

**Pacific students and their perceptions of an academic library:
a case study of Whitireia Community Polytechnic**

by

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Submitted to the School of Information Management,
Victoria University of Wellington
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Information Studies

OCTOBER 2011

ABSTRACT

While more Pacific students are participating in tertiary education, there is little research on the information behaviour of this group in the academic library. As the primary function of the academic library is to support the learning needs of the student community, it is of interest to investigate how Pacific students use libraries and information resources available to them during their course of study.

Using a qualitative case study approach, the aim of this study is to begin to understand Pacific students' experiences of the library at Whitireia Community Polytechnic. This study investigates how they use the library, their perceptions of the library and how it may contribute to their academic success.

Key findings of this study show that students generally had a positive experience of the library, using it not just as an information centre but also as a cultural centre. The library was a place for them to find information, a place for them to study and a place for them to meet other Pacific students and classmates whom they worked and studied with in the library. Though this group of participants did not feel that there were any significant cultural barriers to their use of the library, the findings reveal some cultural factors that may affect Pacific students' use of the library.

Though this is a small case study, it provides an understanding of the experience of this group of Pacific students in an academic library. Understanding the information needs and information – seeking behaviour of this group will enable library and academic staff to develop or improve appropriate services so that student learning outcomes may also be improved.

Key words:

Academic libraries; library services; Pacific students; polytechnic libraries; New Zealand.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks to all the participants of this study, whose willingness to participate has made this research possible. Thank you for generously giving up your time, and sharing your experiences with me. Fa'afetai, fa'afetai lava. Kam bati n raba. Fakafetai. Fakaue lahi.

My grateful thanks to Heather Bradley, Library Manager, Lesley MacGibbon, all my colleagues and staff at Whitireia Community Polytechnic who gave me advice, helped me recruit participants and supported me throughout my study.

Thank you to my supervisor, Alastair Smith, for his guidance and support.

And finally, to Geoff, Thomas, Sam, Miriam and all my family, thank you always for the love and support that you give me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The demographics of the New Zealand population are changing. Since Pacific peoples began migrating to New Zealand in the post-war years until the mid-1970's, with many coming for better employment and educational opportunities, the Pacific population has grown rapidly so that today, the Pacific people have now become an established, mostly New Zealand-born, group in New Zealand.

According to the 2006 Census, Pacific peoples constitute 6.9 percent of the total New Zealand population with 265,974 people identifying with the Pacific peoples ethnic group. The Pacific peoples are a very diverse group made up of many ethnic groups and with a median age of 21, it is a young population and is expected they will comprise an increasing proportion of the student population to come (Statistics New Zealand and Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2010, p.8).

Ministry of Education statistics (2011) show Pacific student participation in tertiary education has grown steadily in recent years. There was a 37% increase in the numbers of domestic Pacific students enrolled between 2003 and 2010 (Table 1).

Table 1. Domestic students by Pacific ethnic group and gender 2003-2010

Gender	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2003-2010	2009-2010
Females	14,747	16,823	16,909	16,006	17,131	17,487	18,839	19,783	34%	5%
Males	9,893	10,878	11,245	10,998	12,131	12,324	13,192	13,968	41%	6%
Total	24,640	27,701	28,154	27,004	29,262	29,811	32,031	33,751	37%	5%

Source: Ministry of Education, 2011

Whitireia Community Polytechnic is a tertiary institution offering a diverse range of educational programmes from Foundation level, Certificate and Diploma through to Degree level qualifications. The institution serves a community that has one of the highest proportions of Pacific people in New Zealand. Whitireia has been recognized as having a “high quality of educational achievement achieved across the majority of programmes offered by the Polytechnic. In 2009, 86% of enrolled students completed their courses, and 73% successfully passed their courses” (ITPQuality, 2010, p.6). In 2010, 1,564 Pacific students were enrolled at Whitireia and 72% of these students successfully passed their courses (Whitireia Polytechnic, 2011). The question of what role the academic library plays in a tertiary institution such as Whitireia with its strong focus on student success has led to this research.

While more Pacific students are participating in tertiary institutions, there is little research on the information behaviour of this group in the academic library. As the primary function of the academic library is to support the learning needs of the student community, it is of interest to investigate how Pacific students use libraries and information resources available to them during their course of study.

This study will explore the information behaviour of Pacific students at a tertiary institution. Wilson (1999) defines information behaviour as “those activities a person may engage in when identifying their own need for information, searching for information and using or transferring that information.” The purpose of this study is to investigate what assists Pacific students to use the library, what acts as barriers to their use of the library and their perceptions of how it may contribute to their academic success. This study intends to fill the gap in the literature and provide an understanding of Pacific peoples’ experience of the library in a tertiary institution. Understanding the information needs and information –seeking behaviour of this group will enable library and academic staff to develop or improve appropriate services so that student learning outcomes may also be improved.

1.2 Research questions

- How do Pacific students at this polytechnic use or not use the academic library to support their learning?
- What are the perceptions of the services provided in the polytechnic library?
- To what extent do students see that their use of the library contributes to their academic success?
- To what extent do students perceive that their Pacific culture influences their use of the academic library?

1.3 Definitions

Pacific students - In this study, students who have identified themselves as 'Pacific' in their enrolment, that is, students who identify as coming from covers people from the islands of Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Fiji and the Tokelaus. 'Pacific' student is used as it emphasizes the heterogeneous nature of this population group. It includes those who have been born in New Zealand or overseas, those who belong to a variety of ethnicities, new migrants or those belonging to second generation or later, New Zealand born families (Gorinski & Fraser, 2006). This study invited Pacific students enrolled at Whitireia Community Polytechnic to participate in this research project.

Culture refers to the way of life members of a group in society which includes their beliefs, values, ideas, language and customs. Tongan academic and poet, Professor Konai Helu-Thaman (1998) offers the following definition of culture as

... the way of life of a discrete group which includes a language, a body of accumulated knowledge, skills, beliefs and values. I see culture as central to the understanding of human relationships and acknowledge the fact that members of different cultural groups have unique systems of perceiving and organizing the world around them. I also

believe the ways in which we have been socialized largely influence our behaviour and way of thinking as our world view (Helu-Thaman as cited in Coxon et al. 2002, p. 6).

Library services - In this study, it refers to the Whitireia Polytechnic library collections, both print and electronic, and services such as reference and circulation services, user education or information skills instruction, library tours and orientations, interlibrary loan, library facilities such as physical space, building facilities, study rooms , library liaison between faculty and students and library staff.

Academic library - In this research, the academic library is the library which supports the information needs of students and staff belonging to the polytechnic. In the literature, the academic library refers to the library belonging to the post-secondary school (also known as tertiary) institutions such as universities, polytechnics or private training establishments. The North American literature refers to the non-university tertiary institutions as colleges.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

As very little research has been carried out in New Zealand on Pacific people and their use of academic libraries, the literature search has included the growing body of New Zealand research on the participation of Pacific people in tertiary education to see what place the library has in supporting their learning outcomes. The international research on academic libraries and students of other cultures refer to minority groups or international students.

2.1 Pacific people in education

In the literature relating to recruitment and retention of Pacific students in higher education, Cuthill and Scull (2011) offer some cultural context in their interviews with Pacific Island migrants in Australia while Latu and Young (2004) provide some cultural background to those teaching Pacific students in the information and communication technology courses. Latu and Young discuss the learning styles of Pacific students that have arisen from the traditional methods of teaching and learning within a hierarchical Pacific society. These learning styles and characteristic behaviours of Pacific students are also discussed in several articles relating to Pacific students in the classroom and will provide a cultural framework in understanding Pacific students in the library to see if these act as barriers to their use of the library (Pacific Islands Students Academic Achievement Collective, 1986; Ho, Holmes and Cooper, 2004; Clark, 2006).

The role of the library in contributing to student outcomes has not been specifically studied in New Zealand. However, contribution of the wider student support service which includes tutoring, multicultural outreach and library has been identified in both New Zealand and international literature. A University of Auckland survey (Anae and Suaalii, 1996 as cited in Mara, 2007) found that the General Library was one of the 4 most used services by Pacific students but it needed to be enhanced and extended. The outcome was the development of the

Pasifika Liaison Librarian at the University (McFall McCaffery, 2008). In Beaver and Tuck's study (1998) of overseas students at a tertiary institution, Pacific Island students rated their level of competency in 'using the library' very highly, more than Asian students. This positive experience of library use and perceived confidence in using the library despite the small sample has relevance for further investigation.

Koloto's research (2006) identified critical success factors and pedagogy for Pacific students in the e-learning environment. Through data analysis of the literature on Pacific learning and e-learning in the tertiary sectors, individual interviews and focus groups, it found some of the critical success factors were access to information, learning centres and other resources. This research also highlighted the importance of incorporating Pacific cultural values, knowledge and perspective within the educational institution.

2.2 Academic libraries and minority students

The themes of under-representation, retention and achievement of minority groups in higher education are also present in the international literature. The range of research involving academic libraries and ethnic minority groups is also small. As colleges developed diversity initiatives to increase the numbers of minority students in colleges, academic libraries were encouraged to re-examine their services to support the needs of minority students. However, in the library literature, the majority of articles which examine the issue of cultural diversity and academic library use focus on the growing international student market. The studies range from cover topics such as information behaviour of multicultural students (Liu and Redfern, 1997; Yi, 2007); Chinese international students (Morrissey & Given, 2006; Liu and Winn, 2009) and issues of cultural communication in libraries (Wang and Frank, 2002; McSwiney, 2003).

The areas of research most relevant to this study have been in the North American studies of the academic library experiences of African American students and Latino students.

2.2.1 African American students and the library

Whitmire's studies of African American students and other minority students have often been cited (1999, 2003, 2004). Whitmire's quantitative studies found that both the African American and White students had similar academic library experiences but generally, African American students used the library resources more often than White students. Later, Whitmire (2003) extended her study to include Asian Americans, Latino, Native American and African Americans to explore any differences in library use. She found that students from all five racial groups shared similar patterns of library use. However, there were significant differences in frequencies of use by students of colour who used the library to study and read basic references more while White students used the library catalogue more. Both Whitmire's studies offer statistical evidence of frequent library use by minority students but further qualitative research might provide answers to how these students use the library and whether they had previous experience or orientation, so that programmes may be better tailored to suit them.

Shoge (2003) examined how African-American undergraduates, graduates and professionals engaged in library activities and their perception of the library as a place for academic and professional development. She sought to find out if there was a relationship between their engagement and their perceived effect on their academic performance.

Shoge's results indicated a positive use of the library particularly by graduate students and professionals who made more use of the range of library resources, used the library as a place for study and ranked the effect on their academic performance more highly. Both groups of students used the library to improve their performance and complete assignments. Shoge acknowledges that the actual relationship between library use and student performance is based on perceived effectiveness and further investigation in this area needs to be based on measurements of programme effectiveness and grades.

A more recent study addressed how minority students used the Portland State University Library in order to understand their feelings about their services and use of library as place (Elteto, Jackson & Lim, 2008). They refer to the studies by Whitmire and Shoge and fill the gap in research by looking at *how* specific racial groups use the library and their perceptions of the service. Results from this study are consistent with Whitmire's in that minority students visited the library more than White students – though in this case, they were less inclined to ask for reference help and had ambivalent feelings about the reference service received. The authors conclude that the library as place was significant to all students - though for minority students access to technology, technological help and writing assistance were more important.

2.2.2 Latino students and the library

Adkins and Hussey (2006) contend that in order to serve an underrepresented population effectively, librarians need to know what the library experience means to them. While their qualitative study of seven Latino students was not representative of the typical Latino, their individual experiences would offer an insight into the cultural differences that could be inherent in the library experience of a non-dominant culture (Adkins & Hussey, 2006, p.457) The authors concluded that students felt most comfortable when they knew how to use the library and understood the expected behaviours. This reflected their acceptance of the prevailing cultural hegemony by working with those procedures rather than feeling alienated by them. However, their experiences were complex – negative feelings about the library by some, were balanced by other positive feelings towards library services and librarians. Their motivation for using the academic library was for their educational needs and the public library was the place that would provide the cultural reinforcement they might need.

2.3 New Zealand libraries

In Australia and New Zealand, the literature also concentrates on international Chinese or Asian students (Sackers, Secomb & Hulett, 2008; Hughes, 2010). A number of research projects by

Master of Library and Information Studies students have covered specific aspects of library services to international, mainly Chinese, students. The two most recent projects by Wang (2006) and Pibulsip (2010) looked more closely at the influence of culture on information behavior of Chinese university students and by Malaysian Chinese medical students respectively. Using a cross-cultural theoretical framework, based on Hofstede's model of culture, these two studies examined the influence of culture on academic library use by international Chinese students in two different New Zealand universities. Their conclusions that there are inter-cultural barriers such as communication and educational traditions were relevant to my research in that it would be interesting to discover if there are similar cultural barriers that exist for Pacific students.

2.3.1 Maori and Pacific people and libraries

The literature relating to the participation of Maori and Pacific people in libraries is recent. The problem of limited engagement of Maori with New Zealand libraries led to the Te Ara Tika project in the 1990's in which the use of public libraries by Maori was investigated (MacDonald, 1993; Szekeley, 1997). The first part examined the issues and activities related to biculturalism and services to Maori from the perspective of the library and information profession, followed by the second report which investigated the Maori perception of libraries and their information needs (Szekely, 2002). These reports found issues relating to intellectual access and information literacy, developing relationships between Maori youth and libraries, Maori staffing, improved outreach to the Maori in the community and promotion of library services. These results led to significant improvement to services for Maori through the promotion of services, increased representation of Maori staff and access to the cultural heritage of Maori.

Most recently, Lilley's research (2008) looked at the information barriers that Maori secondary school students encounter in their use of libraries. Key findings from his study are that Maori students face a variety of barriers in their information seeking including availability of

information, access to information technology and the Internet. The types of barriers varied depending on the cultural context of information they were seeking. Of interest to my study, is the section relating Maori students' attitudes to using libraries and their perceptions of libraries as being "not cool", too focused on books and making them feel unwelcome.

Two pieces of research submitted for the Master of Library and Information Studies have contributed to the theme of Pacific people and libraries. Gayton (2001) hoped to find a relationship between library use and academic success in the secondary school in her research. The focus of her study was to examine how a group of South Auckland Pacific teenagers perceived the role of the school library and librarians. Her study is significant in understanding the attitudes of teenagers who might later have pursued further education and the impact of those attitudes on the role of the library in their tertiary study.

She found that students generally understood that the library was a place of learning and a valuable resource in supporting the learning needs of the school. However, the negative stereotype of the library as a place for the "geeks" and the more academic was at the forefront of their perceptions that discouraged them from going to the library regularly. Her other findings included students wanting a more welcoming environment, more magazines and various non-book resources more suited to their needs that would encourage them to use the library more. The presence of Pacific resources in a separate collection as for Maori was desired to enhance their cultural connection to the library. Gayton found that while students saw the value of the library in the school, it was not a place they visited regularly and did not see it as important to their academic success as they generally had a negative view of their schooling.

Marsters (2008) explored the relationship between Pacific culture and public library engagement of Pacific families in Hawkes Bay to see if their cultural values had any influence on their attitudes and participation. The issue of participation is crucial as this could have an

impact on the education, health and well-being of Pacific People. Family members of five Cook Island families over three generations (17 individuals) were interviewed. Marsters found that those with tertiary qualifications used the library more; the younger members went to the library for their schoolwork though overall, there was little participation in the library among the families. Their experiences of libraries at school and in the community did not reflect their cultural values or heritage.

Key issues to arise from the findings were that access to information and library services be communicated to the Pacific community in a variety of modes including own language newsletters; improved promotion of services to these groups, improved customer service acknowledging cultural diversity, increased audio-visual resources to fit with the Pacific oral tradition and more Pacific representation and involvement in libraries.

The similar attitudes between these two studies indicates that libraries have some work to do in developing and promoting their services to Pacific people in terms of resources, representation communication and environment in order to improve participation and engagement.

2.4 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework chosen reflects the purpose of the study – to understand the information behaviour of students from a cultural group.

2.4.1 Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions

Hofstede's cultural models (1989, 2001 as cited in Fisher, Erdelez & McKechnie, 2005) is used to describe a person's cultural context through communication and social relationships. Hofstede identified four dimensions of culture and used in studies by Wang (2006) and Pibulsip (2010) as cited earlier in the literature review. Two dimensions were found to be most applicable to my study:

Power distance describes “perceptions of equality and inequality by members of various cultures” (Fisher et al., 2005, p. 110) and relationships of dependence. In countries with small power distances, subordinates are quite independent of bosses and society is more egalitarian. In large power distance countries, dependence on those in authority is higher and those with status are treated with deference so inequality is more like to occur. Komlodi and Carlin (2004) argue that this dimension will strongly influence the initial stages of the Information Seeking task. Access to information in these cultures can also be more limited and based on power positions (Komlodi & Carlin, 2004, p.5). It may also be a barrier to library use as traditionally the elder or the teacher was central to the transfer of knowledge to their students and so, the use of the library to pursue their own independent learning and research may be an unfamiliar process for Pacific students.

Individualism vs collectivism – In individualistic countries, “the interests of the individual will prevail over the group” (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 75). Decisions are made according to the best results for the individual. In collectivist countries, people view their actions in relation the common goal of the group. They usually function in collaboration with each other and make decisions collectively. In a collectivist culture, students are less inclined to speak up in class without a teacher present; working in small groups is more likely to increase student participation (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p.97).

2.4.2 Wilson’s model of information behaviour

According to Wilson (1997) the root of all information behaviour is a need for information which is usually only known to the user which may arise from their cognitive, affective or physiological needs.

Wilson’s 1981 model (Wilson, 1999) identified three sets of barriers to information-seeking behaviour – personal, social/role-related and environmental barriers. His review of research found that aspects of the wider environment could present barriers to one’s current

information-seeking activity. The element of national culture and its characteristics could have an effect on the information acquisition process as members of different cultures approach the information-seeking process.

Thus, in a tertiary institution, students may recognize their need for information, motivated by their cognitive needs – their need for information to complete their assignments. For Pasifika students, differences in national cultures may present barriers to the way they access or acquire information. Previous studies have examined the significance of national cultures on information behaviour among Asian students using Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions. This study examined if Pacific students identified or displayed any cultural characteristics that fitted within those dimensions and if those may have affected the way they used the library.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter sets out the research methodology used in this study. It outlines the research design, methods for data collection, sample selection and data analysis. Finally, the limitations and ethical considerations of this study are presented.

3.1 Research design

A qualitative methodology was most appropriate for this study as I sought to gain an understanding of their library experiences from the participants' own point of view. Hearing participants' stories through direct interaction with them, would lead to information rich in detail.

3.2 Method

The qualitative case study method was selected as it involves a detailed analysis of a specific setting, subject or event "on the assumption that it is possible to derive knowledge of the wider phenomenon from intensive investigation of a specific instance or case" (Becker as cited in Gorman & Clayton, 2005, p.47).

In this case, the in-depth and thorough investigation of a group of students who all share a similar Pacific cultural background, in the same setting of Whitireia Community Polytechnic, will offer an insight into their experiences, in their own words, from which further action can be taken. While this group of students will belong to the same umbrella Pacific group, they may belong to different ethnic groups within this.

3.3 Data collection

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. I chose face to face interviews with participants so that they would have the opportunity to express their views without being influenced by others. It was also the more preferable method to establish rapport with participants and gain their trust, making them feel comfortable in speaking, creating an honest and open dialogue. An interview guide with a set of questions was prepared beforehand with the flexibility to clarify, probe and develop further questions.

3.4 Sample

This study used the purposive sampling technique as recommended in Bryman (2008). This technique is a strategic one in which the sample selection is based on which participants are relevant to the research questions. The case study strategy for this study and the research question meant that the site and sample selection were already determined. Though I had ready access to the site as a staff member of the library, permission was sought through the Ethics Committee of Whitiriria.

I used several methods to recruit participants for this study. I approached the Pacific Liaison Student Advisor for assistance in advertising and referring Pacific students enrolled at the Polytechnic to this study. I also posted advertisements across the campus calling for interested participants. Though letters were sent to all faculty staff informing them of the research project, it was felt that Pacific students may have felt obliged to participate if their tutors referred them to me. Time constraints and a slow response to advertisements meant that I had to use my library networks and personal contacts to approach students who were eligible.

Potential participants were given information sheets and consent forms and appointments for a confidential, anonymous interview were made with those who agreed to participate. Though efforts were made to ensure representation across courses, year levels and gender, the sample

consisted of seven female Pacific students, who were studying across two faculties and they were in different years of study. Six students were in the over-25 age group and one in the under-25 age group.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee. Permission was also sought and obtained from Whitireia Community Polytechnic to involve Pacific students from their organisation. As part of the ethics approval process, each participant was given an information sheet that outlined the purpose of the study, the processes for handling and storage of data and the confidentiality and anonymity of their participation. I explained these processes again to participants before each interview proceeded. Informed consent was gathered from all participants.

3.6 Role of researcher

A characteristic of the qualitative method is that the researcher is the key instrument of data collection and there is a close relationship between researcher and participant. This involves establishing trust and rapport between the two. As this was a case study of an institution to which I belonged, I was aware that I would be interviewing participants known to me. This could be seen as a weakness in the validity due to bias and subjectivity. However, its advantage was that I had an already established rapport and trust between participants and myself. Having a written interview schedule and using notes from my observations went some way to moderating these concerns.

As a new researcher, I was aware of maintaining objectivity during the interview process by having a non-judgmental attitude, being open and willing to listen to different points of view. I was also conscious of being sensitive to the language difficulties that some participants had and

giving them time to find the right words and phrases and clarifying their meaning if I was unsure.

In this study, there was the added element of myself as researcher studying this Pacific community and so it was essential that appropriate cultural protocols were observed. The research process was guided by concepts such as Jean Mitaera's "researcher as the first paradigm" in which the researcher needs to acknowledge her own vision, principles and values guiding the research (Koloto, 2003, p.26).

Koloto (2003) offers four principles based on that concept – respect, collaboration, honesty and empowerment. Throughout all interactions, I emphasised the confidentiality and anonymity of participants and that their views would be respected. "Respect (fa'aaloalo) in Pacific culture is the foundation of good relationships that binds everything together" (Apelu, 2008, p.36). The informed consent process that I went through with each participant before their interview allowed them the opportunity to ask questions, to withdraw if they wished and I spoke honestly to them about my intentions and my values. A respectful and collaborative relationship had been already established through my personal encounters in this institution as librarian. The inclusion of direct quotations in the reporting of data findings goes towards the honesty that ensures the 'voices' of the participants are represented (Koloto, 2003, p.26).

3.7 Methods of data analysis

Interviews were arranged with participants at a time that was convenient to them and were held in a private meeting room in the library building, to give them a familiar environment. I arranged spaces between interview appointments to allow for reflection, initial data analysis and time for transcribing interviews. Each interview lasted between 40-50 minutes and was recorded using a digital recorder which I later transcribed. I made notes after each interview was completed as I wanted to maintain a good rapport with the participant while they were speaking. Interviews were transcribed by myself within a day of recording which allowed me to

read through and listen to the recording several times. I also reflected on each interview before, making memos before proceeding to the next interview.

As Creswell (2003) suggests, the first step in data analysis is to read through all your data to get a general sense of the information, making memos of ideas and immersing yourself in the details before breaking the data down. After multiple readings of the transcripts and becoming familiar with the information, I began to break the data down into categories. Initial categories were formed using the interview questions, then gradually combining categories that were similar into themes.

3.8 Credibility

Some of the strategies used to check accuracy of findings in this research was the use of a digital recorder to ensure accurate data collection, using observation and making memos during interviews of the non-verbal cues and using observations in the field as an “insider”. The use of rich description in reporting the findings and direct quotations from participants will also add to the credibility of this research.

3.9 Limitations

This study is confined to the Pacific students attending the selected polytechnic. One of the limitations is that as a staff member of the library, and as researcher, a bias may be present through preconceptions or history. However, I have made any bias clear in this chapter and have been honest and open about my role as researcher during the interactions with participants.

This study is limited by the small sample size and representation. Participants who volunteered were all women, mainly mature students in the over -25 age group and may not represent the experiences of all Pacific students at the polytechnic.

This study is also limited to participants who use the library as efforts to recruit non-users of the library were unsuccessful. However, it is hoped the results will provide an account of the experiences of a group of students from the Pacific community and it will make a contribution to a limited area of research.

The next chapter reports the findings organised according to the major themes developed.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter reports on the findings that relate to Pacific students and their experiences of an academic library at Whitireia Community Polytechnic. Themes were developed following multiple readings and analysis of the transcripts. As Creswell suggests, these themes “should display multiple perspectives from individuals” (Creswell, 2003, p.194). Therefore, the findings here will be supported by the diverse quotations from the participants themselves and as far as possible, the original quotations from participants have been used so that the reader is drawn into an accurate account of the participants’ experience.

The findings have been arranged into the following key themes:

Theme 1: Library use experience of Pacific students. This refers to the information seeking behaviour of Pacific students in the library. It describes the processes students take to search for information, their knowledge of library resources and how effective they are in using the library resources. This also looks at the effective aspect to their use which leads into the affective aspect in theme 2.

Theme 2: “Is the library a place for me?” refers to the use of the library space and what the library means to students. It describes their feelings and attitudes towards the library, how comfortable they are with the library and interactions with staff and how important they see the library in supporting their learning.

Theme 3: Barriers to information seeking which refers to any cultural or other influences that impact on how they use the library.

4.1 THEME 1: Library use experience of Pacific students

This theme encompasses a number of categories including any previous library experience, Pacific students' information skills training, use of library resources and use of reference services.

The participants in this study were generally very positive with their library experience and the effect on their study. They expressed great satisfaction with the services provided. They warmly praised the quality of assistance they received from library staff and the usefulness of the library.

4.1.1 Previous library experience

All but one of these students were mature students, some of whom had started their families at a young age and had been out of the formal education system for many years. Of the mature students, all but one of them were immigrants, many having only lived in New Zealand for less than ten years. For most of these participants, their previous library experience was limited to public library use in New Zealand, and one had never used a library before. All the mature students had used the public library with their children – generally for their children's recreational reading and homework. Two of them mentioned also using the Pasifika resources in their local library for their own information while another spoke of learning how to use the library catalogue to find books. For all these students, the academic library was a new experience.

4.1.2 Library Training at Whitireia

All students interviewed had attended at least a Library Orientation course in their first year of study. For some participants this was combined with the Introduction to Online Searching course while for others, this was taught in their second year. A few students seem to have confused their experiences of this with another computer skills course offered by a staff

member from the Poutama Academic Learning Services.¹ All remember being shown how to find resources using the online library catalogue, being given a brief explanation of the Dewey classification system and how the books are organised on the shelves as part of the Orientation course. This introductory course was important to this group as most had limited library experience. Generally, this group of students found these sessions to be very useful, presented in a manner that was culturally appropriate with clear face to face presentation, good handouts and interactive activities. Students had the opportunity to ask questions and had a computer each to try out those skills being presented.

However, though all the participants said they found this to be useful, some also found this session to be very confusing and overwhelming. Student One said “it was a bit too fast... the tutoring side of it, we don’t understand half of it”. She would have preferred a smaller group session but had not taken up any further individual appointment with the Information Literacy Librarian. She had heard that small group sessions were being organised by the tutor with the librarian and was waiting to join one in the next semester.

Another said that while it was hard to follow, it was very useful and having had several individual follow up appointments, was now a confident searcher of online databases.

It was hard to follow because I ...was not exposed to computers...yea. That’s why it’s difficult for me to follow the instructions. But that’s not stopped me. I always ask because people here are, you know, really helpful. So when I’m stuck, then I come to the librarian.

She goes on to say that after that individual training “I was able to teach others, my colleagues. Yea, I showed them how to find from what I’d learnt.”

¹ Poutama Academic Learning Support Services provides an academic support service to students, offering help with essay writing skills, reading and note-taking skills, exam technique and basic computer skills training. They are located on the ground floor of the library building, close to the main circulation desk.

For all the participants, this course was their introduction to a new source of information - online databases with access to full-text journals, online resources such as Britannica Online and the GALE suite of databases, Index New Zealand and authoritative websites related to their areas of study.

Myself, I didn't know anything at all to search the databases or go there to find the research - not at all. I always use books, journals, stuff like that. But after that class, I learn a lot of new things.

Yea, the journals as well as the databases are very easy because I got the skills now! Because you have [taught] me how to do it. It's very easy to use the database.

This training session also introduced the students to the MYATHENS login system allowing students to have remote access to the online databases so they could search these databases at home. Although this service is available and promoted at these introductory training sessions, only two spoke of using it at home regularly.

Yes, that's the ... other useful thing about the library. Before I didn't know you could have access to the library from home. That show you can work from home. Really helpful.

Some of the participants preferred to do their searching in the library as they did most of their coursework in the library. One student was unsure of how to access the databases so didn't use them at all.

4.1.3 Navigating the library

The practical skills that the participants learnt during these orientation and introductory searching sessions appeared to give most participants some confidence in using the library and navigating their way around a library system that was unfamiliar. For most students, the initial training gave them basic library skills needed to find their information but they all encountered

difficulties in the search process. Participants spoke of using the online catalogue and though they found it hard at first, most persevered and asked for help from library staff. This in itself was not easy and is covered later under the theme of Barriers to Information Seeking.

I really struggled in the first place. In my first year, yea, I really struggled. I started asking the librarian. They teach me step by step how to search on the catalogue. Then they take me to shelf section even though they already tell us when we first start. But I can't remember. I don't know which side and where's the shelf. But then when I ask, they took me there. That's when I get used to it.

As participants described the stages of their search process, it revealed the different levels of confidence they had with using the catalogue and their levels of understanding of the various library processes and services. While most students used the Online Public Access Catalogue to search for resources, they preferred to search for titles in recommended reading lists from their tutors as their first option as they were not as confident in attempting keyword searching.

Once students were familiar with the library classification system and finding items on the shelf, they were still often frustrated by this process when books were not found where they should be. It was at this stage that many students would approach a librarian for help to find the book and then proceed to find alternatives or reserve the unavailable item. Many were familiar with the reserves system, the Closed Reserve collection and inter campus loan.

Another frustration for participants was coming into the library to look for books and finding they had already been taken out. This was a concern to some because as English was their second language, they needed as much time as they could with the resources. They felt that sometimes there were not enough resources in the library.

Generally, the students who had completed the introductory course and followed this up by asking for more informal help from the library staff for searching the catalogue and locating books, became more comfortable and confident with finding their way around the library, becoming more independent users. They tended to have a more positive attitude towards the library. The length of time students had been using the library for also meant the library was less intimidating. Student Two, a third year student, explains how she finds what she needs:

Instead of using the catalogue [on the] computers there, sometimes I search from home and then I get all those titles and the book number and then straight from home, I come straight into the library to the shelves. So it's like, it's easy to access [and] not time consuming. I spend little time searching here because I already search from home.

The students in their first year were still coming to grips with the library and its processes and were less positive about the library. For example, Student Six found it took her much longer to look for books in the library than it did searching the Internet.

All the students found the library staff helpful and approachable and many spoke of the positive effect that individual assistance had on their library experience. Student Two gained her confidence in using the catalogue because “they teach me step by step ... and that's when I get used to it.”

4.2 THEME 2: “Is the library a place for me?”

In response to how participants felt on their first visit to the library as new students, most of the group expressed positive feelings of awe and anticipation as they recognised the valuable resources available to them as they embarked on the educational journey. They were all impressed by the size of the collection as it was a much larger and quite different environment to anything they had experienced before. Most of them had at least had some experience of the local public library but the academic library was a new experience.

4.2.1 First impressions

Student Four punched her fist in the air with passion as she described her initial feelings, impressed by the diversity of the collection.

I feel “yes!” This is a place for me to achieve my goals. The diverse books, not only early childhood but there’s also other resources – health, Maori and others.

When I come into the library, I just see it’s really good area to help for our study, especially other students. But when I came in, I (go) straight to the book areas.

For the only participant under 25, her first impression was one of amazement as it was her first time in “one of the actual libraries”. It was totally different to the small school library she was used to on the island of Niue. For another participant, it was quite daunting coming into the library for the first time, after starting a family at a young age and being out of the formal education system for a long time. Her concern was how she would be able to find what she needed from such a large collection of books.

However, most participants reported feeling comfortable on first entering, seeing other students around them and a supportive atmosphere. One student gave two examples of a sense of belonging with the library:

When I walk into the library, you know, they are displaying artefacts of different ethnic groups around the library. It brings a sense of belonging you know. We also had to design a Maori resource. We were told that we had the opportunity to display, bring it to the library to display, yea, so I was glad to see. It’s like Oh! I’m a part of this, this is me.

Many of these students had also forged a connection with the library that they extended to their families by bringing their children in during the holidays and sharing some of the library resources such as the children’s picture book collection with them.

4.2.2 Frequency of use

All the participants were regular users, visiting several times a week at least, especially when looking for information for upcoming assignments. Four of the seven participants reported coming into the library every day unless they were out on placements in the community, as these excerpts show:

I always come here at the night time, when my husband finish work, look after the children. That's why I come here after about five or six o'clock in the night. Until the library close, I will stay here doing. Because I know if I'm struggle, I know staff they gonna help me, some students here.

4.2.3 Library as study space

What do these students come to the library for if they are regular visitors? For all the mature students, the library was their primary source of information for their study. Their main purpose was to use the library resources, both print and electronic, searching for the information they needed and then, working on their assignments using the library computers. These students were using every aspect of the library facilities and resources:

I use the library to get my resources. I use the library to study, use the library to do my assignments and you know, it's very useful.

I come here to look for books to help for my assignment. I come here to use the computer. I come here if I need some help for the stuff, library stuff, I come here to do the photocopying, stuff like that.

The only participant in the under-25 age group came to the library several times a week, mainly to use the computers as she had no Internet access at home as well as finding books for her assignments.

Several participants spoke of using the meeting rooms for group work, using the library as a quiet place to study and also to be close to the support provided by the library and Poutama Academic Learning Services staff.

The idea of belonging to a community was emphasised by several participants. They saw that the library was a place where many Pacific students as well as students of other ethnicities went to do their research and work towards their academic goals. This group of participants was encouraged by the presence of other students and felt supported in their endeavours by this student community. As these students describe:

I can also see coming into the library, the majority are Pacific students taking different courses. [The] library is a place for me to socialise with other [students] not in the sense that we have the conversation but it's a place where I can meet one another, where there are other Tokelau, other Pasifika students I haven't seen for so long. Seeing them back in here was great. Year Three Pacific students also help us with our assignment.

I saw so many of the Pacific students come in to the library and use the library. Using the information and search for what they want, use the books and stuff like that.

This idea of a community is also supported by the finding that most of these students preferred to spend their time working and studying in the library rather than at home. The library was a place where they had the support of fellow students, library staff and academic support staff as well as the information resources close at hand.

When I come here, I use it as a place to look for resources and I use it as a place to study. I use it as a place where I know there are people I can turn to when I need help. Not only library staff, but Learning Skills (Poutama) people. To use the computers, articles, books, online databases.

4.2.4 Does the library support our learning?

One of the things I love, coming to the library, because my needs are met. In terms of the help that I get, not only from the people working in library, but also quality of books, databases and all.

The idea of learning support appeared to be an important aspect of library use by Pacific students. Students appreciated that they had information resources and academic learning support within the same building. Several participants spoke of having the help they needed around them when they worked in the library. The Library Learning Centre accommodates the Poutama Academic Learning Support Service on the ground floor and an IT support desk in close proximity to the Circulation and Reference desk.

Student Three reported that she began by meeting with a Poutama academic advisor to clarify and help her understand the requirements of her assignment before proceeding to search for information. Another participant was shown how to use the catalogue while seeking help for an assignment from an academic advisor

Most participants said that the library supported their learning. Though some were frustrated at not finding the resources they needed on the shelf when they needed it, they said that the library was their main source of information. For example, Student Two would give this piece of advice to other Pacific students:

I always encourage them to use the library. I think this is only place you can find information. You don't need to buy books. You can borrow them and then renew them, you know. I will always say the library is a very good place for information and it really helps the students in their study because there's always help.

Another student commented:

The library is one of my key support for my study.

Generally, students were very satisfied that the library provided the resources they needed to support their learning. Most students spoke of using the print and online resources, though one student preferred using online resources via the Internet. Students also spoke of the variety and currency of resources that supported their study.

4.3 Theme 3: Barriers to information seeking

When the participants were asked whether being a Pacific student affected their experience in the library most students said that it did not. These students did not perceive that their Pacific cultural background had any effect on their experience. However, reading through other responses from participants reveals that there are some minor cultural barriers to their information seeking. These were found to be in the areas of communication with library staff and possible reasons for non-use.

4.3.1 Communication with library staff

Some participants indicated that language could be a cultural factor affecting their experience of the library. For many of these students, English is their second language and for one student, “sometimes there was misunderstanding” when asking for help from library staff. Another student found it difficult using the library in her first year and identified language as one of the barriers:

I really struggled in the first place. Yea I really struggled...because I was not able to seek help, to ask. I always get shy or ashamed to ask but now I'm more confident in speaking, 'cos the language, the barrier.

Two other students identified this shyness or feeling ashamed to ask others as a cultural trait that may prevent them from using the library:

But I know, I'm a Samoan. I know some Samoan people, they got shy or something like that. But I have to challenge them. You better use the library to learn because we know English is our second language, it's hard for us. But if you keep on reading books, make you understand your assignment and stuff like that. Yea, I gonna encourage them as well to communicate.

Don't hesitate to ask for help. It's a matter of you asking questions because that is part of our upbringing, where you have to not to speak. You're not allowed to speak where there are elders or older people in there. Not to speak the whole meeting or whatever is going on. So I think that's how we sort of not asking questions and shy. New Zealand, we don't have to. Shy is not - it doesn't give us a future. We have to step up and change.

4.3.2 Family

Some students talked of family commitments. The fact that many Pacific students came from larger families – for example, having to look after children - might be a barrier to their using the library. On the other hand, for a few of the participants who had large families, this was actually a reason to come and use the library as it was a good place to study. It was a quiet place to be, away from the distractions of family duties and responsibilities.

One student spoke of the importance Samoans placed on the family and how she treated the library as family. It was more of a positive influence on her use rather than a barrier:

I'm a Samoan student and the way I use the library...the way I use, I always use like, as my normal family. Keep on coming, in and out, in and out. Even the night time. I always come here at the night time.

In the next chapter, I discuss the main findings in relation to the research questions and to the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings in sections that best answer the research questions.

5.1 How do Pacific students at this polytechnic use the academic library to support their learning?

A key finding that emerged is that Pacific students use the academic library not simply as an information centre but also as a cultural centre. They use the library for the information resources and services provided to support their information needs, but they also use the library as a place to meet up with students from their own Pacific cultures and from other cultures to work together, share what they have learnt with each other and support each other. The library is a place for them to study away from the distractions of their families but also a place that they bring their families to.

The Pacific students who participated in this study were regular visitors to the library. Most came to use the library as their place of study, using the computers to work on their assignments and using the library resources, both print and electronic for their research. These students used the library space resources and services of librarians and Poutama Academic Advisers to support them in their study. This is consistent with previous studies of African American and Latino minority students who were found to use the library more than White students. (Whitmire, 2003, Shoge, 2003). Though my study did not compare the Pacific group with another, there were many similarities in how students used the library for their study and for their references.

My study found similar results in the way student used the library space as reported in Elteto et al. (2008). The difference here was that these Pacific students overcame their initial hesitancy and language barriers to regularly ask for assistance from librarians.

Recognising the importance of the library in contributing to their learning outcomes also supports Koloto's research (2006) that identified some of the critical success factors for students in the e-learning environment as access to information, learning centres and other resources. These Pacific students at Whitireia believed that the Library Learning Centre which included the library resources, library staff and Poutama staff within the same building provided a very supportive environment for the students to work in. They felt welcome and comfortable. Pacific cultural values were incorporated throughout the physical space – artworks of various cultures were displayed, group study areas were available and the values of respect, collaboration and community were expressed in the relationships between library staff and students. The location of Whitireia Community Polytechnic within a community with strong Pacific links also contributes to the supportive environment in the library. This is where the strength of the Whitireia lies – supporting students in a culturally safe environment that encourages them to achieve and succeed. This study confirms Koloto's belief that incorporating these Pacific values within the institution was a critical factor in achieving success for students.

5.2 What are their perceptions of the services provided in the polytechnic library?

Though this group of Pacific students, most of whom were female mature students, had some experience of using public libraries with their children, they had to overcome the challenge of finding information in a large and unfamiliar environment. Participating in "Introduction to the Library" courses run by the Information Literacy librarian gave students the skills and confidence to find information and resources in the library. While it was difficult to start with, generally the students felt competent in using the reference tools the library had and with

asking the library staff for assistance when they needed. This confirms results found in Adkins and Hussey (2006) - students who had had library training and understood library processes had more positive attitudes towards the library. The two students who were less positive and felt less confident about their use of the library were in their first year of study were still coming to grips with new skills and had ambivalent feelings about the library.

Results regarding the students' attitudes towards the library services are intertwined with results to all the research questions. Overall, the students reported positive experiences in the library and satisfaction with services provided. Initial difficulties and problems were usually overcome through good relationships and assistance from library staff. These positive attitudes came from the older participants, which may reflect findings of Gayton (2001) and Lilley (2008) of younger Pacific and Maori students who perceived libraries to be "uncool" and too book-oriented, less attractive than using technology to find information.

5.3. To what extent do students see that their use of the library contributes to their academic success?

This study could not show any evidence of the library's contribution to student's academic success. However, all but one of the Pacific students I interviewed recognised the value of the academic library and felt that it had made an important contribution to the success of their study. "Very helpful" and "very useful" was repeated often by the participants. They knew that all the information they needed to complete their assignments was to be found in the library and most agreed that the library helped in their success. However, evidence of this would be the focus of another study in itself.

It was interesting to find that the youngest participant was less convinced of the value of the library and its resources in her academic study. Like the young students in research by Gayton (2001) and Lilley (2008), she did not use the library as often. She came to the library to use the

Internet, more than the resources, as it was faster and easier to find her information and she had no Internet access at home. How younger students who are more familiar with computers and online resources and more inclined to use the Internet, find their information is an area for further investigation.

As was mentioned earlier in 5.1, many spoke of the support they received from the librarians, Poutama Academic Learning Support staff and fellow students in the library which they felt all contributed to the success of their learning.

5.4 To what extent do students perceive that their Pacific culture influences their use of the academic library?

Unlike the studies by Wang (2006) and Pibulsip (2010), these Pacific students did not see that their culture had any impact on their experience of the library. Most felt that it had no significant effect on their use of the library with the exception of the youngest participant who felt that language and inter-cultural communication may have been a barrier. However, closer analysis of the data reveals a few cultural factors that may have influenced students' early behaviour. Findings of my study show that there may be two aspects of the cultural dimensions framework (Hofstede, 2004) that apply to this group.

5.4.1 Collectivism vs individualism

The library experience of Pacific students in the academic library at this polytechnic relates to Hofstede's collective versus individual dimension. This group of Pacific students felt a sense of belonging from their very first visit to the library. For most students the positive experience resulted from the ways they used the library – belonging to a community of students and learners through their use not only of the library collections but through their use of the library spaces for study and the relationships they made with other students and staff in the library. Students appreciated the opportunity to work in the library amongst their peers and have the

support of library staff and academic support staff around them. They found no constraints to this in the library, which is a strength of this academic library. This relates to the collectivism that is feature of Pacific societies where the emphasis is on developing and sustaining stable hierarchical roles and interdependence and group success is encouraged (Ho et al., 2004, p.5).

An aspect of the teaching and learning styles of a collectivist society is that students expect to learn how to do. The success of the interactive Information Skills courses that the library runs and the positive attitudes the participants had towards these are a result of the “hands on” step by step learning experience they were presented with, that was culturally appropriate. These two aspects of collectivism are confirmed by the way students connect with other Pacific students in the library and the way they teach others what they learn about the library, sharing their knowledge.

Another aspect of collectivism is the focus on the family. Family commitments were not seen to be a barrier for this group of Pacific students. However, they recognised that it could be a potential barrier for other Pacific students. For the participants themselves, these family responsibilities were the motivation behind their frequent use of the library. The library was a place that provided all they need to work on their study, free from the distractions of their duties and responsibilities. Yet they also perceived the library to have an important connection to their family – they felt comfortable enough to bring their children in to visit, especially in the holidays while they worked on assignments, and to borrow the picture book resources and as one student put it, the library was a part of her family – she was always going in and out, all day and evenings.

5.4.2 Power-Distance dimension

In the findings relating to cultural barriers and communicating with staff, several students referred to feelings of shyness or shame that made it difficult to approach a librarian for

assistance. This “shyness” or hesitance to approach the librarian may be related to Hofstede’s Power-Distance dimension. In large power-distance countries, dependence on those in authority is higher and those with status are treated with deference. An example of this is that for Pacific people in a traditional hierarchical society, young people were brought up to show respect to their elders and those in authority – library staff with their knowledge were to be respected and deferred to. As one student clearly described it, Pacific people were raised to show respect, to know not to speak unless directly addressed and not to question as such forwardness was culturally inappropriate.

This behaviour is documented in the literature relating to Pacific students learning styles (Pacific Island Students Achievement Collective, 1986; Latu and Young, 2004; Clark, 2006). Librarians with their knowledge of library resources and the authority within the library are treated with the respect shown to teachers. Some of these Pacific students found it difficult at first to approach library staff for help. But they were able to overcome this cultural barrier to ask for assistance which led them to further their knowledge and understanding of the library processes.

This issue is closely linked to the other cultural barrier of language. For the participants in my study, all but one were immigrants to New Zealand with English as their second language. There were challenges for them in communicating their needs – though only one student specifically mentioned misunderstandings, others referred briefly to language and communication as a barrier in their early interactions with library staff and with their comprehension of library resources. A few students referred to this reluctance to communicate as something that might stop others from using the library. As they had overcome these barriers themselves, they challenged other students to move past these and be open to asking for assistance.

Another aspect of this Power-Distance dimension relates to the learning styles that Pacific students have been accustomed to. As traditionally the elder or the teacher was central to the transfer of knowledge to their students, the use of the library to pursue their own independent learning and research may be an unfamiliar process for Pacific students. However, as tutors organised classes to attend the library orientation and information skills courses run by the library, my study found that Pacific students quickly understood the value of the information resources held by the library because they were encouraged by their tutors, whom they held in high regard, to use the library. The findings suggest that most students found these sessions useful as they were interactive, giving them “hands on” experience under the guidance of the Information Literacy librarian with clear notes. This is consistent with the traditional method of teaching and learning described in the literature of observing and doing under close supervision (Latu and Young, 2004).

Suggestions by students for improvements to these courses included offering these in smaller sized groups as large class groups sent by tutors were overwhelming. More emphasis could also be placed on individual follow up tutorials with the Information Literacy librarian or Reference Librarians to reinforce or consolidate what was presented to the larger group.

The participants in this study found it very useful to have the individual assistance from librarians as it improved their searching skills. Library staff should take into account the traditional learning style of Pacific students and view the interaction with a Pacific student as a teaching opportunity - working individually or in small groups, explaining the searching skills step by step. Librarians should also be patient and respectful in their interactions with Pacific students who may be communicating in their second language, taking the time to listen carefully and clarify any mispronunciation or misunderstanding.

5.5 Conclusion

This study has begun to provide an understanding of how Pacific students experience in the academic library at Whitireia Community Polytechnic. This is a small qualitative study whose participants were all female, mainly older students, who were regular users of the library. Therefore, this study reflects the experience of only a small section of the Pacific student population at this polytechnic.

The library collection, resources and services, the library facilities, support from library staff and Poutama staff within the same building leads to a community of learning for students which contributed to a positive experience and supportive environment for this group of Pacific students at this polytechnic library. The question of whether there are any cultural barriers for Pacific students in their experience of the academic library was explored in this study. It was interesting to find that most students did not see any significant barriers that being a Pacific student brought to their library experience, though closer analysis showed that there were some cultural factors that may have had an effect on Pacific students' library experience, though not to the same extent as was found in previous New Zealand library research on international students.

The findings of this study make a contribution to the literature on Pacific people and academic libraries, as we begin to understand their information needs and what is important to them in the library. Further research on how young Pacific people find their information and how to improve the transition to the academic library for Pacific students would be useful.

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Word Count: approx. 11, 227 words.

APPENDIX 1 Participant Information Sheet

Date:

Project title: Pacific students and their perceptions of the academic library

Researcher: Audrey Hinder

*Kia Orana, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Halo Olgeta Malo e Lelei, Mauri, Namaste,
Ni Sa Bula Vinaka, Talofa, Talofa lav, Taloha Ni*

I would like to invite you to take part in this research which aims to assist in understanding the experiences Pacific students have of the library at Whitireia Community Polytechnic.

I am a graduate student undertaking research as part of the requirements of the Masters in Information Studies degree at Victoria University of Wellington.

Purpose: My research project is looking at how Pacific students use the academic library at the polytechnic, what they think about the library services and how they feel the library may help them in completing their study successfully.

This research will be used to:

- Further understand what the needs of this group of students are in the library and how the library can improve its services for this group of students
- For the completion of a research project to meet the requirement for my Masters degree in Information Studies.

People included in the study

I am interested in hearing from students who identify as of Pacific Island descent, including those who do not use the library regularly.

What will happen in this research?

- Your participation will involve a face to face interview with me that will last for approximately one hour. I do not expect that this project will take up more than 1-1.5 hours of your time in total. The interview will be held at a time convenient to both of us and at a place suitable for audio-recording. You are welcome to bring a support person in to the interview with you.
- I would like record the interview using a digital voice recorder. The interview will then be typed up and the transcript will be made available to you to look through and make adjustments if necessary. I would also like permission to make a follow-up telephone call, or a further meeting if needed to clarify any point.

- Once this information is collected and analysed, it will form the basis of my written report for this study and submitted to the School of Information Management at Victoria University of Wellington for marking.
- The research report will also be made available in the University Library and online institutional repository. The research material may also be included in one or more articles that may be submitted for publication or presented at conferences.

Ethical approval

Victoria University of Wellington and Whitireia Community Polytechnic require that all research involving human participants must be carried out according to ethical principles and must have prior approval from the appropriate Human Ethics Committee. This project has received ethical approval from the School of Information Management Human Ethics Committee.

Confidentiality

All information you give will be kept private. Your name will not be used in any publication resulting from the research. What you say will be combined with what others say in the final written report so that individuals will not be identifiable from their responses. Only I as researcher and my supervisor, Mr. Alastair Smith, will see the interview transcripts, which will be destroyed two years after the end of the project.

What happens if I change my mind about being part of the study?

Your participation is voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw from the project, you may do so at any time before **25 August 2011**.

Results

If requested on the consent form, you will be sent a summary of the results of this research when it is completed.

Questions If you are interested in participating, or have any questions now or at any time about this study, you can phone or email me.

Contact Details :

Researcher
Audrey Hinder
Whitireia Community Polytechnic Library
hinderadr1@myvuw.ac.nz
Phone no: 237 3105 / 0272331439

Contact Details :

Project Supervisor
Alastair Smith
School of Information Management
Victoria University of Wellington
alastair.smith@vuw.ac.nz
Ph: 04 463 5785

I hope you can take part.

Audrey Hinder

APPENDIX 2

Consent to participate in research

Project Title: **Pacific students and their perceptions of the academic library**

Researcher: **Audrey Hinder**

Project Supervisor: **Alastair Smith**

I agree to participate in this research project. I have been given an explanation of this research study and I understand what it is about. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered.

I agree to being interviewed and understand that the interview will be recorded and transcribed. I understand that I may bring a support person with me in the interview. I understand that I will have an opportunity to check the transcript of my interview before it is published.

I understand that the researcher may wish to contact me for a follow-up telephone call or a meeting subsequent to the interview, and I agree to the researcher making such contact.

I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information I have provided) from the research project at any time before data analysis begins on **25 August 2011**, without having to give reasons. I understand that if I withdraw from the study before this date, any data that I have provided will be destroyed.

I understand that the information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher, and the research supervisor. I understand that the published results will not use my name and that no opinions will be reported in any way that will identify me.

I understand that when the research is completed, the electronic recordings of all interviews will be deleted within 2 years of the end of the project. Interview transcripts will be destroyed within two years also.

I understand that the results of this research will be written into a report to be deposited in the Victoria University Library, and another copy may be included in the library's institutional repository. The research material may also be included in one or more articles that may be submitted for publication or presented at conferences. It will not be possible to identify me in any way from the material so produced.

I wish / do not wish to receive a summary of the results of this research when it is completed.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Appendix 4 **Notice to recruit participants**

Pacific students needed for research study

*Kia Orana, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Halo Olgeta Malo e Lelei, Mauri, Namaste,
Ni Sa Bula Vinaka, Talofa, Talofa lav, Taloha Ni*

Are you a Pacific student studying at Whitireia Polytechnic, Porirua campus?

If you use the library regularly or have never used the library at all, you are invited to participate in a research study.

I am looking Pacific students to interview as part of a research study towards a Masters in Information Studies. I am interested in learning about the experiences of Pacific students in the polytechnic library and what they think about the library services.

This project has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington School of Information Management Human Ethics Committee and Whitireia Community Polytechnic.

Can you help?

I am looking for 6-8 students to take part in this study on a voluntary basis. You will take part in an interview of about 1 hour, at a time and place suitable for you. Anything you say will be confidential and kept anonymous.

If you would like further information or are interested in participating in my study, please contact me:

Audrey Hinder

My email address is: hinderaudr1@myvuw.ac.nz.

Phone no: 2373105/0272331439

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Appendix 5 Pacific students and their perceptions of an academic library

Interview schedule

Introduction: *of researcher, research and review of consent.*

Part 1: Personal background

Tell me a bit about yourself

Under25/over 25

Country of origin: NZ-born

Level of study: Certificate/Diploma 1st/ 2nd year

Undergraduate Degree 1st/ 2nd/3rd year

Part 2: Experiences – this includes library resources and library physical space

1. Please tell me about any libraries you have used so far? (e.g school, public, academic, in home country)
2. What about your family – have they/do they use libraries?
3. What resources have you used to find information before you started study?
 - e.g books, online databases, Internet
4. What was your first impression of the library at Whitireia?
5. How often do you visit the library (during terms, before exams, in the holidays)
 - What are your reasons for visiting the library?
 - Is there any reason that might stop you from using the library and its services?
6. Can you tell me about any library orientation/database/information skills training course you have attended?
 - Was it presented in a way that was appropriate to your cultural background?
7. Think about a recent time when you were looking for information for an assignment:
 - How did you go about looking for the information you needed?
 - What library resources/services did you use?
 - How did you find this process (easy, hard, any barriers?)
 - How do you think using the library has helped/not helped you?
 - What effect do you think it has had on your achievement

8. What happens if you are unable to find what you need?
 - e.g ask library staff, ask friends/classmates/tutors, go to other libraries, use the Internet
9. Do you think being a Pacific student affects this experience in any way?
 - e.g language, communication with library staff, non-verbal communication, style of education

Part 4: Expectations/suggestions:

10. Can you see any reason why other Pacific students might use or not use some services available in the library?
11. Is there any advice you would give to other Pacific students about the library?
12. Can you sum up your thoughts and feelings about using the library in general?