, microfinance improves the welfare of the poor by enabling them through funds, advisory services and trainings for self-development and financial inclusion. On the other hand, the lack of financial awareness can lead to over indebtedness and greater economic vulnerability for the very clients that microfinance seeks to help. These concerns were first brought to light in India whereby Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) were accused of predatory lending, overburdening poor and illiterate women with loans which they may not have been able to repay and using forceful collection practices to ensure repayment (Tiwari, Khandelwal and Ramji 2008). Thus it is important to understand clientele attributes to confirm the extent of vulnerability and whether existing microfinance business models are suitable for those clients. Hence this way would be more relevant to assess MFIs effectiveness from the client’s perspective. Further, should a MFI achieve its main goal it is perceived to be effective. The main goal of the South Pacific Business Development Ltd., (SPBD) as reported in their web page (www.spbdmicrofinance.com/spbd-network/Sāmoa), is to eradicate poverty by empowering women in poor rural villages with the opportunity to start, grow and maintain sustainable, income generating micro-enterprises).

This study aims to understand the socio-demographic attributes of MFIs’ clients and which attributes significantly relate to small business profitability and sustainability. While microfinance is a topic of global concern, it is worthwhile to examine microfinance in the Pacific context to consider how aspects of cultural importance affect client attributes. We focus our study on Sāmoa, a Pacific Island country which has several microfinance schemes in place. From observation, local MFIs employ similar models to those used internationally including the iconic Grameen style model. However, there is evidence claiming an existence of high loan default rates and low number of client success stories in Sāmoa’s microfinance sector (United Nations Organisation 2013). To that end, this study is
motivated to identify the attributes of clients that are associated with business short to long term success.

The impact of microfinance has been well researched and documented into three broad categories: (i) the impact of microfinance on poverty reduction or alleviation (Hulme & Mosley, 1996; Copestake, 2002; Copestake, 2002; Khandker, 2005; Tedeschi, 2010; Miled & Rejeb, 2018), (ii) the impact on women empowerment (Hashemi, Schuler, & Riley, 1996; Pitt, Cartwright, & Khandker, 2006; Garikipati, 2012; Swain & Wallentin, 2009), and (iii) the relationship between microfinance activities and/or performance and client entrepreneurial skills (Cohen & Nelson, 2011; Karlan & Valdivia, 2011). However, there is limited evidence about the characteristics of clients and microfinance institutions which could better inform financial institutions, policy makers and regulators regarding providing more effective services for clients. Our study contributes to this gap in the literature by exploring clientele characteristics of microfinance participants in Sāmoa to better understand their needs and capabilities so that microfinance institutions can devise suitable financial services with the needs of clients in mind.

We employ a mixture of qualitative semi-structured interviews and quantitative survey analysis techniques to determine the characteristics of microfinance clients in Sāmoa. Our sample of 987 participants was obtained from the Sāmoa Victim Support Group Nofotane Project.

Our results indicate that clients are predominantly unemployed female victims of violence, earning extremely low levels of income and have many children. Age, gender and social group involvement are associated with business income and sustainability. These results reveal the important attributes of an average client which should be of interest to MFIs and policy makers in designing more suitable and microfinance services and regulations.

It is important to note that this study only examined a limited list of client attributes. Some important client attributes such as educational background, financial literacy and loan default rates were not examined due to data unavailability. Hence, future studies should examine these other client attributes in order to provide a more complete understanding of client characteristics.

The rest of this paper is organised as follows. We first review the microfinance literature about the impacts of microfinance and the determinants of microfinance performance. Then we briefly describe the institutional background of the Sāmoan microfinance sector. Description of data collection procedures and research methodology is set out in section 3 while section 4 discusses the results. Finally, section 5 concludes.

**Literature Review**

**Theory of microfinance**

Microfinance is a financial service targeting individuals and small businesses that lack access to conventional banking and related services such as microcredit, small loans, savings and checking accounts, micro-insurance, and payments systems (Tiwari et al. 2008). These individuals and businesses are not able to access financial services from banks and other financial institutions because they do not satisfy the credit check requirements of the banks.

While microfinance is often considered an invaluable tool to alleviate poverty and improve the socio-economic status of the poor (Johnson and Rogaly 1997), the economics behind it is often
overlooked. Marginal output theory and the diminishing returns principle propose that capital should naturally flow to the poorer enterprises because they would be able to yield higher rates of return relative to the rich if both are given a certain amount of capital\textsuperscript{i}. Based on the marginal return notion, Lucas (1988) argues that funds should flow from rich countries such as United States (US) to poor countries such as India. He reports that borrowers from India should be willing to pay up to 58 times more than borrowers from the US for any given level of capital. This creates an increased demand by the poorer individuals/households for capital. The higher interest rates should in turn incentivise suppliers of capital including micro-finance institutions, other financial institutions and investors to create an operational market (Armendariz & Morduch, 2010). The same notion can be extended to the flow of capital from rich depositors to poor borrowers within any country.

**Empirical Evidence of Microfinance**

Despite the theoretical logic discussed previously, reality indicates complications and the need to consider reasons why financial service providers tend to hold back lending to low income earning individuals. Some evidence alludes to risk as being the main deterrent for financial institutions to freely choose the poor individuals over the average and rich customers (Armendariz & Morduch, 2010; Yunus, 2006; Stiglitz & Weiss, 1981; Zeballos, Cassar, & Wydick, 2014).

Current literature on the impact of microfinance can be classified into three broad categories. The first strand examines the impact of microfinance on poverty reduction or alleviation (Hulme & Mosley, 1996; Copestake, 2002; Copestake, 2002; Khandker, 2005; Tedeschi, 2010; Miled & Rejeb, 2018). The second strand examines the impact of microfinance on women empowerment (Hashemi, Schuler, & Riley, 1996; Pitt, Cartwright, & Khandker, 2006; Garikipati, 2012; Swain & Wallentin, 2009). The final strand investigates the relationship between microfinance activities and/or performance and client entrepreneurial skills training (Karlan & Valdivia, 2011), financial literacy skills training (Cohen & Nelson, 2011) and gender relations (Johnson, 2000). However, the characteristics of clients and microfinance institutions remain relatively unexplored.

**Institutional Background: Microfinance Sector of Sāmoa**

The microfinance sector in Sāmoa is relatively small and young compared to other countries. There are only four microfinance institutions: South Pacific Business Development (SPBD), Women in Business Development Incorporated (WIBDI), Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) and Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCS&D) in collaboration with Development Bank of Sāmoa (DBS). A few organisations whose primary focus is not microfinance but provide to a certain extent some microfinance services (e.g. Sāmoa Victim Support Group) recently joined the sector (Moustafa & Kumar, 2016). Due to the relatively young age of microfinance in Sāmoa, the sector is largely liberalised and moderately regulated\textsuperscript{iii}. In this section, we briefly explain the main microfinance institutions in Sāmoa.

1) **South Pacific Business Development Microfinance Limited (SPBD)**

The SPBD is one of the very few major microfinance institutions in Sāmoa and has operations in other Pacific island countries. Their mission is to eradicate poverty by empowering women in poor rural villages with the opportunity to start, grow and maintain sustainable, income-generating micro-enterprises. SPBD provides small, unsecured loans to groups of rural women\textsuperscript{iv} to operate small businesses using existing livelihood and skills. Clients are given training, on-going guidance and
support through frequent visits and inspections within the duration of the loans. SPBD also accepts loans for home improvement and children’s education purposes such as school fees.

2) **Women in Business Development Incorporated (WIBDI)**

WIBDI is the second microfinance institution whose mission is to provide and empower vulnerable families with knowledge and skills through capacity building workshops, opportunities and access to finance and markets (Women in Business Development Incorporated Samoa, 2018). WIBDI encourages their clients to cultivate sustainable business practices that utilise agriculture and livelihood resources. WIBDI’s operations are slightly different from SPBD in that it encourages client savings and allows limited client loans from their saving accounts. In addition, WIBDI collaborates with established local and international businesses to create markets for its clients’ products.

3) **Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC)**

SBEC provides the core services of small business management training and advisory services, advocating and support services for micro-entrepreneurs. Part of SBEC’s business model for business development combines business training, planning and advisory to facilitate access to finance from at least one of the five banks operating in Sāmoa: Development Bank of Sāmoa (DBS), National Bank of Sāmoa (NBS), Australia and New Zealand Banking Limited (ANZ), Bank of the South Pacific (BSP) and Sāmoa Commercial Bank (SCB). The facilitation of access to finance includes providing financial guarantee of up to 75% of the loan principal on behalf of their clients to the bank when applying for a loan. Moreover, SBEC facilitates business nurturing and support. According to SBEC’s Business Training manager, the success rate of SBECs clients paying back loans is around 30 percent to 40 percent.

4) **Ministry of Women, Communities and Social Development (MWCS&D) in collaboration with the Development Bank of Sāmoa (DBS)**

The MWCS&D started their microfinance scheme in collaboration with DBS in 2008. This scheme was designed specifically for women groups in villages and other communities. Assistance given was mainly for agriculture, food processing, sewing, handicrafts, livestock, retail and fishing. This microfinance program initially started with women’s Komiti. MWCS&D provides training and workshops for women to teach them skills such as sewing while DBS administers the micro-credit and lending part of the scheme to women who have been recommended by MWCS&D to be considered for loans. The major challenge for this programme was the poor loan repayment performance; a large number of clients were taken to court due to inability to settle their loan and outstanding repayments. Clients often use borrowed funds for ‘fa’alavelave’, travel or church donations rather than small enterprises or home improvements. It was reported that the success rate for loan repayment was only about 10% of the clients that were doing well. However, they have not been able to sustain success over time. As a result, the scheme is currently inactive (Motusaga, 2018). The operation of the scheme by MWCS&D is similar to that of SPBD but lacked the organisation backup provided by SPBD.

5) **Sāmoa Victim Support Group (SVSG) in collaboration with UN Women Fund**

Sāmoa Victim Support Group serves a uniquely defined purpose to provide support for victims of abuse and violence of any form. They worked collaboratively with UN Women Fund for Gender Equality on a two-year programme for the economic empowerment of unemployed married women or nofotane’. The project involved provision of livelihood skills’ training, workshops to strengthen nofotane’s understanding of their rights and advocating for self-development and empowerment. According to the SVSG President Lina Chang, “Nofotane will always be nofotane; the programme is not attempting to change this cultural aspect of the fa’aSāmoa but rather to improve the economic
empowerment of women, and to increase their participation in domestic and community matters” (Chang 2018) Participants from this one-off project includes past and existing clients from across all three formal microfinance institutions: SPBD, WIBDI and SBEC.

Data and methodology

We employ a mixture of qualitative semi-structured interviews and quantitative survey analysis techniques to collect and analyse data from a sample of 987 participants in the Nofotane Project. We selected our sample from this Nofotane Project because the participants include past and current clients from across three formal microfinance institutions: SPBD, WIBDI and SBEC.

We use multi-stage sampling by firstly randomly selecting 11 out of 41 constituencies then we randomly selected a number of participants from the chosen 11 constituencies based on their respective proportion of the total population. Table 1 shows the composition of the sample with Alataua West being the most represented constituency in the sample. The survey data was obtained from Sāmoa Victim Support Group on a survey they conducted on all their clients and we have permission to select a sample from their database for the purpose of this study only. Semi structured interviews through the ‘talanoa’ methodology were conducted with MFIs representatives to collect information about the success of existing microfinance programmes, the challenges they face with their clients and their solution to address those challenges. Survey data analysis is conducted using SPSS software package.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Sample Composition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constituencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aana Alofi No. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aana Alofi No. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alataua West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anoamaa West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faasaleleaga No.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faasaleleaga No.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itu Salega</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palauli East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaimauga West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaisigano No. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gagaifomauga No. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results and analysis

**Clientele Socio-demographic Attributes**

1. **Gender**

A large proportion of participants are females (77%) while twenty per cent (20%) are males according to Figure 1. The remaining 3% are other genders such as ‘fa’afatama’ and ‘fa’aafine’. The dominance of female participants reflects micro-finance institutions’ preference of females over the opposite sex.
SPBD accepts only females as clients. Boehe and Cruz (2013) allude to better loan repayment performance by women as one main reason for MFIs’ female preference.

Figure 1: Clients Gender Composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Age and Number of Children

Figure 2 and 3 show the results for age and number of children respectively. About eighteen percent (18%) of the participants are aged between 21 and 30, nineteen percent (19%) are aged between 31 and 40, twenty one percent (21%) are aged between 41 and 50 and nineteen percent (19%) are aged between 51 and 60. Eleven percent (11%) of the participants are aged above 60 years old while nine percent (9%) are aged under 21 years of age. Participants’ age is normally distributed.

Figure 2: Age groups of Clients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 21</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More than 80% of participants have children while less than twenty per cent (20%) have no children. The proportion of participants with more than seven children is approximately seventeen percent (17%) while twenty two percent (22%) have 5 to 6 children. Another twenty one percent (21%) of participants have three to four children of their own. Only sixteen percent (16%) of participants have one to two children. In brief, most of the participants are parents with children or dependants.

3. Employment status and Livelihood skills

Furthermore, Figure 4 indicates that seventy nine percent (79%) of participants are unemployed while only 16% have jobs. The remaining five percent (5%) are still in school. About ninety percent (90%) of the participants indicated that they have some form of livelihood skills including sewing, farming, cooking and making handicrafts while the rest either gave no response or responded that they did not possess any of those skills.
4. Basic Business Management skills and Business sustainability

A question was asked for participants to rate on a scale of 1 to 4 their financial literacy level, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest level attained. Surprisingly, all the participants gave a response of 4, indicating high financial literacy level. Although the participants responded to being highly financial literate, reports from site-visits and inspections within the first year of the Nofotane project by SVSG officials found that only seventeen percent (17%) of the sample are operating a small business.

The poor rate of viable businesses emerging out of microfinance programmes despite the excellent financial literacy levels may be attributed to participants’ overconfidence of their traits (Mullainathan & Thaler, 2000). It could also be due to irrational economic behaviours by participants where they do not act in their best financial interest despite being informed and trained on making better financial management decisions. For instance, a Women’s World Banking Pacific study through focus groups highlighted that a large number of women spent their loaned money for the purpose of running a small business on customary obligations (*fa’alavelave*) such as a wedding, funeral or matai title bestowment despite their financial literacy ability (Banthia et. al., 2012). As a result, they struggled to meet future loan repayments and later defaulted on their loans. Many women have been imprisoned and detained for small unpaid loan amounts and led to the suspension of some microcredit programmes including the MWCSD and DBS micro credit scheme. SBEC and SPBD representatives stated that they also share the same challenge of poor loan repayment performance by their clients leading to subsequent loan defaults and legal action taken against them by MFIs.

5. Income and Type of Business

Income is one key attribute of microfinance clients in assessing their vulnerability. Income in this study refers to not only income from micro-businesses but includes wages and regular remittances. Figure 5 shows that around twenty five percent (25%) of total participants earn an income of less than $100 tala per week while more than sixty percent (60%) earn a weekly income of under $300 tala, with only three percent (3%) earning more than $800 tala. By comparison, the average weekly household expenditure in Sāmoa is around $950.43 tala while that of the lowest quintile of the population is $467.93 tala (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2014). This means that most if not all of the participants earn well-below the average weekly household spending and fall mostly in the lowest quintile.

![Figure 5: Percentage of Clients by Weekly Income](image)
The vast majority of the study sample (87%) choose general agricultural activities as their type of business activity as indicated by Figure 6. These agricultural activities include different types of farming from poultry, cattle farms to growing crops of all sorts. Other types of activities include handicrafts, commercial cooking, printing and sewing elei.

**Figure 6: Type of Business Activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bags, hats, mats and handicrafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elei and Sewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floral arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Agricultural Activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contingency or cross-tabulation analysis between socio-demographic clientele attributes, small business profitability and sustainability

The second aspect of this study is to discuss key attributes in the success of micro-enterprises to gain insight into the factors that are important in small-business profitability and sustainability. Business profitability is measured by weekly income while sustainability is measured by the ability of a business to continue operations during the final site-visits by the project host held in the last few months of the two-year period. We focus our study on the relationship between business profitability and sustainability with age, gender and involvement of participants in support group or network as information on other participant attributes was limited.

1. Gender, business short term profitability and sustainability

Table 2 shows the relationship between gender and business short term profitability as measured by income. We performed the chi-square tests of independence to test for the significance of association and confirmed a significant relationship at the five per cent (5%) level. However, the requirement for the expected cell counts of at least eighty per cent (80%) to be more than 5 is not met, hence the likelihood ratio test is more reliable (Evangelopoulos, 2014). The likelihood ratio test statistic is 34.26 with a p-value of 0.005, confirming the significant association between gender and business profitability.

Table 3 reports a significant critical value at the ten per cent (10%) significance level of the association between gender and business profitability, providing further support of the significant differences in female debt repayment performance and that of the males, consistent with previous studies (Boehe & Cruz, 2013; Johnson, 2000; Garikipati, 2012).
### Table 3: Contingency Table for the relationship between Gender and Business Sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Business Survival</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>764</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>191</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>987</td>
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Pearson Chi-square 5.317 (p-value 0.070*)
Likelihood ratio tests 6.18 (p-value 0.046**)

### Table 2: Contingency Table between Gender and Business Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Weekly income (Tala)</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-99</td>
<td>101-200</td>
<td>201-300</td>
<td>301-400</td>
<td>401-500</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>99</td>
<td>185</td>
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<td>Others</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Pearson Chi-square 29.697 (p-value 0.020**)
Likelihood ratio tests 34.26 (p-value 0.005***
Table 4: Clients’ age by Business Profitability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in years</th>
<th>0-99</th>
<th>101-200</th>
<th>201-300</th>
<th>301-400</th>
<th>401-500</th>
<th>501-600</th>
<th>601-700</th>
<th>701-800</th>
<th>800+</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under 21 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>86</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-30 years</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>177</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-40 years</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>41-50 years</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>204</td>
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<tr>
<td>51-60 years</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>183</td>
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<tr>
<td>61-70 years</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>87</td>
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<td>70+ years</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>971</td>
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</table>

Pearson Chi-square 103.80 (p-value 0.000***)
Likelihood ratio tests 115.41 (p-value 0.000**)
2. Age

The contingency table for the categorical variables age and income for business profitability is shown in Table 4. The Likelihood ratio test shows a significant association between age and income at the one per cent (1%) significance level. The relationship between age and business sustainability is not significant as indicated in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in years</th>
<th>Business Survival</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>21-30 years</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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</table>

Pearson Chi-square 9.17 (p-value 0.24)
Likelihood ratio tests 14.76 (p-value 0.039**)

3. Involvement in a support group or network

A client’s involvement in community activities for spiritual, economic and/or social support may be related to business profitability and sustainability. Some examples of support groups include village women’s committee, church community groups and the small groups they join when taking out micro-loans from SPBD under the shared liability Grameen business model. Table 6 shows the contingency table for support group involvement and business income. The chi-square and likelihood ratio tests reported statistics of 52.17 and 47.42 respectively, both of which are significant at the one percent (1%) level. The association between involvement in support groups and operating a business during site-visits in the first few months of the project is not statistically significant. However, Table 7 displays a statistically significant association between support group involvement and business sustainability although the direction of the relationship has not been determined. In brief, support group involvement is important to the continuation of existing business operations and business income. Perhaps, networking and participating in community groups helps clients to learn from and share experiences with others to improve their skills and knowledge in running their individual businesses.
### Table 6: Clients’ support network involvement by Business Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly income (Tala)</th>
<th>0-99</th>
<th>101-200</th>
<th>201-300</th>
<th>301-400</th>
<th>401-500</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>243</td>
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<td>244</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>971</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson Chi-square 52.17 (p-value 0.000***)
Likelihood ratio tests 47.42 (p-value 0.000***)

### Table 7: Support group involvement by Business sustainability

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>317</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>987</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Pearson Chi-square 13.16 (p-value 0.001***)
Likelihood ratio tests 14.81 (p-value 0.001***)
Discussion of Results

This study attempts to examine the attributes of MFIs clients' and investigate the important relationships between attributes to better contextualise their needs. The intriguing results of this study show that most of the clients are unemployed females with many children and earning an average weekly income that is less than half the money required for an average weekly household spending. Additionally, there is an extremely low number of functional small businesses (64 out of 987 participants) still operating by the end of the project. Moreover, most of the clients select agriculture as their business activity. Finally, most of these clients are victims of violence (Samoa Victim Support Group, 2018). Taken together, most of the clients are vulnerable to the extent that they can barely meet the basic necessities for their household. The poor rate of successful businesses, poor micro-loan repayment performance and high loan default rates are a testament of this claim. Women rather spend money on their children’s education and contribute to cultural obligations than investing in their businesses.

How can these findings be useful to MFIs? It is clear that clients’ vulnerability affects their ability for self-development in operating an income-generating business. MFIs need to incorporate client needs into their services. An example of this could be a micro-credit line that provides loans with a set portion for operating a business while a separate portion that can be used for paying school fees, stationaries and school uniforms. Furthermore, it is important for MFIs to reconsider their approaches to financial and business training to encompass more practical applications that are simple enough for clients with limited educational background. The Nofotane project specialised in delivering livelihood skills training with little emphasis on business management and financial literacy.

Conclusion

This study is intended to recognize Sāmoa’s MFIs clients’ characteristics and which characteristics are associated with business profitability and sustainability. The microfinance sector in Sāmoa is one that is highly concentrated and fairly regulated. However, there is concern about the growing demand for microfinance services despite increasing loan default rates, which often puts microfinance clients in more vulnerable situations. The findings indicate that a large number of unemployed female clients are those who have also been victims of violence, mostly parents to more than three children and are earning very low levels of income. In addition, we have also shown significant associations between some socio-demographic attributes and business income and sustainability. Only a small minority of clients were able to sustain their business operations. Gender, age and involvement in community support groups are associated with business sustainability. Thus MFIs and policy makers need to be mindful of these attributes when devising new microfinance services and specific regulations imposed on the microfinance sector.

Finally, this study, although useful for preliminary understanding of the important clientele attributes for sustainability of small businesses, is limited in scope. For example, one might argue that educational background could also be an important attribute of clients in their ability to successfully operate and sustain a business. However, due to data availability we did not examine them. As such, future research is needed to examine in greater depth other clientele attributes in relation to loan default rates and size to gain insight about the contributing factors to the presumably high loan default rates in MFIs.
## Appendices

### Appendix A: Descriptive Statistics

### Descriptive Statistics

<table>
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<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
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<td>.490</td>
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<td>Business Type</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>1.375</td>
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Endnotes
i. The Grameen style model is named after the Grameen Bank which is a microfinance organisation and community development bank founded in Bangladesh that loans money to the impoverished without requiring collateral (Hulme and Arun, 2009).
ii. Capital consists of both physical capital and financial capital (Lucas 1988).
iii. There is no specific regulation for MFIs in Sāmoa.
iv. Groups of women are usually formed in village women’s committee (Komiti a Tina). Each group member is responsible not only for her own loan but those of her fellow group members. SPBD business model follows the Grameen style model.
v. ‘Nofotane’ in Sāmoan refers to a woman who is married into the family and many are not treated the same than they would be in their own families.

References
Mispatai, A. 2018, July. SBEC Business model and policies.
Motusaga, M. 2018. MWCSD and DBS Microcredit scheme.
TELECOMMUNICATIONS REFORM IN SĀMOA: THE INTRODUCTION OF COMPETITION LAW PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECT

Bridget Crichton, National University of Sāmoa and Folototo Seve, National University of Sāmoa

Abstract

Legislative and regulatory reforms in the telecommunications sector of Pacific Small Island Developing States (“SIDS”) stands out from the wider Asia Pacific region. Sāmoa was the first of the Pacific SIDS to undergo telecommunications reform. With the enactment of Sāmoa’s first Competition and Consumer Act (2016) (“the Act”), this article presents our preliminary findings from initial evidence exploring the interface between competition law and telecommunications reform in Sāmoa, following commencement of the Act in 2017, effectively repealing the Fair Trading Act 1998 and the Consumer Information Act 1989. It also seeks to understand the effective approaches to help redress regulatory and legislative compliance issues in the telecommunications sector. Key lessons from this research will be pivotal for the Telecommunications and Competition law makers in both Sāmoa and the Pacific SIDS. Research in this area will further address this gap in the literature and present credible evidence to build up a knowledge base about the role of competition law in Sāmoa telecommunications reform whilst contributing to the discourse of competition law and telecommunications reform in the Pacific SIDS region.

Keywords: competition, law, regulation and telecommunication.

Introduction

Sāmoa is characterized as a “high vulnerability” nation recognised by key bottlenecks to development in the Pacific SIDS economies due to the lack of economic diversification, high susceptibility to internet hacking (Ofa 2012), but more specifically, isolation, geographical remoteness, and susceptibility to natural disasters. Such characteristics have yielded further opportunities to revise regulatory intervention in dealing with the lack of capacity building support and the associated infrastructure investments within the Pacific landscapes.

The smallness literature (i.e., SIDS-focused) suggests that the natural disadvantages hinders the development prospects of the SIDS (Ofa 2012: 34). It is also another important control variable for telecommunications reform and consistently found to influence strongly and positively on the performance of the telecommunications sector (TMG 2016). Competition is therefore the most influential policy reform and also the most appropriate indicator for telecommunications regulatory reform in the Pacific SIDS (Ofa 2012: 184-5) while privatization seems to be less forthcoming. Other socio-political factors include corruption and bribery (Ofa 2012: 184–5).

The motives behind the push by Pacific SIDS for telecommunications reform vary case by case; however, two factors emerge as common to all reforming Pacific SIDS: their smallness and isolation. Also, the push for telecommunications regulatory reform to promote infrastructural development, as a means of promoting economic development and connecting isolated islands (Ofa 2012: 47). The Government of Sāmoa (“GoS”) support for the introduction of competition in the mobile market in its attempt to achieve universal access and establishing a competitive market was met with issues on account of Sāmoa’s vulnerable characteristics including its smallness and isolation.

The entry of Digicel into Sāmoa in 2006 revolutionized the face of telecommunications in the Pacific SIDS region. Prior to 2006, Telecom Sāmoa Cellular Ltd (“TSC”) had exclusive rights to the
mobile segment (Ofa 2012: 67). Once Digicel was granted a licence in April 2006, a State Owned Enterprise ("SOE") and fixed-line operator known as SāmoaTel launched its “GoMobile” campaign two months later (World Bank 2015; Favaro et al., 2008). As a result, competition led to lower prices of phones and internet access and helped ignite small business development and growth across the Pacific (Nichols 2016). In a span of less than one year, penetration went from 18% to 57% and growing (Cullen, Chan Mow and Hassal 2016; Favaro et al. 2008; Nichols 2016). The level of area coverage for mobile telephony in the country went from under 40% to 99% and prices dropped by more than 50% for both local and international calls (World Bank 2015).

Digicel acquired 90 per cent ownership of TSC effectively inheriting its licence and entitlements with the remaining 10 per cent acquired by the government owned Computer Services Ltd. ("CSL") (Ofa 2010). This marked the end of a GoS 10 year exclusivity license granted in 1997 which effectively culminated in a joint venture between Telecommunications New Zealand ("TCNZ") and GOS. This joint venture was often described as the “bad contract” case. The low quality of TCNZ’s mobile network infrastructure was a directly linked to the five-to-six year delay in the introduction of modern mobile services in Sāmoa (Favaro et al. 2008; Cullen, Chan Mow and Hassal 2016; World Bank 2015). This cautionary tale became a future lesson for future Pacific SIDS telecommunications. Another vital lesson from the GoS was identifying how vital the introduction of a competitive framework would be to improving the provision of high quality telecommunications services in Sāmoa (Favaro et al. 2008: 237).

With the legislative support of Sāmoa’s first Telecommunications Act 2005, it introduced the principle of competition into the Telecommunications sector and led to the establishment of the Office of the Regulator. Effectively, instrumental in activating market liberalisation into the Information and Communications Technology ("ICT").

Understanding the telecommunications and competition legislative context

The telecommunications sector in Sāmoa has expanded as a result of privatization and increased competition. Against this backdrop, the MCIT National ICT Policy 2012-2017 defines ICT as “the convergence of data processing and telecommunications” (MCIT 2012: 5). ICT in Sāmoa is defined as comprising: telephony, broadcast media and all the equipment, processes and systems that are used to create, store, manage and share information. It encompasses analogue technologies, such as radio and television broadcasts, and digital technologies, such as mobile telecommunications and the internet (MCIT 2012). This is particularly important in the current scope of the research as ICT development goals overlap with telecommunications services in Sāmoa. The Strategy for the Development of Sāmoa (“SDS”) and the National ICT Policy also confines the telecommunications sector under the umbrella of ICT development goals. More specifically, the SDS (2005-2007 and 2008-2012) positioned telecommunications as a priority area in the Private sector. However, the recent SDS (2012-2016) and (2016/17–2019/20) now positions the telecommunications sector under the Infrastructure sector (MOF 2016).

Therefore, the parameters of this research is confined to telecommunication services within the infrastructure sector of Sāmoa, specific to competition laws and policies governing telecommunications services (Cullen, Chan Mow and Hassal 2016). Understanding the national status of telecommunications regulations in Sāmoa, for the purpose of this research, is inextricably
linked to Competition law and policy. It requires an assessment of its existing policies, feasibility reports, interviews with key advisors in the telecommunications sector and an audit of its current telecommunications and competition law activities.

Our preliminary analysis is supported by a literature review of laws, data collected from our surveys and key interview informants, ranging from executives at the top Internet Service Providers, Academics and employees involved in both the ICT and telecommunications sectors.

Given the small sample from our preliminary findings thus far, it is important to note that this data is representative of the portion of the sector responsible for driving competition and telecommunications laws in Sāmoa (Meese and Chan Mow 2016). Delays in information requests also highlights the longstanding issues of data collection in Sāmoa and the lack of legislative infrastructure such as an Official Information law or Freedom of Information law to ensure adequate governance in the exchange of information between public organisations, the public and researchers.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework: Telecommunications Reform**

Legislative and policy analysis can involve the examination of either the causes or consequences of government policies and laws (ref. Fig. 1). By looking at the causes of public laws and policies, experts such as Dye suggest that public policies and laws themselves are the “dependent variables” and researchers seek to explain the impact of those policies by reference to the social, economic or political forces which are believed to be the underlying causes. Dye refers to this as “policy impact research”.

Fiani (1998) focuses on the interactions between key stakeholders (causes and outcomes of those interactions); while Levy and Spillers emphasize the political, institutional and regulatory framework. Tigre (1999) studied the impact of international institutions and domestic regulation on the telecommunications sector in Latin America—by seeking to identify the factors affecting the national telecommunications laws and policies, including the relationship between the national regulation agencies and key stakeholders.
Relationship 1 A and 1 B discuss the relationships between the multilateral trading system, government and the independent regulator—Tigré highlights that agreements between the actors involved are influenced not only by technical or local issues but also foreign policy issues.

Here the interaction between the government and independent regulator is also reflected. Relationship 2 involves the regulator and SOEs which according to Tigré is influenced by 3 main factors: political environment (national government ideology), secondly, the conflicting interest between the regulator and monopoly player; and thirdly, the political ownership of public telecom operators and how it can be politicized in national telecom policies.

Relationship 3 involves the regulator and competitors—driven by commercial interests, such as pursuing network expansion in urban areas only; whereas the regulator, acting on behalf of the general public favours universal coverage including non-profitable areas (remote and rural areas).

Relationship 4 looks at the interaction between government and interest groups. For the purposes of this research, the premise of our interviews and surveys focused on discussions around interactions identified in this conceptual framework.

Figure 2: Strategy for the Development of Sāmoa (“SDS”) Framework 2016/17-2019/20

The SDS sets the national development priorities /goals for the country. There are four key sectors listed above. However, this project focuses on Infrastructure – specifically, communications (ref. Fig. 2).

The telecommunications sector in Sāmoa has expanded as a result of privatization and increased competition. Figure shows the link between the SDS and the Sāmoa Communications Sector Plan governing Telecommunications and Competition in Sāmoa and links to 50% of the SDS outcomes SDS Key outcomes 1, 4 & 5 are part of the Economic sector, whereas SDS Key outcomes 6 is part of the Social Sector. However, Key outcomes 11 & 12 are more relevant as they relate to the Infrastructure sector where Telecommunications and competition is—more specifically, key outcomes 11 focuses on the “Improved and affordable country wide ICT connectivity”. For purpose of our research, we focus on Goal 1 of the Communications Sector Plan, in the first red circle which is to “provide for access to appropriate and affordable ICT for all” followed by outcome 1.3 “Telecommunications regulations and legislation are consistent with one another and benchmarked.
in support of the digital convergence”. Another important factor to note is that there is no mention of the new Act in the Communications Plan, notwithstanding the issues pertaining to gender equity and environmental responsibility are given cross-cutting status and are therefore considered in each of the activities under each of the goal areas of the CSP, rather than receiving specific treatment as stand-alone thematic areas.

**Figure 3: The relationship between the SDS and Sāmoa’s Communication Sector Plan**

Source: Sāmoa’s Communications Sector Plan 2017/18-2021/22, p18

**Figure 4: Telecommunications and Competition: Legislative and Regulatory Framework**

<table>
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<th>TELECOMMUNICATIONS LAWS AND POLICIES</th>
<th>COMPETITION LAWS AND POLICIES</th>
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<td><strong>LAWS</strong></td>
<td><strong>LAWS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>POLICIES</strong></td>
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<td>Communications Sector Plan Policy</td>
<td>Competition in Telecommunications services Markets Policy</td>
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<td>International Telecommunication and Gateway Policy</td>
<td>National Competition Policy</td>
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<td>Anti Spam Policy</td>
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<td>National ICT Policy</td>
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<td>Samoa National Broadband Policy</td>
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<td>Internet and Email Policy</td>
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<td>Samoa National Emergency Frequency Allocation Plan</td>
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<td>Frequency Allocation Chart Arrangement Plan</td>
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<td>Spectrum Management Plan</td>
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<td>Telecommunication Plan 2009/2010</td>
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<td>Child Sexual Abuse Policy</td>
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<td>(“CSAM”) Policy 2016</td>
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<td>Telecommunications (Goods &amp; Services Promotions and Advertising Guidelines) 2016</td>
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<td>Spectrum Policy on Co-Location &amp; Infrastructure Sharing in Sāmoa 2012</td>
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<td>Frequency Assignment</td>
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<td>Principle Frequency Assignment 2016</td>
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<td>National Table of Frequency Allocation</td>
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<td>Licensing Digital Terrestrial Television Frequency Channel</td>
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<td>Digital Television Roadmap</td>
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Telecommunications, for the purpose of this research, does not focus on radio spectrum. With the legislative support of Sāmoa’s first Telecommunications Act 2005, it introduced the principle of
competition into the Telecommunications sector and led to the establishment of the Office of the Regulator. Effectively, instrumental in activating market liberalisation into ICT.

Prior to the Competition and Consumer Act, Sāmoa had individual sectors address competition under different legislative instruments, namely Part 6 of the Telecommunications Act 2005. The fragmented national telecommunications and competition frameworks may not lead to governance changes. However, it is expected to be framed around policy regulations and laws and the subsequent responses are anticipated to be linked to competition of newly introduced international telecommunications providers to the telecommunications sector. It is here that considerable work remains to be done in mainstreaming both competition and telecommunications laws, policies and regulations into one coherent telecommunications framework.

The Competition and Consumer Act 2016 (“the Act”) has been effective since 3 July 2017. It replaced the Fair Trading Act 1998 and Consumer Information Act 1989. Part 3 of the Act covers the provision on competition rules to: prohibit abuse of market power by businesses that possess market power, prohibit anticompetitive agreements, bid-rigging etc. between businesses. This includes mergers that would substantially lessen competition.

Figure 5: Telecommunications and Competition Enforcement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENFORCEMENT</th>
<th>COMPETITION ENFORCEMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Courts (District, Supreme, Telecommunications Tribunal)</td>
<td>Office of the Attorney General Cabinet (directive from Prime Minister or Cabinet)</td>
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</table>

In terms of enforcement, the Competition and Consumer Commission was established by the Competition and Consumer Act to administer and enforce competition rules to safeguard consumer protection. This largely addresses the inadequacies of competition regulation from the Telecommunications Enforcement agencies. A variety of enforcement measures are made available to the Commission under Part 7 of the Act, such as a warning notice (s 117), enforceable undertakings (s 118), cease and desist notices (s 119), pecuniary penalties (s 124), orders to pay costs (s 126) and the like. The Commission should also alleviate common issues regarding businesses in order to allow for fair competition between businesses throughout Sāmoa (2015: 4).

Role of Competition in telecommunications

He, Lim & Wong (2006) examine competitive dynamics in the telecommunications mobile market and posit that while incumbent firms possessing complementary assets and strong appropriability are typically in a formidable position, new innovative entrants can leverage complementary assets to enter along a new technological trajectory and then develop appropriability. In a dynamic industry such as telecommunications, it is difficult to consistently determine and enforce appropriate regulatory responses that promote competition and innovation (Hunter, Gauvin and Krause 2008).
One of the important objectives of the Competition and Consumer Act 2016 is the establishment of the Competition and Consumer Commission (“Commission”) and providing for its function. As provided in the Act, the Commission is to administer and enforce competition rules to safeguard consumer protection. A variety of enforcement measures are made available to the Commission under Part 7 of the Act, such as a warning notice (s 117), enforceable undertakings (s 118), cease and desist notices (s 119), pecuniary penalties (s 124), orders to pay costs (s 126) and the like. The establishment of the Commission (s 6 under Part 2 of the Act) will alleviate common issues concerning businesses in order to allow for fair competition between businesses throughout Sāmoa. However, during the consultation stage, submissions noted that the Act should be the Principal Act for all regulations and rules pertaining to competition and consumers to also include the broadcasting and telecommunication sectors. It was resolved that regulations pertaining to competition and consumers in relation to broadcasting and telecommunication matters would still be monitored by the Regulator of Sāmoa.

Historically, the telecommunications context in Sāmoa in 2006, set the tone for competition as international phone rates fell prior to the opening of a second international gateway. Two licenses were issued by GoS to operate mobile-phone technology based on the Global System for Mobile Communication (“GSM”) technology. Visible changes could be seen in the behaviour of the two existing operators in Sāmoa as a result of competition (Favaro et al., 2008; Ofa 2010; Cullen, Chan Mow and Hassal 2016; World Bank 2015; ADB 2015; ADB 2016). Arguably, Digicel faced no real competition following the privatisation of SāmoaTel in March 2011, claiming a significant share of the customer base through the efficient installation of cell towers (Meese and Chan Mow 2016). Less than two years a noticeable increase in the total number of fixed-line and mobile phone subscribers particularly in the rural remote areas of Sāmoa was partly driven by the impact of competition in the sector.

Prior to this, Sāmoa had individual sectors address competition under different legislative instruments, namely Part 6 of the Telecommunications Act 2005. The fragmented national telecommunications frameworks may not itself precipitate sudden governance changes. However, it is expected, to be framed around policy regulations and laws and its subsequent responses are anticipated to be linked to competition of newly introduced international telecommunications providers to the telecommunications sector. It is here that considerable work remains to be done in mainstreaming both competition and telecommunications laws, policies and regulations into one coherent telecommunications framework.

Despite the historical context, the emergent themes emanating from the majority of our surveyed research participants support the need for stronger legislative and regulatory compliance (50%) equally alongside fair competition (50%) in terms of what they would like to see result in the telecommunications sector since the enactment of the new Act (ref. Table I). The highest prioritized area identified was higher product quality for improving competition at sector, ministry and divisional levels. Our interview data indicate diverse opinion confirming that the telecommunications framework adequately supports full competition whilst identifying the two strongest players, Digicel and BlueSky (Digicel executive, interview survey, 25th May, 2018).


**Table I. Literature Review and Preliminary Findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes (preliminary)</th>
<th>Findings (Interviews and Survey participants)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smallness</td>
<td>• Not mentioned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anti-Competitive practices</td>
<td>• Competitive pricing plans, Greater product variety, Greater innovation (33%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lower probability of bid rigging, less abuse of market power (16.67%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other factors</td>
<td>• Inadequate incentives to innovate, invest and operate efficiently (83.33%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Higher productive quality, Fair Competition (50%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Competitive price plans and a range of options to the consumers to ensure the quality of goods and services remains high (33.33%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Incentives to innovate, invest and operate efficiently, good faith, The independent regulatory role of the Office of the Regulator (16.67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate legal and regulatory framework</td>
<td>• Inadequate telecommunications legislative and regulatory framework (33.33%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inadequate competition law framework (i.e., competition rules, policies, laws) (16.67%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of qualified personnel to develop, administer and regulate competition in the telecommunications sector (66.67%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective enforcement mechanism</td>
<td>• Stronger legislative and regulatory compliance (50%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Mandatory legislative and regulatory compliance requirements (33.33%)</td>
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A. Source: 29 Survey Participants and 7 Interview Participants

**Competition law enforcement**

The historical background of competition law and enforcement in Western industrialised countries is significantly different from that of Pacific countries. However, Choi (2010) argues that other factors be considered such as the influence of domestic or foreign pressures, prior to the adoption of a competition law and regulatory framework. If adopted in the absence of such pressure, it suggests a high probability that enforcement against large monopolies should be vigorous as the experience of Korea has shown. In 1980, the Monopoly Regulation and Fair Trade Act provided Korea’s first comprehensive competition law which was enacted largely in response to resolving the economic conglomerate issue created by a few large monopolies known as the Chaebol (Choi 2010). Similarly, the Radisson Accord endorsed by the Government of Fiji on 20 November 2007 achieved its first objective in Fiji to end monopoly rights in the telecommunications market. By developing the legal arrangements and responsibilities as a result of granting a 15 year non-exclusive licence to all providers (Ofa 2010).

The adoption of competition law offers numerous advantages to emerging economies. Some critics argue that a high degree of political intervention and a lack of due process in enforcement are the major factors contributing to the potential failures in the enforcement of competition law in developing countries (Nikomborirak 2006: 605-6). The mere existence of competition law does not confirm the establishment of an effective mechanism of enforcement (Choi 2010: 153). Williams (2013) argues that competition authorities will experience difficulty in competition law enforcement due to a lack of investigation skills, corruption, low levels of economic development, inefficient institutional systems and economic concentration. If this situation exists, networking with similar jurisdictions will assist in the facilitation and exchange of knowledge and furthering/enhancing/fostering? building a common philosophy or framework of competition law enforcement (Choi 2010: 4, 153). But to enforce the competition law effectively in a developing country setting, an appropriate regulatory framework needs to be put in place in order to support
the process of change (Ma 2011: 304). Moreover, to sustain this economic growth, however, it must be regulated by a complementary and robust legal and regulatory framework to ensure fair competition, and transparency of competition authorities and procedural fairness in enforcement proceedings (Nichols 2016). The relationship between competition law and economic growth is controversial in economic theory, despite the many studies investigating the impact of competition law on country performance, such as productivity growth and price stability (Ma 2011: 301). Ofa (2012:2) further suggests that early signs demonstrate a positive relationship between telecommunications reform (i.e., the introduction of competition policy, privatisation policy and the establishment of an Independent Regulator) and sector performance in the Pacific SIDS.

However, competition legislation alone does not necessarily lead to more competitive markets. For example, when the United States first enforced competition law in the twenty first century, it initially lacked adequate personnel experienced in the application of this type of law (Ma 2011: 306). This argument points out that competition law is not a stand-alone regulatory tool, and co-exists in conjunction with a wider vehicle of public policies in pursuit of economic growth. Its impact is determined by competition culture, as shaped by the prevailing socioeconomic ideology and institutional framework.

Without a supporting framework to ensure effective enforcement, competition legislation itself is neither an impediment or accessory to market competition and economic growth (Ma 2011: 305). Our preliminary findings indicate our informants had different expectations about the legislative and regulatory context and they offered a range of opinions about the best approach according to the Sāmoan telecommunications context. The role of the Office of the Regulator was evaluated, with survey participants noting that a range of issues relevant to issues impeding competition in the telecommunications sector, lay outside of their jurisdiction, therefore, impeding its function (ref. Table I). When Digicel engaged in litigation, challenging decisions from the Office of the regulator, in response the GoS was not equipped with the adequate resources or technical capacity to counteract this litigious strategy. This finding was corroborated by the majority of our surveyed participants (ref. Table I). In response, the GoS amended the Telecommunications Act in 2008 mandating the use of a Telecommunications tribunal to strategically support GoS in managing its expenditure.

The majority of our participants acknowledge the role of the Office of the Regulator as instituting and maintaining the appropriate measures for the purpose of preventing dominant telecom service providers from engaging in anti-competitive practice (ref. Table I). Part VI, Competition Policy, (sections 25, 28-31) of the Telecommunications Act (2005) incorporates an anti-competitive provision. Moreover, sections 3(f) and (l) provides that one of the objectives of the Telecommunications Act (2005) is to: establish a framework for the control of anti-competitive conduct in the telecommunication sector; and to institute and maintain appropriate measures for the purpose of preventing dominant telecommunications service providers from engaging in or continuing anti-competitive practices. This aligns with Part 3 (Competition Rules), section 30 of the Competition and Consumer Act (2016). However, the same cohort also indicated a greater need for legal and regulatory policies that are required to increase competition in the market and reduce anti-competitive unfair trading (ref. Table I). Similarly, our informants note the need for updated policies (Internet and Email, Broadband, National ICT, Communications sector) and laws including the Telecommunications Act (ref. Table I).
It is important to note that regulations and policies embedded in law are not adequately achievable in practice due to the vulnerable characteristics of being part of the Pacific SIDs context (Meese and Chan Mow 2016). This places the current telecommunications regulatory and legislative framework under considerable pressure. The attempt to establish an adequate competition regulatory and legal framework that is not heavily reliant on the islands has allegedly led to monopolies bypassing regulatory processes and engaging in anticompetitive practices.

Conclusion

This article provides a case study based on our preliminary findings of the telecommunications reform context in Sāmoa leading to the introduction of competition law. This research demonstrates how the introduction of competition in Sāmoa was led by the telecommunications sector with added tension from both public and private sectors. Our preliminary findings further suggest the underlying tensions that characterise the telecommunications reform process. In Phase two of this project, we will further investigate the impact of the competition law framework. Our illustrates the ongoing debates around universal access. These findings also highlight the need to further examine other geographic, social and cultural demands in which the public and private actors operate. It could also be argued that the challenges for Sāmoa are not due to competition law issues per se but the tensions between our public and private actors in achieving universal access and service provision. Whilst overcoming the duopoly entrenched in the Sāmoan telecommunications context, the next stage involves ongoing consultation to investigate the limitations of public and private actors in the development of ‘best practice’ competition policies to support the competition framework.

Acknowledgment

The authors wish to thank the National University of Sāmoa for funding our research and Associate Professor Chris Noonan (Faculty of Law, University of Auckland). We also wish to thank our research support staff (Muliagatele Faafofoga Auvaa Aisake Peseta-Esau and Patricia Ivale Rye) and our research participants who kindly agreed to be surveyed and interviewed by the team.

References


HERITAGE
A PAN-PACIFIC SYNTHESIS OF NATION-BUILDING: SĀMOAN, HAWAIIAN, TONGAN AND AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIRST CONSTITUTIONS OF SĀMOA, 1873–1875

Lorenz Gonschor, ‘Atenisi University, Nuku’alofa, Tonga

Abstract

In August of 1873 the first attempt was made to create a unified Sāmoan state when the Ta’imua, representatives of Sāmoa’s districts, gathered in Mulinu’u and adopted a constitution, which was then further updated and amended in January and May of 1875. The constitution attempted to create a compromise between the 19th century Western notion of a nation-state and traditional Sāmoan concepts of governance. Hence, that pre-colonial constitutional project of the 1870s is remarkably similar to the current post-colonial constitutional system of the country. Common histories of Sāmoa have often ascribed this first attempt at Sāmoan constitution-making to American diplomat and adventurer Albert Steinberger, but in fact his influence on the constitution was only one of many. Active agents in the constitution-making were first and foremost the Ta’imua themselves, and foreign influences came not only from the United States, but most of all from Hawai’i, whose king Kalākaua took an active interest in creating a unified Sāmoan state, and also from Tonga, which a delegation commissioned by the Ta’imua visited to learn more about a modern Polynesian state. Sāmoa’s first experiment in constitutionalism and nation-building should thus be seen as a pan-Pacific synthesis.

Keywords: Sāmoa, nineteenth century, constitution, nation-building

Introduction

In Polynesia, the nineteenth century was a time of great social and political upheaval and change. Contact with the West had brought new technologies and ideas (including literacy and Christianity), and slowly integrated the islands into the global capitalist economy. The encounter with the technologically overwhelming West challenged traditional systems of governance leading to the necessity to radically transform traditional institutions in order to be able to resist being taken over by potential colonisers, which especially during the second half of the century became more and more of a threat.

It was in this context that in August of 1873, delegates from all of Sāmoa’s districts referred to as the Ta’imua (“front line”) gathered in Mulinu’u and designed a constitution in order to create a centralised Sāmoan government structure. The constitution, and its amended versions produced in January and May of 1875, attempted to create a compromise between the nineteenth century Western notion of a nation-state and the traditional Sāmoan concepts of decentralized village-based polities, alliances of such polities, and interrelated paramount families. It was thus an attempt by the Ta’imua to create a hybrid political system, similar to other non-Western countries in the nineteenth century such as Hawai’i and Tonga in the Pacific, or Siam and Japan in Asia. Later, after more than half a century of intervening German and New Zealand colonialism, a remarkably similar constitutional system was created by the independent Sāmoan government for the current post-colonial state of Sāmoa, of which the pre-colonial state building project of the 1870s can thus be seen as an important historical predecessor.

Common histories of Sāmoa have often ascribed this first attempt at Sāmoan constitution-making to American diplomat and adventurer Albert Steinberger who was then visiting Sāmoa and gained the trust of the Ta’imua who hired him as their advisor and eventually appointed him premier of the burgeoning Sāmoan government. A detailed examination of the constitution’s text and its drafting process, however, reveals a much more complex picture, in which Steinberger and...
the American influences he brought with him were only one of several factors. Active agents in the constitution-making were first and foremost the Ta’imua themselves, and foreign influences came not only from the United States, but most of all from Hawai’i, whose king Kalâkaua took an active interest in creating a unified Sāmoan state, but also from Tonga, which a Sāmoan delegation commissioned by the Ta’imua visited to learn more about a modern Polynesian state. Sāmoa’s first experiment in constitutionalism and nation-building should thus be seen as a pan-Pacific synthesis.

Historical background

Unlike Hawai’i and Tonga, which due to their already highly stratified pre-contact political systems and the strong personal ambitions of their modern founding fathers Kamehameha I and George Tupou I became consolidated as monarchical nation-states from early on (Hommon 2013), Sāmoa remained a state-building project in the making throughout the nineteenth century. On one hand, one could argue that a proto-national consciousness was highly developed in Sāmoa, given the existence of a national ceremonial greeting enumerating the most important chiefly titles (faʻalupega) for all of Sāmoa, providing evidence that “the idea, if not the reality, of a unified Sāmoa has existed for centuries” (Meleiseā 1987: 1-2; emphasis in the original).

But on the other hand, the classical Sāmoan political system was remarkably decentralized, and instead of large centralised chiefdoms, the core polities of Sāmoa by the time of Western contact were small units referred to as villages (nu‘u), which should be understood as polities consisting of several extended families (ʻāiga) owning a wedge-shaped piece of land usually stretching from the shore to the interior mountain ranges (Meleiseā 1987: 5-6). Groups of such nu‘u formed sub-districts, which in turn formed districts, both of which should be regarded rather as confederations of nu‘u than chiefdoms in their own sense, each ruled by a council (fono) composed of the highest-ranking chiefs of the constituent nu‘u (Gilson 1970: 51ff; Meleiseā 1987: 6). Despite this decentralised political system, the chiefs within each fono had different ranks, and there existed highly ranked chiefly titles. Through deliberation and consensus-finding, the fono of district capital villages and other traditional centres could bestow the highest chiefly titles, usually on a chief from a high-ranking family who had proven his leadership qualities in warfare. The bearers of the paramount titles would then be acknowledged as the formal leaders of their districts and were highly venerated by people of lower rank, but unlike in more centralised Polynesian archipelagos, their position was rather ceremonial. In summary, the classical political system of Sāmoa was very decentralised on the ground yet contained a level of ‘national’ politics of the great chiefly families as well. In the words of Sāmoan political scientist Asofou So’o, it “was based on a substructure of autonomous village polities linked by a genealogically sanctioned superstructure of chiefly connections” (2008: 52).

While the system was from its inception well balanced and provided reasonable governance for the Sāmoan people for centuries, it became highly inefficient after Western contact to protect them against foreign incursions. The creation of a centralised state along the lines of Hawai’i or Tonga became more and more imperative, if Sāmoa wanted to prevail as an independent polity.

But this was not an easy task to accomplish. Even though one of the high-ranking titleholders, Malietoa Vai‘inuupō had fought victorious battles in the 1820s and 30s and subsequently converted to Christianity, he did not build permanent dynastic kingship as it was done successfully by Pomare II in Tahiti and Tupou I in Tonga around the same time (Gilson 1970: 59-60; Meleiseā 1987: 28).
Instead decades of warfare continued after his death, while western settlement intensified, and especially during the 1860s and 1870s, great amounts of land were sold by individual village chiefs to settlers, often in order to pay for weapons (Meleiseā 1987: 21-36). Since no Sāmoan state existed to control these movements, and traditional Sāmoan politics were most unlikely to produce one, resident foreigners and Sāmoan leaders alike increasingly looked for outside models to follow.

The most important model was the comparatively stable and powerful kingdom in the Hawaiian Islands, unified by Kamehameha I around the turn of the nineteenth century and existing as an internationally recognised constitutional monarchy since the 1840s (Gonschor 2013). As early as 1849 Sāmoa-based LMS missionary George Pritchard wrote to the Hawaiian government on behalf of several Sāmoan chiefs asking for advice on the functioning of a modern government, and King Kamehameha III drafted and sent a letter to Sāmoa together with copies of the Hawaiian constitution and laws (Gilson 1970: 191). But apparently the letter was never sent, probably due to disagreements between the Hawaiian King and members of his Privy Council.

A few years later, however, Sydney-based diplomat Charles St. Julian, in his capacity as Royal Hawaiian Commissioner to the Independent States and Tribes of Polynesia, devoted considerable efforts to Sāmoa when drawing up plans for a political reorganisation of the Pacific Islands’ region under Hawaiian leadership in the mid-1850s (St. Julian 1857: 4). There already existed a series of law codes that had been sporadically enacted under the influence of London Missionary Society (LMS) missionaries in the Tuamāsaga district in central ‘Upolu and occasionally in other districts as well – based on the model of similar codes the LMS had helped to implement in Tahiti – (Powles 1979: 87-88; So’o 2008: 30). Building on this legal skeleton, St. Julian drafted a proposed constitution for a Republic of ‘Upolu in 1854, which was based partly on the American republican model and partly on Sāmoan customary principles. Later, St. Julian became convinced of the ill-suitedness of republican models of governance in Polynesia and instead suggested a confederation of small-scale monarchical chiefdoms for Sāmoa, which he termed a “Lilliputian resurrection of the old German Empire upon which a more perfect system may and will be slowly grafted.”

It appears that neither of St. Julian’s proposals ever had much influence in Sāmoa, even though they were likely disseminated to Sāmoa via St. Julian’s confidant, the Hawaiian consul in Apia John C. Williams (Gilson 1970: 196). But the increasing familiarity with Hawai‘i as a functioning Polynesian state, as well as neighbouring Tonga whose King George Tupou I had visited Sāmoa in 1842 and 1847 (Gunson 1990), combined with the ever increasing land alienation and related Western encroachments, helped to reinforce the political will among an increasing number of Sāmoans to create a centralised government for their nation. Additionally, Sāmoa found itself in a potential ‘niche’ of sovereignty between German, British and American colonial interests that could be played off against one another if a strong Sāmoan government existed. Hence the formation of a functioning native state to fill this niche became ever more imperative.

Sāmoan–Hawaiian synthesis in the 1873 and January 1875 constitutions

Finally, in mid-1873 a representative group of seven high ranking chiefs representing all major districts (one of each of the first-order districts of Savai‘i and ‘Upolu, plus one from the eastern islands) established themselves as the Ta‘imua and formed a Sāmoan national government, headquartered in Mulinu‘u next to Apia harbour. This area that was not a major political centre in
traditional Sāmoa and thus suitable as a neutral location for a new national capital (Meleiseā 1987: 36).

In August 1873, the delegates assembled at Mulinu’u and drafted and enacted a constitution, followed by the drafting of a code of criminal laws later in the same year. While the criminal code continued to display Tahitian LMS influence (Gilson 1970: 298 n24), the new constitutional system was a *sui generis* Sāmoan hybrid with elements incorporated from Hawai’i. In the absence of a Sāmoan monarch, the source of sovereignty of the Sāmoan state was identified collectively as the *matai* (family heads) and the government described as established by the eight classical centres of political power and prestige in the archipelago (*Tūmua* and *Pule*). The basic governmental institutions were the *Ta’imua*, equated in English to a House of Nobles, seven *matai* of higher rank selected from each of the first-order districts for one-year terms and presided by one of them on a basis of rotation, and the *Faipule*, a lower house consisting of lower ranking *matai* representing each *nu’u*.

As Guy Powles succinctly remarked, “the bicameral concept reflects the Hawaiian model of House of Nobles and House of Representatives which St. Julian and others had diligently advocated” (Powles 1979: 91). Despite this Hawaiian influence in the overall institutional framing, the two houses were in fact quite different from the two legislative houses of the 1852 Hawaiian constitution, which St. Julian had likely made available through consul Williams at the time. The *Faipule* as a body of village representatives might have been somewhat similar to the Hawaiian lower house (which included elected district representatives), but the *Ta’imua* were not only an upper legislative chamber but also served as the executive council as well as the collective head of state, with such prerogatives and treaty-making and receiving diplomats usually assigned to a monarch in a kingdom or a president in a republic. Furthermore, the *Ta’imua* would appoint district governors as well as judges. They were also empowered to appoint one of the supreme titleholders to become a ceremonial monarch, but this was left as a possibility for the future. If any comparison with the Hawaiian Kingdom should be made, the *Ta’imua* in the 1873 constitution would thus simultaneously fulfil the prerogatives of the Hawaiian King, the Cabinet, the Privy Council and the House of Nobles.

Another interesting aspect was the limitation of the government to deal mainly with foreign nations, foreign settlers and some matters of national importance. However the government was to keep out of local affairs at the village and district levels. Hence, the constitution stated that “the customary rights and privileges of the *matai* at the meetings (*fonos*) [the English pluralisation of the Sāmoan terms is in the quoted original, so it needs to be maintained] of the village or district shall not be abridged (disturbed).” Overall, this system was quite an ingenious hybrid adapting the traditional Sāmoan power structure to the unavoidable need of the time to have a national government. Apparently the *Ta’imua* government worked quite well during the first two years of its existence (Gilson 1970: 305–310).

In January 1875, the *Ta’imua* enacted a more elaborate constitution, which defined the composition and prerogatives of the *Faipule* (now officially translated as “House of Commons,” six members to be selected by each first order district), the seven *Ta’imua* (to be selected indirectly by the *Faipule* of each district) and the judiciary (*Fa’amasino*, consisting of a Supreme Court with three judges as well as up to thirty district judges – like in St. Julian’s 1854 draft “Republic of Upolu” constitution –) more precisely. The constitution furthermore created new offices. First and foremost
a King, to be elected from either the Malietoa or Tupua family, to be a ceremonial head of state but without any of the sovereign powers a monarch enjoyed in typical monarchial constitutions (such as those of Hawai‘i and Tonga). Those powers remained with the Ta‘imua, who could also depose the King. To assist them in their executive functions, the Ta‘imua also appointed a secretary and a treasurer, offices also reminiscent of St. Julian’s 1854 draft. The Faipule selected one of their members from each district to serve as a member of the Au Filifili, a sort of permanent committee of Faipule who remained in the capital to attend to government business when the full assembly was not in session. To enforce government decisions, a national police force (Leoleo) was instituted.

Kalākaua, Steinberger and the Sāmoan-Hawaiian-American synthesis of May 1875

While Sāmoan leaders were thus taking firm steps towards establishing a modern state, this new Sāmoan political assertiveness converged with a change of policy in Hawai‘i. Prior to the 1870s, the Hawaiian government had been ambivalent about getting too involved with other Pacific archipelagos, despite the enthusiasm of individual government officials such as St. Julian. But King Kalākaua (1836-1891) who ascended to the throne in February of 1874 made relations with the rest of Oceania a central component of his foreign policy. Merely four days into his reign, Kalākaua wrote to King Cakobau of Fiji advocating for renewed friendship between Hawaii and Fiji, but his most durable involvement with another Polynesian archipelago would be with Sāmoa.

Coincidentally, the American diplomat and adventurer Albert Steinberger had arrived in Sāmoa as a special emissary of the US president to compile a report on conditions in the archipelago, right in August 1873 when the Ta‘imua government was formed and its first constitution was being framed. Steinberger was a colourful character, and whether his final loyalty lay with the United States, Sāmoa or his own interests is difficult to determine, but he was clearly one of the few foreigners the Sāmoan chiefs trusted (Howe 1984: 251-252; Robson 1979: 45–54). Hence, within a short time of his sojourn, he ended up becoming the chief advisor of the Ta‘imua.

Steinberger’s influence also helped to promote a renewed input of Hawaiian ideas into Sāmoan state-building. On his way to Sāmoa, the American emissary had already passed through Hawai‘i and met with Kalākaua’s predecessor King Lunalilo (Stathis 1982: 89), so it is highly likely he was already familiar with the Hawaiian system of government when arriving in Sāmoa. During his second stay in the archipelago in 1875, his association with the Hawaiian Kingdom was even clearer. Not only did he return to the US via Hawai‘i again in late 1873, but after a longer sojourn in the United States and Germany, Steinberger once more stopped over in Honolulu in early 1875 before coming back to Sāmoa for a second sojourn. On the first leg from San Francisco to Honolulu, Steinberger accompanied King Kalākaua who was returning from his state visit to Washington D.C. where he had successfully lobbied for a Hawaiian-US trade agreement. During the long interaction with the Hawaiian King, Steinberger became familiar with the Hawaiian political system, and Kalākaua pleaded his support for an independent Sāmoan state (Robson 1979: 55-59; Torodash 1977: 54-55). Kalākaua himself was cautious about disclosing too much detail about Steinberger’s plans, but expressed his clear support for him in the bilingual speech he delivered at his homecoming celebration at Honolulu’s Kawaiha‘o Church, and a leading Honolulu newspaper columnist commented that it was “the policy of Col. Steinberger to bring the chiefs of the several islands [of Sāmoa] together, for the purpose of bringing about a consolidation of all into one bead government, under a code of laws similar to the Hawaiian.”
As it turned out, the exposure to Hawaiian statecraft influenced Steinberger’s further involvement in Sāmoan affairs. Considering the 1873 constitution insufficient, Steinberger drafted a new Sāmoan constitution which he hoped to convince the Ta‘imua to adopt. In his first draft of the constitution, Steinberger included a provision to have a Sāmoan king elected by universal suffrage to be the founder of a new dynasty (Gilson 1970: 314n78), a concept likely influenced by a similar provision in the 1864 Hawn constitution, following which both Lunalilo and Kalākaua had been elected to the throne after the demise of the Kamehameha dynasty in 1872, events Steinberger likely had analysed in conversations with Kalākaua.

After further discussions with a large variety of Sāmoan leaders, a modified version of Steinberger’s draft was adopted by the Ta‘imua as the new Sāmoan constitution in May of 1875. Reflecting the previous Sāmoan constitution, Steinberger’s American background and his familiarity with the Hawaiian Kingdom, the constitution was a hybrid of American, Hawaiian and Sāmoan ideas of statecraft. It contained the American notion of popular sovereignty and actual wording from the US constitution, including the words “We the People of Sāmoa” as the source of the constitution at the beginning of the Declaration of Rights preceding it, and a provision for a referendum to transform the political system from a kingdom to a republic. At the same time, it also contained phrasing from the Declaration of Rights in the Hawaiian constitution, but curiously not from the 1864 but from Hawaii’s first constitution of 1840, including the theocratic notion that “no law shall be enacted at variance with the word of our Lord,” which by that time had long been removed from the Hawaiian constitution during later efforts to secularise it.

The main political institutions remained similar to those in the preceding August 1873 and January 1875 constitutions, but important details were changed, bringing those more in line with the Hawaiian model. The Ta‘imua (House of Nobles, their number now raised to fifteen, with two from each larger and one from each smaller first-order district) were in the future to be appointed by the King upon nomination by the people of their districts, and, modelled on the 1864 Hawaiian constitution, sit together in one legislative council with the Faipule (Representatives) who were to be elected by ballot, and their number significantly reduced to about twenty. The constitution defined the process for filling the office of the King more clearly, with the King now to be elected for a four-year term by the Ta‘imua and Faipule, alternating between the Malietoa and Tupua families. While still far from being a sovereign from whom all powers emanate, the Sāmoan King now had some powers previously exercised by the Ta‘imua. For example, the King could appoint district governors (upon nomination by the leading matai of the district), make treaties and receive diplomats. Like in the 1840 Hawaiian constitution, he was also to be Chief Justice ex officio.

While the current Ta‘imua were acknowledged as the country’s supreme power, their executive powers in the future were to be significantly reduced and limited to those of an advisory council to the King. The main executive organs comprised of the King, Premier (Ali‘i Sili o le Mālō, literally “Supreme Chief of Government”) and two cabinet ministers heading executive departments of the interior and of finance, respectively. The Supreme Court was completely restructured, now consisting of the King, the Premier and four other judges appointed by the legislative council.

Soon after the constitution was enacted, Malietoa Laupepa was elected as the first King, to be succeeded four years later by the holder of the highest title of the Tupua family, which at the time was under dispute. Most significantly, Steinberger was appointed Premier, making him one of the most powerful figures in the Sāmoan government. This was not as surprising as it might appear.
Having already gained the trust of most Sāmoan leaders during his first stay, Steinberger was regarded as a benevolent yet politically neutral figure who could be assigned powers no Sāmoan chief could dare to assume for himself without provoking immediate discord and partisan divisions. In the words of historian R.P. Gilson, “only a trusted European, without Sāmoan partisan affiliations or leanings, could have performed these functions successfully” (Gilson 1970: 315). The Hawaiian-language newspapers, *Ka Lahui Hawaii* and *Nupepa Kuokoa*, would later compare Steinberger’s role in Sāmoa to that played previously by, American Congregationalist missionary physician, Gerrit Judd in Hawai‘i as Kamehameha III’s advisor in the 1840s and in the early twentieth century American diplomat H.M. Sewall compared Steinberger to, Kalākaua’s main European advisor during the 1880s, Walter M. Gibson (Bailey 1980; Sewall 1903: 14).

Immediately after proclaiming the constitution, even before the appointment of King and Premier, the Ta‘imua wrote to Kalākaua, announcing the formation of the new government, attaching a copy of the constitution and asking the Hawaiian King for recognition. King Kalākaua responded with a formal acknowledgement of the Sāmoan government “as a nation among the nations of the earth.” A few months later, after the new institutions had settled in, Premier Steinberger wrote a letter to Hawaiian Foreign Minister to William L. Green in which he suggested to further formalise Hawaiian-Sāmoan relations by concluding a treaty—on equal terms—between the two nations.

With all the obvious importance given to relations with Hawai‘i, the latter was not the only Pacific nation the new Sāmoan government looked at as a political model and pursued closer relations with. Around the same time, the Ta‘imua also sent a delegation to Tonga, in order to learn about the Tongan system of monarchical government, building on the connections between the neighbouring archipelagos re-established in the 1840s and ultimately going back to traditional times (Helu 1999).

Overall, the political system initiated in 1873 and improved by the 1875 constitution seemed to be a workable compromise between the Sāmoan tradition of decentralised governance and the need for a central government to deal with the settlers and with foreign powers (Davidson 1967: 53-55; So’o 2008: 35-39). The large powers given to collective bodies representing nu‘u or coalitions thereof, i.e. the Ta‘imua and Faipule, and the more ceremonial role of the monarch, “accorded well with Sāmoan ways” (Howe 1984: 251), while the at least temporary assignment of the executive to a trusted foreigner neutralised the struggle between the various chiefs contending for power.

What is also intriguing about the Sāmoan constitutional system is that despite the absence of traditional state-like political structures, the vocabulary created for concepts of modern statecraft was remarkably traditional in origin. For instance, the Sāmoan term used for law is *tulafono*, a concept clearly grounded in classical concepts of governance. Some other terms for innovative institutions were literal translations, such as *failautusi* (“someone doing writing/accounting”) for ‘secretary,’ i.e. cabinet minister, but there were very few words that were direct borrowings from English.

**Epilogue**

In the end however, the constitution failed to produce a stable government, mainly due to antagonistic foreign interests, agitated by European settlers and naval intervention. In early 1876, Steinberger was arrested and deported by a visiting British warship due to a conspiracy of the US
and British consuls who objected to the premier’s pro-Sāmoan policies, especially his commitment to examine fraudulent land sales in the past and prevent further such sales (Gilson 1970: 321-331). In the resulting chaos, the Ta’imua deposed Laupepa from the kingship, who then set up a rebel government. Without all parts of the constitution fully operating in a normal manner, the Ta’imua continued to run at least the external affairs of the government for a while, which included sending the first and only nineteenth-century Sāmoan diplomat M.K. Le Mamea Faleto’ese o ʻoverseas to negotiate a treaty with the United States. (Gilson 1970: 349ff). After multiple crises and hostilities between the rivaling parties, Malietoa Laupepa was restored to the kingship in 1880, with Mata’aafa Iosefo, another paramount title holder, serving as premier, but the government’s authority remained tenuous (Gilson 1970: 332–382; So’o 2008: 39–41). Nonetheless, the Sāmoan government published a new set of laws, of which a copy was apparently sent to the Hawaiian government.

In the absence of Steinberger or another trusted European, the position of premier was abolished and a more extensive executive cabinet was created. By the mid-1880s, this cabinet included a Secretary of State (Failautusi Sili), Secretary of Interior (Failautusi mo Sāmoa, literally “secretary for Sāmoa”), Secretary of Treasury (Failautusi Teu Tupue), Secretary of War (Failautusi o Taua), Secretary of Lands (Failautusi o Fanua), Secretary of Works (Failautusi o Galuega), the Chief Justice (Faamasino Sili) and a Registrar (Failautusi Faamau-upu). In summary, the period between 1875 and 1900 was marked by numerous attempts to reconstitute a government according to the 1875 constitution, each lasting for a short moment before the country reverted to periods of factional division or outright civil war, as Western colonial interests constantly interfered to stir up Sāmoan political factions against one another (Meleiseā 1987: 38-45). At the same time, like virtually all other non-Western countries in the nineteenth century, Sāmoa was forced to sign unequal treaties with the Western powers that would surrender parts of its sovereignty to those powers (Kayaoğlu 2010), including control over the capital Apia, which was placed under joint extraterritorial authority of foreign consuls (Burgoyne 2006).

In 1886–87, King Kalākaua of Hawai‘i once more attempted to support building a stable Sāmoan government under the 1875 constitution when a diplomatic commission and a Hawaiian navy ship were sent to Sāmoa and a Hawaiian-Sāmoan treaty of confederation was signed between Malietoa Laupepa and Hawaiian envoy John ‘Ailuene Bush. While the initiative seemed promising, with rivaling paramount titleholders Mata’aafa Iosefo and Tamasese Titimaea starting to express interest in supporting a unified Sāmoan government under Hawaiian guidance, the attempt became nullified after a few months by a forceful naval intervention by Germany and an almost simultaneously occurring coup d’état by pro-American settlers in Hawai‘i (Cook 2011, 2018; Gonschor 2019).

More foreign interventions attempting to set up a functioning Sāmoan government were undertaken by the three contending Western powers (Germany, Great Britain and the United States), which in 1889 established a “tripartite protectorate” over Sāmoa, but political instability continued, and in 1899, the archipelago ended up being divided between Germany and the United States, each making part of the archipelago their colony (So’o 2008: 43-44). The larger German part, which became a Mandate and later Trust Territory of New Zealand after World War I, achieved independence in 1962 with a constitutional system remarkably similar to that of the pre-colonial one of 1875 (Meleiseā and Schoeffel 1987: 153ff; 1987: So’o 2008: 51ff), and unlike the highly instable and often virtually non-existent pre-colonial state under the 1875 constitution, the post-colonial
Sāmoa has been a state since 1962 has experienced actual political stability, arguably more than most other post-colonial states of the region.  

**Conclusion**

As Andrew Robson stated in his 2004 biography of a British consul in pre-colonial Fiji, “[i]t is common to divide Pacific history into three periods: pre-contact, colonial, and independent or post-colonial.” (Robson 2004: 173) But Robson continues that such a classification “does little or no service to the decades immediately preceding the imposition of colonial rule. This period is distinctive, important, and fascinating, in part because it was a time relatively unburdened by the particular inequalities among people that colonial rule later imposed and assumed” (ibid.) Indeed it is a mistake to see political developments in nineteenth-century Sāmoa, like in other Polynesian archipelagos, as mere “preludes” to colonialism. Rather these were crucial eras for the development of national consciousness, out of which colonialism was not the logical outcome, but to the contrary, an interruption of the process of national development. Thus Australian political scientist Peter Larmour, comparing the processes of constitutional development in the nineteenth century before colonialism to those in the twentieth century after colonialism, concludes that “[c]olonialism interrupted a process of transforming indigenous political systems that had begun in Hawai‘i and continues in Tonga” (Larmour 2005: 67).

It was in this context, that in the 1870s Sāmoan leaders developed a new and unique political system for a modern Sāmoan nation-state. Despite being first and foremost a Sāmoan initiative, Hawaiian and American influence was very important in this development, both in terms of advice and assistance coming from Hawai‘i and the United States to Sāmoa and in terms of direct institutional transfer of ideas and elements of the Hawaiian and American political systems. As a neighboring archipelago that had successfully transformed itself into a modern state, Tonga had some influence as a political model as well, despite the obvious concerns about Tongan political influence, given the historical experience of Tongan domination and Sāmoa’s successful liberation struggle against them in the past (Helu 1999).

The constitutional system thus created was a creative, well-thought out solution to the problem of creating a modern state on top of, and in parallel to, the complex traditional system of Sāmoan governance. It appears that the system worked best until the idea of having a King on top of the complex state apparatus was pushed by certain interested parties, which led to jealousies between the contenting high title holders and in consequence a return of political instability. Western colonial interests then made the situation worse by further stirring up and supporting such jealousies.

While those foreign interests won for the time being and held Sāmoa hostage for the first six decades of the twentieth century, Sāmoans picked up in 1962 where they had left off in 1900 and resumed the project of creating a hybrid political system that is at the same time anchored in Sāmoan tradition and global standards of modern statecraft, in other words, a system synthesising “the local with the global, the indigenous with the Western” (Aldrich in Armitage and Bashford 2014: 322). Marking the beginning of this process, the early constitutions of the 1870s deserve an important place in Sāmoa’s political history.
Endnotes

1. Translation according to Meleisea 1987: 36
2. Privy Council meeting of 4 March 1850, Privy Council minute book, Vol. 3B, Hawai‘i State Archives. When in 1853, the first Hawaiian consul in Apia was appointed, Wyllie once more attempted to send the 1849 draft letter as part of the consul’s instructions, but this suggestion did not find the approval of other Privy Councillors. Minutes of 2 May 1853, Privy Council minute book, Vol. 7, Hawai‘i State Archives.
4. St. Julian to Wyllie, 11 May 1855, p.3
5. English manuscript translations included in item R 6 387 983, Archives New Zealand, Wellington. Similar but not entirely identical English translation printed in Gurr 1931, which is reproduced in this dissertation as part of appendix 12. Hereafter 1873 Sāmoan Constitution.
8. English manuscript translations included in item R 6 387 983, Archives New Zealand, Wellington. Similar but not entirely identical English translation printed in Gurr 1931, which is reproduced in this dissertation as part of appendix 12. Hereafter January 1875 Sāmoan Constitution.
9. Kalākaua to Cakobau, 16 February 1874. Copy enclosed in Set 11-29/1874, Chief Secretary’s Office, Naval and Consular Correspondence, National Archives of Fiji. Unfortunately, Kalākaua’s intention to nurture Hawaiian relations with Fiji came to nothing, as by the time Cakobau received Kalākaua’s letter, the Fijian King had already begun negotiations that would lead to Fiji’s annexation to the British Empire before the end of the year (Routledge 1985: 186-210).
10. For biographical notes on Steinberger’s and descriptions of his two sojourns in Sāmoa, see Stathis 1982 and Torodash 1977.
15. May 1875 Sāmoan Constitution, Article VI, Section III.
16. This was obviously an accommodation to the theocratic Tahitian model of legislation promoted by the LMS and Wesleyan missions. That the wording exactly matches the 1840 Hawaiian constitution implies that Steinberger must have acquired a copy of that document, then long obsolete, during one of his visits to Honolulu.
17. For a contemporary analysis of the May 1875 Sāmoan constitution in comparison with the Hawaiian constitution, see The Hawaiian Gazette, September 15, 1875, p. 2.
18. May 1875 Sāmoan Constitution, art. I, section V.
19. Ibid. art. I section III.
20. Ibid., art. I sect. VII, VIII; art. III
22. The Ta’imua of Sāmoa to Kalākaua, 19 May 1875. FO&Ex, Miscellaneous Foreign 1875, Hawai‘i State Archives
23. Kalākaua to the Ta’imua of Sāmoa, 16 July 1875. Copy in FO&Ex, Miscellaneous Foreign 1875, Hawai‘i State Archives. See also Poor 1887: 564.
25. According to an article in the Tongan government newspaper Koe Boobooi, Iuly/August 1875, p. 37.
27. O Suafa o le Kapineta o le Malo o Sāmoa. Sāmoan Government Cabinet. Undated printed broadsheet in Sāmoan and English. Copy of Sāmoan version attached to letter from Bush to Gibson dated 1 February 1887, in FO&Ex, 1887 Sāmoan Affairs, Hawai‘i State Archives; English version reprinted in Gurr 1932, but misidentified as dating from 1875.
28. For an analysis of the post-colonial Sāmoan state, its achievements and problems see So'o 2008 and Meleisea and Schoeffel 2012. For a reflection on post-colonial Sāmoan politics from the point of view of the current Prime Minister, see Peter Swain, Pālemia: Prime Minister Tuila‘epa Sa‘ilele Malielegaoi of Sāmoa, A Memoir (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2017).

References


KNOWING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY IS CRUCIAL

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Abstract
The paper will discuss the greater need to strengthen the importance of family history and ancestry within the home and aiga. Social changes, modernity and the historical diaspora of generation misplacement have significantly contributed to the detrimental status of our Sāmoan aiga and society as a whole, especially in our histories of traditional genealogies and ancestries. With today's changing world, it is essential that family history be shared with family members for numerous reasons, and the lack of communication of such vital information, will result in multiple problems that not only affects the individual and family but the society as a whole. With our people migrating overseas and living abroad, new generations are being formed and are losing touch with their roots. In years past and still practiced by many, genealogy which belonged to the Sāmoan aiga was kept with those who were entitled to the privilege. This opportunity was not given to all members of the family. Genealogy meant knowledge, power and rights to land. The recognition that the world is changing, should breathe new life to our traditions especially that of family history. This paper concludes that this privilege should be given to all.

Keywords: genealogy, diaspora, tradition, family, history

Introduction
Sāmoan families’ genealogies are sacred for many reasons, and in the past only chiefs held this traditional knowledge. However, the inevitable global effects of migration have transformed Sāmoa into a global family. Many parts of our families are located way from Sāmoa and we often do not connect. That is why I believe it is more appropriate that family history or genealogies be made available to other members of the family.

Knowing family roots increase a sense of belonging. Many Sāmoans now live outside of Sāmoa. However, regardless of their citizenship, they are still heirs or suli of families. Their children, born and raised outside of Sāmoa, are far removed from these family roots and the Sāmoan culture. Weakened family and cultural connections often links to a reduced sense of belonging and a loss of identity. Knowledge of family history and genealogy invigorates one’s self identity and a sense of belonging.

The power of knowing one’s genealogy.
In pre contact Sāmoa, the orator chiefs were the venerated custodians of genealogies. Such knowledge legitimizes power and authority of the chiefs and it was part of formal Sāmoan oratory. It was and still is so sacred that only the chiefs can recite it in their oration, not for the common people. Freeman (1964) states that “the genealogy of chiefs, especially of high chiefs, was preserved with great care, and the custody was committed to a select class, who were very careful and jealous of the honorable and responsible function they held”. This is still practiced today in most Sāmoan families. A chief will keep a record of his genealogy and before he dies, he gives this sacred record to his eldest son or whomever he chooses to be the next chief and caretaker of the family and genealogy. However this practice gradually transformed with the onset of literacy. Cheryl Nunes (2007) in her discussions traced this unavoidable change in oral practice after the arrival of Christianity. However, it did not entirely remove the sacredness of the genealogies.
...with the onset of literacy in Sāmoa, these unique attributes of the spoken word have become challenged by the onset of writing and westernization. The dynamics of storytelling have been deeply transformed, as writing can undermine the natural power that is held within the imagination of a storyteller. Elders and orators have begun to slowly see their authority slip away, not only because knowledge has become redistributable, but more significantly because interest in oral tradition has waned. Before writing, oral histories, myths, and legends were highly coveted in Sāmoa but today there is a difference.

Grattan (1948) Secretary of Sāmoan Affairs in Western Sāmoa in the New Zealand Administration observed that, “it is a grave offence in Sāmoan custom to ‘open’ or recite genealogies without authority.” Grattan explained how important this is and how revealing facts of genealogy have become the subject of heated dispute. This recording was made over sixty years ago. Yet, this feeling of jealousy and extreme care in revealing genealogy is still present among many Sāmoan families today. Sāmoan people often speak of the reluctance of people even close relations, to share genealogy with them. Therefore many desire to have this knowledge but do not have this privilege.

**Resistance to the sharing of genealogy**

Genealogy legitimizes one’s rights to ownership of customary land or even rights to live in a village to which a person has rights. Knowing one’s family history can also allow one to have rights to a matai or chiefly title from the family he or she belongs to. Often relatives, who have lived in the village for long periods of time, sometimes consider visiting relatives as having a lesser right to the title or land, based on the perception that the person has been away and has not been seen to serve or tautua within the family.

The fabrication of family genealogy to obtain people’s rights to land and titles is a constant concern for families in Sāmoa. Epling (1970) noted this dilemma of Sāmoan genealogy in his discussions, “It is not strictly genealogical...generations are collapsed, individuals are added and deleted, pedigrees are manipulated and sometimes falsified, and, in general, relationships are adjusted and readjusted to fit the circumstances of the time.” I cannot stress enough the importance of family genealogy because it validates one’s claim to one’s birthright. Therefore, it is essential that family members must know their genealogy for their own protection. For this very reason, Sāmoans often do not share their family histories or genealogies.

**The problems resulting from reserving genealogy to only a few people.**

In the Sāmoan culture and customs, it is taboo for young people to question their elders about issues such as genealogies and family histories. The elders kept these to themselves and do not share it with others. However with the transformation of Sāmoan families, the younger generations today, often blame their parents for not sharing with them, their family genealogies. Too often now, young people are unaware of family relations because the elders do not share them. It is only during family gatherings such as weddings, funerals, saofai (chiefly title bestowments), family reunion and others that family members discover these connections.

Family elders who record their family genealogy give the next generation good grounding when they inherit these treasured books. But there is always a sense of loss when elders take this knowledge and their wisdom to the grave. The absence of knowledge about family history may explain people’s silences about the past, as observed by Barron (2014) in his work. These silences create serious family problems such as marriages between close relatives unknowingly. Such
accidents of marriage are becoming common with Sāmoans living abroad. In some cases, such discoveries of their close blood connections lead to separation.

**How migration weakens family and cultural ties.**

Migration for various reasons weakens family ties and cultural connection. Families usually migrate in search for better life opportunities. In some cases, no one in the family stays back in Sāmoa so there is no need to reconnect back to the island, thus weakening networks with family branches that did not have the opportunities to migrate. Just as society changes, ideals and everyday traditions and customs also change. Younge 2015 perceived that “migration involves loss...it’s not workers who emigrate but people and whenever they move, they leave part of themselves behind. Younge went on to say, “As migrants we leave home in search of a future but we lose the past”. Such weak links strike at the foundations of one’s identity and cause a fragile sense of belonging resulting to what Garvey warns against, people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots. While migration is inevitable, people must evade such eternity by ensuring that they know their family histories and culture, especially the language.

Sāmoa is now a global family and many Sāmoans living outside of Sāmoa do not speak the Sāmoan language. Some families hold on to the language and culture so the Sāmoan language is spoken at home. However, some families adapt to the new life discontinue or discourage the use of the Sāmoan language in the home. Sara Vui-Talitu, a Pacific Journalist for Radio New Zealand observed this trend in one of her recent stories.

Vui-Talitu (2017) tells of a Sāmoan-born man name of Sonny Natanielu who moved to New Zealand when he was only two years old. Sonny’s parents’ had an ‘elevated education’, and they “stopped me speaking in Sāmoan and so I completely lost the language and the culture”. Natanielu explained how he went through emotional problems leading him to attempt suicide twice until he discovered what it meant to be brown or “to be Sāmoan in today’s contemporary modern world” (Vui-Talitu 2017). He elaborated further to Talitu that, he noticed because a lot of parents didn’t pass on ways to be Sāmoan, I saw that people looked for ways to identify themselves. They got it in gangs, alcohol, drugs, and all sorts of crime. And for those who didn’t do crime, many ended up in the mental health system”.

Natanielu found solace when he received a tattoo, tatau in Sāmoa which gave a sense of identity. Natanielu’s experience attests to what Vui Talitu states as the epitome of a Sāmoan’s life, which is the genealogy or gafa. (Vui-Talitu 2017). Natanielu lived away from Sāmoa but a preferred Sāmoan proverb that resonates for him in his search for an identity is the flight of the Toloa, the Pacific Black Duck that travels the world but always returns to its home in Sāmoa. Vui-Talitu also states that so must a Sāmoan return to his homeland and reconnect with family and history.

The Toloa always takes flight but then it returns to the water. So it is like you will always need to return to Sāmoa and return to your roots. So for all Sāmoans...always return back to your home and reconnect to your family and your history.

Natanielu’s case, as recorded by Vui-Talitu, demonstrates the significance of how migration subtly shapes how we see ourselves. At the same time, Natanielu’s experience shows how one’s knowledge of history and culture provides grounding for one’s identity and self-confidence to an individual.
Another inevitable change that has the degree of knowledge of family history is miscegenation which resulted to families with mixed cultural and ethnic descendants. Interethnic marriages are very common today in Sāmoa and New Zealand, yet such incidence was frowned upon at the turn of the 20th century. The children usually learn the dominant language and culture at home. However, in many cases, there tends to be the adaptation to the language and culture of the new home while unintentionally ignore the cultures of origin.

According to Gray (2001), often these part-Sāmoan youth do not mix with their own cultural groups, because they do not find a sense of belonging amongst their own people. Usually such youngsters grow up bonding with children from other races and marrying into other ethnic groups. Such reactions inadvertently become the catalyst for family disconnection and loss of roots. Gray has witnessed firsthand such characteristics of Pacific islanders in New Zealand and states that:

*New Zealand-born Sāmoans and even Sāmoan-born Sāmoans, who have lived practically all their lives here since a very young age, are now in what we call an identity crisis or an identity dilemma. They are though, as I see it, forging for them a new ‘urban Pacific’ type of identity which can be good and also bad in the long run.*

Anae (2015) explains New Zealand-born identity in a poem saying that:

- I am a Sāmoan – but not a Sāmoan
  - To my aiga in Sāmoa, I am a palagi (foreigner)
- I am a New Zealander – but not a New Zealander
  - To New Zealanders, I am a bloody coconut, at worst,
  - A Pacific Islander, at best,
- To my Sāmoan parents, I am their child.

Migration and living abroad also generated other problems. Macpherson (1999) stated that young migrants who were exposed to other views and ways of life challenged the validity of the culture and the identity constructed from it. “New Zealand-born Sāmoans often had more in common with other New Zealand-born Pacific peoples than they did with Sāmoan-born Sāmoans and particularly those of their parents’ generation, leading young people to identify themselves as ‘New Zealand-borns’.” Hekau (1995) raises a similar point in relation to Niueans and questions how Niueans in New Zealand qualify to be identified as Niueans when the majority have been born and brought up in New Zealand and think like New Zealanders, yet they have had to accept the label – Niue.

We ask the same questions about our Sāmoan families abroad because most do not know their genealogies. Wherever people may migrate to, it is essential that people know and have a working understanding of their culture, families, language, genealogy and the customs of their people which will construct an individual sense of identity, self-worth and peace. If they do not keep their cultures alive, it can result in a crisis as expressed by Gray(2001) who envisaged the loss of geneology as a loss of social currency, “...one’s papa’anga or genealogy, which is the basis of personal identity provides understanding of leadership, status, obligations and responsibilities and even career choices” (Gray 2001: 4).

If one is unsure of his or her identity and begins to forge for another identity, one may question whether this is good or bad. This may be a sign of doubt and uncertainty about his or her roots.
Knowledge of our family history and genealogy grounds us with the sound understanding of our identity.

**The importance of family history.**

Family history is vital for several reasons. It can bring with it a thrill and excitement that can help to strengthen family relationships. Family history can be used for validating family stories, tracing land ownership, tracing family portraits, seeking proof of paternity, seeking a better understanding of historical events, even providing medical information. Knowing medical information of past ancestry can help present generations to be more careful and help reduce medical or health problems. Common illnesses such as diabetes, asthma, cancer and heart disease may be common in families and having knowledge of this history may help one to be more cautious and increase awareness.

A sound knowledge of family history strengthens family bonds regardless of the distances in between the locations they now reside. They are the ties that bound our present and resilient future, to the past. Such links, according to Coleman (2017), are ‘durable’ and will stand the test of time. When we study family history we do not only learn about who our ancestors are, we learn about the challenges they faced, we come to know who they are and what they were like. We connect to them and a stronger sense of identity is developed.

Coleman’s recent assessment of the significance of knowing family history draws a correlation between self-control, self-esteem and emotional wellbeing. She posited, ‘the more children knew about their family’s history, the stronger their sense of control over their lives, the higher their self-esteem and the more successfully they believed their families functioned. It turned out to be the best single predictor of children’s emotional health and happiness”.

Coleman who shares the view with Barron further explains that family history is much more than collecting information of names and dates, which we find on our family trees. It is about what “makes us who we are...it’s about people who lived and breathed and suffered and triumphed...it’s about all of us.” Family history is a part of us which is true and real and it is something that cannot be lost to us, our children and generations to come.

**Conclusion**

Knowing your family history is crucial because it enables us to develop a strong sense of identity that can endure social transformations. Migration has changed our society significantly and the majority of our people have now live overseas, far away from home, and there is a high tendency for them to lose their heritage. It is imperative to teach our children who they belong to, where they come from and instill within them the importance of their origins, heritages, backgrounds and ancestors. By doing this, it will increase and reinforce within them a sense of identity, pride and self-esteem. It will intensify a sense of principle, self-worth, confidence and loyalty to their Sāmoan blood and people. Numerous problems such as marrying relatives, falsification of genealogy and other problems as previously mentioned can be avoided by knowing your roots.

By strengthening these connections, the individual is protected as he or she acquires an enriched perception of his or her own identity and as the individual is strengthened so is his or her own society. He or she receives a new enriched feeling or sense of belonging and it is that feeling
which will cause the ‘toloa’ to fly to the water pool found in the motherland making connections with his or her own. “E lele le toloa, ae ma’au i le vai.”

References


EXPLORING THE LITERATURE ON COMMUNITY MANAGED SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT, WITH REFERENCE TO APOLIMA ISLAND, SĀMOA

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Abstract

Island tourism provides a plethora of literature that discusses the distinction of islands as cold water and warm water islands. The literature on the warm South Pacific islands tourism highlights challenges, opportunities and successes of these peripheral emerging tourism destinations. The successes of tourism in the South Pacific are projected on to the sustainability framework, emphasising the importance of the community because of their position and involvement in tourism processes as well as in the implementation of sustainable tourism. Though there may be plenty of literature on community participation in sustainable tourism, very little is focused on Sāmoa, much less Apolima Island. This presentation discusses the literature review carried out, for an encompassing understanding on the potential of Apolima Island as a community, to engage in sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: island tourism, emerging destinations, sustainable tourism, community participation

Introduction

This paper presents the focus areas, research and literature, which provided the basis of my dissertation, which was submitted in 2016 for my Masters in Tourism in the University of Otago, on the topic “Potential for Community Managed Sustainable tourism development on Apolima Island, Sāmoa”. This was the most challenging part of this research, mainly because I could not understand why I had to find out what has been thought and said around this topic. The main aim of my research was to grasp an understanding of the Apolima Island community’s integration into the overall, Sāmoa sustainable tourism development strategy. To navigate this study, my research objectives focused on exploring community perceptions and attitudes towards tourism on Apolima Island and, investigating the island’s potential for community managed sustainable tourism development.

With such a specific focus on Apolima Island, I decided to start off by broadly looking at concepts such as island tourism, sustainable developments, sustainable tourism, and community involvement in projects. These discussions were later narrowed down to the context of the South Pacific region. The more difficult literature search focused on the topics of tourism in Sāmoa and its local community involvement. Of course there are numerous internationally funded community projects, however these belong to the facilitating bodies, which may be government ministries. Besides national documents such as the Sāmoa’s Economic Atlas and Statistical Abstract (Sāmoa Bureau of Statistics 2011: 13) and the Sāmoa Tourism Sector Plan 2014–2019 (2014a), there is not much written about Sāmoa’s tourism. There are a few academic articles such as the work by Scheyvens (2005 and 2008) on beach fales and of course the collective work of Twining-Ward and Butler (2004) and Twining-Ward and Tuialemafua (2004) on sustainable tourism development in Sāmoa, and the use of STD indicators in this setting. These were used to understand not only Sāmoa’s tourism context but also its interpretation of sustainable tourism and sustainable tourism development. However literature on Apolima Island was even more limited, mostly because it is a periphery within a periphery. This was the challenge in the search for literature, however, most of these documents were accessible online. On that note, information for my literature review were
Definitions and descriptions of islands as tourist destinations

The first part of the literature review focused on the definitions and descriptions of islands as tourist destinations. Islands are commonly known to be small and isolated peripheries, physically, politically and economically. They are perceived as timeless and ageless places that are exotic and erotic earthly paradises, with adventures waiting to happen. They are places of people imagined to eagerly welcome visitors at their shores, and embrace them with their different culture. All of these were amplified through travel writings and imagery in the form of novels, songs, through word of mouth and nowadays social media, which create enthusiasm for romanticised expeditions and escapes to island destinations.

It was also important to distinguish between the islands because the cold water islands as argued by Butler (2006) in contrast to Conlin & Baum’s (1995) earlier study, are more specific and unique destinations compared to the warm water islands, which have a greater substitutability because they are more generic. This indicates that compared to cold water islands, warm water islands are easier to access, more geared towards relaxation and rejuvenation, and sought after by leisure tourists. Gossling and Wall (2007) contribute to this description of the more popular Pacific islands, by highlighting Louis de Bougainville’s description of the islands as the Garden of Eden, because they exhibit “a good life”.

The typical tourism offering of the South Pacific islands are sun, sea and sand, though according to Weaver (2001), Panakera and et al. (2011), with the islands’ support of sustainable tourism in the 1990s, tourism offering in the South Pacific transitioned to include natural, cultural and historical interest. Panakera and et al. (2011) explained that the Pacific tourism package included an all year round warm climate, white sandy beaches, endemic marine and land eco-systems, distinctive cultures and social structures, and a history linked to Western penetration. And with any package, there may be hidden costs, conditions or caveats.

The focus of this literature review was narrowed down into the economic, social and environmental challenges of tourism in the South Pacific. Graci & Dodds (2010) highlighted the growing dependence of islands on tourism as a means of economic diversification, and in their MIRAB\(^1\) status, islands face economic challenges. Similarly, Carlsen and Butler (2010) point out the unequal distribution of economic benefits even between the mainland and the periphery. On the theme of social challenges, the literature highlighted the increasing commodification of local culture amongst the islands, so as to remain competitive given that their tourism offerings or products are very similar. Besides the commodification of culture, Ryan (2001) discusses the impact of the demonstration effect on the community, because the tourist is away from his/her usual is in their liminal space, and is less obligated to conform to the host community’s norms. In addition to social challenges, Mowforth and Munt (2008) highlight social divisions as a result of tourism, and how even a small number of tourists can impact the local culture. Playing into this discussion, Gibson (2015) and Harrison (2002) talk about the “belongingness” of Fijians to their land because the land holds their placenta, and yet, it is being taken from them for the sake of tourism development and to cater for the tourist flows. Carlsen and Butler (2010) discuss environmental challenges and central to their discussion is how fragile the island ecosystems are, and yet these features are the basis of tourism.

sourced mainly from online articles and books, from the University of Otago library, and documents from government ministries and organisations of Sāmoa.
Mowforth and Munt (2008) emphasize that it is important to calculate carrying capacities to ensure sustainability. The climate change discussion then takes over in this literature review, highlighting the vulnerability of the South Pacific islands, or as Ryan (2001) puts it, their powerlessness and highlighting the community response to climate change through adaptation. According to Veitayaki (2010), Pacific islands are resilient because of their distinctive traditions and lifestyles.

The second part of the literature review focuses on Sustainable Tourism, the successes as well as the challenges when looking at the Pacific Island’s context. The sustainability debate touches on the point made by Liburd and Edwards (2010) about tourism’s long-term viability, inter-connected nature and of course, as Butler (1991) highlights in an earlier study that tourism is not just business. Tourism is a people industry, and the interactions of people delivering and receiving the tourism services and products, is detrimental to the growth and sustainability of the industry. Thus, Miller & Twinning-Ward (2005) suggest that in the name of sustainability, a less tourism-centric approach must be considered. Community involvement is key to sustainable tourism and in order to progress, Graci and Dodds (2010) provide a list of challenges and successes of sustainable tourism to guide communities. When planning community projects there is collaboration which highlights Murphy’s (1991) perspective of communities as ecosystems, living and working together as they understand the benefit of doing so; or otherwise a collaborative alliance according to Jamal and Getz (1995). Mowforth & Munt (2008) contend that community-based tourism (CBT) is a new form of tourism which has emerged out of the debates on the most ethical way to go on a holiday, tourism which empowers local people to say what tourism is acceptable and what is not. Tosun and Timothy (2003) move the discussion towards community participation in tourism development, proposing that for peripheral destinations, community participation:

- is a vital element in the implementation of tourism plans and strategies
- contributes to sustainable tourism development in several ways
- increases tourist satisfaction
- helps tourism professionals design better tourism plans
- contributes to a fair distribution of costs and benefits among community members
- can help satisfy locally identified needs
- strengthens the democratisation process in tourist destinations

With the community on-board, Liburd and Edwards (2010) state that CBT can provide the host community, benefits such as:

- tourism development that is acceptable to local residents,
- the local residents’ involvement controls what is or not accepted as well as empowerment to integrate tourism and other activities,
- open up opportunities for ongoing forums to share ideas, communicate and reinforce positive operations in the area,
- and facilitate the establishment of codes of conduct.

CBT is more about development in the community not development of the community (Hall 2018) and the focus is on the host community because their involvement adds value to the tourists’ experience. . Graci and Dodds (2010) state that tourism growth is varied between the regions of the world, and to further this discussion and understanding about the community’s position in the tourism development context, it is important to consider Butler’s (1980) Tourist Area Life Cycle
model. While this model has been used many times, the position of most Pacific islands like Sāmoa is better described in the Exploration and Involvement stages of the model. Two examples were extracted to illustrate the tourism growth in the Pacific islands; one discusses the success of the beach fale in initiating a healthy multiplier effect for Sāmoan communities (Shevvens 2008). The second example discusses the local Fijian response towards tourism (Kanemasu 2015) and the land issues that have evolved over time because of tourism development. While both destinations support tourism, CBT in particular, both have a cautious approach because of the diminishing natural resources and imposed threats on culture.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study proposes to:

A. **Contribute to Sāmoa’s focus on sustainable tourism development.** Sāmoa recognises the various forms of tourism around the globe, and has directed its focus on sustainable tourism development, and valuing community participation (Sāmoa Tourism Authority 2014a)

B. **Contribute to tourism research about Sāmoa, and research conducted by an indigenous person.** Sāmoa tourism research is limited, particularly research conducted by indigenous Sāmoans. This is important because cultural appropriateness and shared cultural values (Toombs 2012), between the researcher and the participants or place, can facilitate accurate interpretations.

C. **Contribute to the overall understanding of Sāmoa’s tourism context?**. Tourism research on specific areas or case studies is also limited, but these are important in formulating analysis that can contribute to the overall understanding of Sāmoa tourism.

D. Is significant because it involves engaging with local Sāmoans, documenting their views which are analysed according to the research objectives.

E. Is also significant because it contributes to the South Pacific tourism island profiles and literature.

Faafetai lava!

**Endnotes:**

1. MIRAB – Model that explains the economies of small island nations; Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy.

**References**


CLIMATE CHANGE
PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF FRESHWATER CARBONATE DEPOSITS AT FALE O LE FE’E: IMPLICATIONS ON CULTURAL AND GEO-HYDROCLIMATE SIGNIFICANCE IN SĀMOA

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Abstract

A carbonate outcrop measuring greater than 1 metre across its longest axis and weighing up to one ton was identified adjacent to a stream channel at approximately 464 metres elevation in the central volcanic rift zone on Upolu island, Sāmoa. This outcrop is in the upper Vaisigano River catchment ~9.5 kilometres inland of Apia, and ~50 metres upstream of the ancient cultural site Fale o le Fe’e. The presence of carbonate deposits in this predominantly volcanic area have previously been reported in Sāmoan oral tradition, early missionary reports and several scholastic campaigns dating back to 1845. However, their origin has been enigmatic in that several of these information sources interpret a marine origin, with only two accounts concluding on a terrestrial origin. In this paper, preliminary carbonate isotope analysis results carried out on: 1) fresh samples taken from the outcrop; 2) transported carbonate cobbles found downstream of the deposit; and 3) coral from the coast, are presented to show that the deposit is a terrestrial freshwater tufa formed through in-situ meteoric processes. The likely formation processes of this deposit and implications within the cultural context at Fale o le Fe’e are assessed. In addition, the potential significance of these findings within the Sāmoan geological context and their potential for understanding long-term hydro-climatic changes in Sāmoa are discussed, including directions for future research.

Keywords: freshwater tufa, geo-hydroclimatic, Sāmoa

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the most likely origin, marine or terrestrial, of carbonate deposits in the Fale o le Fe’e vicinity using carbonate stable isotope analysis. A carbonate outcrop located approximately 9.5 km inland of Apia, ~50 m upstream of the Fale o le Fe’e ruins (or Abode of Fe’e – War God of the A’ana district in prehistoric Sāmoa) (Stair, 1894), was visited and provides the basis for analysis in this study (Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3).

Whilst Fe’e originally has affiliations with the A’ana district, the area which Fale o le Fe’e is located is in the Tuamasaga district which is immediately east of A’ana. Traditional knowledge indicates that carbonate deposits in this area were associated with Fe’e, and were interpreted to be marine in origin and transported by Fe’e from the coast to the inland site where he settled and made his abode. A sample from a charcoal deposit found at approximately 30 cm depth in a test pit adjacent to the Fale o le Fe’e ruins has a calibrated radiocarbon age of 520 – 320 cal BP (AD 1430 – 1630) (Williams 2014) (Figure 2). This result probably represents a minimum period at which humans might have occupied and/or used the area more frequently. Interestingly this age is contemporaneous with the so-called 500-year rule of A’ana from 1320 – 1820, and the likely timespan at which importation of the A’ana ideology of Fe’e into a portion of the Tuamasaga district belief systems might have occurred (Va’a 2008). Furthermore, it suggests human interaction with this site and the presence of calcareous deposits in the area during this period, which explains how the deposits might have come to feature in local oral history.
A review of the literature suggests that the deposits are most likely non-coastal in origin. For example, Stair (1894) reported that the deposits were found in the stream bed, and upon splitting a specimen said by local guides to be coral, they observed various leaves and small twigs embedded in it. Stair (1894) attributed the specimens to a substance formed in the neighbouring stream. Similarly, Stair (1894) concluded that larger deposit blocks found further upstream were calcareous spar of a more compact formation. Finally, Stair (1894) observed stalactites forming upon the surface of a rock in a nearby place that was once a large natural basin at the foot of a precipice into which the stream once fell from above, forming a small cascade.

Freeman (1944) later carried out archaeological investigations in this area and obtained calcareous specimens which he got analysed through a geologist at the University of Auckland. Freeman concluded from this analysis that the calcareous specimens were locally formed travertine; which are terrestrial carbonates involving hydrothermal processes of formation. These results also pointed to a dismissal of a marine origin for calcareous deposits in this area. These observations suggest in-situ formation, possibly due to either hydrothermal or cold freshwater carbonate forming processes.

New Zealand navy surveyors to this area in the 1950’s, who accompanied Kear and Wood (1959) during geological investigations in Sāmoa, reported a >10 ton calcareous boulder interpreted to be marine limestone found at ~458 m elevation (Stearns, 1955; Kear and Wood, 1959). This was suggested to be indicative of either; 1) possible transportation by earlier humans for building purposes at the site (Kear and Wood, 1959), or, 2) large-scale emergence possibly as a result of uplift, or eustatic movements much greater than those attributed to Pleistocene glacial-interglacial cycles (Stearns, 1955; Nunn, 1998).
Figure 2: (a) Fale o le Fe’e site; (b) Charcoal layer associated with sample WK30088 which dates to 500 – 300 cal BP (Williams 2014); (c) Calcareous deposit ~30–50 m upstream of Fale o le Fe’e (Photo by Paul Anderson, pre-Cyclone Evan in 2012); (d) Same deposit in (c) taken in April 2014; (e) Sample of the main deposit in (c) and (d); (f) Calcareous cast wood sampled from the main deposit in (c) and (d); (g) Calcareous cobble obtained by Paul Anderson from the river bed further down-stream.

Figure 3: (a) sedimentary features of the sample from the main deposit; (b) sedimentary features of the calcareous cast wood sampled from the main deposit
However, Stearns (1955) reported that no recognizable algae were observed in sample thin sections, even though recognizable fossil coral appeared to be recrystallized in the limestone block observed in the field. This strengthens the findings of Stair (1894) and Freeman (1944) that calcareous specimens found in the area were in-situ terrestrial formations as opposed to having a coastal marine origin. Two unsuccessful field campaigns by Nunn (1998) to locate the calcareous specimens in the area limit any further evidence in the literature of their likely origin subsequent to the report by Stearns (1955).

This paper provides preliminary carbonate isotope analysis results of calcareous samples obtained from the Fale o le Fe’e area to demonstrate their origin and likely processes of formation. The implications of the findings are discussed within the cultural, geological and hydroclimatic contexts, with recommendations for future research provided.

Methodology and data

Two fresh outcrop samples, and two cobbles in the stream bed adjacent to FOLF which closely resembled the outcrop material, were obtained during field reconnaissance in 2012 and 2014 for analysis of δ¹⁸O and δ¹³C at the University of Canterbury stable isotope analytical facility (Figure 4). An available coral sample from the northwest coast of Ta’u island was analyzed to provide a reference standard for calcareous material formed in a marine environment.

For each sample, targeted surfaces were cleaned with subsampled powder material obtained using a Dremel hand-held rotary drill. The subsamples were pre-treated and analyzed for δ¹⁸O and δ¹³C by Associate Professor Travis Horton at the University of Canterbury in accordance with techniques provided by Li et al. (2008) and Horton et al. (2016). This involved using a ThermoFinnigan GasBench II coupled to a ThermoFinnigan DeltaV+ isotope ratio mass spectrometer operating under continuous ultra-high purity He flow conditions. δ¹⁸O and δ¹³C values were two-point normalized to the VPDB scale based on replicate analysis of IAEA certified reference materials. δ¹⁸O and δ¹³C ratio plots are presented and interpreted within the context of terrestrial and marine derived carbonate isotopic signatures.

Results and interpretations

δ¹⁸O and δ¹³C values of subsamples plotted in Figure 5 for the fresh specimens taken from the outcrop reflect unaltered/unweathered material, with values within the spectrum for a rain-derived primary meteoric carbonate source. The distribution of values for each sample likely reflects environmental conditions of precipitation (i.e. wetness and dryness). Specimens with higher δ¹⁸O and δ¹³C values likely reflect dryer conditions of formation associated with higher CO₂ degassing and fractionation of carbon isotopes, as well as evaporation induced oxygen isotope fractionation (Figure 5). Relatively lower values of δ¹⁸O and δ¹³C (i.e. lower carbonate) are likely reflecting wetter conditions of formation associated with lower rates of δ¹⁸O and δ¹³C fractionation. The spatial distribution of values reflects the environmental conditions of formation (e.g. time, place, wetness/dryness, surface temperature, soil respiration rate, available organic material). Similar trends are observed for the detrital cobbles taken from the river bed further downstream. However, the lower δ¹⁸O and δ¹³C values for these samples compared with the fresh samples likely indicate the degree of weathering.
Figure 4: locations of subsampled powder material for isotope analysis from; (a) calcareous cast wood sample from the main deposit; (b) calcareous rock sampled from the main deposit; (c) detrital cobble taken from further downstream of the main deposit; (d) another detrital cobble taken from the vicinity of (c); and (e) weathered marine coral sampled from ~0.5m depth on the Ta’u coast.

Figure 5: $\delta^{18}$O and $\delta^{13}$C values of subsamples taken from the specimens shown in Figure 4.
In addition, they likely reflect a different carbonate source which may have formed in different environmental conditions (e.g. wetness, dryness, carbon availability, etc) compared with the outcrop which the fresh samples were sourced. The spatial plot for the coral sample reflects meteoric diagenesis and weathering of a primary marine carbonate source. Ultimately, results obtained for samples from the Fale o le Fe’e area are consistent with a terrestrial meteoric carbonate origin. Results for the weathered coral sample are consistent with a marine carbonate signature.

Discussion

Deposit type and environmental implications

The isotope results suggest that the carbonate samples analyzed in this study are an in-situ terrestrial formed freshwater tufa deposit. It seems reasonable to suggest that similar deposits in the Fale o le Fe’e vicinity are of the same origin and were present in the area during minimum human occupation of the area c. AD 1430 – 1630. These formations/deposits were most likely interpreted by inhabitants during this, and potentially earlier, period as being coral specimens of a marine/coastal origin, and subsequent association and development of the ideological association with the war God, Fe’e. Indeed, it is understandable how this interpretation might have come about given the distinct resemblance of these deposits/formations with coral reefs and the fact that Fe’e has its origins from the ocean.

A review of the global literature, in addition to the findings presented here, corroborate that these are of a freshwater carbonate origin formed via in-situ processes. These results confirm the dismissal by Stair (1894) and Freeman (1944) that carbonate deposits within the vicinity of Fale o le Fe’e are marine in origin. Furthermore, Freeman (1944) had reported from initial analysis that carbonate deposits from the area were travertine. However, travertine formation is associated with hydrothermal processes and higher temperatures at which carbonate precipitation occurs, whereas results presented here indicate formation due to ambient meteoric processes, which are consistent with tufa formation (Ford and Pedley 1996);

Whist further analysis is required to develop a model of their most likely formation, it is probable that seasonal and/or longer-term hydroclimatic changes along with available carbon (e.g. organic materials) and their interactions create the necessary conditions for carbonate precipitation. Available data currently limits a more comprehensive interpretation regarding the true extent, age and conditions of formation for these tufas. More detailed field and laboratory analysis is required to achieve this.

Nevertheless, the preliminary findings in the study indicate a distinct geological unit present in the Fale o le Fe’e area, with potentially similar deposits in analogous environments that should be better studied, mapped and incorporated into an updated geological map of Sāmoa. Additionally, more detailed stable isotope analysis will enable a better understanding of their environmental conditions of formation (e.g. timing/seasonality, temperature, wetness, dryness, soil respiration and hydraulic conductivity, hydrogeological conditions). In turn this may provide proxies for understanding longer term hydro-climatic variability and change in Sāmoa, including longer term frequencies of probable extreme events at the watershed/catchment scale (e.g. paleo- droughts and floods) (e.g. Conlan et al. 2005; Johnson et al. 2009; Pedley and Rogerson 2010; Banks and Jones 2012).
Cultural implications

The interpretation preserved in oral tradition that carbonate deposits near Fale o le Fe’e were of a marine origin is suggested as follows. Firstly, to the naked eye the deposits indeed resemble coralline material comparable to that found on coral reefs. In the absence of modern techniques to determine their true nature, it seems reasonable to suggest that initial/earlier humans to visit the area could easily have interpreted carbonate material found at the site to be coral sourced from the coast.

Secondly, the fact that the site was affiliated with Fe’e (cuttlefish) which is a marine species, suggests that humans in the area (i.e. minimum of AD 1430 – 1630; Williams 2014) attributed the presence of the deposits to coral materials that were transported from the coast by Fe’e (the A’ana/Tuamasaga War God; Va’a 2008). The in-situ nature of deposit formation, as determined in this study, implies that they were present in the area during the probable minimum period of humans visiting or using the site more frequently/permanently (i.e. AD 1430 – 1630); and subsequent emergence of traditional interpretations on how the deposits had come to be there.

Conclusions

This study set out to determine whether high-elevation carbonate deposits located in central Upolu were of a marine or terrestrial origin, and to assess the likely cultural and environmental implications of either scenario. The carbonate stable isotope analysis results presented in this paper lead to the following conclusions:

- $\delta^{18}O$ and $\delta^{13}C$ values for the fresh samples taken from the outcrop and detrital cobbles taken from the river bed further downstream indicate that these are of a terrestrial meteoric origin.
- Available evidence suggests that carbonate deposits in the Fale o le Fe’e area are freshwater tufas formed through ambient meteoric derived carbonate precipitation, as opposed to a travertine formed through hydrothermal processes.
- The possibility that these deposits are of a marine origin is dismissed.

Future research directions to better understand the significance of these deposits in Sāmoa might include:

- Locating and mapping the geologic extent of these deposits in the area, including in analogous environments.
- Determining the ambient conditions and timing of their formation, including seasonal effects and investigating their potential use as geological proxies for understanding paleo-hydroclimatic changes and longer-term frequency of extreme events (e.g. droughts, rainfall, climate variability cycles).
- Application of findings to better understand historical human-environment interactions, and to support the restoration of Fale of le Fe’e as a cultural heritage and potential tourism destination.

The interpretations and conclusions provided in this paper are based on initial analytical data obtained and information available in the literature. They should be treated as preliminary until more comprehensive investigations are undertaken and new analytical information becomes available.
Acknowledgements

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References


STRENGTHENING NATURAL HAZARDS RESILIENCE THROUGH EVIDENCE-BASED RISK INFORMATION: PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS RESULTS OF THE PARTNER PROJECT, SĀMOA

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Abstract

Evidence-based risk information to support planning and response to natural hazards underpins effective disaster risk management decisions. In Sāmoa, the Pacific Risk Tool for Resilience (PARTneR) project provides a means to advance this. PARTneR, a three-year project which began in July 2016, involves tailoring the impact and loss modelling tool, RiskScape, for use in the Sāmoan context. The objective is to provide a tool that planners and decision-makers can use to help manage the risks and socio-economic impact to diverse types of natural hazards. Tailoring of the tool is being framed and demonstrated through three co-identified case studies: 1) tsunami risk and loss modelling for response planning; 2) landslide risk mapping at Mt Vaea for urban land use planning; and 3) impact forecasting for tropical cyclone related flooding in Apia. This paper presents preliminary results for each case study, with a focus on the approach and datasets used, application and use of the results, associated data management systems and information access. Challenges and limitations of each study are discussed, including wider project directions and implications on strengthening resilience to natural hazards within a sustainable development context in Sāmoa.

Keywords: natural hazards, risk, PARTneR project, Sāmoa

Introduction

Natural hazards have affected approximately 9.2 million people in the Pacific and caused US$3.2 billion (in nominal terms) in associated damage since 1950 (World Bank 2015). More specifically, during the last 15 years 300,000 people in Vanuatu have been affected by earthquakes, cyclones, floods and volcanic eruptions (source: http://www.emdat.be). In Sāmoa 143 people were killed by a tsunami in 2009 and cyclones Ofa and Val in the early nineties resulted in combined cost estimates approximately four times the GDP (World Bank 2009). Disasters from natural hazards in the Pacific undermine sustainable development and basic human rights.

However, the impacts from natural hazards can be reduced through integrated Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) including more informed land use planning. For example, in the Pacific just $1 invested in risk reduction can save approximately $7 in return (Crowley et al. 2016). However, although risk assessment is the foundation of DRR, the 2014 Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) highlighted the lack of systematic approaches to risk analysis and ways of applying this information (Crowley et al. 2016). The need for low-cost and easily applied tools that support this is critical, as reflected in the international Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030, which directs nations to “enhance measurement tools and the collection, analysis and dissemination of data” (UN 2015).
Despite this, Pacific Island Countries (PICs) have only limited tools and processes to support the realisation of the Sendai Framework and associated Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific. The Pacific Risk Tool for Resilience (PARTner) project, which is being piloted in Sāmoa and Vanuatu from 2016-2019, aims to provide tools and data management systems for these two countries that will enable decision-makers to better manage risk and vulnerability (Crowley et al. 2016).

This is being implemented via the customization of RiskScape, which is an open access natural hazards impact mapping and loss modelling software application built on a generic risk model framework for natural hazards (Schmidt et al. 2011). The software system is used for storing, processing, analysing and visualising the estimated impact information such as damages to assets, economic losses, human casualties, and reinstatement costs.

For Sāmoa, the tailoring of RiskScape and the application of outputs for risk-informed decision-making is framed around three demonstration case studies that were identified by the local stakeholders during initial inception workshops in 2016. The three demonstration case studies for Sāmoa include: 1) Tsunami risk and loss modelling for response planning; 2) Near real time impact forecasting for Tropical Cyclones; and 3) Landslide risk for land use planning.

This paper aims to discuss the preliminary results that have been produced for these three case studies. The intended uses and applications of the information are discussed within the context of strengthening resilience through risk-informed response, emergency management, land-use and development planning. Whilst the outputs of these case studies are intended to demonstrate the types of information which can be produced and used by disaster, emergency response, and land use planning agencies in Sāmoa, they have wider applications for enhancing community resilience through awareness and capability strengthening. Upon the completion of this project, it is envisaged that the RiskScape tool will enable key stakeholders in the public and private sectors to carry out risk-informed decision-making and planning that helps to reduce the socio-economic impacts of natural hazards. In the longer-term, such activities will help contribute to achieving resilient and sustainable development for Sāmoa.

Methodology and data

Each case study required the use of available data on hazards, assets, and where applicable, vulnerability data. Available assets data used were sourced from the 2009 PACRAFI (Pacific Catastrophe Risk Financing Initiative) dataset for Sāmoa (World Bank 2015).

Tsunami case study

Available tsunami evacuation zone layers (Leonard et al. 2011) and spatial locations of buildings and roads from the PCRAFI database provided the baseline hazard and assets data, respectively, used in estimating the total number of buildings exposed in each zone.

The targeted tsunami case study along Southwest Upolu involved the use of a coarse (100-200m) tsunami inundation model developed by Lane et al. (2014) and the 2009 PACRAFI buildings and road datasets for the area. Resident building occupancy were used to estimate the number of exposed people. These were estimated from the 2016 Sāmoa Population Census data to derive an average resident building occupancy rate (e.g. total village population/residential building numbers). Damage functions developed by Reese et al. (2011) were used to inform the development of
vulnerability tables for use in the estimation of damage levels for buildings and people (Simi et al. 2018a; 2018b). Exposure to 10m road lengths were calculated to provide an indication of which roads in the area could potentially sustain damage and/or impede access.

**Landslide case study**

For the Mt Vaea landslide case study, available high resolution (1m) LiDAR topography data was used to create a digital elevation model (DEM), with landslide susceptibility estimated in ArcGIS based on the slope angle of the terrain (Simi et al. 2018c) (Figure 2 and Figure 3). Four susceptibility categories were assigned: 1) low (<25°); 2) moderate (25° - 35°); 3) high (35° - 45°); and 4) very high (> 45°), which were adapted from the methods of a project assessing landslide susceptibility in Vanuatu (Beca et al. 2016). These categories provided a basis for modelling potential landslide collapse (i.e. the potential area above a slope that may collapse which estimated at 35° angle above a slope) and run-out (i.e. the potential area a landslide may cover below a slope and is estimated to be 30° angle below a slope) zones following the method of Beca et al. (2016). These formed the landslide hazard scenarios providing a basis for exposure analysis of assets. Assets data used included buildings and roads obtained from the 2009 PCRAFI dataset.

**Tropical Cyclone flood case study**

High resolution 1:250-year ARI flood models at (Water Tech Ltd., 2014) available for the Vaisigano River catchment provided the hazard and intensity parameters in the analysis. Buildings and road data from the 2009 PCRAFI dataset provided the asset data required, with flood-depth damage functions developed following the 2012 Tropical Cyclone Evan flood damage surveys in Apia applied to estimate exposed people and building damage levels (Paulik et al. 2013). Threats to human safety were estimated according to vulnerability relationships developed by Cox et al. (2010).

**Figure 1: Workflow and datasets used in the:** (a) tsunami evacuation study; (b) southwest Upolu study (c) damage level definitions in relation to tsunami flow depths.

**(a) Exposure assessment – aggregated by district**

![Diagram](image-url)
(b) Southwest Upolu focus area

(c) Damage level definitions for buildings, roads and people (top) and how these relate to different flow depths (bottom)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Damage Level</th>
<th>Tsunami waters may or may not contact assets but are not likely to cause damage. People are not exposed to tsunami damage.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Negligible</td>
<td>Tsunami waters may contact assets but are unlikely to cause damage. People are not likely to experience injury or death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Low</td>
<td>Non-structural may occur with minimum disruption to asset usability. People are not likely to experience injury or death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Medium</td>
<td>Non-structural and repairable structural damage may occur disrupting asset usability. Vulnerable people could experience injury or death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: High</td>
<td>Irreparable structural damage may occur severely disrupting asset usability. All people could experience injury or death.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset</th>
<th>Asset Attribute</th>
<th>Hazard Type</th>
<th>Loss Types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exposure Type</td>
<td>Damage Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0m &lt; 0.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Flow Depth</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Flow Depth</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridges</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Flow Depth</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2: Landslide susceptibility map for Mt Vaea, Upolu

Legend
Landslide Susceptibility
- **Moderate** (slope angle 25° - 35°)
- **High** (slope angle 35° - 45°)
- **Very high** (slope angle > 45°)
- **Potential runout area**
- **Potential collapse area**
Exposure analysis and impact modelling

Exposure analysis and impact modelling were undertaken using a customized version of the impact and loss modelling software – RiskScape V.1.0.RC3. Customization of the platform involved updating of the building types standards in accordance with the standard Sāmoa building types defined by the Sāmoa Bureau of Statistics. Preliminary exposure results are presented for the landslide and tsunami case studies, with exposure, damage levels and threat to human safety presented for the Tropical Cyclone flood case study. All the results are presented at the aggregated district level.

Results and interpretation

Preliminary results and interpretations are presented in three sections: 1) tsunami case study results which include exposure of buildings in tsunami evacuation zones and a targeted exposure/damage assessment for buildings, people and roads in Sa’anapu; 2) exposure of buildings and roads to potential Mt Vaea landslide collapse and runout zones; and 3) exposure and threat to human safety from flooding in the Vaisigano River catchment.

Tsunami results

Exposure of buildings in tsunami evacuation zones

The distribution of buildings exposed in tsunami evacuation zones per district are provided in Figure 4. Vaimauga West has the highest number of exposed buildings with close to 4,000 buildings in tsunami evacuation zones (6% in the red zone; 90% in the orange zone; 4% in the yellow zone). When held in conjunction with other districts in the greater Apia industrial area – Faleata East, Faleata West and Vaimauga East, approximately 8,000 buildings fall within tsunami evacuation zones. Of the total number of districts, 19% have more buildings outside of the tsunami evacuation zones relative to the number in exposed zones, compared with 81% of total districts having higher numbers of exposed buildings relative to the number of buildings outside of evacuation zones. On
Savai’i Island, Faasaleleaga I have the highest number of exposed buildings relative to other districts on the island, with 75% of buildings in this district located within the orange zone.

**Figure 4:** Results of the tsunami exposure analysis in the red, orange and yellow evacuation zones. The bottom panel illustrates the spatial distribution of exposed buildings corresponding to the graph in the top panel (for demonstration only – geographic details and scale are not shown).

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Southwest Upolu buildings, roads and people exposure and damage analysis

The number of exposed buildings along SW Upolu are provided in Figure 5. Safata has the highest number of estimated buildings likely to be damaged in the analysis scenario, with 23% of total buildings in the district experiencing some form of damage (4% - low damage; 14% - medium damage; 4% - high damage). The estimated number of people exposed to the tsunami hazard in this scenario are highest in Safata district (Figure 6), with 62% of the population experiencing medium exposure and 19% experiencing high exposure. Gaga’emauga II district experiences the lowest number of estimated people exposed compared with the other three districts on SW Upolu. Safata district also experiences the longest lengths of road exposure in the tsunami scenario (Figure 7), with more than 8 km of total road length exposed, with 27% of exposed road length estimated to experience high road damage. Gaga’emauga II have the shortest length of road exposure, however 79% of the total road length exposed in this district are estimated to experience high road damage.
Figure 5: Results of tsunami exposure and damage to buildings in southwest Upolu. The bottom panel illustrates the spatial distribution of exposed buildings in Sa’ananu village (for demonstration only – geographic details and scale are not shown).

Figure 6: Results of the number of people exposed to the tsunami and the levels of exposure in southwest Upolu. The levels shown are based on exposure to specific tsunami inundation depths.
Landslide results

Mt Vaea exposure to landslide collapse and runout zones

Vaimauga West is the only district with buildings located within landslide runout and collapse zones in this scenario (Figure 8a and Figure 9), with a total of 35 buildings exposed to landsliding in these scenarios (54% located in the runout zone, and 46% in the collapse zone).

Vaimauga West also experiences the longest total length of roads exposed in this scenario, with ~2.5 km of total road length exposed within the runout zone and 0.82 km of road length exposed in the collapse zone (Figure 8b and Figure 9). Roads in other districts around Mt. Vaea are less exposed to potential landslides.
Figure 8: Results of buildings (top) and total road length (bottom) exposure analysis to landslide runout and collapse zones at Mt Vaea.
**Flood study results**

**Exposure and damage of buildings and people to flooding in the Vaisigano River catchment**

Figure 10 provides the spatial distribution of the estimated threat to human safety from flooding along the banks and floodplain of the Vaisigano River. A total of 1,938 people are estimated to be at threat to human safety, of which 20% are exposed to extreme threat, 26% exposed to significant threat, with 16% and 38% exposed to moderate and low threat, respectively.
Figure 10: Results of threat to human safety from flooding in the Vaisgano River catchment.

(a) Threat to human safety scale in relation to flood flow depth and velocity (DV) (from Cox et al. 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV (m³/s)</th>
<th>Infants, small children (H.M ≤ 25) and frail/older persons</th>
<th>Children (H.M = 25 to 50)</th>
<th>Adults (H.M &gt; 50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>Safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 0.4</td>
<td>Low Hazard¹</td>
<td>Significant Hazard;</td>
<td>Low Hazard¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dangerous to most</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.6 – 0.8</td>
<td>Moderate Hazard;</td>
<td>Significant Hazard;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dangerous to some¹</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.8 – 1.2</td>
<td>Extreme Hazard;</td>
<td>Extreme Hazard;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dangerous to all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 1.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Number of people exposed to various threat levels from a 2012 Tropical Cyclone Evan flood-type event

(c) Distribution of buildings exposed to threat from a 2012 Tropical Cyclone Evan flood-type event
Discussion and conclusions

The results presented demonstrate the types of basic and potential information that can be obtained for various natural hazards using an impact and loss modelling tool to support evidence-based planning and management decisions. More importantly, they demonstrate how the intended purpose of information and nature of a required decision influences the level of impact and loss information required to inform/support that decision.

For example, the tsunami exposure analysis in evacuation zones, which was motivated by local demand for improved emergency tsunami response planning, provides an indication of the relative exposure of buildings located within the various tsunami evacuation zones. More specifically in this study, it provides an indication of which districts have higher exposure numbers compared to others, which in turn helps to inform emergency responders of ‘risk hotspots’ or areas requiring greater emergency resources and focus. Similarly, the more detailed tsunami impacts focus study on Southwest Upolu provides an indication of the estimated damage to buildings, roads, and people from a tsunami along the southwest coast of Upolu.

Information from these studies have multiple applications and can be used by emergency planners and responders to: 1) inform which areas may experience the highest levels of damage; 2) inform which areas might require the highest numbers of people to evacuate; 3) strategically select evacuation routes and centres (e.g. churches, schools, community halls) located outside of evacuation zones and which can be used as emergency support centres; 4) strategically select safe triage points outside of evacuation centres; 5) identify areas which could potentially be cut-off from immediate humanitarian support as well as local/nearby resources which could be used during response mobilization (e.g. rural health centres as well as police and fire services outposts).

Information produced for the landslide and flood studies have similar applications. The motivation for the landslide study was driven by local demand to support land use planning at Mt Vaea, with the results demonstrating baseline information to support this goal. Findings indicate which buildings may potentially experience damage to landsliding at Mt Vaea including road lengths which might be exposed. This in turn can be used by land use planners to support mitigation planning (e.g. road protection, disaster insurance), and can also be used by emergency responders to inform them of non-affected access routes which can be used to reach potentially affected people/areas.

The flood study, which was also motivated by emergency response purposes, provides information which responders can use to map out evacuation routes and centres, including resources planning and mobilization (e.g. the number of people which may require emergency health services and associated preparation).

Information resources demonstrated in this paper can also be used to inform whether international humanitarian support might be required for various disaster scenarios before an event occurs, providing a potential means for forecast-based risk financing.

Whilst the results presented are for demonstration purposes only and are subject to inherent uncertainties associated with the baseline datasets used, they nevertheless provide an indication of the types of information that could be produced and used through risk analysis/modelling tools. This in turn contributes to strengthening resilience through better informed/evidence-based planning and decision-making. Furthermore, it contributes towards sustainable development through more
resilient adaptation, response and recovery activity planning, as well as strengthening of capability
to plan, cope and recover from disasters.

Activities remaining in the PARTneR project pilot phase for Sāmoa include: 1) strengthening
data management and risk-related data collection standards; 2) information access and availability;
3) capability and capacity building for ongoing maintenance and sustainability of project efforts.
Future research directions for consideration beyond this project include extension of the lessons
learned using more detailed asset datasets as they become available (e.g. census and gender/age-
disaggregated data), as well as more detailed hazard models and development of vulnerability
functions for different types of assets exposed to different hazards. These in turn could help to
produce information regarding direct economic loss estimation, mitigation and cost-benefit analysis
planning to inform building codes, as well as scenario modelling for various development activities.

Acknowledgements

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ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCE OF SĀMOAN COMMUNITIES

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Abstract
This paper aims to demonstrate that a ‘non-equilibrium’ perspective of island societies could provide a more nuanced understanding of their resilience to climatic and other environmental challenges. The ‘non-equilibrium’ view of resilience sees the social systems of island nations as highly dynamic areas, constantly undergoing persistent change and environmental disturbance. It is exposure to such ‘disturbances’ that fosters resilience in people. Drawing on findings on field-based research conducted on residents in Samoa, the author argues that island societies are resilient because they continue to adapt and survive despite living on small isolated landmasses and being exposed to physical and socio-economic challenges, including climate-related changes. The research findings revealed Samoans’ detailed understanding, awareness and experience of climate-related and other environmental changes. More importantly, islanders’ multiple and multi-layered connections, have enabled most to take advantage of opportunities and devise ways of managing, avoiding and reducing the risks associated with climatic and other environmental changes. These have already proven vital in enabling Samoans to cope with previous challenges, and are expected to do so in future.

Key words: climate change, islands, environment, community resilience

Introduction
The term “resilience” has become the latest catchphrase in regional and national policies of island governments. Analyses of such documents reveal the prevalence of equilibrist understandings of resilience as the process of developing adaptive responses to environmental challenges. Some scholars (Holling 1973; Folke 2006) have argued this understanding of resilience ignores the dynamic nature of environmental change and human adaptability and has resulted in futile efforts to fix problems without fully understanding neither the nature of the perceived problem or the implications of the solution. Holling (1986) stated that one could never assess the fitness of today until tomorrow as there is so much uncertainty in natural processes and the way systems behave over time and space. A few studies on islands (Resture 2006 cited in Veiyataki 2010; Kenny 2012; McNamara 2013), report that such approaches result in short-term and piecemeal strategies, which in some cases create additional challenges to these places.

This paper argues that islands, like many parts of the world, are frequently perturbed places and island societies, which have inhabited these places for more than 3,000 years, are highly dynamic social entities. The fact that such social entities continue to survive on island environments prove their current and future resilience to environmental challenges including climate change. To support this argument, this paper draws on studies interrogating the ‘adaptive capacity’ of ecological (Holling 1973; Folke 2006) and social systems (Waddell 1975; Faoulo 1993; Thaman 1990; Lefale 2010; Hetaraka 2012) in various disciplines (notably ecology, geography, sociology, psychology and economics) which have asserted evolutionary and holistic understandings of ‘places’ but also emphasize the importance of questioning how and why ‘change’ can be crucial to enhancing the adaptability or resilience of a human system. More importantly, it presents some of the findings of a qualitative research I conducted in eight Sāmoan communities. The investigation involved these main research questions: What do Sāmoans know about environmental challenges? How do Sāmoans develop/gain knowledge of environmental challenges? What coping mechanisms and strategies are they using? Do Sāmoans feel they are able to deal with future risks associated with global warming, say in the next 50+ years? As indicated by these questions, the study sought to deepen understanding of the resilience of an island society by assessing islanders’ knowledge and
awareness of environmental changes. Moreover, the study examined survival strategies devised by island residents, at the individual, family and community levels to reduce, avoid and mitigate current and future environmental related risks, and to maximize associated opportunities.

1. **Theoretical grounding of this paper: understanding the concept of ‘resilience’ and its indicators**

This paper’s conceptualization of island community resilience draws on two theoretical ideas. The first idea is a non-equilibrium stance or an evolutionary understanding of island communities whereby these are dynamic entities and their resilience would be demonstrated in their capacity to endure previous and current environmental challenges. Evolutionary understandings of resilience suggest resilience is the ability of the system to absorb change, persist and even transform (Holling 1973; 1986). The timing, nature, rate and duration of the disturbance determine the kind of change that occurs as small and big events and related processes transform organisms and systems over time (Berkes and Folke 1998; Folke 2006). Another aspect of the evolutionary view of resilience is the idea that disturbances can introduce a resilience and capacity for the system to transform itself, depending on existing resources, knowledge, skills and learning processes (Gunderson and Holling 2002; Westley 2002; Simmie and Martin 2010). In this instance, resilience could be developed by allowing the system to probe its boundaries through exposing the system to disturbance. This aspect of resilience concerns the opportunities that disturbances create in terms of the recombination of evolved structures and processes, renewal of the system and emergence of new trajectories. Some psychological studies have argued the importance of disturbances, struggle and pain to the development of a person’s character (Waller 2001; McElheran 2011).

The second idea is viewing island communities and their adaptive strategies holistically which is a crucial part of cultural ecology. Holistic ideas are found in the literature on the resilience of social ecological systems (SES) which talks about linked “Social Ecological Systems” that are neither humans embedded in ecological systems nor ecosystems embedded in human systems (Westley 2002). However humans are unique within SES because they are able to create novel approaches to change that can transform the future of the system (Gunderson 2000). Many studies of social systems have indicated key attributes of social resilience include social memory, flexible skills and learning mechanisms, people-place connections, a diverse and innovative economy, mobility, an engaging system of governance and intelligent leadership (Gunderson, 2000; Adger, 2003; Folke, 2006). It is important that these adaptive strategies are assessed holistically rather than in isolation.

2. **Testing theoretical ideas: Assessing the resilience of Sāmoan communities**

The previous section indicated that resilience underlines the capacity of individuals and systems to evolve with and adapt to environmental changes. Moreover, people can acquire resilience through their experience of living in challenging conditions. My investigations in Sāmoa sought to validate these claims by examining perceptions of environmental change as well as identifying coping strategies in eight villages in Sāmoa. Qualitative methods such as interviews and focus group discussions were used to gather the research information. Interpretivist processes such as primary and secondary coding were used to create tools to evaluate the research findings and show the resilience of selected island societies from a non-equilibrium perspective. Specifically, secondary coding which involved the combination of content analysis, deconstructing verbal and non-verbal meanings and comparative analysis helped produce templates that can be used to evaluate and present human perceptions of current and future climate-related changes but related survival strategies. The next section explains some of the study findings.
B. Heightened awareness of environmental challenges

The findings showed a heightened awareness of global warming and associated risks across the eight villages, which I argue is an aspect of resilient individuals. Greater awareness has been mainly due to personal experience of these changes and the existence of various sources of information such as older members of families, villages and churches, media and community consultations conducted mainly by the government. There has been significant progress made since independence to re-integrate the Sāmoan traditional system of faamatai into formal governance and there is evidence of people not only drawing knowledge of climate change from their personal experiences but from climate change information they have heard from external sources.

Across the eight sites the majority of participants reported that the temperature had slightly increased especially in recent decades causing dry spells, more intense winds/cyclones, frequent periods of short heavy rainfall and sea level rise. Those that were interviewed described both negative and positive impacts of these events on themselves and their families. The most frequently mentioned risks are damage to crops, houses and water sources and these had mainly occurred during cyclones. Since the 1950s additional risks had been experienced such as loss of coastal land for crops and houses, reduced productivity of the land and marine areas and salinization of coastal water pools and springs. The majority of participants also discussed the opportunities associated with these changes, mainly instances of sharing and reciprocity between neighbouring families and easier ways of accessing food. The members of one coastal village on the southern coast of Upolu recalled how there was a lot to eat during Cyclone Heta (2004) because the electricity went off and all the frozen foods had to be used. An elderly participant laughed as he remembered his experience of the 1966 cyclone and how he’d taken advantage of so many breadfruits and coconuts which had fallen due to the strong winds.

The participants’ descriptions of climate-related events and their impacts suggested the magnitude of risks they had experienced. All of the identified climatic changes have had a generally low to medium impact on the lives of the surveyed residents. Cyclones were perceived to have the strongest impact to the surveyed participants while shorter, heavier rainfalls have had the least impact in recent years. Stronger and more damaging winds are perceived as likely to have the greatest impact to the residents in the future. More hot days is also perceived to increase in magnitude. While incidences of shorter heavier rainfall are perceived to increase in the future, their magnitude would be low. Sea level rise is also perceived to have a low impact. The reason for this is because most of the village have now shifted inland.

C. Awareness of future environmental challenges

Loss of coastal lands and properties which have been significant to the majority of the participants is perceived, by most, to reduce in future. This is because most have shifted inland. Reduced productivity of the land is perceived to be a major issue in the future together with damage to crops and other properties. The occurrence of new diseases and inadequate water are perceived to emerge as significant concerns in the next fifty years. There was an outbreak of a new disease chikungunya at the time of my field survey so this could explain why this was in the minds of people. The village’s alternative sources of water are located on the coast which could be the main reason why they foresee water supply being a challenge in the future. It’s interesting to note that there were no opportunities identified by the participants.

D. Knowledge of current and future adaptive or coping strategies

The participants described many activities carried out at the family, village and church level as responses to the increasing heat and its impacts. Elderly participants and those engaging in land and
sea-based activities provided more in-depth descriptions of relevant activities while younger people tended to make brief remarks. Key themes that emerged from interviews with elderly residents in regards to enduring the impacts of global warming include social networks, diversification of household activities, developing and sharing social memory, mobility, managing the environment and having an attitude of preparedness and hard work. Younger residents stated managing the environment, mobility and adopting new methods and ways of doing things have been helpful. Some examples include, wearing cooler clothes, installing fans, using rubbish trucks for inorganic waste disposal. Both age groups agree that social networks have been very useful during events such as cyclones and the 2009 tsunami.

Most participants suggested the majority of current coping strategies will also be relevant to endure future climate change. Strengthening and diversifying social networks remains the most important strategy. Developing social memory, managing the environment, preparedness and hard work and diversification are also perceived to be important in dealing with future changes. Mobility was mentioned by only two people who were living on the coast at the time of the field work. Elderly participants also emphasized the importance of developing behaviour of preparedness and hard work. Only two people mentioned mobility because they still lived on the coastal part of the village.

**Discussion and Conclusions**

Several features of this paper’s theoretical approach enabled this investigation to establish that these island communities are resilient as well as provide a deeper understanding of their dynamic and highly complex nature. Firstly, involving non-equilibrium perspectives (Holling 1973; 1986; Berkes and Folke 1998 and Folke 2006) in the theoretical framework allowed the study to extend its focus beyond the narrow focus on island vulnerabilities and establish the resilience of islands based on the notions that they are dynamic systems comprising complex buffering capacities. The non-equilibrium idea that disturbances play an important role to developing buffering capacities of systems (Berkes and Folke 1998; Gunderson and Holling 2002; Westley 2002 and Simmie and Martin 2010) enables this study to strengthen its claim that island societies are resilient as they occupy small and isolated landmasses, which are frequently affected by environmental disturbances.

Using the cultural ecological approach was equally important as it shifted the study’s focus towards assessing the resilience of islands using social rather than physical and macro-economic indicators of resilience. As noted in the previous section, these indicators were connections, awareness and sensitivity to changes, mobility, spiritual and mental strength and diversification. The holistic approach that was used emphasized the interconnectivity of resilient strategies as well as the role of connections in understanding the extent of existing resilient practices. By exploring human perspectives and experiences of selected island societies, the study findings revealed these places experience frequent and sometimes unpredictable disturbances many of which are climate related events. These events play a significant role in strengthening connections, developing greater awareness of climate related risks and other resilient behaviour as detailed in the previous section.

To conclude, this paper argues that the resilience of Sāmoan communities is demonstrated by their recognition of current and future changes associated with environmental challenges. The majority of the participants also demonstrated knowledge of both risks and opportunities associated with the challenges they are experiencing and those that may occur in the future. Additionally, they were able to talk about the multiple strategies they are carrying out to endure current environmental challenges and how most of these strategies would be relevant to cope with future challenging events.
References


NEOLIBERAL COMPETITION AND LOCAL ADVANTAGE: A CASE OF A MULTINATIONAL CAR PARTS FACTORY IN SĀMOA

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Abstract

Yazaki Corporation, a Japan-based multinational car parts maker, shifted its labor-intensive manufacturing factory from Melbourne to Sāmoa to reduce the production costs and maintain their competitiveness in the global automotive markets. In 2017, Yazaki shut down its 26 years of operation in Sāmoa. The closure was due primarily to closure of the company’s main client Toyota automotive assembly plant in Australia. This confirmed critiques of the way in which multinationals could exploit workers in developing countries as ‘disposable commodities’. In such view, low-paid factory laborers like Yazaki Sāmoa workers are seen as powerless victims of neoliberal economy in which multinationals shift their operations to countries where they can maximize the benefits. However, my study offers another perspective; it explores the ways in which the factory employment filled in with the lives of Sāmoa workers. Many workers were able to take advantage of the re-hiring system the company had to adopt in order to maintain the production efficiency as a competitive supplier. As it adapted to operating in the Sāmoan labor market, the re-hiring system provided the factory workers flexible work choices. Accordingly, from a standpoint of Sāmoan workers, multinational factories can be seen more positively as a source of advancement despite the admittedly exploitative nature of their operations that promote the inequality in wage and wealth.

Keywords: factory workers, multinational corporation, human agency, neoliberalism

Introduction

Sāmoa Observer referred the date of 25 August 2017 as “an era in Sāmoa’s history ended yesterday” (Feagaimaali‘i-Luamanu 2017, para1). It was the day when Yazaki Sāmoa, the Japanese-owned multinational car parts manufacturing factory, officially closed. Yazaki was Sāmoa’s biggest private employer, operated since 1991 for 26 years. This closure was a direct impact of an Australian government decision to stop subsidizing the car manufacturing industry, which led to the closure of the Toyota Australia plant, the sole client of Yazaki Sāmoa since 2007. The closure of Yazaki Sāmoa is a classic example of neoliberal economy in which multinational companies can exploit workers in developing countries as if they were disposable commodities (Braddock 2016). In such a structuralist view, low-paid factory workers are typically seen as powerless victims of neoliberalism, which undermines their circumstances and promotes the inequality of wealth between core and peripheral countries. My paper, however, moves beyond these views and explores the ways in which the Yazaki factory workers used their multinational employment to expand choices in their lives. It argues that less powerful social groups in developing economies like Yazaki factory workers were able to exercise their agency, even in somewhat limited ways, against the seemingly unopposable and agentless force of multinational operations driven by the quest for profit. The stories and information, which support this study, are based primarily on my direct observations of the company’s operation and communications with the factory workers while working at Yazaki Sāmoa as part of the management team for six years.

Background

The Yazaki Corporation, the mother company of Yazaki Sāmoa, is a Japan-based multinational car parts supplier, and operates in nearly 500 different locations across 45 countries and employs a global workforce of over 290,000 people (Yazaki Corporation 2016). While the Yazaki produces
various car parts, their main product is automotive wiring harness, for which the corporation has the largest world market share in the automotive industry. An automotive wiring harness is a bundle of cables and data-circuits that run through a vehicle, distributes power and relays information to various electrical components in the vehicle. Building a wiring harness is very labour-intensive since most assembly processes are done manually. A large harness is made of more than 500 cables and circuits that are bundled together and wrapped in insulated tape by human hands and then attached to different branches. This manual assembly process is considered the most flexible and cost-effective method to accommodate a large range of part numbers, vehicle models and options that require specific sets of wiring harnesses. Minimizing the cost of labour, therefore, is crucial for harness manufacturers like Yazaki to remain comparative in the cutthroat global car parts industry.

Since 1970s, Yazaki has gradually relocated its harness manufacturing sites from industrialized countries to less industrialized countries including Sāmoa to take advantage of low wages. Initially, Yazaki set up harness factories in Melbourne and Adelaide to support the growing demands in the automotive manufacturing industry in Australia in the mid-1970s. In the mid-80s, Australia adopted a neoliberal policy to reduce tariffs on automotive parts with the aim of improving the competitiveness of domestic car makers by importing cheap car parts. This policy resulted in encouraging Australia’s car parts manufacturers including Yazaki Australia to look for a location outside Australia and produce labor-intensive products like wiring harnesses at a cheaper cost, and then import them back into Australia.

When Yazaki headquarters in Japan was looking for potential relocation sites near Australia, Indonesia, Fiji, and Sāmoa were shortlisted. While Indonesia offered the cheapest labor pool, Fiji had the best logistics to Australia, but Sāmoa had the most stable politics and an enthusiastic government. The government of Sāmoa offered Yazaki various tax exemptions, free lease of government land, and the construction of a factory building, in addition to a moderate-size cheap and nonunionized labor pool (Aiavao 1992; Malua 2009; Sasabe 1994). At that time, minimum wage in Australia was AU$10-17 (approximately SAT$18.50- SAT$31.50) per hour, whereas Sāmoa’s minimum wage was a little over SAT$1.00 per hour. Another incentive for relocation was the fact that products manufactured in Sāmoa would qualify for export tax free to Australia under the provision of the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement (Malua 2009). Considering these benefits, the headquarters decided to relocate the factories from Australia to Sāmoa.

Yazaki Sāmoa

In 1991, Yazaki began operations in Sāmoa at three different locations while the government of Sāmoa worked to complete the construction of a 25,000 square-meter factory building in Vaitele, in the outskirts of the capital Apia. In order to manufacture wiring harnesses for Toyota, Mitsubishi, and Holden all of which were located in Australia, about 1,400 local employees were hired. As the government expected, since its establishment, Yazaki Sāmoa has played a significant role in developing Sāmoa’s private sector especially in terms of job creation. During the 26 years of operation, the company employed over 60,000 locals. At its peak, when the factory had two shifts, it had employed 3,500 workers. However, by mid-2007, business declined when Toyota Australia became its sole remaining client, so the company reduced the number of employees in Sāmoa. Despite this decline, from the time of its establishment until its closure, Yazaki Sāmoa remained the
largest private sector employer, hiring around 800 workers. Therefore, international banks often referred to this multinational factory as one of the most successful outcomes of neoliberal reforms in the Pacific Islands region.

**Working conditions**

Workers of Yazaki Sāmoa especially on the shop floor were mainly young with an average age of 20-23 years old. The majority were early school leavers who had dropped out from school around year 8 or 9. Working conditions for the shop floor workers who were known as operators were difficult. Located in a poorly ventilated concrete and corrugated iron factory, the shop floor was very hot and humid especially in the afternoon with an average temperature of about 35 degrees Celsius. In this stifling environment, the operators were required to stand and assemble wires on the conveyor line while the production leaders stood behind them and periodically shouted at them to work faster in order to achieve the targeted quantity. In periods when overtime was required until 8 or 9 in the evening, operators often worked for 11 to 12 hours a day. Such long hours of work were burdensome, especially for those who commuted from the other side of the island and needed to catch a bus as early as 4:00am in order to arrive at the company before the starting time of 7:25am.

Despite their hard work and challenges they faced daily, the shop floor operators barely made SAT$100 per week, giving them an hourly wage of SAT$2.30. Such working conditions can be seen as a common picture of multinational’s super-exploitation. Sāmoan factory workers, however, were able to take advantage of the automotive industry’s global competition, which compelled the company to modify its operation policy and resulted in working in the favor of the workers. One example is the re-hiring system adopted by Yazaki Sāmoa.

**Global competitiveness and local advantages**

The global car parts industry is considered one of the most highly competitive industries in the world. In the climate of cutthroat competition, the performance of car parts suppliers is measured commonly by good quality, low cost, and just-in-time delivery (i.e., deliver only what is needed, when it is needed, and in the amount needed). To remain as a competitive supplier, Yazaki Sāmoa hired the majority of factory workers at the minimum wage and kept the production cost low. For the quality and delivery, the company needed to retain a sufficient number of well-trained shop floor operators and maintain the production efficiency with stable quality. However, retaining an adequate number of Sāmoan operators was one of the toughest challenges faced by the company as the operators did not stay with Yazaki for long. More than half of the operators employed left the factory within their first year, over 75 percent left within three years, and only about 10 percent worked at Yazaki for longer than 10 years.

The high turnover rate among Yazaki operators can be explained with reference to Sāmoan cultural practices. Daily life in a Sāmoan village is full of sudden communal demands known as fa’alavelave, which can be anything from big events such as funerals, church hall openings, or village cleanups to little matters such as baby sitting or looking after sick grandmother. Young adults are expected to do work for and to give priorities to these family, church, and village activities. In this cultural context, the young adults’ labour is an important household resource to contribute to events, and their service is often considered more important than earning a minimal wage from the factory. Further, in addition to factory wages, most of the Sāmoan families have a range of
household strategies including remittances from overseas family members and subsistence farming and fishing, to sustain their livelihood while Sāmoa’s customary land system secures their access to land.

For these reasons, the level of commitment to the factory employment among young operators was low. They joined Yazaki to help pay the bills and help their family to contribute to social, cultural, and church-related monetary contributions. In addition, being employed is a requirement to apply for a personal loan for other needs from Sāmoa National Provident Funds or other lending institutions in Apia. Hence, they wanted a job. However, when something more important came up in their lives, they quit the factory. The company, on the other hand, needed to cope with the intermittent nature of young workers’ attendance at work in order to hold the required number of operators. Therefore, though reluctantly, they adopted the rehiring system. It was the company’s countermeasure against the high turnover rate to remain a globally competitive supplier, but the rehiring policy worked in the favour of Sāmoan operators.

Initially, the company had a strict policy that forbade rehiring as a way to discourage operators from resigning once trained. They had to modify the policy and adopted the rehiring system as a production strategy to retain a required number of operators by reducing their training period. Usually the company provided a one-month training for new operators, aimed to make them productive and efficient industrial workers. The training included modules on company philosophy and rules, manufacturing processes and techniques, and Japan-based work ethics. Rehiring former operators reduced the needed training period from one month to one week, just long enough to refresh their skills and the techniques previously acquired. This system allowed the company to secure operations-ready manpower to meet the customer demands on time.

This rehiring system, at the same time, became a convenient tool that allowed young workers to move in and out of the factory according to their circumstances and needs for immediate cash. With this system, workers can quit factory when they were dissatisfied with their working conditions or when they had more important priorities in their life, knowing that they can come back to work anytime. The company had no limitation as to how many times they can rehire the same worker. In my observations, some were rehired more than five times. In this regard, the rehiring system provided operators with increased bargaining power with their employer, the multinational-owned factory, because they knew that the company depended on an adequate number of operators. Consequently, the factory workers became active agents who could shape the company policy and expand their options. The rehiring system is one of a several aspects of the Yazaki Sāmoa operation that represents how the global competitiveness in the neoliberal economy can be taken advantage by local workers.

**Conclusion**

In August 2017, despite the wishes of factory workers, Yazaki ceased its operation in Sāmoa as a result of the decline of the car manufacturing industry in Australia and its global supply chain, of which Yazaki Sāmoa was a part. The loss of Yazaki Sāmoa was a typical example of the flow-on effects of changes in transnational operations, reflecting the critique of a neoliberal economy that undermines the situation of workers in peripheral economies. However, I hope my paper today sheds a light on the different perspective on neoliberal competition and multinationals’ operation.
For its workers, the last day of Yazaki Sāmoa was the day that they lost their company and the workmates with whom they had established attachments, and was the day they lost a convenient tool to increase their work choices. Conversations with workers revealed that most of them wished Sāmoa had more multinational corporations like Yazaki to provide opportunities particularly for young workers to earn money. Such positive views may contrast with the critical studies of neoliberalism that take structural, global, macroeconomic, and mono-cultural approaches and focus primarily on overarching exploitation rather than on the small, but not insignificant, acts of resistance and agency workers may enact.

However, if development is to increase choices among people with limited opportunities and resources, I venture to propose to shift our point of reference at times, from global to local, from national to grassroots, from theoretical to practical, from colonial to millennium, from absolute truth to multiple realities, from exclusive to inclusive and then look closely at the lived experience of people we talk about in our discussion of development. As we shift our standpoint and acknowledge the perspectives of less powerful social groups, we may see different realities of neoliberalism and multinationals’ operation and may have more effective ideas of how we can reduce the inequality not only in wealth but also in life choices.

References


LITERACY
IMPLEMENTING THE PROFICIENCY ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST (PELT) IN HEN 100 - BUSINESS ENGLISH

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Abstract

During the past five years at least, there has been growing concern by stakeholders that students who have completed the HEN100 - Business English course at the National University of Sāmoa (NUS) have not been performing as expected both in the classroom and in the employment sectors. Consequently, the English and Foreign Languages (EFL) Department at NUS developed the Proficiency English Language Test (PELT) which was introduced into HEN100 as an attempt to understand and deal with these issues. This paper reports on the reasons for administering the PELT. Additionally, the author evaluates the results of the test and suggests recommendations, which could be implemented to assist the relevant lecturers and candidates with improving their performance(s) during lectures and tutorials, as well as in retaining the skills required in the workplace.

Keywords: English, literacy, Samoan students, proficiency tests

Introduction

The struggle with reading and comprehension is not new. A 2006 UNESCO report states that there are 771 million people over the age of 15 who exist without basic literacy skills. Many of those affected reside mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, West Asia, East Asia and the Pacific Region which would include Sāmoa. There are several reasons why students do not read in English in Sāmoa as they should. In a study by Vaai, Heem, Arp and Koria (2009) on literacy issues, the main findings for not reading were: too many domestic chores, lack of reading materials in English, financial constraints, the inability to comprehend vocabulary and boredom. Another significant reason in Vaai et al’s study (2009) was that if time was available, a student would prefer to play sports, as sporting careers were more lucrative for the individual’s family. Another researcher, Marsh 2003 (cited in Skelton and Francis 2003: 63) comments that television viewing resulted in the reading of fewer books. While Marsh’s study applied to the United Kingdom, the same would be relevant to Sāmoa. The overuse of mobile devices, present in almost every classroom and organization, has also had a negative impact on reading habits. Mangubhai (1995: 17) states that one reason for not choosing reading as a preferred leisure activity in Pacific Island contexts, is that “reading for pleasure—particularly, solitary reading—is not a practice that is encouraged in the societies because it is regarded as socially isolating.” This is because “in Pacific societies, activities are communal based and many homes do not allow private spaces.” In addition, “living conditions...cultural practices have not encouraged the development of the practice of wider reading.” Teasdale, Tokai, Puamau (2004: 42) add that “a culture of literacy has not yet developed in most settings in Oceania,” and that “written material is not a primary source of information gathering.

These literacy issues, which are evident even at the tertiary level in Sāmoa, led to the decision by English lecturers in 2018, to add a proficiency test, the Proficiency English Language Test (PELT), to one of the courses that is currently taught the National University of Sāmoa—the HEN 100—Business English course. This paper discusses the reasons for administering PELT in this context. The author discusses the results of the test and proposes recommendations, which could be implemented to assist the relevant lecturers and candidates with improving their performance(s) during lectures and tutorials, assignments and examinations, as well as in retaining the skills required in the workplace. It must be noted that even though the students’ pass rates of HEN 100
are at expected levels, (or example, pass rate for final exam 2018 was 88%, details in a later section), there are still valid concerns from lecturers and employers alike. These apply to both classroom engagement and employment practices. It is hoped that the analysis of the PELT results may offer a more profound insight into the reasons for and complexities of the problem(s).

**Literature Review**

There are many global organizations, which administer Language Proficiency Tests for a variety of reasons. Beinborn, Zesch and Gurevych (2014: 517) state that “language proficiency tests are used to evaluate and compare the progress of learners.” Some of the popular assessments used are Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and The International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Both tests include listening, reading, writing and speaking exercises. According to Li (2018, p. 283) the “TOEFL and IELTS are...widely available and accepted...as a proof of English proficiency as a foreign language for non-native English speakers with a plan to study in a foreign higher institution where they are required to communicate effectively in the classroom...the campus and...in the culture.” Li (2018: 283–284) also points out that there are “domestic universities...in non-English speaking countries,” where students have to sit the TOEFL or IELTS test before admission to a post graduate programme. “Peking University, ... requires its Ph.D candidates to have a certificate of Academic IELTS (no less than Band 7) or TOEFL.iBT( no less than 95). Otherwise those candidates have to participate in the English test in accompany with other subject tests administered by the university itself.” To add to the debate, Pandey and Pandey (2014, p. 93) highlight the fundamental issues with “enhanced communication skills in English.” These two researchers also emphasise the importance of English during employment interviews, where “interviewers conduct interviews in English...the most commonly used language in the business world. Most business contracts are written in English. Handling international business deals require effective skills in English. English is the preferred business language because it is an exact language” Pandey and Pandey (2014: 93).

The PELT used in this study was devised locally. While PELT was originally designed by the English and Foreign Languages’ (EFL) Department of NUS especially for the Foundation students enrolled in all faculties, there was no reason why it could not have been administered to students in another course. As a consequence, the test was added in an attempt to identify the underlying causes for students’ difficulties, sometimes “unfavourable results” in HEN 100, and subsequent “unacceptable performance”, in workplace(s) after graduation. All these sentiments have been expressed by stakeholders during consultations with NUS’ Administration and the EFL Department (NUS, 2016–2018).

This paper is the first step of what the author hopes will be a work in progress for at least three (3) years at NUS. This is with particular reference to HEN 100 – Business English, and the ongoing difficulties that have been expressed by shareholders, regarding graduates who are now employed in both public and private institutions. Two studies dealing with similar issues were published in 2014 (Heem and Alexander-Pouono) and in 2016 (Alexander-Pouono). However, in order to obtain additional information, apart from analysing examination results and interviews with relevant personnel, it was decided to add another dimension, viz. the addition of a Proficiency English Language Test. This was to ascertain whether or not students had the “expected levels” of language competency required for the course, and if there were any deficiencies, what strategies could be implemented to assist in improving the ‘dilemma.’ The same could apply to other courses as well.
Background of the study

At the National University of Sāmoa, the language of instruction is English (NUS Calendar 2018.) The only courses which are delivered in Sāmoan are the Sāmoan options. First Year Degree students are given the choice of two writing courses in English, which are HEN 107, English for Academic Purposes and HEN 100 – Business English. The former is intended for those who wish to improve their writing skills, while the latter was specifically tailored to suit the needs of the Sāmoan Society of Accountants. The course, (HEN 100), which has been in existence for over thirty years was created by the English Department, at the request of the Society of Accountants for those engaged in industries, various Government Ministries and agencies, as well as for employees in the public and private sectors. The main purpose of this core paper is to “strengthen the applications of the work force” (Heem and Alexander-Pouono 2014: 48), and it continues to be offered by the English Department at NUS.

HEN 100 – Business English is taught during Semester 1 of each academic year. It is a fourteen (14) week course with two hours of lectures and a one hour tutorial per week per student. All lectures are given in English by a team of academics and sometimes, other experts are invited to present. While attendance is compulsory, especially for tutorials, it is still a problem for some students, owing to, for example, clashes with other courses, transportation difficulties, personal commitments etc. The lectures are held on Wednesday evenings, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm., followed by tutorials from 7:30 to 8:30 pm. Other tutorial sessions are on Fridays from 8:00 – 9:00 am, and 9:00 – 10:00 am. The Wednesday tutorials are to accommodate those who prefer to have their sessions then or who may have clashes with other subjects on Fridays.

The course content involves a variety of topics, beginning with the communication process, listening skills, intercultural/international communication, impromptu, prepared/formal, debating, telephone etiquette, reading and media, spoken orders and directions. Emphasis is also placed on writing skills as shown with the requirements for clear technical writing, e.g. memos, summary writing, report writing (proposals, tender documents, incident, progress, sales, and laboratory reports). In addition, students are taught how to compose and write correspondence for a variety of reasons, including letters to the editor, letters of complaint or answers to queries, employment applications, the different types of curriculum vitae and/or resumes, and how to write questions and answers for interviews in the employment sectors (EFL Department 2018).

The next aspect deals with the composition of the students who enrol in this course. When this requirement was first introduced in 1990, the first cohorts were mature students who were studying on a part-time basis to upgrade their skills and their academic qualifications. Participants in the group were aged between 25 to 50 years, and they were employed in several sectors of public or private institutions. While some already had established careers, there were others who were just beginning their training towards a specific line of business (Heem and Alexander-Pouono 2014). The more experienced participants were able to make informed contributions to tutorial discussions, owing to their years of service in the business fields, especially with oral discussions or practical exercises. This is no longer the case, as the majority of students lack employment experience, hence the reasons for concern to lecturers and employers alike.

The following is a breakdown of the HEN 100 students for Semester 1, 2018. The initial number registered was 104 students, as number(s) may change slightly owing to late enrolments, course changes and withdrawals from course or programme. There were eighty three (83) females and twenty one (21) males, ranging in ages from 18 to over 40 years. One hundred (100) of the
undergraduates were full time learners, with four (4) attending on a part time basis. Four (4) of the learners were registered in the Faculty of Arts, while the remaining one hundred (100) were enrolled with the Faculty of Commerce (Faculty of Business and Entrepreneurship). Table 1 shows the number of students from each category. The highest numbers of students, forty-one (41), were graduates with a Foundation Certificate General. The next largest group was one of thirty-five (35) graduates with a Foundation Certificate in Commerce. In addition, there were other Foundation Certificate graduates: six (6) from the Faculty of Arts, four (4) from the Faculty of Education, while the others were mature entrants (2), as well as students with previous degrees (4), and six (6) unknown. The table (1) also shows that there were only six (6) employed students (NUS 2018).

### Table 1: Background of students enrolled in HEN100 Business English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Entry Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mature Entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Foundation Certificate - Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Foundation Certificate- Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Foundation Certificate - General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Foundation Certificate – Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Students - previous degrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that the majority of students (59) for the 2018 intake were between the ages of eighteen to twenty (18–20). Twenty nine (29) were in the twenty-one (21) to twenty-five (25) age group, thirteen (13) aged between twenty-six to forty (26–40), with three (3) over the age of forty (40) (NUS 2018). This could possibly mean that the younger students require additional workplace expertise in the classroom, prior to full time employment, with extensive practice in both oral and writing skills.

### Table 2: Age groups of the 2018 HEN100 Business English students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Students</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>18–20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>21–25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>26–30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>31–35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>36–40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>41+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Owing to the design and expectations of the course, it would have been ideal to have undergraduates who were exposed to the commercial world, either on a full time or part time basis, as this would have allowed them to be “active participants in the ‘real world of business and trade’” (Alexander-Pouono 2016: 51). However, since many of the learners undertake degree studies immediately after the completion of the Foundation Certificate at NUS, or maybe mature students without previous work experience, tutorial exercises, role playing sessions or discussions involving workplace practices or client satisfaction or dissatisfaction become ones where the majority of the learners are seen as “passive participants” (EFL Department 2018).

Applicants can enter HEN 100 with a pass in HEN 004 Foundation English, mature entry (NUS Calendar 2015) or a cross credit in the required area of interest from another tertiary institution, for example, the University of the South Pacific (USP) (NUS Calendar 2015). There is no requirement for employment in either a private or public institution. Since the expectation is that students are already equipped with the necessary listening and reading skills, as well as familiarity with current trends in business practices and work ethics, many students find some aspects of the course to be very challenging. For example, during an assessment on “Giving Talks”, where students were each required to give a three to five minute impromptu speech, there were some who chose to be absent because they did not want to present in front of their peers. When asked why he missed the two tutorials, Pablo* (not his real name, 2018) said, “My English is not good enough. I do not want the class to laugh at me.” As a result, a lack of participation will have a negative impact on course mark and final grade for the particular student.

Methodology

The data was collated using the information from the PELT, which was administered for the first time in 2018 to this particular group. The success rate for HEN 100 – Business English during the past four (4) years (2015–2018) was also collected to provide some benchmarks to the study. While students continue to pass HEN 100 – Business English, it was decided to administer the PELT to the incoming intake of students in 2018, in order to ascertain as to whether or not their existing reading and comprehension levels were ‘up to par,’ and if not, what corrective measures could be taken to improve the situation.

The PELT was administered during the second lecture (Week 2) of the HEN 100 course, where ninety three (93) students were present. It (PELT) was divided into three (3) sections. They were as follows: Section A: Language and Grammar (15 marks), Section B: Comprehension (20 marks), and Section C: Summary Writing (15 marks).

Results and Discussion

The success rates for HEN100 final results during 2015-2018 were as follows: 2015 – 69%; 2016 – 88%; 2017 – 100%; and 2018 – 88%. For 2018, Table 3, below shows the course marks for 107 students, while Table 4 highlights the final results for 104 students. The marks are allocated as follows: 40% for internal assessment or course work (10 quizzes, 4 tasks and 1 major assignment) and 60% for final examination (4 sections: A – Short Answers, B – Enumeration, C – Matching Type and D – Technical Writing).

103
Table 3 shows the course marks for HEN 100 – Business English 2018 (EFL, 2018).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>No of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-29</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the students, 71 out of 107, scored between 21–29 marks, while 17 learners obtained scores of 11–20, 11 candidates gained 30–40 points, with 8 getting below 10 marks. Some of the reasons for low grades were absenteeism, non submission of tasks, and failure to revise for quizzes.

Table 4 gives an analysis of the final grades obtained by the 2018 cohort of HEN 100 – Business English Students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>DNC*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pass Rate = 88%  
Mean = 59.5%  
Median = 61%

*Did Not Complete course, e.g. failure to submit major assignment.

There were 104 candidates who sat the final examination, with a pass rate of 88%, a mean of 59.5%, and a median of 61%. Of the 104 students who sat the examination, the results were as follows: A (4), B (33), C (53), D (6), E (6), with 2 classified as DNC (did not complete) (EFL, 2018). The most common grade was ‘C’. (While comparative grades with other years have not been included, ‘C’ appears to be quite a popular grade. There were many students who stated that it was only necessary to ‘pass’ the course, as it was not his/her area of ‘specific interest’. This would be of great concern as it impacts on the capacity of students at all levels to meet the expectation of potential employers, especially after they graduate from NUS.

The data obtained from PELT, Table 3 (showing the breakdown of the HEN 100 – 2018 course marks), as well as that of Table 4 (explaining the final results for the same course), (EFL, 2018), confirm that the majority of students are passing with a ‘C’ average, which is cause for concern.
This ‘low achievement level’ may account for the unsatisfactory performance of graduates at the workplace, as expressed by stakeholders in several consultations with NUS’ Administration and the EFL Department (NUS 2018). Previous studies undertaken by Heem and Alexander-Pouono (2014), and Alexander-Pouono (2016) identified similar issues. In an attempt to improve students’ competence in the work arena, it was decided to include the PELT component in order to ascertain what were the issues, and what corrective measures may be necessary to equip graduates with further business knowledge and/or skills in order to comply with the expectations of prospective employers, especially in the corporate sectors.

With reference to the PELT that was administered to the HEN 100, 2018 group, Table 5, given below, shows the sections, the composition of each part of the test, as well as the results. The details are: Section A (Grammar and Language) 15 marks, Section B (Comprehension) 20 marks, and Section C (Summary) 15 marks. For Sections A and B, the questions were multiple choice in design, while the requirement for Section C was to read and summarise a given passage in 100 words.

The findings of the PELT (Table 5) show as follows: firstly, in Section A, (Grammar and Language), the marks ranged from 1 to 14 (out of 15,) with 16 (out of 93) students gaining 7. Secondly, in Section B, (Comprehension), the scores varied from 4 to 17 (total mark 20), with 16 (16/93) attaining 10 marks. However, in Section C, (Summary Writing), with an allocation of 15 marks, there were 45 (45/93) students who obtained 8 marks. The highest grade given was 10, while the lowest was 3. Some learners simply ‘copied’ from the original text. When a tally of the total marks was made, it showed that the pass rate was 59%, or 55 students out of a possible 93. It must be noted that some of the cohorts may have undertaken the PELT in 2017 or maybe at a prior date, but no comparison was undertaken at this stage.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Section A: Grammar &amp; Language (15 marks)</th>
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In my experience here at NUS, it is an extremely ‘gargantuan task’ to encourage students to read in English for study purposes, much less for pleasure. This applies to both foundation and degree students. Previous students in another course HEN 104 – Children’s and Young Adults’ Literature, (which I also teach), commented on some of the reasons for not being fluent in English. Their rationale included parents and caregivers who were unable to speak English, not being exposed to English reading books as young children because of financial or other reasons, while another was that language of instruction at their primary and (some) secondary schools was Sāmoan. They also cited the difficulty of reading textbooks in English later on and the ‘trauma’ of taking examinations in English.

Information obtained from the World Data on Education (UNESCO-IBE 2011) regarding the structure and organization of the education system in Sāmoa, state, among other aspects, that, “as regards language, the goal is for all students to be equally competent in Sāmoan and English. This requires that both languages are used as means of instructions as well as the learning of the different features of both languages. Both Sāmoan will be used as the shared medium of instruction in primary schools. For Secondary schools English will be the main medium of instruction and all secondary teachers, irrespective of subject specialization, are language teachers” (MESC 2016 cited in UNESCO- IBE 2011). However, many students struggle with English, even at university level.

At the current time, the course does not include a practical component. HEN100 would be strengthened if it incorporates ‘the need to know’ skills to suit industry training needs. In addition, the ‘nice to know’ skills depend on the assessment of the programme and whether or not they meet the Graduate Profile and what the industry needs.

One possible reason for the difficulty with English is given by Betham-Scanlan (2016: 212–213) that part of the problem is the late exposure to English. Moreover, “the educational life of a student ... becomes the shared responsibility of primary and secondary teachers, as well as parents of the child. When these students arrive at university, we try our very best to help them. The problem is that we have received them academically malnourished, lacking the skills which they should have acquired while in their childhood and youth.” Betham-Scanlan (2016: 214–216) also identifies constraints to the problem. Among them are, “...the restricted contact to English, the timing of introduction to the language (English), when the majority of families speak Sāmoan at home, the lack of reading, as well as an inadequate supply of suitable reading material.”
Given the findings, the next task is to undertake a more in depth study to determine what exactly is required to improve new students’ abilities in the four areas as mentioned previously. They are reading, writing, listening and speaking in English.

Conclusion

The data collected demonstrate that there are areas, which warrant attention. The first is to enhance the reading, writing, listening and speaking skills of learners, which would improve the scores in the Proficiency English Language Test (PELT). The second is to raise the achievement level in HEN 100 from ‘C’ to ‘As and Bs.”, while the final necessity is for a change in students’ attitudes towards English as a prerequisite for a successful career in the corporate world. This means that they (students) need to be convinced that a ‘C’ average in HEN 100 – Business English may be insufficient to meet the requirements of employers, either in a local, regional, or international organization.

Recommendations

In order to improve the expected outcomes of HEN 100 – Business English, there is need for the following suggestions.viz. Firstly, there should be compulsory reading assignments on a variety of topics. Secondly, additional weekly grammar exercises should be given on all aspects of the syllabus. Thirdly, the English and Foreign Languages (EFL) Department, in collaboration with the Faculty of Business and Entrepreneurship (FOBE), should design a specialist course in Report Writing at the 200 or 300 levels, tailored specifically for technical writing in the corporate world. Next, if possible, the number of tutorials could be increased from one to two hours per week to enable more practical application of business correspondence. Moreover, the EFL Department and FOBE should conduct periodic collaborations and consultations with the various stakeholders, departments, public and private enterprises to ensure that course content and practice are relevant, current, and compatible with the needs of individuals and industries. In addition, the establishment of an Industry Advisory Panel should be effected at the earliest opportunity to ensure that the English and communication training needs of employers are addressed and further consolidated.

To further strengthen the English Curriculum, on-going curriculum development workshops need to be implemented with the relevant industry stakeholders to identify and address on-going English and communication needs in the workplace. Identified industry training needs should assist NUS in ensuring that the design and teaching of the English courses are efficient and aligned to meet the Graduate Profile. Particular emphasis should be placed on integrating a balance of theory and practical learning which is highly interactive and meaningful to the learner. Practical strategies may include and not be limited to role plays, case studies with different communication scenarios, supervised mock job interviews with guest lecturers from industry and the like. Generic skills are essential for the workforce but specialised skills can be acquired as on-the-job training. This is why assessment instruments should be especially formulated to reflect the practical nature of the course so that feedback can be used to gauge the success of the classes.

In conclusion, the EFL Department could consider group follow up refresher sessions and workshops. Customized training can then be delivered on site, according to the specific needs of the particular organization or institution. This would be at a cost and time to be negotiated between the two parties (EFL-NUS and the other party). While the process may involve a change in pedagogy or course content, it is hoped that the end result(s) would be the ‘retention’ of acquired skills.
Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank all those who assisted with this report.

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Abstract

This paper highlights a ‘way forward’ in addressing the low levels of mathematics achievement in Sāmoan Schools with a special focus on Primary and Early-Childhood. The main theme of this paper is—the child’s learning of numeracy starts at infancy and develops together with language and cultural behaviors through observations and interactions with h/her surroundings and environment including family members. It is suggested that, from the time an ‘infant smiles’ when h/she sees Mum or Dad and ‘screams’ when a stranger tries to get the child’s attention—that recognition or the ability to differentiate images and patterns, is when the learning of mathematics has begun.

This paper has two examples of how cultural and native language encourages the learning of mathematics. (i) Australian Aboriginal culture—using ‘Story Telling’ method and (ii) the native Philippine language (Waray) in the teaching and learning of mathematics at Primary and Kindergarten. In addition, an example on the ‘concept of fraction’ from the Sāmoan Mathematics Curriculum Years 1–8 (2011) to highlight a concern using the correct Sāmoan terms to reflect accurate and equivalent mathematical meanings.

Keywords: mathematics, curriculum, numeracy, education, language

Introduction

In general, mathematics is the study of measurement, relationships, and properties of quantities and sets, using numbers and symbols. Arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and calculus are branches of mathematics.

Mathematics is a foreign language for many students (Kenny et.al, 2005). According to some experts in ‘language development’, language begins before the baby is born.

“Language development begins before birth. Towards the end of pregnancy, a fetus begins to hear sounds and speech coming from outside the mother’s body.” (Encyclopedia of Children’s Health: http://www.healthofchildren.com/L/Language-Development.html)

For Sāmoan children who learn English and Mathematics they become ‘tri-lingual’ learners. An example, number “12” – “twelve” (English), “sefulu-ma le-lua” (Sāmoan) and “base 10 and 2” = “ten and 2” (Chinese version).

Consider the numbers ‘eleven’ to ‘fourteen’, ‘twenty’, ‘hundred’ and ‘thousand’ in both English and Sāmoan. Eleven = sefulu tasi (10+1), twelve = sefulu lua (10+2), thirteen = sefulu tolu (10+3), fourteen = sefulu fa (10+4) and twenty = lua sefulu (10+10), a hundred = selau (100=10 lots of 10), a thousand = afe (1,000=10 lots of 100).

It is clear from comparing the English and Sāmoan words for numbers (11 to 14, 20, 100 and 1000) that the concept of ‘quantities’ (eg. ‘eleven’ = ‘sefulu tasi’) represented by ‘numerical symbol’ (eg. 11= sefulu ma le tasi) are easier to comprehend and understand in Sāmoan then the English especially at the early stage of the child’s language development.

At the early stages of mathematical language development, the Sāmoan language provides logic and consistency with values and quantities as well as providing a ‘conceptual numerical structure’ upon which further mathematical learning in Sāmoan or English are built on.
Thus, the ‘language development’ of Sāmoa mathematics is defined, here, as the process by which Sāmoan children or learners from the early stages of infancy come to understand and communicate Sāmoan mathematics using Sāmoan language. (http://healthofchildren.com)

**A Sāmoan perspective**

Knowledge of numbers or “numeration” is developed at the same time the child learns the native language, in this case Sāmoa, and as the child participates in the daily routines in h/her cultural environment, h/she learns from other members of the family and those in that familiar ‘environment’. From the time an infant smile upon recognizing the faces of Mum, Dad and familiar others in the surroundings and screams when a stranger tries to get attention—the learning of mathematics has begun.

Recognition or the ability to differentiate images, patterns, sizes, names, etc are the first signs of ‘learning and understanding’ in the child’s own native-language. The ‘mother language’ and the ‘abstract language’ of mathematics are one and the same interconnected processes of learning and understanding at infancy. For instance, the child/baby can “signal” for mother’s attention that h/she is hungry, wet or just to get attention by ‘crying’. How is crying a ‘signal’ of ‘abstract language’ of mathematics? Because the “mother” could respond to the baby’s crying in a ‘qualitative’ manner and decides the baby needs her affection and love - demonstrated by her talking, smiling, kissing and hugging the baby. On the other hand, “mother” could respond to the baby’s crying in a ‘quantitative’ manner and decides to (i) feed the baby (ii) get the pram ready (iii) take the baby out for a walk and fresh air. Or ‘mother’ could provide both ‘qualitative and quantitative’ care. Thus, from the very early stages of a child’s life the ‘mother language’ and the ‘abstract language’ of mathematics (qualitative and quantitative) are interconnected processes of learning.

This early recognition by the child of who’s who, what’s what, good/bad behavior, the rights and wrongs, in the child’s environment are the ‘key foundational structures’ for the child’s learning of his/her SĀMOAN LANGUAGE and SĀMOAN MATHEMATICS.

As a Sāmoan mathematician and mathematics educator, who grew up in Sāmoa during the days when classrooms had no desks or chairs but just a ‘fala’ (mat) on the floor—there was very ‘little’ distraction for the child from learning to read, write, and learning basic arithmetic. Hence, whatever I learned at Primary school and at home in those early years were ‘qualitative and quantitative’ mathematics that provided the ‘sound foundational structures’ upon which my later learning of ‘higher mathematical structures’ became one interface that I can access when requires.

**Australian Aboriginal cultural approach – Story telling**

An example of using ‘story-telling’ a method of communication amongst the Australian Aboriginal tribes being used in teaching and learning mathematics, in particular ‘algebra’. The MAST (Maths as Story Telling) is a pedagogical approach developed by Dr Chris Mathews, an Aboriginal from the Quandamooka Nation (Moreton Bay, Queensland)—as a resource support for teachers to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the mathematics curriculum (Queensland Studies Authority [Nov 2011]). Dr Mathews believed that Aboriginal culture plays a key role in children’s learning of mathematics and argued that most students (indigenous and non-
indigenous) only experience mathematics in abstract form (i.e. they stay within the cloud), see Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: An example from a Year 2 student who used the MAST approach**

![Conventional mathematical solution](image)

Native Philippine Language (Waray)

A study by Espada (2012) in the Philippines showed young children (kindergarten pupils) that are exposed to and learn mathematics in their native language, performed better than those who were exposed to mathematics through the English language. She concluded from her study, that the use of the native language in teaching kindergarten mathematics resulted in a higher mathematics performance than the use of a foreign language, for example English, as a medium of instruction.

**Current state of mathematics in Sāmoa**

The low numbers of students enrolling to do Foundation and First year mathematics units at the National University of Sāmoa is an indicator of low-achievement in secondary mathematics—which is a reflection on the quality of mathematics teaching and learning provided at the early stages, in Pre-school and Primary school levels. I suggest that a ‘key element’ that links ‘knowledge’ to ‘conceptual’ understanding is ‘missing’.

**Is this ‘key element’ the Sāmoan language?**

At the introduction, I suggested that knowledge of numbers or “numeracy” is developed at the same time the child learns the native language, in this case Sāmoan, and as the child participates in the daily routines in h/her cultural environment, h/she learns from other members of the family and those in that familiar ‘environment’. In other words, the Sāmoan language adds “structure” to the learning of mathematics and numeracy (or basic arithmetic of adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing) of whole numbers (quantities). These ‘foundational skills’ underpin the other higher levels of learning mathematics.

**Mathematics curriculum Years 1-8 (2011)**

The existing Mathematics Curriculum for Years 1–8 (2011) in Sāmoa was not designed for Sāmoan teachers nor the Sāmoan culture and language. The current Mathematics Curriculum was designed for the Australian English-speaking nation.

The English language is indeed the medium of communication almost universally—but not for learning mathematics if the ‘people’ have their own culture and language as we have in Sāmoa.
As an example, let us consider “What is a Fraction?”

What is a FRACTION – by definition - a FRACTION is a “whole quantity divided into equal parts”.

Example: 1 whole divided by 4 = 4 equal parts = 1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4

In teaching the concept of fractions to a group of student-teachers—I gave each teacher an A4 paper and asked them to “show me how to get 1/4 using the A4”. The teachers started folding the A4—“a half and then half again”. Well done – to all. But when I asked to describe in writing ‘how they got the 4-quarters.’ Only a few described the “process of folding to achieve 4 equal shapes”. The majority just described the “solution” eg. 1/4 or “one divided by 4.”

Two weeks later I gave a topic test and the first question was,—“Explain in your own words, what is a fraction?”

Around 40% of student-teachers had written “numerator/denominator”—this result indicates that once learning has been ‘consolidated’ in the memory, then it would be very difficult to “undo later”. This result is of concern because it indicates that these student-teachers would very likely teach their students this ‘incorrect’ definition of a fraction.

The above exercise, is a good indicator why many pupils when they reach High School struggle with mathematics—because during their learning at Primary level in which ‘key foundational concepts’ (or building blocks) that are required for further conceptual understanding of mathematics would in many cases learnt “incorrectly” and not put right.

Mathematics curriculum Years 1-8 (2011) – Sāmoan version

The next stage in learning and understanding the concept of “what is fraction”, was to look at the Sāmoa version of the Australian Mathematics Curriculum and see how ‘a fraction is defined’ in the Sāmoan language. The definition of a “fraction” in Sāmoan is “vaega-mea”—this definition means “divide into parts”. Although this definition is ‘partly correct’, it is not satisfactory for conceptual understanding and the teaching of mathematics.

The term Fraction in English mathematics means “dividing a WHOLE quantity (or unit) into EQUAL PARTS.”

Therefore, the term Fraction in Sāmoan should be – “vaega-mea tutusa” or “divide into Equal parts.”

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THE IMPORTANCE OF READING: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Reading comes from the root word ‘read’ which can be a verb or noun in definition is the act or an instance of reading or perusing. To read is to interpret or translate information in a different medium such as writing. This research paper discusses how reading has helped me develop an interest in the English language. Moreover, the paper looks at my experience as a neophyte in academia, as a tutor in the English and Foreign Languages Department. Reading is the keynote to knowledge, breaking barriers in language and communications. The discussion concludes with some suggestions to encourage reading.

Keywords: reading, language, knowledge, English, education

Introduction

There is a Sāmoan saying that ‘A lelei le amataga, e lelei lona taunuuga/ a good beginning resounds a good ending.’ In the educational context, this phrase would translate as—if the foundation knowledge is solid, a child will flourish. This is how I perceive the importance of learning how to read as a child.

Reading is a crucial skill to possess and it has been a key factor to my academic achievement. My joy in reading comes from my family, who taught me how to read at an early age. I learned new words through reading and listening to stories and new sounds. Although I did not understand it first, I was beginning to be transformed by this new skill. My knowledge of a range of words improved and I began to understand storylines as well, simply because I could read. This paper portrays my journey as a young reader to illustrate the significance of this vital skill for learners.

Early introduction to reading

I was taught how to read by my grandmother (my mother’s mother) by reading the Bible and newspapers in the Sāmoan language. She divided words into syllables for me to learn. She taught me my first words which consisted of my family relatives names. After learning how to read and pronounce my family’s names I started learning additional words until I could finally learn how to read on my own. Proper pronunciation was also important and she made sure of that. From this young age I developed a love for reading. Doake (1985) verifies the power of this inevitable process in informal learning in his study.

According to Slaughter (1993) who frequently cites Doake claims that children know about books before they go to school for formal instructions. “Their parents and others read stories to them, and children imitate this behaviour by going through favourite books on their own and reading them from memory, often with amazing accuracy” This is true based on how a child’s memory works. Listening to their parents as they tell stories allow their memories to grasp firmly what the story is. Thus when the child comes across a book with the same story or tale introduced to them by their parents precisely, the child will have no problem in identifying the story. In my case when I was young, stories like ‘Sina and the Tuna’, ‘Vaea and Apaula’ were some stories my mother told me as a child. Thus when I came across a book consisting of the story I already knew what the story was based on the title and the contents of the story.
Reading helped me progress at secondary school education at Sāmoa College through the study of English Literature where I was introduced to modern classics such as ‘The Silver Sword’, and ‘Wasteland’ and some contemporary Sāmoan works such as ‘Guilty Rain’, just to name a few. Through reading, I broadened my vocabulary ability that greatly helped me in my writing. Furthermore, reading helped me process and understand the literature I was studying as a young adult and I was able to identify with the issues and offer some responses rhetorically the issues raised by various authors.

Observing students’ reading difficulties

An individual with sound reading skills is also a confident public speaker. Unfortunately, I have discovered that young students that I have worked with not only struggle with reading comprehension, they shy away from public speaking. Words pronunciation tended to be very poor and there is always a reluctance to stand in front of the class to express an opinion. These behaviors are symptoms of missing foundation blocks of education, such as reading skills.

The reading processes I was introduced to as a child assisted my academic journey as an undergraduate student at the tertiary level. I studied English at the National University of Sāmoa. Linguistics was difficult but Literature was always enjoyable. I must say that I was only able to grasp the language because of my love of reading. Now I am a junior lecture of English, teaching in the Foundation Programme since 2018. It was not long before I discovered that the majority of my students do not share the same joy in reading. And this correlated to their lax attitude towards class reading material in which they struggled to understand. Their reading comprehension was very weak.

I found my students performed poorly in the class activities and assignments. Written expression was the biggest encounter, with most of them showing a lot of grammatical errors, limited vocabulary and common misused words such as loose/lose, their/there, and affect/effect etc. I also noticed although some students had brilliant ideas, they were unable to structure their arguments coherently. From my perspective, I believe that the root of all these problems was level of reading comprehension. Moreover, their attention span when reading was very low.

SRA reading laboratory

One of the strategies that the English and Foreign Languages Department has used since 2013, to improve the reading comprehension skills level for Foundation students was to introduce the Science Research Associates Inc. reading laboratories, commonly known as SRA cards. These self-assessed exercises develop young readers through personalized K–12 reading content that ensures each student is working at the right level and moving ahead at his or her own pace. Although I notice some small improvement, there is still a long way to go because of the varieties of learners in my class. Pound (1951) observed that no two readers’ ambitions, mediocre as they may be, are identical. As a teacher of the English, I have to inspire my students to be interested in reading. To do that, I had to first trace their journeys as young readers.
Becoming a reader

The aiga or family is the child’s first learning environment where reading supposed to be introduced by parents and those close to the child. By the time a child starts early childhood education, he/she would have already grasped reading or familiarity of stories read, even though they may not understand it. Goodman (1984) posited in his research of numerous evidence that show children do not wait until school before they start reading. Parents will often testify to a child’s ability to recognize their favourite ice-cream from an advertisement and many will read the labels as they go round the local shops or recognize street names and signs. Goodman further explained that young children might not comprehend the relationships between English symbols and their sounds but they have no problem in reaching the meaning. What Goodman and others highlight is that that children’s understanding of environmental print is linked to literacy.

Barriers to reading

Many scholars have highlighted the numerous barriers to reading. Family socioeconomic conditions affect a child’s development of reading skills. The children who are most at risk for reading failure enter kindergarten and the elementary grades without these early informal reading experiences. Frequently, many poor readers have not consistently engaged in the language play that develops an awareness of sound structure and language patterns. They have limited exposure to bedtime and naptime reading. Equally, children from poverty stricken areas, those with limited proficiency in English, those from homes where the parents’ reading levels and practices are low, and those with speech, language, and hearing impairment are at risk of reading failure. However, many children with robust oral language experience, average to above average intelligence, and frequent early interactions with literacy activities also have difficulties learning to read.

Technological improvement and the digital age have also influenced our reading habits and attitudes. The introduction of modern gadgets such as iPhones, ipads, laptops have opened up access to reading material online and the portability of library books. Many are confronted on the choice on which to choose, a printed book or an electronic version of the book via the internet. We don’t have to own a physical book to access content anymore. There is a myriad of different ways to read books, articles and any other kind of written material. We also have many screens that allow us to interact with content, from eye-friendly e-book readers to shiny tablets and smartphones. Interestingly, however, printed book sales are also still strong in terms of sales and there has been little to no significant drop in the market for hard copies. Yet, with the availability of books or ebooks and gadgets that are supposed to improve their learning, our young people’s reading ability still continues show no signs of improvement.

Recommendations for reading

The following are some considerations for strategies on how to improve reading and literacy. In the first instance, I believe that literacy instruction should build on what children already know about oral and written language. Slaughter (1993), argues that instructional experiences should be focused on the comprehension of meaningful text rather than on isolated skill development.

Secondly, I believe that emergent readers and writers should be encouraged to take risks as they attempt to comprehend and use print. Errors should be regarded a natural part of the
development of literacy abilities. To do this, requires positive reinforcement where children are seen as people capable of exploring and enjoying oral language and print. The success of such strategy lies with the imaginative teacher who should model reading and writing frequently for the children. Teachers should read aloud regularly from a wide variety of literary works, particularly from predictable texts that are familiar to the children. Moreover, children should have many opportunities to read independently. Furthermore, reading should be integrated with the other components of communication (listening, speaking, and writing) and incorporated across the curriculum.

**Benefits of reading**

The following list highlights the benefits of reading to an individual

- Sets you up to succeed.
- Develops Language skills.
- Exercises your brain.
- Enhances concentration.
- Encourages a thirst for knowledge.
- Develops imagination and creativity.
- Helps develop empathy.
- Provides entertainment.
- Creates a bond.
- Meditates your mind and puts you at ease.

**Skills involved in reading**

As a way forward I would like to discuss briefly the skills involved in reading. I draw from Sousa’s (2011) discussions some of the aspects that we, as teachers of the English language must take note. These include Phonological and phonemic awareness so young readers can recognize the smaller components of words, such as syllables, into individual sounds. For example, phonologically awareness enables a reader or listener to identify the difference between bat and pat and bat and bet. Before tackling the printed word, children need to be able to recognize that words are made up of individual sounds (phonemes) and that these sounds can be manipulated to create new words. This skill is called phonemic awareness (a sub division of phonological awareness) and includes the ability to isolate a phoneme (first, middle, or last) from the rest of the word, to segment words into their component phonemes, and to delete a specific phoneme from a word.

The second skill to develop for young readers includes the alphabetic principles and phonics. The alphabetic principle describes the understanding that spoken words are made up of phonemes and that the phonemes are represented in written text as letters. This system of using letters to represent phonemes is very efficient in that a small number of letters can be used to write a very large number of words. Matching just a few letters on a page to their sounds in speech enables the reader to recognize many printed words. Phonics is an instructional approach that builds on the alphabetic principle and associates letters and sounds with written symbols. To demonstrate phonics knowledge, a child tells the teacher which letter is needed to change cat to can. Simply learning letter-sound relationships during phonics instruction does not necessarily lead to phonemic awareness.
Vocabulary knowledge is the third skill to gauge readers’ imagination. Readers must usually possess a word in their mental dictionary in order to reorganize it in print. Children learn the meanings of most words indirectly, through everyday experiences with oral and written language. These experiences include conversations with other people, listening to adults read to them, and reading on their own. They learn vocabulary words directly when they are explicitly taught individual words and word-learning strategies. Some vocabulary should be taught directly. Direct instruction particularly effective for teaching difficult words representing complex concepts that are not part of the children’s everyday experience.

Fluency is the fourth aspect required in reading. This is the ability to read a text orally with speed, accuracy and proper expression. Children who lack fluency read slowly and laboriously, often making it difficult for them to remember what has been read, (recall the limited capacity of working memory) and to relate the ideas expressed in the text to their own experiences. Frequent practice in reading is one of the main contributors to developing fluency. Fluency bridges the gap between word recognition and comprehension. Because fluent readers do not need to spend much time decoding words, they can focus their attention on the meaning of the text. With practice, word recognition and comprehension occur almost simultaneously.

The final skill highlighted by Sousa is text comprehension. Comprehension is a complex, interactive process that begins identifying words by using knowledge outside the text, accessing word meaning in context, recognizing grammatical structures, drawing inferences, and monitoring oneself to ensure that the text is making sense. When confronted with several meanings for a word in a sentence, the brain needs to select the one that makes sense in context. Many English words have dozens of meanings, depending on their context. Thus, developing the ability to quickly block irrelevant meanings becomes a necessity for reading fluency and comprehension.

Conclusion
Reading helped shape my academic skills because the foundational reading experience I received as a child was solid. Families should be encouraged to be involved in reading with young children as they begin their educational journey. Now, as a teacher in the digital age, I have to help my students improve their reading ability by incorporating technology and other innovative methods so they are able to comprehend the texts materials they are engaged with in their learning, because an individual simply cannot cope in academia without reading.

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LEADERSHIP
TRANSNATIONAL FAAMATAI: DECOLONISING AND RE-INDIGENISING 'DEVELOPMENT'

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ABSTRACT

Based on our Marsden longitudinal research project "Sāmoan transnational matai: ancestor god 'avatars' or merely title-holders?", this paper explores the sacred tenet of Sāmoan faamatai leadership—'O le ala i le pule o le tautua' under three strands: the first is 'trouble in paradise'—changes to faamatai in Sāmoa propelled by socio-political upheavals through Government legislation, the Lands & Titles Court and research directly impacting matai, sa'o, monotaga, tautua, fa'avae and Sāmoan custom; the second strand emplaces pule and tautua within a transnational framework—migration as development without return and as transnational expansion of leadership through 'transnational reincorporation'. This process creates economic, political and social mechanisms that enable transnational matai to participate in Sāmoa's development process over the long term and from afar. Woven through these two strands are findings based on a survey of faamatai experiences completed by 550 transnational matai which is the third strand of analysis. Transnational faamatai experiences/meanings and attitudes are important indicators of the sustainability of faamatai and faaSāmoa in transnational spaces and ultimately in Sāmoa and should be acknowledged.

Key words: pacific transnationalism, fa'amatai, Sāmoan chiefly system, development from below, transnational reincorporation

Fa'amatai

Today, Sāmoa is a nation governed by matai - titled family heads. The role and responsibilities of the matai in Sāmoa is to ensure the wellbeing of his/her family both domiciled in the village and in transnational spaces. The role and responsibilities of transnational matai domiciled out of Sāmoa is attending to the wellbeing of the family in Sāmoa from afar as well as family in the global nodes of meta-Sāmoa. In 2016, 70,000 registered matai and 146,481 matai titles accounted for 37% of the population in Sāmoa (Meleisea 2016; Potogi 2016: 126). Only matai can be elected to Parliament and universal suffrage introduced in 1991 to replace the former electoral system that had restricted the right to vote to matai only, has enabled all Sāmoans aged 21 and over, the right to vote in elections. Prior to 1991, a crisis arose in Sāmoa precisely because only matai could vote or hold elected office. In order to increase the numbers of their voters, senior chiefs began to split lower matai titles among several holders or created new titles. This inflationary practice became so common that Sāmoans referred derisively to these new voters as matai palota (ballot chiefs) (Chappell 1999: 287).

The 1982 general election in Sāmoa experienced the first divisive effect of party politics and witnessed the devastation of customary Sāmoan practices at the hands of Sāmoans themselves and the legal system, with neither of the protagonists - Tupuola Efi, the incumbent Prime Minister nor his opponent, Va'ai Kolone, Leader of the HRPP winning a clear mandate for effective government. This crisis illustrated the difficulty Sāmoans experience in making choices that are strictly legal, which derives in part of from an "ambivalent regard for the faaSāmoa, and a growing entrepreneurial attitude towards politics and political power (Ioane 1983: 527).

Current developments tell the story of a similar situation in Sāmoa today. Regarding land, custom and history in Sāmoa, Meleisea and Schoeffel assert that for more than a century Sāmoans have asserted that there are timeless norms in relation to customary land tenure,
Despite historical changes and introduced legal and religious principles. This has resulted in a slow cultural revolution in which ancient political institutions have been completely reshaped, from the efficiency of a subsistence economy to a money-based economy (2015: 22).

This 'cultural revolution' has impacted on the fa'amatai markedly. In 2015, the customary institution of matai sa'o was investigated by enquiries by the government of Sāmoa through its Law Reform Commission into the viability of the status of matai sa'o. Traditionally a matai sa'o was the sole head of an extended family owning common property, possessing authority over its members including holders of other matai titles belonging to that family. Meleisea suggests that the government's interest is very likely to be related to legislation passed subsequent to the Land Titles Registration Act 2008, such as the Customary Land Advisory Commission Act (CLACA) 2013, which makes it easier for customary lands to be leased (Meleisea 2017). This legislation suggests that a matai sa'o may authorise a lease on a portion of customary land appurtenant to his/her title on behalf of the extended family. This complicates the current situation whereby multiple holders of senior titles that have the status of matai sa'o are living in the village to which the title is associated, or in other places in Sāmoa, or overseas, and the issues in defining Sāmoan custom (ibid.).

Such complications now signal the need to legislate on the selection, appointment and authority of matai sa'o which disturbs time-worn fa'amatai understandings, practices and processes and is yet another example of the divisive effect of party politics and the devastation of customary practices at the hands of Sāmoans themselves and the legal system expressed by Ioane as 'turmoil in Paradise' (1983). The danger to Sāmoans, whether at home or in the transnational space is whether those who have rights to customary land are being consulted, which happens when there are many matai sa'o, or matai sa'o who fail to consult their families (ibid.).

Sāmoa has, for understandable reasons neglected the development of its customary law body of knowledge which has led to two further socio-political anomalies. The first is the lack of attention to what exactly customary lore/law and practices are and who defines these, the second is how recent legislation concerning matai sa'o, monotaga and tautua and other related legislation will impact on transnational fa'amatai. Because of this there is no properly established corpus of knowledge available to make an informed assessment of these anomalies (Suaalii-Sauni 2017: 167). In the context of legal pluralism and politics in Sāmoa and the examination the fa'amatai, monotaga and the Sāmoa Electoral Act 1963, Suaalii-Sauni states that legal scholars must be committed to the development of the Pacific region, to delve into customary law archives and making it intelligible to the legal and cultural theorist and practitioner alike, to find points of comparison, to show contemporary relevance, and to highlight historical continuities and discontinuities, so that law can indeed be for all" (2017: 185).

This lack of commitment from legal scholars begs the question as to who exactly is therefore defining customary law? Aiono-Le Tagaloa provides a response to this question in her examination of the Sāmoan Lands and Titles Court when she asserts that "What started as a colonial institution...has become a heavily indigenised hybrid body...[that applies] the customary rules relating to land and titles...albeit through a non-customary processs". Indeed she asks the question "Despite its colonial origins, should the Land and Titles Court now be
considered a customary body, following its indigenisation by Sāmoans?” (2009) Add the second anomale that there may be more transnational matai sa'o i fafo than in Sāmoa in the mix, and there really will be trouble in paradise.

Many scholars agree that "Western notions of individual rights and freedoms have been promoted by mass education and emigration" (Meleisea and Schoeffel 1983: 111). The matai system, including splitting titles and creating new ones, has been exported overseas in diaspora to New Zealand, Australia and the United States. Western-educated Sāmoans are earning better incomes, acquiring palota titles and enter politics. "The foremost source of change in Sāmoa today is from New Zealand," Meleisea says. "There is hardly a family in Sāmoa without relatives here, and there are few Sāmoans in New Zealand who do not maintain a relationship with their homeland" (Meleisea 1992: 63–64).

It is a well-known fact that Sāmoans in New Zealand are the power house of fa'amatai in Sāmoa and in transnational spaces (see appendix ii where of 550 responses, 58% matai survey responses came from New Zealand compared to 31% from Australia and 7% from USA). An examination of the entire 41 books of the Matai registers held in the Sāmoa Land and Titles Court in 2016 revealed that there was a total of 70,000 registered matai (Meleisea 2016), and 146,481 registered titles (Potogi 2016: 126).

On further examination of the matai registers in September 2018 we can now reveal that of the 70,000 registered matai, 2,083 of them were born out of Sāmoa, i fafo. Of these, 83.5% were born in New Zealand, 6.6% born in Australia, 6.3% born in US, and 3.6% born elsewhere in the world (see Appendix i). Add to this NZ-born cohort, the 50% Sāmoan-born transnational matai domiciled in New Zealand respondents from the transnational matai survey—the math produces some strong trends. While we cannot be certain that these samples are representative of the entire population of Sāmoan matai, these results suggest that a very substantial proportion of transnational Sāmoan matai live in New Zealand. Of the 420,000 Sāmoans who live outside of Sāmoa, over a quarter of them live in New Zealand.

**Pacific transnationalism**

Transnationalism is the wave of future studies in population movement and mobility in the Pacific and offers a meeting point between a shrinking world, facilitated by infrastructures that enable space-time compression and an expansionist globalisation (Lee and Francis 2009)

Migration and Transnationalism: Pacific perspectives (Lee and Francis 2009) is the first edited volume to link a wider literature on transnational studies to specific cases in the Pacific and illustrates that rather than focussing on migration alone, Pacific transnationalism views migration in the broader context of indigenous movement and mobility. This perspective emphasises kin-based agency in the negotiations and meanings and arrangements in diasporic settings. My work extends kin-based or aiga-based agency to the focus on matai—family heads—as the leaders of aiga and their agency in which migration, remittances and their experiences can now be viewed as extensions of local fa'amatai customs as much as they are a result of the incorporation of Pacific communities into a global economy. That is, we can now view the home society and host society as a part of a single social field with families through the fa'amatai using indigenous conceptions of appropriate behaviour to mediate new situations (ibid.; Small 1997: 193).
As Nahkid states "Pacific transnationalism is a way of life." (2009: 215). However, while there are other features of transnationalism, we cannot understate the value of remittances. Our interest in, attention to, and sustainability of remittances based on why billions of dollars are remitted to Sāmoa on an annual basis and why transnationals and their family leaders persist in maintaining a set of multi-related social relations that bind them and connect them and link their countries of origin with their countries of transnational settlement (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc 1995) is crucial in understanding how and why Pacific transnationalism is indeed a way of life. The 'myth of return' (Walton-Roberts 2004) provides the affective tie when transnationals balance the desire to return with the reality of settled life and fuels transnationals, especially matai to meet their cultural roles and responsibilities as aiga heads and leaders to meet social, cultural and financial obligations.

Transnationalism and development

The relationship between transnationalism and development—and how best to study it—is emerging as a major international policy concern. Recently, transnational theory and research has stressed that the networks of socio-economic relations of individuals and groups which embrace migrants' country of origin and destination, are of paramount importance in the study of migration and return (Mangnall 2004, Byron and Condon 1996: 102, Nyberg-Sorensen et al. 2002: 18, Transrede 2001: 5). These studies also suggest that "people connected by transnational networks" is the most important resource for developing countries (Mangnall 2004: 8; Nyberg-Sorensen et al. 2002: 24).

Mangnall states that the advantage of transnationalism as a framework is that it recognises that neither return nor integration is the whole story for the study of international migration and development" (ibid.). Rather than doing one or the other, many migrants prefer to develop transnational lifestyles 'between' or 'across' two countries, economies, cultures and lifestyles (Transrede 2002).

Faist’s (1997) framework for such research, is based on two premises. Firstly, international migration and return cannot be adequately described by focusing solely on countries of origin and destination. Instead, they must be studied as unfolding in "transnational spaces" within which flows of people, goods, capital and services cut across the borders of nation-states (ibid: 206). Secondly, return must be regarded as a factor of the strength of social ties and social capital within transnational spaces, as well as a strategy for social capital's transfer. The skills, knowledge and contacts gained in the process of forming and expanding these social ties can be used to transfer human, financial, cultural and other kinds of capital and, in the process, develop transnational identities and loyalties (Mangnall 2004:8, Ammassari and Black 2001: 30, Faist 1997a: 204, 2000, Levitt 2001: 202–203).

In the transnational view, migration, host settlement and repeat homeland visits has two main development impacts. First it has created a 'continuous socio-economic field' (Mangnall 2004: 22) flowing between Sāmoan communities in modern nation-states, the 'traditional' families, villages, and bureaucratic sector in Sāmoa, and ultimately capitalist metropoles. Within this transnational field, the benefits of migration are evidenced by the circulation of people, remittances and goods within the aiga and fa'amatai networks.

Our Marsden research project, "Sāmoan transnational matai: ancestor god 'avatars' or merely title-holders?" is a longitudinal project which examines intergenerational experiences of transnational fa'amatai across three nodes of meta-Sāmoa (Australia, Hawaii, San Diego).
Findings from the *fa’amatai* survey under headings of ‘the reluctant matai’, ‘tautua’, the myth of return’ and ‘future of *fa’amatai*’ in Appendices iii-vii, reveal that key indicators of the stability of this socio economic field are the four directional flows of remittances or *tautua*. These directional flows of transnational *tautua*, championed by *matai i fafo*, is evidenced economically through subsistence remittances to families and villages; *saofai* (*matai* installations) remittances to families, villages and Sāmoa; ‘tourist’ cash flows to families and villages and Sāmoa via family reunions and funerals, evidenced by high levels of repeat visits to Sāmoa, including *malaga* as transnational funding for community projects (Lilomaiaiva-Doktor 2004; Franco, 1991); and finally, au-malaga, Sāmoans in New Zealand as VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives) or tourists (Mataafa 2015). Migration has led to an increase in the total Sāmoa population within that transnational field documented as approximately 200,000 in Sāmoa and a conservative 420,000 in meta-Sāmoa nodes of New Zealand, Australia and the United States alone. Considering the fact that over a half of all Sāmoans on the planet now live overseas, the *fa’amatai* has clearly become transnational in scope.

0 le ala i le pule o le tautua: Development from below

Transnational economic/financial *tautua* commitments and responsibilities are undoubtedly fuelled by *fa’amatai* affective ties. Based on ethnographic data from our Marsden Research Project, and findings gleaned from a survey of faamatai experiences completed by 550 transnational *matai*, the sacred tenet of Sāmoan *fa’amatai* leadership – ‘0 le ala i le pule o le tautua’ will now be discussed. The literal translation of 0 le ala i le pule o le tautua is ‘the way to power is through service’. Pule infers secular authority and economic strength (*malosi*) and is the effective tie; *tautua* is to serve with reverence and dignity (*mamalu*) and is the affective tie (Anae et al. 2016; Anae 2017)

Ethnographic data from our Marsden research project on *tautua* practised by transnational *matai*, knowledge of *fa’amatai*, *faalavelave*, intergenerational challenges (loss of knowledge of *fa’asāmoa* and *fa’amatai*, more *ali‘i* titles), transformations (the church, women as *matai*, new forms of titles), and the future of *fa’amatai*, are published elsewhere (Anae et al. 2016). The conclusions were that despite changes over the last hundred years, faamatai is still being reproduced successfully in Sāmoa i fano. As pointed out by So’o (2007: 253) the versions of *fa’amatai* that are practised overseas are variants of the *fa’amatai* that is practised in Sāmoa. And so they should be; culture changes. There is debate about where to find the ‘true’ *fa’amatai*. But does a ‘true’ version exist? Some say the *fa’asāmoa* and *faamatai* in Sāmoa are more corrupt than in Australia or the US. They see the ‘real’ Sāmoa happening out of Sāmoa—mainly because transnational *matai* hold on to the *fa’asāmoa* and *fa’amatai* that their parents taught them as pioneers (See Anae 1998). Practices often referred to as transnational Sāmoan cultural and fiscal “excessiveness” (ibid.: 255) have now infiltrated the homeland and been accepted as the norm.

More than ever, research suggests that affective ties are becoming stronger for younger generations born and raised outside Sāmoa; stronger because of rather than despite the loss of language and knowledge of customs and gafa (genealogy). These emotional, spiritual and social ties wrap around the changing elements of the faamatai to hold them together. They have been expressed in this research as: respect for elders and the sacrifices they have made to be Sāmoan in a
foreign land; a desire to take on matai titles out of respect for parents, aiga and villages and to work for their wellbeing; acknowledgement of inequalities associated with rank, status and system of authority in the fa’asāmoa and fa’amatai; and, a strong emotional attachment to the fa’asāmoa and fa’amatai as a way of life, despite the challenges and misgivings they experience.

Understanding the perspectives and experiences of transnational matai gives a temporal perspective on how the fa’amatai is changing. In independent Sāmoa, Tcherkezoff (2005) finds possible challenges to fa’amatai in the debates about suffrage and in new religious movements that emphasize individualism. Research on Sāmoan migrant communities in New Zealand (Anae 1998, 2002, 2006), Australia (Va’a 2001) and California (Gershon 2012) indicates that fa’amatai takes new forms to stay relevant for life in Sāmoa i fafo. For the pioneer generation, customary fa’asāmoa and fa’amatai had to take a back seat to the demands of settling in a new home, establishing their churches and raising local-born children. Now those new generations are grappling with issues of social justice, culture, language and identity by rebuilding what they know of fa’asāmoa and fa’amatai, limited as it might be, because they are affected by the values such as service and respect learned from their pioneer parents (Anae 1998, 2002, 2006).

In New Zealand, the affective ties are what inspires younger generations born out of Sāmoa to demand from their elders and from the government the setting up of re-education/new education programmes where they can be taught Sāmoan culture, history, language and identities in the ooga amata (language nests), schools, Universities and other tertiary institutions (see Anae 1998, 2002, 2006). It is also affective ties which inspire NZ-born Sāmoans to take on matai titles. These trajectories may well occur in the other nodes of Australia, Hawaii and mainland USA. Time will tell.

Despite changes over the last hundred years, fa’amatai is still being reproduced out of Sāmoa. Understanding the perspectives and experiences of transnational matai gives a temporal perspective on how the fa’amatai is changing. In migrant communities as expressed by matai in Hawaii, the Sāmoan church pastors assume prominent leadership roles. Other serious challenges to the reproduction of fa’amatai are expressed above—especially the increased use of English. Many young people do not know the honorific language, the pan-Sāmoan ranking of titles, and the appropriate speeches that are necessary to conduct a ceremony or a sophisticated debate in a fono o matai. They do not have the oratory skills that are necessary for performing fa’amatai. Then there are the pressures for giving-money, time, and service. However, with the leadership of the pioneer generations, first and second-born generation NZ/Aus/US-born generations are finding ways to meet these challenges. Strategies developed amongst pioneer cohorts and NZ-born Sāmoans in New Zealand are leading the vanguard in the persistence of fa’asāmoa and fa’amatai in Sāmoa i fafo.

Conclusion

Transnational matai experiences of fa’amatai, development and the transnational framework are particularly useful as it allows for an integrated analysis of the relationship between social and symbolic ties, physical, metaphoric return, and repeat returns and the transfer of people, goods and money between Transnational corporations of kin, matai and Sāmoa. The transnational framework (Faist 1997, 2000 cited in Mangnall 2004) proposes that a migrant’s choices of physical or metaphoric return—whether to stay, return or visit—are conditioned by their symbolic and social ties to host and origin countries. At the same time, those transnational
and local social ties can be used to transfer human, financial, cultural and other kinds of capital to the origin country through physical and metaphoric and real return via repeat visits.

All the key elements for the transnational framework—physical and metaphoric return, social and symbolic ties, various kinds of capital—are to be found in the participant narratives and survey responses presented above. They describe many kinds of physical return between Sāmoa and their host societies, including sporadic and regular visits, and more importantly reasons why the fa’amatiai and matai identity is important to them. As leaders of families in the transnational space this makes them doubly responsible for personal as well as familial tautua to their families in Sāmoa and across the globe. Their leadership roles are more significant amongst women matai (Anae et al.2016; Anae 2017). The narratives describe metaphoric return activities designed to keep ties to the homeland and maintain Sāmoan culture and identity through education programmes, language pre-schools, church services, community groups, phone calls and letters. Local and transnational social ties forged by matai participants including spouses, children and grandchildren, individuals and groups in the community such as churches, social and sports groups.

Sāmoans and matai across the diaspora still express their migration in terms of tautua—an obligation to aiga—everywhere. Aiga encapsulates migrant identity, facilitates a wide range of overt functions, such as raising money, providing housing and employment, coping with life crises, it gives its members the security of living in a customary, secure, well-loved group (Pitt and Macpherson 1974). Gough makes the point that not only is commitment to the customary institution of aiga one of the major motivations behind migration, but also that its replication across the diaspora is also one of the key reasons Sāmoans have been able to establish such successful diasporic communities and, ultimately, why these communities flourish. Sāmoans both personally and as part of a kin group led by their matai represent Sāmoa’s comparative advantage; Sāmoans engaging successfully in the world economy in unique ways while retaining faithful links to customary practices. These practices have provided the framework for their engagement, enabling the comparative advantage that Sāmoa needs in order to ensure a sustainable future in a globalising world.

Gough points out that Sāmoa’s engagement in the globalised world, no matter how seemingly successful to date, is not without risks. Continued engagement is dependent on market opportunities and favourable migration policies of labour-importing countries, moreover the lives of transnational Sāmoans’ are now entrenched in the diaspora (2006: 91). Globally, they are considered ‘labour migrants’ and the remittances they send home form part of the estimated $65 billion per annum that is returned to labour exporting economies (Kane 1995). In the case of Sāmoa between 30-50% of the GDP of the country, more than all the exports and aid, is remitted each year.

Opportunities to participate in the global labour market have boosted per capita GNP, and as a result, assisted development in Sāmoa. Community services and opportunities, like access to health services and education have broadened significantly.

By emplacing pule and tautua within a transnational framework—migration as development with repeat returns and as transnational expansion of leadership through ‘transnational reincorporation’ economic, political and social mechanisms have been created which enable transnational matai to participate in Sāmoa’s development process over the long
term and from afar. Transnational fa’amatai experiences/meanings and attitudes encapsulated in the research findings and data are important indicators of the sustainability of fa’amatai and fa’asāmoa in transnational spaces and ultimately in Sāmoa and should be acknowledged. As such, surely it is time for the powerhouse of global/transnational fa’amatai to be an integral part of the solution to these 'troubles in Paradise'.

Soifua.

Endnotes

1. See also economic indicators of remittance/cash flows mainly coming from New Zealand (Kane 1995)
2. This number is a very conservative number which does not take account of all registered matai born in Sāmoa and domiciled i fafo. Sāmoan population in Sāmoa approx. 200,000. Sāmoan population overseas approx. 420,000.
3. Sāmoan population in New Zealand according to 2013 census was 144,138, with projected population as 160,000 in 2018. See Appendix vii

Acknowledgements

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References


Appendix i

Matai Registrations of matai born out of Sāmoa (I fafo):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Born in NZ</th>
<th>Born in Australia</th>
<th>Born in US</th>
<th>Born elsewhere</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Vaimauqa Sasae</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Vaimauqa sisifo</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Faleata Sasae</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Faleata sisifo</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Sasaa le Califaa</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Sasaa le Usooa</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Aana Alofa Nu.1</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Aana Alofa Nu.2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Aana Alofa Nu.3</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Aiga I le Tai</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Falealatai &amp; Samatau</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Lefaqa &amp; Faleaseela</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Siumu</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Falealili</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Lotofoaa</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Leoa</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Aleipata Itupa I Luga</td>
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</tr>
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<td>19.</td>
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</tr>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>Vaa o Fonoti</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Aoamaa sisifo</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
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<td>171</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Fasaleleaa Nu.2</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Fasaleleaa Nu.3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Fasaleleaa Nu.4</td>
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<td>34.</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>35.</td>
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<td>36.</td>
<td>Alataua Sisifo</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>37.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Palauli Sisifo</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>Satuoaitea</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Palauli Sasae</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>Palauli le Falefa</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1736</strong></td>
<td><strong>138</strong></td>
<td><strong>133</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
<td><strong>2083</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

130
Demographics

Where titles are from
The majority of the surveyed participants held Matai titles from:

Western Samoa 96.2%
American Samoa 3.8%

Language
55 percent of Transnational Matai are fluent in everyday Samoan language.
24.5% are also fluent in the Matai language.
Less than 2% Cannot speak or understand Samoan

Degree of Samoanness
What Matai identified themselves as:
84% Full Samoan
14% Part Samoan
2% Non Samoan

Age
The majority of Transnational Matai are currently within their:

40’s 29%
30’s 25%
60+ 10%

Gender breakdown
75% Male, 25% Female

Age of becoming a Matai
People are most likely to accept a Matai title between the ages of:

26 - 30 years 18.3%
31 - 35 years 16.8%

Church denomination
25% Catholic
16% EFKS
10% Methodist
9% LDS
8% AOG

Earnings
The majority of Transnational Matai survey participants
44% earn between $51,000.00 and $100,000.00 a year
12% earn over $100,000.00 a year

Currently living
of Transnational Matai survey participants are currently living in

New Zealand 58%
Australia 31%
USA 7%
Elsewhere in the world 4%

Employment
81% Currently employed
9% Are retired
5% Are unemployed
5% Currently studying
The Reluctant Matai

Qualities of a Matai
According to Matai, the top five qualities of being a matai are:

- Being respectful 88.6%
- Being understanding 86.6%
- Being Humble 86.1%
- Being a good decision maker 85.2%
- Being strong to lead with love 84.9%

The bottom five qualities of being a Matai are:

- Being rich 7.3%
- Being raised in the village 20.4%
- Having status in the church 20.4%
- Having status in the community 31.1%
- Being good with money 37.5%
- Speaking fluent Samoan 60%

Understanding Faamatai
A majority of Matai believe that the faamatai is about serving their family 85.6%

This is followed closely by serving your village 76.9%

What makes a good Matai

92.5% They have respect for their family
88% They listen to their family
78.4% They contribute to family faaalavelave

Being fluent in the Samoan language and having oratory skills are much lower reasons for being a good matai with 51% and 33% respectively.

Being a good Matai

62% Believe they’re good
7% Don’t think they are
31% Are not sure if they are

Reasons for NOT being a good Matai

Of those who considered themselves as NOT being a good Matai, half said it was because they don’t attend family events and gatherings.

Just under half 46% said it was because they can’t speak Samoan and don’t participate in family faaalavelave.

Are you respected as a Matai Ifafo?

63% of Matai Ifafo believe they are respected.
82.6% believe they are respected because they respect their families back

72.6% believe they are because they listen to their families.
Most feel no respect due to not attending family events, contributing to faaalavelave as well as not being able to speak Samoan.

Are you respected as a female Matai

84% Believe they are
16% Believe they aren’t

74.5% Family wanted them to become one
20% Of Matai wanted to become one
65.5% Wanting to serve one’s Family
# Tautua

## Place of saofai
The majority of saofai are held in either Western or American Samoa.

- **4%** Being held away from Western and American Samoa.
- **2%** Of saofai held in Western Samoa but held away from village of title

## Cost of saofai
- **Average cost between $1000.00-$2000.00 NZD per recipient.**
- **Roughly 10% of all saofai will cost the recipient over $5000.00 NZD.**

## 1-5 ie toga
- **10%** On average, a recipient gives between 1-5 ie toga for the saofai.

## Attending the saofai
- **80%** attend their actual saofai
- **20%** have someone represent them at their saofai.

## Travel to Samoa?
- **20%** of Matai travel to Samoa on average once a year
- **14%** travel on average two or more times a year
- **3%** Have never been to Samoa

## Second Matai title
- **25%** of Matai hold a second title
  - The majority of the Matai who hold a second Matai have it bestowed between the age of 36-40. This is 10 years after the age that people are most likely to accept their first Matai title.
  - The majority cost of a second saofai ranges between $2000.00-$5000.00

## Third Matai title
- **20%** of Matai hold a third title
  - The majority of the Matai who hold a third Matai have it bestowed between the age of 41-45.
  - 20% of these saofai cost over $5000.00 which suggests that these titles are considered of even greater significance by the families bestowing them.

## Accommodation while in Samoa
- **52%** Majority of transnational Matai stay with family in the village
- **7%** mostly stay in hotel or resorts

## Reason for travelling to Samoa
- **69%** of Matai travel to Samoa to visit their family
- **57%** of Matai travel to Samoa for a holiday
- **53%** of Matai travel to Samoa for a saofai
- **48%** of Matai travel to Samoa for a funeral
- **37%** of Matai travel to Samoa for a reunion
### Tautua (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you tautua the village of your title?</th>
<th>Participation in local faalavelave over past 2 years:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91% have a connection with their village</td>
<td>93% have contributed to local faalavelave in the past two years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83% have family land in their village</td>
<td>94% have been funerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9% have no connection with their village</td>
<td>51% have been church events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52% have no connection, don't live in their village</td>
<td>53% of Matai attended some in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44% have no immediate family in their village</td>
<td>98% of Matai contributed in the form of money</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Matai have spent on average between $2000.00 each on local faalavelave a year.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you contribute to faalavelave?</th>
<th>Participation in Samoa faalavelave over past 2 years:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>71% Always contribute to faalavelave</td>
<td>88% have contributed to Samoa faalavelave in the past two years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27% Sometimes contribute to faalavelave</td>
<td>89% have been funerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2% Don't contribute to faalavelave</td>
<td>30% have been church events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why do you contribute to faalavelave?</th>
<th>Participation in Samoa faalavelave over past 2 years:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>72% Part of being a Matai</td>
<td>58% of Matai attended some in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62% Because they want to</td>
<td>58% have been saofai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58% Brought up to contribute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52% On behalf of their parents</td>
<td>99.5% of Matai contributed in the form of money</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Matai have spent on average between $2000.00 each on local faalavelave a year.*
Appendix vi

Myth of return

Would you consider moving permanently to Samoa to live?

49% of transnational Matai would consider moving permanently to Samoa to live.

70% of transnational Matai would consider moving permanently to Samoa to be with family.

66% of transnational Matai would consider moving permanently to Samoa to retire.

27% of transnational Matai would consider moving permanently to Samoa to start a business.

11% of transnational Matai would not consider moving permanently to Samoa to live.

Future of Faamatai

Will the faamatai continue into the next century?

78% Yes

5% No

17% Not sure
Appendix vii

Sāmoan population in Sāmoa and I fato 2000-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sāmoa 1</th>
<th>NZ 2</th>
<th>Aussie 3</th>
<th>Hawaii 4</th>
<th>Mainland US 5</th>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>196,440</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>197,695</td>
<td>160,000*</td>
<td></td>
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5. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samoa_Americans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samoa_Americans)

*= Estimate
HEALTH
STRESS RESPONSES OF SĀMOA STUDENTS AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SĀMOA (NUS): FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Helen Tanielu, National University of Sāmoa and Minerva Taavao, National University of Sāmoa

Abstract

Stress is important for survival and can be understood through the stressful experiences of individuals (Aherne, 1998). It is a term used to capture different human experiences that are disruptive in people’s lives and is an issue that affects university students due to the various stressors that they face when they are studying. This study explored the general stressors as perceived by NUS students aged between 18-29 in foundation, first and second year degree courses in the Social Sciences department. The study utilized focus groups and surveyed students using two adapted questionnaires. The focus groups sought to get a qualitative in-depth look at what issues university students (aged 18 to 29 at NUS) found stressful and to whom they might turn to for help during these times. The questionnaires surveyed more than 250 students of the same age cohort using two adapted questionnaires, ‘The Perceived stress scale (Cohen et al, 1983) questionnaire and the COPE questionnaire to assess how often these students felt stress and how they coped. The focus group results showed that competing demands of academic requirements and commitments outside the university as well as home environment were key stressors affecting Sāmoan students’ and stressed them often resulting in poor academic outcomes. This proceedings paper will present the findings on stress responses of students in the focus groups.

Keywords: stress, coping, disruptions, young people.

Introduction

Stress is important for survival and considered a necessary part of life. It is a term used to capture different human experiences that are disruptive in people’s lives and an occurrence that is well researched throughout the world because of the issues that affect the physical and mental health of people. Stress exists amongst university students due to the stressors students face both in academia and outside (Lazarus and Cohen, 1977, Declan, 1998; Majumdar and Ray, 2010 Chow and Flynn, 2016; Mason 2017). Tertiary education or most notably, university education is testing for all who attempt it, especially for students who enter with clear goals of getting an education to get a job for their future. The transition from secondary to tertiary is difficult when the university student now has to organize himself or herself independently and the academic work done is very different from when at secondary school. At other times, there are issues or disruptions in their lives that lie outside of university but can influence their lives and cause them to feel pressure or strain (McDade, 2000; Fuatai and Soon-Schuster 2001; Chow and Flynn, 2016). This is notable especially when you live and experience life in a small nation where social and cultural change through modernization, migration and globalization has affected it so much due to a world; made bigger through the never-ending presence of other forces. These internal and external forces play a role in young people’s lives and affect how they perceive their world and futures. These conditions can cause stress on students and can affect their academic performance, physical and mental health. This proceedings paper will present the focus group responses around what causes stress amongst Sāmoan students at university.
Stress, coping and university students

Stress has been in the literature since the 1930s. It is a term used to describe different ‘disruptive’ experiences of people in their everyday lives. The main interest around stress was linked to the connection between stress and health, which only clearly came about in the nursing literature of the 1970s (Lyon 2000). Other disciplines have also identified the connection between stress and coping as inextricably linked to health. Studies have said that stress can add flavor, challenge and opportunities to our lives, egg us on towards our goals and makes experiences exciting and activities challenging (Mujumdar, 2010). It is generally defined as the body’s non-specific response or reaction to demands made on it or to disturbing events in the environment (Yusoff 2010). Therefore, it is a person’s perception of the occurrence that determines their response. In certain amounts, stress can help a person work harder or do even better at things. However, sometimes it can produce a number of emotions that can affect a person’s physical and mental health (O’Brien 2014). The sociological understandings of stress on a person centers around the feeling of helplessness during times of stress and the failure to adjust to certain situations when they arise (Aneshensel 1992 in Au 2016; Pearlin and Bierman 2013). Evidence has shown that stress amongst university students affects their wellbeing, as they are vulnerable to several stress factors like academic work, social pressures and family or relationship disruptions, academic performance is affected (Robotham and Clare 2006; Pariat et al. 2014; Kumar and Bhukar 2013; Yusoff 2010).

Sāmoan Context

Sāmoan young people living in today’s world face a variety of situations or conditions that affect them on a daily basis. In the process of growing up and the diversity of encounters in a small nation, stress is present (McDade et al 2000). As university students, it is a time of choices and different lifestyles and are then exposed to challenges not only of being a young person but also in the academic requirements needed of them to complete their studies. In the past 21 years as a lecturer and academic at a mostly Sāmoan tertiary institution, I have had a substantial number of students every year and in each semester that ask me for help because they could not meet the academic requirements to complete their degree on time. This was mostly due to the pressure of other disruptions that occur in their lives. Academic requirements and family obligations are key issues that students always talk about when they fail to complete their work on time. This has led to many taking longer to complete their degrees or even dropping out of university altogether. Therefore, the interest to look at the disruptions in Sāmoan students’ lives came to fruition. The interest as social researchers was in looking at the experiences of stress amongst students in Sāmoa, how often they experienced these stressors, and how they coped with it.

The purpose of this study was to conduct a preliminary exploration of the stress experiences of young people at the NUS. Three objectives guided this research. Firstly, to find out how often students experienced stress; secondly, to find out how they coped with stress and lastly, what were the actual conditions or issues where students faced stress. Ethical approval was obtained from the NUS University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). For the purposes of this Sāmoa Conference proceedings paper, only the findings on what main aspects caused stress amongst students will be presented.
Research method

The study utilized a mixed methods approach by conducting qualitative focus groups and a quantitative questionnaire survey of NUS students between the ages of 18 and 29 using two adapted questionnaires.

Participants:

Participants were recruited from the NUS Faculty of Arts foundation, first and second year Bachelor of Arts (BA) students. Students were randomly selected for the qualitative and quantitative parts of the research based on criteria of age (18–29), interest and willingness to take part in the research. The researcher had an existing relationship with the participants and therefore participants were able to be more comfortable in talking about issues that were stressful to them.

Focus groups:

Data collected through focus groups explored students’ experiences of stress by gauging what students thought young people found stressful, what they themselves found stressful in their lives; the main issues that caused their stress; what they would do if they became under stress and what would they do help them with the stress. The focus groups were digitally recorded and transcribed. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the study findings.

Findings and discussion

This research centred on stressors that Sāmoan university students identified and perceived affected them while at university, how often they felt stressed and how they coped with said stress. Only the focus group findings on student stressors are shown here. Students showed a willingness to be part of the discussion in identifying issues that they felt were stressful to them and found that it was a medium where they could easily express themselves. Five prominent themes emerged during data analysis, specifically expectations, nofo a’oga (boarding with other family), financial and institutional stressors. The findings are given and discussed below.

Expectations

Family expectations and academic requirements were serious concerns for many students. Feelings associated with family expectations verses academic requirements showed that the even though education was encouraged and revered, family members did not understand that students needed much time to do their academic work. In the evenings or after classes when they had to do their assignments and study, they could not do so because this clashed with a lot of the things that parents and families wanted them to do or attend at the end of the day. As one student said,

“... With the assignments and you go with them to your family and there are other things to do for example, chores and your mum, dad, others pile things on you...yeah it stresses you out...” (FG3-P3 Male).

Sāmoan families have expectations of their children and even though education is important, there are equally relevant expectations of students when they go home.
One student said,

"we are pressured because of too many assignments...and then at home I have family responsibilities that I have to uphold and also I need to meet the expectations that my family have for me...” (FG3-Female).

Education is very important to Sāmoan people but when there are competing commitments that are required of young people when they go home, it does affect the time they have for their academic work and hence affects academic performance. The stress that students feel is important in understanding what these students face when they are at university. Students may face issues when coming from secondary school to university. They will struggle to become more mature and take full responsibilities in completing their assignments, or scheduling their study timetable. Most importantly, they will also have to deal with great expectations from families on their studies, and trying to fit in extra curriculum with other obligations involving church, family chores, family faalavelave (issues), and their own personal changes.

**Nofo a’oga (boarding with other family for schooling)**

In Sāmoa, many students from the other Islands and the villages in the rural areas move to the urban areas and stay with family in the urban areas to attend university and other schooling. Living with other families and relatives not of our own immediate family has its own issues that affect university students. This particular aspect was an emotional one for many students who live in the urban area (Apia and its suburbs) in their relatives homes for schooling. In Sāmoa, this is called nofo a’oga. These situations have been a constant for Sāmoan families who attend tertiary schools which the main ones are situated in the Apia urban area and surrounding suburbs.

One student said,

“Mea lea o le nofo aoga e le manaia lava, matuai stress ai lava, nofo i le tuafafine a lo’u tama, e le maua le fiafia foi na le i totonu o le aiga, e moi lava e faimai o aiga ae ese lava le lakou treat ina o a’u pei e vaai mauolalo foi na le...”

(staying with family for schooling is not nice and very stressful, staying with my father’s sister, I am not happy in the family because even though they say we are family, they treat me differently like they look down on me)...” (FG3-P2 Female).

One other difficulty that students face and feel when they board with others is that they do not belong to the place they stay in or do not have the confidence to speak out or ask the owner of the residence if something happens to them. They expressed that they do not feel supported.

One female student said,

“a tupu se faalavelave ia au ou te mā e ta’u i isi tagata so ou te stress ai la, ma e mamafa i lo’u mafau fa se mea ae le mafai na faasoa atu i isi tagata ....

(When something happens to me, I am embarrassed and not comfortable to tell others and it stresses and weighs heavy on my mind because I can’t tell anyone)” (FG2-P3 Female).

Another student said,

“e tele le eseeseega, le nofo l ou matua ma le nofo l tagata ese...e ou matua e mafai na e fai i soo se mea ae o tagata ia e te nofo ai, e le mafai na e fai ai..”

(There is a difference, staying with your parents and staying with others...with your parents, you can ask them for anything but with others you stay with, I cannot do that....)
Living with others even if they are family are stressful for student who do this in Sāmoa. When you are away from your parents or guardian and in an environment that you a student is unfamiliar with, then it is a cause for stress and difficulties for them.

**Financial stressors**

Financial stress is traditionally a stressor that most university students face especially when having to deal with studying and living at the same time. The Sāmoan students in the focus groups identified this as something that affects them also although in Sāmoa, student financial stress has a different meaning from the usual financial stress faced by university students in other more developed countries. In Sāmoa, paying student fees for each semester is stressful for students because they feel the stress that their families go through trying to pay their fees. There is no student loan system in Sāmoa like it is in other more developed countries and many families take out personal loans to pay for their children’s fees. In many cases, when students cannot pay their fees, they are not allowed to enter the university and so have to wait until their parents or guardians have enough money to pay.

One student said,

“stress out i mea tau tupe...e te fiu e finau i le kou aiga i le pili, a faapea lava e le mafai e le kou aiga, leai se mea e mafai, e ke faatoli lava i le taimi e maua ai le kupe...”

*(Stressed out with money, you can keep asking your family for money to pay your bill but if your family can’t do it, there’s nothing you can do, you have to wait until the money is available).*  (FG2-P4 Female)

**Institutional stressors**

Students also found that the university system was not good to them particularly in relation to relationships with academic staff. Students expressed unequal treatment by some staff members on them that they found stressful.

One said,

“I think it would be helpful if the teachers instead of looking down on the students, they should do their best to motivate them.”  (FG3 P1 Male)

And,

“... Sometimes you don’t feel like doing the assignment, sometimes you don’t even want to approach the teacher to ask them about what the assignment is about, sometimes you don’t even think she likes you so that sometimes you don’t even want to go to class and miss class some days...”  (FG3-P4 Male)

Another student stated that,

“Apparently ...most teachers are like that, mostly here, favouritism is very common... some lecturers they favour the halfcastes (name given to students of European and Sāmoan blood) and the palagi (European) kids......so when they see them, they act all nice and give them information but then when it comes to us, they give us that look. As if we didn’t do a single assignment... and here we are working our butts off trying the best we can to prove that we have done what we came here for to do...”  (FG1-P2 Female).

Stress about University assignments all due in at the same time was also identified as another contributing cause of stress amongst students. One student said,

“The fact that I'm taking six courses is really pressured because like this whole week I have four tests and 3 assignments have to be due by Friday.”  (FG1-P1 Female).
Another one said,

“...stress me out because last week there are due many assignments in...tele meaoga i le vaiaoa e tasi o e stress la lo’u mafaufau poo le a le mea e fai (many assignments in one week My mind is stressed about what i should do)....” (FG1-P2 Male).

The pressure of having to meet deadlines that causes them stress is universal for all students in universities and coincides with a lack of or limitations of organised behaviour amongst students when they attend university. This was reflected in the foundation, first and second year students that participated in this study.

**Overall**

Themes that were recognized in the data as pertaining to key stressors are family and other expectations, *nofo aoga*, financial and institutional stressors. Peer and boyfriend/girlfriend relationships were mentioned as important stress factors but taken in the context of fundamental stressors for Sāmoan students only the key four are featured. These are presented above together with excerpts from the focus groups, emphasizing student’s words about what they felt were stressful.

The findings highlighted above, are in many ways comparable to the findings of research conducted around the world demonstrating that university students face stress from different sources that may not necessarily be about academic pressure. Other stressors like family, inadequate guidance from lecturers and teachers; financial and career prospects, institutional issues and others also play a significant part in the stress that university students face (Misra and McKean, 2000; Fuatai and Soon-Schuster, 2001; Meijer, 2007; Majumdar & Ray, 2010; Chai and Low, 2015, Mason, 2017; Bulanda et al, 2018). The unique stressor in this is the *nofo aoga* theme that revealed the distinctive nature of Sāmoan (and other Pacific nations) context of students moving from rural to urban for schooling. This occurs in other countries also but this unique circumstance of Sāmoan students draws attention to the stressful nature of what students face and how they feel when they live with others. This aspect will be discussed further in the full paper that will bring the stress and coping data together from the focus groups.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to conduct a preliminary exploration of the stress experiences of young people at the NUS. This paper presented the main stressors that Sāmoan students at the National University of Sāmoa felt were issues that caused them much stress. It was recognized that Sāmoan students faced many issues that caused stress. Competing expectations from family and academic requirements; boarding with other family for school, financial and institutional stressors were the main themes emphasized as stressful situations for Sāmoan students at NUS. Despite relationships being a stressor for students, it was not as key as the four themes identified above. Sāmoan students face stress every day and in a number of ways so understanding what they go through is important for their wellbeing as well as a vital aspect within academic institutions. It is hopeful that this study can provide an opening basis to continue the discussion around stress and coping for students and young people in Sāmoa.
References


