

Research Fatigue Among Tongans in Aotearoa: An Exploratory Study introducing the Fei'umu Research Method for empowering the researched.

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Abstract

Introduction: There has been a number of references in the literature to over-research and research fatigue¹⁻³, but rarely have the concepts been empirically investigated, and never for Pasifikans. There have been claims that researchers have built careers out of the 'natural experiment situations of the Pacific⁴⁻⁶ with minimal benefits to the researched, e.g. the Tongans⁷.

In response, an exploratory investigation into the New Zealand Tongan communities' understanding of and participation in, research, (HRC Seeding Grant No. 11/529), was conducted.

Method: We consulted 2 different church meetings in Auckland (approximately 50 people in each group). We also engaged in talanoa/discussions⁵ of the issues with 5: church leaders from different denominations; Tongan researchers; business owners; and 5 community leaders from Auckland, Wellington, Hamilton and Christchurch, respectively

Results: The study found, that the Tongan communities are subjected to a variety of research, information, and data gatherings, from a myriad of agencies. The respondents used a variety of mechanisms to avoid discomfort, get rid of researchers as expediently as possible, including; heliak⁸, white lies, sarcasm, or give expected answers, thus confirming research fatigue¹. The interviews and surveys employing the Tongan language and ethnic specific research approaches were preferred, especially for sensitive issues. The study suggests that ownership of the research process will improve the robustness of the data collection, and the community ownership of research outcomes.

Conclusion: The presence of research fatigue will threaten robust data collection and ownership of research findings⁶. This paper discussed research fatigue and its dangers, and suggest ways to address this problem⁸⁻¹⁰, before researchers are driven further from the researched communities and the utility of research knowledge^{11,12}.

A new research method is introduced to enhance community participation and acknowledge ownership of respondent knowledge contributions. The Fei'umu Research Methodology uses the talanoa 13 and talanga



A new research method is introduced to enhance community participation and acknowledge ownership of respondent knowledge contributions. The Fei'umu Research Methodology uses the talanoa 13 and talanga 14 together as data collection instrument following the process of fei'umu 15,16 (cooking with underground earth ovens): covering 'umu preparation: food and cooking processes; eating arrangement and seating; entertainment; feasting protocols; and oratory exchanges.

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**RESEARCH FATIGUE AMONG TONGANS:
Fei'umu Research Method empowering the researched**

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Research Fatigue?

1. Tongans in Auckland
2. A Community Talanoa
3. What's Research Fatigue?
4. Why it's important?
5. How was the Talanoa?
6. Outcome of the Talanoa
7. Conclusions
8. The Fei'umu Model: a response to research fatigue





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Tongans in Aotearoa

- 50,481 Tongans in 2006
- 90% church affiliation
- >50% NZ born & raised
- Increase of 24.0 % from 2001
- Fastest growing Pacific group
- 38% <15 years old
- About 34,000 live in Auckland
- Highest abortion rate!



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Redefining Tongans Life Problems in Auckland: the 4 Ps

Powerlessness: minority, no equity,
Poverty: affordability, access

Poor Education: acceptability, employment
Personality difference: marginal existence

Driver of Change "If we don't do it no one will"

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What is Research Fatigue?

Respondents' & Researchers'

Complains of:

- **Over-research; &**
- **helplessness to control research directions and returns**
- **Misrepresentation of data**

E.g.: Ms. M. Mead's Samoa; &
 • **"Growing up in Tonga?"**



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Features of research Fatigue: 1. Clarity of purpose

Respondent Fatigue

- Topic is irrelevant and uninteresting to respondents
- *Research questions are decided by researchers & funders*
- Research don't seem relevant to respondents.
- *Research may be carried out too late (after the event).*

Researcher Fatigue

- **Researchers feel research lacks clarity of purpose.**
- **Researchers feel research fails to ask questions that are genuinely useful.**



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Features of research Fatigue: 2. Research Methods


Respondent Fatigue

Respondents are tired of responding to 'same old' data collection methods (e.g. questionnaires, feedback forms)

- Research methods used do not energise or engage respondents.

Researcher fatigue

Researchers are experienced in one or two methods but lack confidence to try others; Suitable to respondent



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Features of research Fatigue: 3. Research Execution

Respondent Fatigue

Topic relevant and interesting to respondents ;

- but respondents are tired of irrelevant questions;
- *or methods of data collection, particularly if respondents have already voiced discontent; and*
- *are feeling that 'nothing changes'.*

Researcher Fatigue


Researchers feel anxious that data quality is poor due to poorly worded questions, etc.

- **Researchers feel that research is restricted by clients brief, regulatory frameworks/demands for 'hard', 'transparent' data.**
- **Researchers feel research is restricted by resources (time, money, personnel, etc.)**

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Features of research Fatigue: 4. Practical Actions & Outcomes


Respondent Fatigue

- Respondents are frustrated: at giving responses yet receiving no feedback about research findings; &
- with receiving feedback that seems misleading or lacks credibility.
- Respondents receive feedback but changes due to research do not happen.

Researcher Fatigue

- Researchers do not see much changing as a result of the research.
- Researchers feel frustrated that research may have raised respondents' expectations but changes as a result of the research are unlikely to happen


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Why Is Research Fatigue important?

**Research:
to uncover a reality**


- Knowledge and experiences (data) are finite resources & shouldn't be mined mindlessly & recklessly
- Robust data depends on robust respondents
- Research fatigue affect robust research
- Current process *disempowering & tiring, favouring researchers*




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**Display at
Massey
University,**

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How was the Talanoa Done?




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Talanoa by Tongan known to Respondents
In/outsider Researcher?

- Practice tradition & spoke **Tonkanese**
- Collective Consent
- Taped for transcription and, thematic analysis

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Study Population



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**Tali
'Eiki
Houma
2011**

- 2 church meetings of 30-50 people of all ages and gender
- 5 church leaders: 2 Male & 3 female; 5 business owners
- 5 researchers: health; education; social science
- 5 community leaders from different sectors

• Each category: saturated and triangulated

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Ola 'e Talanoa

Church groups:

- English and Tongan questions used
- Too many strangers asking
- Lots of misunderstandings
- Quick responses to get rid of researchers
- *Questions on a wide variety of issues from health to living to death*
- *Sometimes: lie, joke, and/or heliaki ('secret talk')*



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Ola 'o e Talanoa



- *Repetitive questions of same issues*
- *So many different people asking*
- *Tiresome & pointless questions*

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Ola 'o e Talanoa

Community of 5s all similar:

- *There should laws against useless questioning*
- Plenty of strange researchers
- hard to understand reaeacher behaviour and quetions
- Varieties of "researchers" are hitting the Pacific communities
- Tongan nuances used: heliaki, *fakakata*, polepole, *fakatokilalo*, ki'i loi, fieme'a, hua, *fakapangopango*, etc.




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Conclusions & Talanoa Summary

- ✓ Research fatigue +++ present
- ✓ Protection & power sharing with respondents needed
- ✓ Research ownership of respondents needed
- ✓ New empowering research approach needed
- ✓ Some legitimate research **not** supported because of fatigue
- ✓ Nuances of language affect robust data collection!




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Tongan Realities




Need to use both
Talanga & Talanoa

- Talanga: verbal sparring to establish a new truism
- Talanoa: tell stories
- Necessary exchange to uncover reality
- Deconstruct the nuances of Tongan to expose meanings!

Branched
Coconut Tree Llahona,
Tonga

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Talanga Methodology



The Kava Circle


Home of
Talanga

- Result of analysis presented to respondents
- Talanga on interpretations
- Agreement on result then write up as co-authors with respondent representatives
- Use discernment groups for reference

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Eureka! The Fei'umu Research Model: the steps

1. Okooko & Ngoto'umu
2. Tokonaki & Fusilu
3. Feime'akai & Talanoa
4. Ta'o'umu & Talanoa
5. Fuke'umu
6. 'Au'au & Fokotu'u Pola
7. 'Ilo & Talanga
8. 'Inasi & Tufa
9. Lea Malie Lea Vovo



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1. Okooko & Ngoto'umu



Ta Fefie & Keli e
ngoto'umu

- Preparatory phase
- Study Design
- Identify Study populations
- Sampling
- Funding
- Study instruments
- Logistic design
- ID Research team

Fei'umu:
Everybody's
Business

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2. Tokonaki & Fusi Lu








**Food &
Recipe
collection**

**Talanoa: Data
Collection**

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Tokonaki: Ako Toungaue

Talanoa and Talanga : Explanation of project and data Collection



3. Feime'akai & Talanoa

Talanoa : sharing of project and data collection



Soane





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Feime'akai: Toungaue

Talanoa & Talanga; Sharing the data and agreeing on robustness






Feime'akai & Ako Talanga

Talanoa:
Share Data & explanation to ensure quality

Talanga to verify data accuracy

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Feime'akai: Tele, Fohi & fufulu

Participatory process: all involved

Fei'umu: Everyone's business

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4. Ta'o'umu & Talanoa

Data entry, Data incubation and Storage

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5. Fuke'umu

Data retrieval

Then Unpack data surprises

Some editing and cleaning and , then: *Re-present data to respondents*

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Kai Pola & Talanoa



Data Analysis: researcher and respondents

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6.'Au'u & Fokotu'u Pola



- Unpacking and classifying data
- Setting the tables & grouping data
- Data sorting

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Kai Pola & Talanoa



Sharing analysis and agreeing on interpretations

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7.'Ilo & Talanga

- Share & Digest Results
- Talanga & talanoa about results
- Agree on interpretations & representations
- Analysis: respondents & researchers share the meaning
- Fakame'ite & Lea Malie



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Fakame'ite & Lea Malie



Celebrating the agreed results and share research outcome!

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Lea Malie & Me'a Malie



Respondents and researchers and present the results together or independently

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'Ilo & Talanoa



Sharing the results and fruits of research

'Ilo Kava & Talanga



Faikava: medium of talanoa & talanga



Tufa Tu'unga



8.'Inasi & Tufa



Respondents & Researchers
Talanga, Vahevahe Felingiaki
 •Share analysis
 •Agree on Conclusions
 •Co-authorship: respondents & researchers
 •information dissemination
 •Fiemalie & Nonga



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Fiemalie & Nonga



Fiemalie & Nonga



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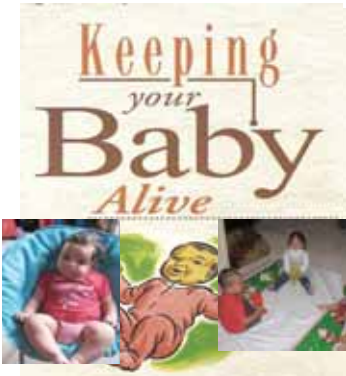


Malo 'Aupito: Ke mou Nonga



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Let Fei'umu Fix Fatigue

Malo e
Ve'ekihela
Haere Ra!



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