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NEGOTIATING TĪVAEVAE AND TALANOA METHODOLOGIES IN EDUCATION: A CRITICAL REFLECTION

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ABSTRACT: The diverse nature of Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand means that Pacific educators and researchers regularly negotiate multiple identities, voices and cultures in their work and research. Often researchers in this field emerge from an education or teaching background and wish to explore the questions they have formulated about their local or wider Pacific community with regards to education. This paper offers a reflection from a Cook Island Māori researcher who has negotiated the use of the talanoa and tīvaevae methodologies as part of his participatory action research doctoral study. The researcher's experience indicates a dynamic synergy between the two methods, as they pertain to the Pacific educational research field in New Zealand. The reflection offered aims to help inform and support other researchers, Pacific and non-Pacific, in their negotiation of the diverse landscape that this field presents.

Keywords: Pacific education, Pacific research methods, Indigenous education, Cook Island research

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Pacific research methodologies have risen to prominence in Aotearoa New Zealand educational research in recent decades, undertaken largely by researchers who desire to remain connected to culture, identity and practices that flow from culture (Naepi 2016; Smith 2012; Suaalii-Sauni and Fulu-Aiolupotea 2014). These methodologies are critical for both Pacific and non-Pacific researchers as they give priority to the diverse ontological and epistemological perspectives of various Pacific cultures and act as reference points to help us locate ourselves within the wider narrative of research in this region (Naepi 2016). This article uses my doctoral research as a case study to reflect on two specific Pacific research models, tīvaevae and talanoa, and the synergy that resulted from using them collaboratively.

I chose the tīvaevae model in my research to culturally locate myself as a Cook Island researcher among the diversity of Pacific peoples in the school community where I am located. The tīvaevae research model and theoretical framework is an Indigenous model that is based on the process of creating tīvaevae (traditional artistic quilts) in the Cook Islands and that has been slowly emerging over the last two decades as a Pacific research

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model (Futter-Puati and Maua-Hodges 2019; Powell 2013; Te Ava and Page 2018). This method was pioneered by Teremoana Maua-Hodges and further developed by several academics connected to the Cook Islands, including Te Ava (2011; Te Ava and Page 2018), Hunter (2022) and Futter-Puati (Futter-Puati and Maua-Hodges 2019). The tīvaevae model has a clear process and a specific set of values attached to it (discussed later in this article) that align with other Pacific research methods, including the talanoa model. From my perspective as a researcher, there is a relationship between both the concept of co-creation and the practical interaction between persons when using tīvaevae and talanoa.

Alongside tīvaevae, I also chose to use talanoa as a research method to respect and support my participants to have a strong voice and to story their experiences in the study. The talanoa method is "an existing cultural practice of the Pacific" (Faʻavae *et al*. 2016: 140) and relies on the development of strong relationships between the researcher and the participants (Vaioleti 2006). The concept of talanoa (open conversation) encourages participants to story their experiences through open conversation. With talanoa, the focus of the conversation is controlled by the "interests of the participants themselves and their immediate surroundings and worldviews" (Johansson Fua 2014: 99). In my research I sought to adapt talanoa to be fit for purpose in the community in which I was present—a community that is not strictly governed by a singular set of cultural norms or protocols but rather has a more fluid and dynamic reality, with multiple worldviews present in a Pacific school community.

CASE STUDY: MY DOCTORAL RESEARCH —EMPOWERING PACIFIC VOICE

While there has been a growing body of academic literature concerning Pacific educational issues at a national level in New Zealand, there remain significant calls for academic, social and pastoral improvement in the education sector for Pacific learners and their families (Chu *et al*. 2013; ERO 2013; Ministry of Education 2020). This indicates that the need for practical solutions is something that requires urgent attention across New Zealand, and particularly for the Pacific community in Christchurch, where Pacific communities experience minority status (Reason and Bradbury 2008). Currently the Pacific student, family and community voice is limited in terms of education and engagement in Christchurch secondary schools. The aims of the study included gathering the voices of Pacific students and parents, alongside teacher voices, in order to inform school approaches around curriculum, pastoral care and policy. As I wanted to place the voices of the participants at the centre of the data collection process, talanoa sessions were conducted with the following three groups within the Pacific school community:

– Students representing a range of ages and Pacific ethnicities at Shirley Boys' High School,
– Members of the broader Shirley Boys' High School Pacific community, for example, parents, and
– Both Pacific and non-Pacific teachers within Shirley Boys' High School.

I will also be reflecting on the process of engaging with the community voice in order to inform discussion about how schools are better able to listen and respond to Pacific voices.

This study employed a qualitative community-based participatory action research approach (Reason and Bradbury 2008) with group and individual talanoa sessions as the main form of data collection. In their working definition of participatory action research Reason and Bradbury (2008) state that it "seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people" (p. 4). It "aims to produce knowledge and action directly useful to people, and also to empower people through the process of constructing and using their own knowledge" (Shortall 2003: 225). This study uses tīvaevae and talanoa to underpin the participatory action research design. The tīvaevae model formed the basis of the overarching approach and of developing my own positionality, while the talanoa method was employed for the data collection processes.

POSITIONALITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

I come from a culturally mixed background with a diverse European ethnicity and Pacific (Cook Island Māori and Tahitian) heritage. This hybridity has contributed strongly to my teaching and research practice and the way I live my life. The weaving of different cultures, traditions and worldviews that shape my own identity allow me to walk with confidence in the world of education and be connected to my community. I have had a 14-year teaching career in which pastoral care of Pacific students and the leadership of cultural development and Pacific family engagement were key elements. In this work I have learned that the diverse nature of Pacific communities in New Zealand demand that our ways of teaching and researching adapt to and respect participants' cultural and ethnic worldviews.

At the outset of my doctoral research, I was encouraged by my supervisor to explore different methodological approaches. At that stage in the journey, I was more interested in moving through the process quickly to enter what I perceived to be the more interesting and important task of collecting the data and making use of it. The need to develop an appropriate methodological framework and to inform my actions by deeper thinking around the "how" allowed me to work on finding my place in relation to Pacific research

methodologies and give myself space, as an emerging researcher, to adjust my approach and position at the forefront of both my own identity and that of the participants in my research. This also ensured a stronger sense of cultural safety for me and participants as the study progressed because we were able to bring our ways of thinking and acting into it. I believe this will mean a greater impact when my doctorate is completed.

As an ethnically diverse New Zealand–born man of Cook Island Māori descent, living in the diaspora and relatively isolated from my cultural roots, positionality in relation to research methods has been a thought-provoking and motivating process. My original intention to include the talanoa method in my data collection was centred on a relational and voice-oriented focus in my research, which, as a teacher, made sense to me. However, in making these research decisions, my supervisor challenged me by asking where I, and my Cook Island Māori Pacific identity, were positioned within the study. While he was aware that most of my participants would be Samoan and Tongan, thus making talanoa a sensible method to include, he prompted me to remember that I was not Samoan, Tongan or Fijian—cultures from which various forms of talanoa emerge—and that I should explore a Cook Island methodology such as tīvaevae.

CONNECTING THE RESEARCH DESIGN WITH THE RESEARCHER

Traditionally, tīvaevae are crafted by mamas, or elderly women and matriarchs, their skilful hands giving visual and tangible effect to places, occasion, memory and ceremony. One has only to visit the communal locations these mamas frequent, such as Punanga Nui Market in the Cook Islands or Cook Island community centres in New Zealand, to see the ongoing creation of tīvaevae. Tīvaevae are often talked about as a legacy—as items to be left behind for the next generations, typically by these Cook Island matriarchs (Tagata Pasifika 2019). Tīvaevae expertise does not currently exist in my immediate family, with previous generations producing examples of this craft (for an example see Fig. 1). As a result, I had access only to basic knowledge about tīvaevae. I made the decision to travel to Porirua, in Wellington, to visit Teremoana Maua-Hodges, the architect of the methodological framework based on this Cook Island quilting tradition. This time spent with her helped develop my thinking around tīvaevae, particularly in relation to my research.

Interestingly, as part of the wider dialogue we have as a family, my brother and grandmother, aged 26 and 84 respectively, have recently begun making tīvaevae (see Figs 2 and 3): not as a simple hobby used to keep one's hands busy and because there is nothing else to do but rather, as is customary, to use as part of an upcoming occasion, specifically to honour our cousin and grandson for his marriage. With the intergenerational gaps that have

opened within my family due to migration and subsequent cultural isolation, this practice, both physically in the quilting sense and metaphorically in terms of my research, is helping to provide a platform for restoration and cultural reorientation.

PACIFIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Pacific research methodologies have several key elements in common. As Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery (2019) state, "these commonalities highlight that Pacific and Pasifika communities share semiotic and representational perspectives rooted in Pacific realities" (p. 191). Two of these commonalities—Pacific values and Pacific metaphorical language—as they relate to tīvaevae and talanoa will be briefly outlined here, as will an acknowledgement of the critical lens that can be employed when working with them.

Pacific Values

Understanding and appreciating Pacific values is critical in working with Pacific peoples and Pacific research methodologies. This is not to imply that there is a homogeneity among values systems across the Pacific, even if there are multiple expressions of common values that are found in the various communities (Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery 2019). These value expressions, which have arisen out of the cultures and ethnic traditions in Pacific nations, have helped root Pacific communities in the diaspora. In countries such as New Zealand and Australia, these communities use them to emphasise a strengths-based approach to working with their people in education (Ministry of Education 1996). When it comes to Pacific research methodologies, values underpin much of the process that is developed as part of the actions undertaken (Enari 2021; Fa'avae *et al*. 2016; Naepi 2016). Values such as reciprocity, respect, family, love, service, spirituality and collectivism connect communities and provide a foundation on which to build and conceptualise new traditions in environments that are different from the traditional homelands (Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery 2019). Both the tīvaevae and talanoa methods have these underpinning values, offering a research design whereby the researcher views the participants through the lens of these values.

Pacific Metaphorical Language

Pacific research methodologies are based principally around imagery that links to practices, concepts or realities present in the Pacific and, being ethical practices, are used to guide research (Sanga and Reynolds 2017; Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery 2019). This metaphorical approach strengthens the accessibility of the methodology by grounding the research process, or aspects of it, in familiar customs or traditions. For the Pacific researcher, this

offers a tool through which to culturally locate themselves within the research process, a way to anchor their identity and a way to engage and empower Pacific participants. If the researcher engaging with a Pacific research methodology is unfamiliar with or not associated with the specific Pacific practices that underpin that methodology, this metaphorical approach offers a window into a deeper connection with Pacific epistemologies, potentially developing the researcher's approach and growing an understanding and appreciation of Pacific cultural approaches in research. However, risks of engaging with Pacific research methodologies in this way may include the researcher making assumptions about the community they are working with, appropriating cultural knowledge or misusing the method due to limited knowledge of the specific practice. Care should be taken in any work that engages with Pacific research methods.

IMPACT OF THE TWO RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES ON MY RESEARCH

The following sections will detail how the use of the tīvaevae and talanoa models affected the study with reflections on their potential use in future research. Both tīvaevae and talanoa worked in conjunction with the participatory action research approach. The tīvaevae model supported my work in the field as a researcher, and talanoa was the method through which I engaged in respectful and open data collection with the community.

The Tīvaevae Model—A Cook Island Community Approach

As briefly described in the introduction, the tīvaevae method reflects the tīvaevae construction process. This is a creative quilting or textile creation process that involves unique ideas and creations and results in significant gifting and bestowal, something that is widespread in Pacific cultures (Rongokea 2001). An example of this is the various gifting of ʻula (necklaces), lei (flower neck garlands) and other garlands that one might see at airport arrivals, university graduations, weddings and other events. In Cook Island culture, one might consider tīvaevae to be gifting par excellence.

There are three specific elements to tīvaevae creation, as outlined by Teremoana Maua-Hodges (Te Ava 2011). These three dimensions reflect the process undertaken by the researcher to develop a powerful "creation", so to speak. The koʻikoʻi is the gathering of patterns and ideas to inform the creation of the tīvaevae. In research, this reflects the initial co-construction of the research objectives and questions: these emerge from the community and the discourse as opposed to merely the researcher. The tuitui is the sewing of the pattern onto the canvas—the physical making of the tīvaevae within the community of expertise. In research this reflects the collaborative data collection that occurs and the data analysis which forms the concrete

product of the research work. Lastly, the ʻakairiʻanga is the reflection on the completed creation and offering of the tīvaevae to others as a gift. In research, ʻakairiʻanga is the co-assessment or evaluation of the final product that will be "gifted" or given to the recipients—in this case the Pacific community within which the research is conducted—for their use and benefit.

Alongside the three elements of tīvaevae creation, there are specific values that accompany the process. In my research approach, I view these values as a primary guide for the researcher, as they complement my own Pacific positionality, particularly in relation to the participants. These are tāʻokotaʻi (collaboration), ʻakairi kite (shared vision), tū ʻakangāteitei (respect), tū ʻinangaro (relationships) and ʻuriʻuri kite (reciprocity). The values also serve as a strong interface between the Pacific research approach, tīvaevae and talanoa in my case, and the research design of participatory action research. These I will discuss in my reflection on the process.

Figure 1. Example of a tīvaevae taʻōrei (patchwork tīvaevae). Created by my great-great-grandmother, Nitika Kea, ca. 1975.

Koʻikoʻi—The Gathering of Patterns

The koʻikoʻi phase represents a beginning, the start of collaboration, undertaken by reaching out and searching for connections, motivations and ideas. What is achieved in the process of koʻikoʻi will underpin the creation of the tīvaevae and will form the basis of the legacy that outlasts the creators of the tīvaevae (Rongokea 2001). Te Ava and Page (2018: 72) state:

> The *koikoi* process required knowledge and experience in planning, gathering the appropriate materials at the right time and at the right place and ensuring that the pattern tells a story of Cook Islands history. These stories are *tapu* (sacred), central to the values of Cook Islands cultural practice and made ready for crafting into a *tivaevae*. The significance of this phase is that Cook Islanders learn to create their own way of understanding of the world in which they live. They, in effect, bring their own knowledge and investigate how the "patterns" fit together and then are evaluated for success.

At the outset of my research, I had my own motivations and ideas for what it was that I wanted to study and what I wanted to delve into as part of my doctoral journey. However, in consultation with my supervisor, we determined that as part of my initial research design, I needed to survey the Pacific education landscape. In *Decolonizing Methodologies* Smith (2012: 9) states that "research with Indigenous peoples can be more respectful, ethical, sympathetic and useful". Following this, my research needed to engage with the community from the beginning, and through a gathering of ideas or questions that helped me understand their priorities, I would be better able to focus my own research.

In the koʻikoʻi phase of my research design, I conducted seven initial talanoa with different members of the wider Pacific community, listening to their voices. They were open conversations, without a detailed preprepared question framework. The topic of the conversation was experiences of Pacific peoples in secondary education in Canterbury and what we would like to know about it. The following topics were discussed: their own cultural and educational background, their connections to education, their aspirations and hopes for young Pacific peoples, their perspective on how good talanoa could be conducted and what they felt needed to be explored in Pacific education. These conversations helped me formulate my research problem and methodological approach. They revolved around the following themes:

- Pacific values in the context of teaching and learning,
- partnerships between the school and Pacific communities (for example, churches),
- relationships between the school and Pacific parents and students, and
- the environment, both physical and social, in which schooling occurs.

These themes formed the basis of my research questions and objectives, giving me a clear way forward into the research.

Figure 2. The beginnings of a tīvaevae mānu (appliqué tīvaevae) in progress. Created in 2022 by my brother, Josua Te Maru Ariki Houghton, and grandmother, Dinah Sullivan (nee Rongo Kea).

Figure 3. Tīvaevae mānu detail in the ‘akairi‘anga phase.

Tuitui—The Making of the Tīvaevae

The tuitui process is where theory and practice meet and the act of creating begins. In the creation of a tīvaevae, the finished product is not achieved in a single session, but rather a collaborative effort is undertaken that will take many hours and may span several months or a year, depending on the complexity of the patterns and the size of the creation (Rongokea 2001). Technical skill and problem solving are the essential elements in this phase.

At this point in my research, I entered what I thought was going to be the relatively simple exercise of collecting the data, doing so in an environment in which I had lived and worked for many years. However, the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic had arrived, bringing with it various complexities such as lockdowns, limited group gatherings, mask use and physical distancing. COVID-19 will be discussed further in its impact on talanoa; here it is important to note its specific impact on the tuitui phase of the research. As mentioned above, the tuitui process involved data collection in the form of talanoa interviews and talanoa group sessions with Pacific students and parents, as well as teachers of Pacific students, at the school in which I taught in Christchurch, New Zealand. At the outset of each participant engagement, a brief explanation was given to the participants on tīvaevae and talanoa, which helped them understand the research process that they were involved in. Participants responded positively to the approach, and the resulting talanoa was rich.

ʻAkairiʻanga—Reflection and Offering

The ʻakairiʻanga or gifting of the finished piece represents the completion of the creation process, with a view to the legacy that it embodies. The tīvaevae is now presented and can be seen by all, showcased and celebrated (Rongokea 2001). This step involves returning to the community and making the offering, understanding the reciprocal nature of the gift. At the time of writing, my research is on the cusp of the ʻakairiʻanga phase. The intention is to present a copy of the thesis back to the school's board of trustees as well as its Pacific staff, in order that the findings of the study may be put to use and the voices of the participants respected and treasured. Participants involved will be given a summary of the thesis and a reflective talanoa will be held. The tīvaevae methodology recognises the special relationship between the researcher and the participant, one characterised by the values that underpin the tīvaevae creation process. This comes to the fore in the ʻakairiʻanga phase.

Tīvaevae Method Values

I offer the following explanations of how my research approach aligns with the values connected to the tīvaevae methodology (Te Ava 2011).

Tā'okota'i (Collaboration): This project was collaborative, with different parties coming around the table to offer their perspectives as part of the initial design, including members of the school's Pacific community. Just as tīvaevae are created by multiple hands, the aim of empowering Pacific voices in this research is to seek to be inclusive of the different hands that are involved in Pacific student schooling.

'Akairi Kite (Shared Vision): When completed, this thesis will be a shared vision for Pacific voice in secondary education, bringing together the voices of student, community and teacher to inform thinking about school approaches, values and environment and to work towards better outcomes for Pacific communities.

Tū 'Akangāteitei (Respect): There were many occasions throughout the study that called for respectful listening, and the completed creation needs to be respectful of the voices of the participants. Just as tīvaevae are given to honour the recipients, so will the gifting of the final product be done from a position of respect for the community from which the voice has emerged.

Tū 'Inangaro (Relationships): Supporting the talanoa approach, the dialogue in the talanoa is built on existing relationships and networks. Just as creators of the tīvaevae gather and deepen bonds through their work, the talanoa between researcher and participants strengthens both research and the community. In the articulation of their voice, participants have in the researcher an active listener and an advocate.

'Uri'uri Kite (Reciprocity): The circular nature of this research means that what is gifted to the researcher by way of participation and voice is gifted back to the community from which it came.

Having these values underpinning the research process offered a way in which to visualise the study as a whole, particularly with the interconnectedness among participants.

The Talanoa Method—A Pacific Dialogical Approach

Talanoa is a phenomenological research method that focuses on understanding the participant experience in relation to certain events (Vaioleti 2006). The talanoa method is derived from Pacific philosophy, values and cultural traditions, and is "orientated towards defining and acknowledging Pacific aspirations while developing and implementing Pacific theoretical and methodological preferences for research" (Vaioleti 2006: 25). This can be difficult to achieve, with various processes and restraints around research installed by universities often creating barriers to talanoa in cultural terms (Fa'avae *et al*. 2016).

The central aims of my research are to examine the barriers that often exist for Pacific students in traditional schooling methods in New Zealand, and to allow the voices of Pacific families and students to emerge. This is an area of engagement that schools often find challenging, with school leaders and teachers often experiencing a disconnect between themselves and Pacific communities (Chu *et al*. 2013; Chu-Fuluifaga *et al*. 2022). Vaioleti (2006) describes how the talanoa method aims to connect to the "lived realities" (p. 22) of Pacific cultures and peoples and supports the researcher to collect authentic qualitative data in a respectful manner that creates space for the participants.

Talanoa Considerations

One consideration in the use of this approach is the growing cultural hybridity and intergenerational disconnection that many Pacific people experience (Chu-Fuluifaga *et al*. 2022). In my project, there were participants who had not necessarily previously experienced talanoa as a named concept or had never come across the explicit use of the word. In circumstances like this, I carefully explained talanoa, in an appropriate way for the different participant groups, and attempted to link it to ways of talking together that they were familiar with. This emphasises the need for researchers to have a strong understanding of the community in which they work, and to build flexibility and processes for clarification into the research design (Fa'avae *et al*. 2016). This is so that the research can support and enhance Pacific communities (Sanga and Reynolds 2017).

Another consideration is that talanoa is identified as a pan-Pacific approach, which implies a relative homogeneity across Pacific cultures and lexicons, risking an embodiment of a colonial or historical western perspective or approach (Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery 2019). In order to avoid these assumptions, I explained talanoa in Samoan- and Tongan-specific contexts, as well as giving examples of similar practice in my own Cook Island context. In my own research, I have relied on the relational nature of the methods used. The talanoa method, as applied in my study, was conducted with participants with whom I had cultivated long-standing relationships over many years, if not with a specific individual then with the community from which they emerged. As an ethical consideration, I took steps in order to try to lessen the risk around power imbalances, given that I was still a teacher at the school. So, while there were risks and challenges associated with this approach, such as power imbalance or feelings of intimidation among participants, I felt that it aligned with the assertion of Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba (2012: 5) that "only with prolonged periods of participant-observation can the trust and mutual respect required of valid *talanoa* research be developed. Further, the long period of residence is necessary for our participants' multiple 'truths' to be exhumed." They go on

to ask: "Is the mere effort to apply this approach enough or do short stints in the field have the potential to produce potentially invalid or even harmful research data?" (p. 5). My experience was that my long-term presence and work in the specific community that constituted my research field meant I was able to draw on shared understandings or concepts while in the talanoa. My connections with the students in the talanoa enabled me to encourage their thinking when they were unsure or shy in the discussion and gave them a level of assurance that I had some understanding of their experiences. When it came to parent participants, there was a mix of parents who had been at the school for a year and some who had had an association with the school for a decade. In all cases, I was younger than the parents. Each was approached in a specific way, and I attempted to engage in talanoa that was both respectful and provocative, in order to create a space where they felt comfortable to share their thoughts openly.

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Talanoa Method

While the initial start to my doctoral study was not affected by the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the restrictive measures through 2020 and 2021 had significant effects on the study. It was my intention to begin the data collection required for my study in early 2020, but the looming pandemic and subsequent lockdowns were disruptive and required substantial adaptation. In my view, it was essential that the talanoa sessions with participants be conducted face to face, and in an atmosphere that was calm and comfortable. This meant that I had to wait for a period where there was reduced anxiety around being exposed to COVID-19. My positioning within the community, as a teacher at the research site, meant that I was able to align my research needs with the priorities of the community. I was able to take the metaphorical temperature of the community to assess when the best times for face-to-face talanoa would be.

SYNERGY BETWEEN METHODS

A key focus of this article has been to present the ways in which I used tīvaevae and talanoa as Pacific research methodologies/methods and the impact that this had on my research, as well as the resulting synergy that occurred. The diverse nature of Pacific peoples living, learning, working and researching in New Zealand lends itself to a dynamic and collaborative Pacific research space which needs further exploration and higher levels of engagement. In my experience as a Pacific early-career researcher, talanoa and tīvaevae offered an exciting and, importantly, useful approach as I navigated the field and attempted to do so by valuing and privileging Indigenous and community knowledge. Synergy occurred around two significant concepts or principles at the root of my research questions: power and voice.

Tīvaevae and talanoa work together to support a process of power sharing. In the context of my research, the term power can be defined as the ability to achieve self-determination, where a person or collective is able to control their own life or lives (Asgharzadeh 2008; Bourdieu 1974). Talanoa and tīvaevae working in synergy is underpinned by the researcher's desire to empower their participants and offer disruption to traditional or culturally hegemonic ways of doing research (Hunter 2022; Te Ava *et al*. 2011; Te Ava and Page 2018). This stands in contrast to the way many institutions, educational and otherwise, operate or have operated in the past. It is the power relationships and principles of control that lie at the heart of the disenfranchisement and marginalisation of groups such as Pacific peoples. When processes involve power sharing or partnership to empower the community, power is siphoned away from the dominant structures. Tīvaevae privileges the ideas of the community and allows them to give direction and guidance to the process. Talanoa supports this by encouraging the researcher to listen and share the power in a reciprocal manner, centred on the voice of the participants (Puloka Luey 2021). In particular, the ʻakairiʻanga phase of the tīvaevae model stimulates a reciprocity which, in turn, gifts the outcomes of the research back to the community involved.

Tīvaevae and talanoa encourage a research process that values and respects the voice of participants. Voice, in the context of my research, can be defined as the right or ability to express thoughts, ideas and opinions. I agree with Asgharzadeh (2008) that across the global education landscape, there is a need for "different marginalized bodies" to come together, "empowered to come to voice and to advance their common struggle for justice and equality" (p. 339). In this case, I focus specifically on Pacific voice in the state education system in Christchurch, New Zealand. The marginalisation of Pacific peoples emphasises the importance of making space for operative and equitable platforms that empower their voices, and for them to be self-determining agents in the design of their future. Nabobo-Baba (2004) states that Pacific researchers must "represent the voices of our peoples" (p. 31), and the cooperation between talanoa and tīvaevae serves to amplify the voices of participants and provokes the researcher to ask the question of how their voice sits within the research design. The understanding of dialogue being a transformative and humanising force (Freire 2005) is essential if we are seeking to transform school to become a place of safety and equity for Pacific peoples. Empowering Pacific students, families and community voices concerns not just an attempt to fight for dominance but rather one to create opportunities for profound dialogue to occur between schools and their communities. Tīvaevae and talanoa work together to achieve this.

CONCLUSION / IMPLICATIONS

Until recently, the tīvaevae model had not been used widely in academia, with several researchers publishing literature or theses detailing its use in the last decade. Its popularity with Cook Island Māori researchers, as well as the grounding it offers in Pacific epistemologies, offers a way for other Pacific researchers to actively accept the challenges of contemporary research in communities and remain connected to Pacific values and processes as they do so.

The use of the talanoa method in a community where the researcher has a long-term association with the participants can carry with it risks around power imbalance and conflicts of interest; however, embedding the talanoa method within tīvaevae and the participatory action research framework is a way to potentially alleviate these concerns. The principles of relationality within talanoa allowed me as the researcher to remain agile and responsive to the needs of the community, not just in the setting of a focus group or an interview but also in the context around them.

The experience of the synergy between tīvaevae and talanoa has presented an opportunity to reflect on the dynamic that can arise when Pacific cultures and traditions intersect. The diverse nature of Pacific peoples in New Zealand schools and communities presents an increasing need for this to be reflected in research approaches. The positionality of the researcher and an understanding of Pacific research methodologies also played a significant role, as they can contribute greatly to the empowering of Pacific peoples as partners and stakeholders in research.

GLOSSARY

The terms included in this glossary are Cook Island Māori unless otherwise stated.

ʻakairi kite	shared vision
ʻakairiʻanga	reflection on a completed tīvaevae and its offering as a gift
koʻikoʻi	gathering of patterns and ideas for a tīvaevae
lei	flower neck garland
mama	elderly woman or matriarch
tāʻokotaʻi	collaboration
talanoa	sharing of experiences and stories through open conversation
tīvaevae (tīvaivai)	Cook Island quilting tradition
tīvaevae mānu	appliqué quilt

tīvaevae ta‘ōrei	patchwork quilt
tū ‘akangāteitei	respect
tū ‘inangaro	relationships
tuitui	the making of a tīvaevae
‘ula	necklace (Samoan)
‘uri‘uri kite	reciprocity

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