

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

This research was designed to collect information about gambling issues for Tongan people living in Auckland. Anecdotal evidence from various Public Health community development projects identified that gambling for Pacific peoples was emerging as a common 'new' problem.

The *Kakala* model based on the traditional process of fragrant garland making was chosen as a framework for the design of the research and provided the blueprint for recruitment of participants and interviewees, for data input and analysis and for the dissemination and return of the information gathered and analysed. A detailed description of this model follows discussion of the need for culturally sensitive methodologies and of alternative designs. It was envisioned that the research design would be adapted for studies into other Pacific communities once the Tongan study was completed.

Fifty people were identified in various fields to be interviewed in order to find out whether the anecdotal evidence and stories relayed in the community were indeed true. The interview process also played a dual role in developing relationships with various providers, churches and community groups so that further investigation and interventions could be developed in partnership with these groups.

Interviews were conducted with:

1. Twenty ministers of different churches and denominations
2. Fifteen health and social providers and
3. Fifteen community leaders

The Research Aims

The research design was broken into two phases of which this investigation is the first phase with the aims of:

1. Reporting the extent to which gambling is an emerging health and social problem for Tongan people in Auckland.
2. Identify issues that contribute to the risk of developing and addiction to gambling

3. Lay foundation of knowledge and community support for further systematic investigation and action these issues.

The second phase of the investigation is currently pending on further HRC funding and is divided into two parts. Part one is a continuation of more in-depth qualitative interviews, whereas part two concentrates on developing relationships and public health interventions.

Phase two's aims are:

1. To explore social, cultural and spiritual issues of Tongan people in Auckland which contribute to the risk of developing addiction to gambling and problem gambling.
2. Investigate central Tongan cultural concepts that have been identified as themes in interviews, the interplay of these worldviews with gambling activity, changing socio-cultural values and views of money and calculation, forms of exchange.
3. To empower the Auckland Tongan community by initiating partnerships to plan and develop culturally appropriate public health gambling intervention for Tongan people in Auckland and
4. To provide relevant information to health planners and providers for planning and the implementation of culturally appropriate public health strategies for Tongan people in New Zealand against gambling.

Appropriate Research Framework/Models

Research methodology and appropriate frameworks and models for investigation and analysis of Pacific information is varied and discussed by many Pacific and non-Pacific scholars. To be even more specific there have been a range of Tongan models and frameworks that have developed by Tongan scholars and academics in order to expand the parameters/boundaries of traditional western frameworks. However, like much of the literature on Pacific peoples the field remains scarce.

Concepts and themes throughout the investigation points to a number of Tongan understandings as to why Tongan people gamble. Although social factors such as accessibility and availability are commonly addressed it is only one of many factors that contribute to a Tongan gambling problem. Tongan themes such as *fua fatongia*, *fua kavenga*, *feinga*, *tapuaki/faingamalie* need more in-depth analysis, discussion and interpretation in order credible development and planning of appropriate and effective interventions. Without a socio-cultural understanding of such themes and concepts, interventions will ultimately disappoint the community it is to serve, providers and the funders.

Tamasese, Peteru and Waldergrave (1997) discovered that when they were investigating a Samoan perspective on mental health and the utilisation of 'culturally appropriate' services in New Zealand there was very little cultural appropriateness and sensitivity towards Samoan patients. In relation to developing research methodologies the authors stated that:

'constructs of method should emerge from the and faithfully reflect the intrinsic source of its participants' needs and knowledge bases...The call for legislative and social relief reflects a community which recognises that it is in crisis. It also raises serious questions for the research community regarding their ability to address their own roles and appropriate process of research within communities in crisis.'

Based on their experience and findings that Samoan patients continued to feel disintegrated when assessed under a western framework, Tamasese and Peteru (2002) identified and developed a research methodology called the Fa'afaletui.

This model is based on the process of how knowledge and information is gathered, defined and framed in the Samoan knowledge system. In collecting and identifying knowledge the Fa'afaletui research framework incorporates the three different but complimentary perspectives of the people on the mountain top, the people in the tree tops and the people in the canoe out in the sea.

Knowledge gathered is then circulated among the fale²⁶ of the elderly men and the fale of the elderly women where they scrutinize and evaluate its accuracy and appropriateness and then shared within the rest of the village.

Further support towards developing models for indigenous research that encompasses specific indigenous values and principles is found in the work of Linda .T. Smith (1999) within Maori education. Smith argued that it

'appals us that the west can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things that we create and produce and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be the creators of our own cultures and our own nations.'

Smith continues to state that 'research is implicated in the production of theories which have dehumanised Maori [and other indigenous peoples] and in practices which have continued to privilege western ways of knowing while denying the validity for Maori of Maori knowledge, language and culture.'

Supporting partnership in cross-cultural research in the New Zealand context, Spoonley (1999) highlighted four issues and suggested that four things should be considered when considering a research design. Spoonley, explains that research for Maori was often an exercise in social control and that researchers tended to be pakeha and the indigenous peoples or minority groups were 'subjects' of the research design rather than an integral part of the research development in planning, consultation, practice or advisory.

Spoonley, suggests that consideration should be made in four areas; the idea that research is a partnership, the issue of accountability, the requirement for researchers to take responsibility for their actions and the question of what is to be developed or implemented from research findings.

In light of these discussions on cross-cultural research methodologies the research team purposely sought to find Tongan research frameworks for the data collection process, analysis and the dissemination of information.

One of the models given consideration by the team was the work of Seluvaia Tu'itahi-Tahaafe (2003) and her development of the *Fakalotofale'ia* model in relation to her work with Tongan

²⁶ Fale - house

people with disabilities and their families. This model was identified due to the lack of appropriate frameworks and approaches mainstream services and health professionals could access when working with their Tongan clients and their families. At the same time it also addressed the fact that Tongan clients did not fully understand the requirements and/or processes of mainstream services.

The *Fakalotofale'ia* model is based and characterised by a number of Tongan values and principles such as *'ofa* (love or compassion), *fetokoni'aki* (interdependence), *makafetoli'aki* (reciprocity), *uouangataha* (collective), *faka'apa'apa* (respect), and *fe'ofa'ofani* (harmony/share and care, looking out for each other)'. (Tu'itahi-Tahaafe, 2003)

Fakalotofale'ia points to the underlying principles of the model whereby the *kainga* network is essential and vital in the successful operation of *Fakalotofale'ia*. Tongan values such as those described are essential in fulfilling obligations to the disabled family member and supporting the rest of the family in the process of caregiving through *ofa* (love and compassion).

Tu'itahi-Tahaafe breaks down the concept of *Fakalotofale'ia* by explaining its main components as follows;

- Faka The Way / The Way of
- loto Inside / Heart / the heart / Inside the heart
- fale / fale'ia House / Household / of the household / within – inside of the household, and its attendant values and expected ethical standards and etiquette.

Cross-cultural methodologies, frameworks, models and context specific information is important in the planning, collection, analysis and reporting of socio-cultural investigations. The importance of work such as that done by Tu'itahi-Tahaafe is that it continues to contribute specific Tongan values and principles to research literature, planning of evidence based interventions and programmes, informing service providers, policy makers, academics and scholars. These models remove us from 'trying to fit' into western frameworks to a realisation of various possibilities and understandings of 'our own things'.

*The Kakala*²⁷ model was also considered and was identified by the team as the appropriate model for this particular investigation. This model provided the blueprint for recruitment, fieldwork, input and analysis processes.

²⁷ Kakala – fragrant flora and fauna

This model was developed by Konai Helu-Thaman (1999) in criticising western educational constructs that reflect western values, aims and methods and how they have replaced Tongan worldview, values and processes. It is based on certain Tongan values and principles such as reciprocity, sharing, respect, collectivism and context-specific skills and knowledge, and it describes the process of gathering knowledge and information, analysing and arranging the gathered information and applying it through gift-giving.

Helu-Thaman's *Kakala* model is one that is based on the traditional process of fragrant garland making. She associates the recruitment and interviewing processes to the time of '*tolu kakala*' or searching for, selecting and picking the most appropriate flowers and fauna as well as the most appropriate time for '*tolu kakala*'. The *tolu kakala* process is one that takes many skills to collect the required flowers and fauna, people with these skills need to know their flowers and fauna, know the correct texture, maturity, colour, fragrance and locations to *tolu kakala*.

The next process which Helu-Thaman man likens to the data input, analysis and write-up period is when the collected flowers and fauna is gathered and given to the '*kau tui kakala*' or the people that weave and put the garland together. These people select the most fragrant and appropriate flowers and fauna for the garland design and begin creating either a traditional designed garland or a more contemporary design incorporating the designers own artistic flare. The *kau tui kakala* hold knowledge of traditional methods and designs and comment on correctness, presentation and symbolic meanings. They are knowledgeable in the intrinsic meanings of the *kakala* and the garland.

The final process of the *kakala* process is on completion of the garland, it is then given away as a gift or presented to someone for a special occasion such as a festival, dance, birthdays, weddings or other such events. The final process of *luva e kakala* is important in the research process as this is where the information is then returned to participants, community, scholars and people so that it can be useful. It is the launching and distribution of information that Helu-Thaman relates to the final process of '*luva e kakala*'.

Interviewing and Analysis Process

Participants

At the heart of this research are the stories relayed by church ministers, health and social professionals and community leaders and workers.

In developing the original research proposal some of the reviewers commented that the team needed to firstly identify that Tongans in Auckland had gambling issues first rather than assuming that this was the case from anecdotal stories and past prevalence data.

The team then chose church ministers, health and social professionals and community leaders and workers because:

1. It was through work with various service providers, health and social professionals that the increasing emergence of gambling issues in the community was initially identified.
2. Further team discussions also identified church ministers as another group of participants that had a captive audience of Tongans all over the region. The team believed that their observations would be valuable and significant to identifying whether Tongans in Auckland had gambling issues.
3. Community leaders and workers were identified for the same purpose as they worked with Tongan people across the board in the various community groups and activities that they co-ordinated.

Various unrelated public health interventions were being planned and implemented in Pacific communities in partnership with other providers, community groups and some churches. It was through this work that gambling became a topical issue for discussion and found that many of the public health issues being addressed were either directly or indirectly connected to gambling in some form.

An example of this was with a particular Pasifika smokefree project where the project message was regarding a smokefree Pasifika and during the planning and implementation of the event, gambling was identified as one of many related issues. The same was evident in some alcohol

work and is consistent with current research (Rankine 2003) that gambling is related to other public health issues such as alcohol consumption and tobacco.

These groups were asked to comment from personal and professional observations of their Tongan communities, clients and congregations.

Interviewees were identified through the churches, social and health providers, registered and unregistered community trusts and groups such as kava groups and church sub-groups.

Criteria for participation was:

1. Tongan ministers who were caretakers of a Tongan congregation
2. Tongan ministers who were involved in some way with the Auckland Tongan community.
3. Tongan or Pacific social and/or health professionals working with Tongan clients and their families.
4. Tongan community leader, whether it be part of a registered or unregistered community trust, groups or formal gatherings of Tongan people such as kava parties.

Recruitment

Recruitment was by way of invitation to share with the research team their experiences, observations and suggestions in their ministry, professions and community.

Invitations were sent out by mail with the information sheet and followed up by a phone call from the research team to arrange time and date for an interview. The invitation sheet was offered both in English and in Tongan and covered information about the research aims and objectives, design, contact telephone numbers for the research team and guarantee of confidentiality. All interviews were recorded for accuracy of information collection and analysis.

All participation was stressed as voluntary and was on an invitation basis to take part. This invitation was for participants to share their observations and personal analysis of gambling issues for Tongan people in Auckland.

Interviewing Process

Interviews were face-to-face interviews as well as focus group interviews. The ministers and health and social professionals interviews were individual face-to-face interviews whereas the community leaders and groups were a mixture of face-to-face and focus groups. This was due to the community nature of the groups and was left to them to decide how many people were to be present during the interviewing time. Community groups were more inclined to request another person or persons be part of the interview process.

All interviews were recorded and followed an interview schedule covering the research aims. All participants were required to fill out and sign a consent form before beginning the interview.

Questions were designed to search for information regarding the extent of gambling in the Tongan Auckland community, contributing factors to developing problem gambling and laying foundations for support further investigation and public health intervention.

Coding and Analysis

Sione Tu'itahi interviewed all the ministers and prepared the transcripts. Yvette Guttenbeil-Po'uhila interviewed the health and social professionals as well as community leaders and prepared the transcripts. Transcriptions were written in the language used during the interview so as to ensure and maintain context and socio-cultural meanings.

All of the interviews used both Tongan and English but the majority of the interviews (42) were conducted in Tongan and English as the second language whereas eight interviews were conducted in English using Tongan as the second language.

Re-occurring themes and concepts were drawn out by Sione and Yvette and taken to the research team for further discussion and analysis. These themes and concepts were also taken to the Tongan experts' advisory group and members of Vaka Ola for more analysis and discussion.

During writing this report the tapes were extensively re-listened to for clarification and authenticity. The team also stressed the importance of listening to the tapes to get the feeling

and atmosphere of the actual interview, so that information being extracted took into consideration the mood of the actual interview and was in line with what the participant 'actually' meant.

Major themes and concepts for the research were identified by re-reading transcripts, re-listening to the tapes and discussion and analysis by the research team as well as the Tongan experts' advisory group. These themes and concepts are discussed in detail in chapter five.

Translation

The research team and experts advisory group includes fluent Tongan speakers and qualified translators and interpreters. The investigators are experienced in translation and do not expect difficulties in understanding and interpretation. However there is a process of consultation if ambiguities arise.

A vigorous process of translating Tongan to English was used involving the research team and cultural advisors in order to diminish the loss of meaning of Tongan principles and concepts.