

**Speaking to the Past and Future:  
Generational Communication and Changing Verbal  
Discourse in Samoa**

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## Abstract

Due to the absence of a written language, prior to 1830, Samoa has always had a strong oral tradition where histories, family genealogies, songs, and traditional knowledge have been passed down from one generation to the next. Verbal discourse between family members and especially female generations has been essential in continuing traditional practices and ways of living. As the *fa'asamoa* (the Samoan way) adapts to the forces of modernity and globalization, verbal discourse between female generations is in transition. Younger female generations are becoming better educated than their mothers and grandmothers, an increased number of Samoan females are migrating to urban settings and abroad, and teenage girls are more readily adopting Western values and styles. All of these factors are contributing to new forms of mother-daughter communication. Despite changing patterns of verbal discourse and its impact on Samoa's oral tradition, mother-daughter communication continues to be rooted in the *fa'asamoa*; shaped by its underlying concept of respect and identity with one's *aiga* (family).

This paper utilizes ethnographic fieldwork, personal interviews, surveys, and secondary literary and academic sources to investigate the ongoing nature of verbal discourse that exists in Samoa between mothers and daughters, and to determine whether existing and changing communication patterns contribute in altering Samoan cultural identity.

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# WORDS

Where would we be now  
Without words  
To communicate our thoughts  
And build bridges across  
Our misunderstandings  
I have seen  
Many wordless faces  
Suffocating  
In their own silences  
I have tried  
To decipher  
Your wordless dreams  
And to interpret  
The unspeakable you had  
No words for but yours  
Is an impossible  
Wordless world

Words consoled me  
In my saddest hour  
Kept me company  
In my worst moment  
Of loneliness  
I believe in words

Say Something!

-Tate Simi

*~For Mothers, Daughters, and Female Generations to come.... ~*

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*Choppy Manaia!*

~My loving family, thank you for sending me to a beautiful tropical island in the middle of the South Pacific, for trusting me to make smart decisions, for stressing the importance of communication, and for giving me a voice with which to tackle the world with.

**FA'AFATAI LAVA!**

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## *Mother*

*There are things we never talked about mother,  
Like the first stains of womanhood.  
There are things we never shared together,  
A man got in our way.  
There were moments when  
Understanding was impossible,  
You were holding the pasts' soils and I, the present air,  
Our only common theme, was an underlying love  
Hidden in our women's hearts.*

**~Vaine Rasmussen**

## Opening Remarks

Communication, both verbal and nonverbal, is a means of transmitting and expressing desires, fears, thoughts, and opinions; a medium by which individuals can understand, relate, interact, and interchange with one another. Communication, however, is not always a mutual two-way exchange as it is constantly bounded and influenced by education, social environment, and culture.

The Independent State of Samoa, more formerly known as Western Samoa, lies at the center of the Pacific Ocean and is considered one of Polynesia's oldest and most preserved cultures. As a result, many aspects of the *fa'asamoa*, or the Samoan way, which existed prior to European contact continue to flourish today. Specifically, traditional features of communication among family members, mothers and daughters continue to be dictated by the past. Of course, there have been changes along the way. When the London Missionary Society came to Samoa in 1830 to spread Christianity, they brought with them Victorian ethics of proper gender roles and behavior; influences that greatly impacted Samoan women. Relationships between brothers and sisters were governed by *feagaiga*, or covenant, where brothers were expected to operate with their sister's interests in mind and vice-versa. European pressures, however, threatened this idea. The particularly equal relationship between men and women in Samoa prior to contact slowly deteriorated and with this followed the weakening of communicative relationships (Figiel 5-3-07).

This paper examines the nature of verbal discourse exchange between female generations today and its evolution. Additionally it focuses on the impact and consequences of its change on culture and identity and examines efforts to revitalize communication in the future.

## Process of Inquiry

The initial objective of this study was to examine the verbal process of transferring traditional knowledge and information down through generations and to investigate the loss of oral histories exchanged within families. Of primary importance was whether verbal discourse between elder and

younger generations was slowly weakening. Further thought and discussion led to a more focused topic concerned with changing communication patterns between generational females, which still provided insight into the original objective on transferring traditional knowledge and histories. Intrigued with the cause and impact of communication change and inspired by Samoan author Sia Figiel's *They Who Do Not Grieve*, this project set out to explore changing verbal discourse within female generational relationships in Samoa. Figiel's powerful novel about three generations of women and the complex history of stories and secrets passed down from grandmother to granddaughter brings to light many of the issues faced by mothers and daughters and illustrates the influence of culture and tradition on family communication. Thus, this study sought to examine whether change in such discourse contributed to a change in culture or cultural identity. A combination of ethnographic fieldwork, personal interviews, surveying, and secondary literary and academic sources were compiled.

Two separate visits were made to the village of Lotofaga in the Aleipata district of southern Upolu where communication and language of three different female generations from the Mafutaga family were observed and documented. This task was particularly difficult due to the fact that all communication was in Samoan. Content and nature of verbal discourse was described as accurately as possible and descriptions were based primarily on non-verbal actions.

Personal communication and interviews were conducted with a variety of different aged females from both rural and urban environments and with a variety of backgrounds. Three middle-aged women and one younger woman were interviewed in rural villages while eleven other contacts were made in Apia via personal interview and e-mail. Personal information about mother-daughter relationships and communication related questions were posed to some interviewees while general, scholarly, and academic questions regarding the topic were posed to others <sup>1</sup>. Mali Voi, the Cultural Advisor for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the academic advisor for this project, was extremely helpful to this study. Voi offered insight not only on the nature of verbal discourse

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1 Appendix A: Interview Questions



in Samoa today but also on how education should act as an agent to improve those discursive relationships.

Thirty five surveys were distributed to women of all ages and backgrounds in the Apia downtown area as well as to young women at the USP Alafua campus. Seven surveys were distributed to students from Fiji, Tokelau, and Tonga in hopes of carrying out a small comparative case study and examining mother-daughter verbal discourse from a more Oceanic perspective. Survey results were limited at times because it was unclear whether the survey was filled out based on the individual's relationship with their daughter or mother. In addition, the last question of the survey was a bit confusing due to its multiple parts, thus many individuals left the question blank.

A variety of academic and literary secondary sources were consulted including Samoan author Sia Figiel's *They Who Do Not Grieve*, and Tahitian author Celestine Vaite's *Frangipani*. Both of these novels examine themes of mother-daughter relationships and the role communication plays and works within them. Figiel's novel illustrates more of the traditional Samoan mother-daughter relationship while Vaite's story offers insight into the changing nature of communication. Both of these literary examples supplement the findings from this study and offer yet two more examples of the communicative interaction between female generations.

### Traditionally Speaking

Similar to Samoa's social structure where individuals hold specific statuses with designated rules governing their behavior, Samoan verbal discourse is also traditionally characterized by a "visible hierarchy" (Simanu-Klutz 4-25-07) where respect for one's elders and one's mother is an uppermost cultural custom and expectation. Culturally, the mother is always right and ultimately her word is final when it comes to decision-making (Kruse-Va'ai 4-25-07). Even a disagreement with a mother and elder daughter would be delivered with uttermost respect or the daughter would be reprimanded for thinking she was the mother's equal (Simanu-Klutz 4-25-07). Ordinarily, conversation is never mutual. "Mothers always hold the power. [They] dictate. [They] tell. [They] rarely listen" (Figiel 5-3-07). The reasoning

behind this one-way authoritative and strict mother dependent relationship lies within the *fa'asamoa's* emphasis on respect and communal thinking. Communication is influenced by a lack of privacy within villages where neighbors and distant family, living in close proximity to one another, often know, observe and listen to everyone's business. A disciplined daughter who is submissive and respectful to her mother is an indication that she is under her mother's control and being raised strictly and properly (Liki 5-1-07). Entire villages will know whether a daughter disrespects her mother and such actions reflect poorly on the family and the mother. Consequently, communication and the role of discourse is shaped by both one's physical and social environment.

The *fa'asamoa's* long lasting practice of oral teachings is also important in shaping mother-daughter verbal discourse. Traditionally, females learned about life through a customary mat weaving process that commenced at their time of birth and concluded around the age of twenty-one when they first entered womanhood. Through the stitching of this fine mat, females would sit and listen to their elders who would pass on the times, knowledge, and stories of their ancestors. Each stitch would tell a specific legend, genealogy, or history, and in this fashion traditional knowledge would be passed down by word of mouth through the generations ( Voi 4-17-07). Once the female reached the age of twenty-one she had acquired the oral knowledge and teachings necessary to live in life and was therefore capable of finding an appropriate male companion.

Due to the cultural nature of this oral tradition, females were unable to possess a strong voice of which to ask questions, challenge authority or ask to be heard. Customarily, they were not expected to behave in such a fashion. "Communication was verbally non-existent. Daughters were to be seen, not to be heard" (Figiel 5-3-07). They had no power when it came to voicing their concerns or opinions and were consequently completely at the hands of their mother and elders. Verbal interaction was characterized by a command and response mode with very little input from the daughter who was instructed to act upon request without questioning (Simanu-Klutz 4-25-07). It should be noted that in Samoan culture, "the unspoken is spoken through body language" (Figiel 5-3-07). The silent language which exists between mothers and daughters is an unexplainable phenomenon. "An expression of affection or violence is

understood by Samoans and is not expressed verbally, but it's there and it defines the relationship" (Figiel 5-3-07). Author Sia Figiel brings to light an extremely important point when she notes that "talking is a Western [concept], talking to express feelings among people is Western. [Samoans] can say so much more in the way [they] move towards one another than in a three hour speech" (Figiel 5-3-07). This idea is crucial in examining verbal communication between mothers and daughters in Samoa because it's a matter of cultural understanding. Exploring the talkative manners and interactions of Samoan females from a Western cultural perspective is entirely insignificant. Customary behavior is at the source of shaping discourse and determining the role of communication in Samoan female relationships.

In her novella They Who Do Not Grieve, Sia Figiel explores the heart of the mother daughter relationship, depicting further the reality of verbal discourse and communicative exchange. Figiel's description of 'so-called conversations' as "commands, accusations, curses, [] spat at [her] in the most public of ways for everyone to see, hear, smell, taste, and feel" ( Figiel 1999:172) illustrates the true nature of mother-daughter dialogue as an authoritative one-way exchange. This idea is further developed in Figiel's 'Daughter-mama silent talk' chapter where the novella's youngest female generation is hounded with questions from her mother while given no time to respond before the next inquiry is demanded. The chapter consists solely of this 'conversation' between mother and herself and causes one to ask whether such information is actually desired by the mother or whether she solely seeks obedience and respect. Earlier in the narrative, Figiel provides another chapter denoted specifically to the absence of verbal discourse between mother and daughter which works to further detail the nature of this cultural relationship.

Pisa [mother] never talked to me. I never talked to her. We never talked to each other. That is we never held a conversation. From the time I was conceived to the time I was born, I have no memory of a conversation with her. Only words flying in the air, suspended above the ocean that divided us, which as far as other women were concerned *constituted* conversation between mother and daughter in the most intimate, private way. (Figiel 1999: 172)

Not only was verbal discourse a one-way exchange between mother and daughter but in many cases it was characterized by "hollow spaces of silence" (Figiel 1999:174), as explained above. Figiel's account

conveys a relationship between females where there is no interchange of expression, speech or understanding but rather a display of forced order, discipline, and instruction.

This complete lack of verbal discourse embedded in such a domineering relationship had numerous effects on Samoan daughters. For one, there was no discussion of pregnancy, sex, female reproduction, or personal hygiene. Such knowledge was acquired through observation and, as mentioned above, daughters had learned everything they needed to know about living, their ancestors, mat-weaving and other material culture by the age of twenty-one. Discussing subjects of sexual nature was taboo and it was assumed that daughters would naturally learn about periods and pregnancy when they experienced it (Saaga 4-17-07). Daughters were therefore left with no outlet for self-expression and often lived their lives in a place where they had no one to talk to. Figiel again exemplifies this idea in her novella through the daughter's narrative:

One thing you taught us that I despise is this silence. This disease. This not explaining anything. Not talking about anything. SO that when things happen to me-things you don't even know about-I don't know who to talk to. I don't know whether it was proper to talk about such matters. Whether it was right even to talk about them because, because we never talked about anything. (Figiel 1999: 97)

The lack of education and communication about basic life issues spread from mothers to daughters is quite evident in this passage. There has been and continues to be a frustration and emotional dissatisfaction as a result of these absent verbal discussions which are slowly fading away as Samoa enters into more modern times.

### Contemporary Verbal Exchange

Communication between mothers and daughters in Samoa today continues to be characterized by the cultural and traditional framework illustrated above however it is starting to be differentiated by its interchanging nature. In her novel, Frangipani, about the nature of mother-daughter experiences in Tahiti, author Celestine Vaite exemplifies the constant struggle between preserving the practices of the past and adjusting to the realities of the present day. "Materena [the mother] shakes her head with disbelief. She

can't understand Leilani's [her daughter's] generation. Her generation wouldn't dare ask their mother to justify her decision. What mamas said was the law, the final word" (Vaite 2004: 118). Despite the novel having been written from a Tahitian cultural perspective, the concept of respect of one's mother and elders is universal across island peoples. A communicative relationship where daughters speak back to their mothers and voice their opinions is becoming much more typical. As stated above though, this verbal exchange remains contextualized within the *fa'asamoa* structure. Despite the increased verbal actions of daughters, mother-daughter discourse continues to include discussion of family roles, respect for elders, learning how to dress, Sunday school and church (Saaga 4-17-07).

A survey distributed to thirty six individuals in the downtown Apia area and within the USP campus provides insight into the nature of contemporary discourse between mothers and their daughters. Twenty four of thirty six surveys were filled out according to daughters' relationship with their mother while eleven of thirty six surveys were filled out based on females' relationship with both mother and daughter <sup>2</sup>. A comparison of communication between two and three generational females yielded interesting results <sup>3</sup>. Both groups of females indicated that issues of the future were most often discussed, while boyfriends and pregnancy were less common to talk about, but still existent in conversations. In terms of frequency of discussion, 6/24 (25%) of females without daughters talked with their mothers everyday while 6/11(54%) and 5/11 (45%) of females with daughters talked with their elder or younger female generation every day or every few days, respectively. This statistic suggests that younger female generations perceive less communication with their mothers than elder generations.

In terms of language, 13/24 (54%) and 9/24 (37%) of females without daughters and 4/11 (36%) and 7/11 (63%) of females with daughters stated that they speak i) Samoan and ii) English and Samoan, respectively. In this case, it is evident that younger generations are continuing to speak Samoan with their

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<sup>2</sup> Surveys asked for the age of the female survey participant, the age of her mother, and the age of her daughter. It was assumed that females without daughters (generally younger generations) completed surveys based on their relationship with their mother. It was unknown whether female participants with daughters (generally elder generations) completed the surveys according to relationships with their own mother or daughter. A survey flaw no doubt.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix C: Survey Results

mothers while elder generations are beginning to speak more English in addition to their native tongue. It was also found that 17/24 (71%) of females without daughters reported their mothers initiating their conversations while 7/11 (63%) of females with daughters noted the same. These findings suggest that mothers continue to be the dominating force in mother-daughter communicative relationships.

Generalizations regarding female communication continue to remain difficult to construct due to a variety of social factors influencing its features. One major factor is the differences in rural and urban settings where traditional communication patterns are more conserved in the former and more effected by outside pressures in the latter. A rural/urban survey comparison was also carried out in order to detect discourse patterns<sup>4</sup>. In both environments, topics of boyfriends and pregnancy continued to remain less frequent among discussions while the future and school issues were commonly talked about. It was intriguing to note that greater numbers of mothers initiated conversation in the urban areas, 5/11 (45%) in rural compared with 16/24 (66%) in urban, which suggests that perhaps mothers are more strict in terms of questioning daughters about their actions and daily activities due to the greater access to privacy. The loss of language in urban settings was also important to note with 10/11 (91%) of the females speaking only Samoan in the villages and 9/24 (37%) in the towns. Similarly, 12/24 (50%) of females spoke Samoan and English in urban areas and only 1/11 (9%) in the villages. In terms of comfort when dealing with personal issues, few females in the towns (1/24) were never comfortable about speaking to their mothers or daughters while 4/11 (36%) in the villages were never comfortable. One might assume that more traditional communicative relationships in rural settings prevent young girls from being able to approach elder generations. Finally, it was worthy to note that 4/11 of females felt that they understood their mothers or daughters in rural areas while 13/24 of females felt the same in urban settlements. Perhaps, greater opportunities to education or the work force allow mothers and daughters to interact with one another more casually and with less of a social hierarchy restricting them.

Survey results and other sources indicate that verbal discourse in rural Samoan villages takes on many of the traditional characteristics of the past yet many mothers are encouraging and stressing greater

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<sup>4</sup> Appendix C: Survey Results

communication with their daughters as well as more honest discussions. Putting everything into the open to win the trust and confidence of young daughters prevents unwanted pregnancies and eloping. When issues are not discussed, daughters begin to keep secrets, lie and disobey their mothers (Lesa 4-23-07). Mothers have also started to talk in greater depth about boyfriends, having a husband, and raising a family. One interviewee noted that she talks to her daughter about how she must always obey the family and mother first, a very Samoan tradition. Although sex and reproduction continue to remain taboo subjects, abstaining from sex and the consequences of pregnancy are becoming more often talked about nowadays (Penitito 4-19-07). Seven out of thirty six survey applicants mentioned discussing reproduction and pregnancy.

Daughters are starting to approach their mothers as well to discuss issues of boyfriends and the future. One daughter stated that she always receives the right to choose her boyfriend but she continually talks and seeks the approval of her mother first. A common trend discovered regarding the issue of boyfriends is that daughters are prohibited from dating boys living in the same village. This is due to the nature of communal living, the rumors, and the possibility of shame brought upon the family. This important rule is commonly discussed with both mothers and fathers as their daughters begin to approach the age of twenty-one, as traditionally this was the age that one entered womanhood and began to start making individual decisions about male companions, though decisions which continued to be approved by the daughter's mother (Tuitali 4-19-07).

Conversation between mothers and daughters in the Samoan urban areas have transformed from those within Samoan villages. Mothers and daughters have greater access to education in towns and larger villages thus, "educated mothers are giving daughters more say in how they deal with life" (Simanu-Klutz 4-25-07). Living in urban areas where mothers are most likely working also provides daughters with greater privacy and freedom to roam the streets with boys. If daughters are unable to find work, prostitution is a common resort, causing the daughter to live a life of more promiscuous behavior where secrets and lies are ultimately kept from their mothers (Penitito 4-19-07). Despite greater freedom to make

particularized decisions, mothers will of course forever have the right to instruct their daughters when they need it.

Contrarily, verbal discourse is also more restricted in urban areas at times due to the increased strictness of mothers on their daughters regarding nightclubs, drinking, and drugs. “Mothers often become more instructional and demanding when it comes to norms of dress or behavior for example” (Kruse-Va’ai 4-25-07). Similar to the rural settings, the mother-daughter relationship improves with age. “There’s more openness and discussion of a broader range of topics and issues and additional time is spent talking as friends rather than as mother and daughter” (Kruse-Va’ai 4-25-07). With this also comes the continued mother-daughter respect relationship as well as the daughter constantly catering to the mother’s needs. Looking after one’s mother as she gets older is continually reinforced during a daughter’s Samoan upbringing as well (4-25-07). As mother-daughter communication continues to transform, a daughter’s service to her aging mother becomes less of a responsibility and more of a passion and desire.

Language use between mothers and daughters is also noteworthy to examine as evidenced in the surveys. Most Samoan mothers and grandmothers in today’s age are continuing to speak Samoan though more and more of their daughters, especially the young and overseas educated, are resorting to English. May Saaga from the village of Alafua states that she always spoke formal Samoan with her mother while in the present day she speaks both Samoan and English with her children and grandchildren. “A study by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESCC) released in July, 2000 indicated that only 89 per cent of grandparents could talk to their children (parents) in Samoan, while only 70 per cent of parents could do the same to their children” (So’o 2006: 63). Furthermore, only 65 per cent of the youngest generation could talk in Samoan (63). Many people argue that they speak Samoan less regularly because the language has such a limited vocabulary. “Samoan language has a limited capacity to express and conceptualize ideas and is suitable only for social, cultural and religious domains” (So’o 2006: 64). The fact that greater numbers of Samoans wish to express themselves is a positive detail, however is it happening at the cost of lost communication with elders and lost Samoan identity? Verbal communication between mothers and daughters is directly tied to changing language and comprehension.



An example from Figiel's They Who Do Not Grieve nicely illustrates this concept of language development. "When their mothers spoke to them in Samoan, they would respond in English. It [was] sad and happy at the same time. They have to know this language in order to know [the] people. To get ahead in this country" (Figiel 1999: 206). Not only is English stressed within schools but young females are further subjected to English meanings and words through television and music lyrics (Liki 5-1-07). One mother in the village acknowledged humorously that she always spoke Samoan with her daughter but would swear in English when she was angry; words she had acquired through the media. "The increased use of English is associated with ever widening exposure of the population to foreign cultures and ideologies; it is a development which has intensified in the last few decades as a result of Samoa's greater involvement in globalization" (So'o 2006: 63).

### Communication in Transition

Times are changing and the world and its cultures are slowly following close behind. In terms of verbal discourse in Samoa, elder generations of females are becoming more open to change as they realize they must confront the dynamic nature of their culture. Although acting at a gradual pace, mothers are responding to the need to communicate more often with their daughters (Figiel 5-3-07). The reason for this need is becoming more obvious as well. One mother from Lotofaga states, "by not talking to daughters, it causes them to go around and hook up with lots of guys" (Penitito 4-19-07). In addition to mothers' need to take care and protect their daughters, opportunities for education are allowing both mothers and daughters to become well educated so that problems become more shared and less generational (Voi 4-17-07). "The tendency of young Samoan girls to run away from home when intergenerational conflicts occur is also teaching mothers to be less strict and to communicate more often about their problems" (Simanu-Klutz 4-25-07). The influences of education, modernization, and the greater availability of opportunities to travel abroad and experience new cultures are important factors which are working to shape verbal exchange between mothers and their daughters.

Education has been one of the most influential factors in the changing of verbal discourse between female generations. For one, educational institutions work to alienate young girls from traditional worlds, causing daughters to become more independent and capable of challenging authority. Additionally, education becomes a distractive agent from traditional morals and values (Voi 4-17-07) often causing daughters to forget their cultural upbringing and Samoan etiquette and thus viewing their mothers as inferior or incapable of making their decisions. (Simanu-Klutz 4-25-07). “A PhD does not mean the mother-daughter relationship can be mismanaged” (4-25-07) and often this is not the case.

Education is put in a more positive light when mothers are able to receive the tools necessary to teach their daughters about issues such as reproduction and sex, issues which had traditionally been tabooed and silenced. Education is the key difference in seeing the change between female generations. Mothers did not have the information they needed to communicate with their daughters and school has definitely changed that (Warren 4-23-07). Interestingly enough, mothers who are less educated often still see themselves as the sole educator of their daughters; however, many are learning to adjust their dictatorial natures (Simanu-Klutz 4-25-07). Daughters are also able to use their education to improve verbal discourse with their mothers by better understanding why aged mothers are as they are. Gaining knowledge on diabetes or what it means to eat or live healthily is causing daughters to be more sympathetic and passionate about taking care of their mothers and elders as they age (Kruse-Va'ai 4-25-07). Furthermore, their education is significant in developing their own opinions about their lives, Samoan culture and the world away from the public and cultural majority. Issues of pregnancy and abortion are real issues that happen and so daughters with educated backgrounds are becoming “less judgmental and less blaming” when such issues surface (Peteru 4-27-07).

Every year numerous numbers of Samoans migrate to overseas countries such as New Zealand, Australia and the United States to take up education opportunities and residency (So'o 2006: 59). Mother daughter communication is greatly affected by this movement, although it is difficult to make generalizations about the existing and changing nature of communication while daughters or mothers are separated. In some cases, daughters end up distancing themselves from their mothers when and after they

leave for school, excited by their new found freedom, increased confidence and self-esteem (Liki 5-1-07). Returning home to Samoa's conservative ways following time abroad also strains the relationship, as often the daughter is unwilling to take her place beneath her mother's orders and rules. In other cases, daughters become closer with their mothers during their time abroad and upon their return. Sometimes mothers write their daughters countless letters while away warning them not to drink or take drugs or to continue watching out for boys, an example of the true connection between mother and daughter. Despite being thousands of miles away from home, daughters continue to live under the structure and rules of their mothers. One interviewee revealed that her time abroad allowed her to gain the trust of her mother without her passing judgment. Following her return home, their relationship became much more substantial. Lastly, in the daughter's preparation to study or travel away from home, mothers often pass down information in hopes of preparing them for their experiences. May Saaga's daughter left home at age twelve and Saaga found it necessary to teach her about reproductive issues prior to departure, as she would for sure encounter such matters abroad. Evidently, migration plays a considerable role in determining the nature of verbal patterns between mother and daughter.

An inevitable outcome of traveling outside of one's own country and culture is the embracing and adopting of outside values and ideals. The way one speaks, dresses, acts, relates, and thinks, are inspired by one's environment. Even within Samoa,

Instant communication brought about by radio, television, telephone, [and] internet, has affect[ed] Samoan culture and the way Samoans look at the world. Every year, the government sends hundreds of Samoan students, public servants and business people overseas for training and education purposes, [and] exposes them to other kinds of cultures and world ideologies. (So'o 2006: 58-59)

Not only does this instant communication bring about oceans of social and cultural change but specifically it creates peer pressure for young female teenagers to dress differently, to talk differently, and to try drugs and alcohol, exactly the situations which stimulate verbal conflict with their mothers. "Cultural perceptions are perceived as real by younger generations when in fact the perceptions have been marketed and targeted toward them" (Voi 4-17-07). As a result, a clash is created between more traditional Samoan

mothers who are unable to communicate with their rebellious daughters and the more modern Samoan daughters who cannot approach or discuss issues with their uncomprehending mothers.

Despite these global influences, this change in speaking can also be attributed to basic generational differences that exist between mothers and daughters all over the world. One generation will always be one-step further or more illiterate in technology than the other, one more adopting of modern times. It is inevitable that there will always be different perceptions about life between mother and daughter (Voi 4-17-07). Vaite's Frangipani accurately illustrates this idea in one of the daughter's narratives when she states "Sewing is not really important for our new generation because we care about other things. The death penalty. The starving children in Africa. The laws. Empowering women. The alarming birthrate in Tahiti and in the world. Our generation has so many issues to worry about" (Vaite 2004:118). Verbal discourse is slowly fading away from traditional cultural norms where subjects of sewing and cooking knowledge are discarded in favor of more global, environmental, political, and economic issues, subjects which are often far too complex for a mother to engage in without the proper education. Modernity causes change, the "professionalization of family roles in terms of mothers working in market economies and daughters going off to study at universities" (Simanu-Klutz 4-25-07). Discourse is also heading in a direction where it depends on spending power and income generating activities. Mothers and daughters are working together to make money, to save money either communally or individually and so the nature of conversations and discourse will follow this path as well. Some women develop stronger communicative relationships with their mothers as they become financially needy with kids or school loans and thus need their mothers to support them (Liki 5-1-07). Author Sia Figiel makes another important point when discussing change which is that nowadays mothers listen when before they didn't. "It's a generational gap" (Figiel 5-3-07).

## Village Case Study

Observations were conducted of one family of three generational females for a period of ten days in the village of Lotofaga in the Aleipata district of southern Upolu in February and April of 2007. All exchanges between grandmother, mother, and daughter were in Samoan, therefore observations were based primarily on nonverbal actions, tone of speech, and my limited comprehension of basic Samoan words and phrases. Sera, the eldest female in the family is mid seventy and runs the small *faleoloa* (shop) at the residence. Her daughter, Matila is forty years of age and a member of the village women's committee and CCCS Women's Fellowship and is a language instructor for the mentally disabled. Her daughter Nina is fourteen years of age and a Year Eight student at Lotofaga Primary School.

Sera (70) -----Matila (40) -----Nina (14)

### Interaction : Sera and Matila

*Verbal discourse was a two-way exchange though Matila was always at the service of Sera. When the phone rang, when Sera needed something, when someone else needed Matila, Sera would always yell for Matila to come immediately. Yelling would continue until Matila was present. Sera would constantly demand Matila to provide me [the guest] with more food, dry clothes, snacks, or a blanket. Sera was very concerned with the well-being of her guest and would communicate a great deal with Matila to ensure that her guest was comfortable and well taken care of. On a few occasions, Matila and Sera sat together and engaged in two-way conversation about the store, the guest, the funeral the following day. The conversation could be described as very comfortable, as two friends would talk, both asking questions, both responding to one another. The main time this encounter was documented, the conversation lasted for approximately twenty minutes.*

### Interaction: Matila and Nina

*Verbal discourse was primarily a one-way exchange. Matila would yell at Nina to retrieve food items, cooking utensils, water, soap, all types of object, and Nina would respond accordingly often*

*without questioning or responding. On some occasions she commented on the demands made by her mother but would always carry out her mother's requests. On one occasion, Nina talked back to her mother and Matila chucked a rock at Nina's back. During the observation period, a total of ten days, a two way-conversation, similar to the ones between Sera and Matila, was not once observed between Matila and Nina. Every night Matila would sit and complete Nina's English homework while Nina took care of other chores. In some instances, they sat together and questions would be asked regarding the homework. Often there were no words exchanged between mother and daughter except to make comments about the guest (palagi) and Nina would often laugh following these exchanges. When the faleoloa was open Matila would often yell at Nina to retrieve the key or run the front counter. Nina would never ask questions.*

#### Interaction: Sera and Nina

*Verbal discourse was almost non-existent. Interaction was similar to that of Matila and Nina though less discourse was documented in general. Sera constantly commanded orders from Nina such as opening the shop, or fetching the guest tea or water during the day when Matila was absent. Sera also instructed Nina to watch the youngest child at times when he was creating chaos.*

#### Examination

Communication between Matila and Nina and Sera and Nina was minimal but one would expect discussions to become more regular as she approaches the age of twenty-one. Discourse between Matila and Sera was predictable. Mother and daughter communicated like friends despite daughter continuing to provide service to her mother. It was interesting to note interaction and roles of the three females and how it influenced their speaking. Matila completed Nina's homework which caused the two of them to ask each other questions, even if briefly. The influences of education are most likely uniting mother and daughter. Sera worked the store with the help of Matila and Nina so communication was stimulated in response to this responsibility. The influence of a western market economy becomes present with the need to work and communicate together to save money. Nina assisted Matila with the cooking, served, and waited on her mother and grandmother while they ate thus one-way discourse in the form of instructions was existent.

This social and verbal hierarchy continues to dominate rural life and it was evident that traditional Samoan discourse practices are still in place.

**Impact of Changing Verbal Discourse** “ *We were mother and daughter. Woman and woman*” (Figiel 1999:173)

Communication between female generations is changing but what are the implications? Why is this significant in Samoa? Foremost, increased verbal discourse and open communication reduces the rate of suicide among teenage girls. When young girls elope or become pregnant prior to marriage, it brings shame upon their families and often daughters will be banished or disowned by their mothers (Voi 4-17-07). This is just one of the many reasons behind Samoa’s terrorizing suicide rate; girls do not wish to bring shame upon their families so they take their lives instead. Increased education and discussion with mothers about pregnancy and safe sex are preventing girls from being thrown into undesired situations. As discussed above there is also greater clashing between grandmother, mother and daughter generations as Samoa becomes more heavily engulfed by the forces of modernization. Samoan families migrating to New Zealand often end up sending back gifts and ‘Westernized’ material possessions to their villages, hence blurring the distinction between rural and urban experiences (Liki- 5-1-07). Younger generations again start to develop different expectations and ideas which differ greatly from their elders. Furthermore, mothers and daughters begin lacking the historical knowledge and experience to keep up traditional practices such as mat weaving or legend recitals (Simanu-Klutz 4-25-07).

The issue of preserving the *fa’asamoa* from the consequences of changing discourse is an important matter to consider as well. Elena Peteru suggests that the *fa’asamoa* is not changing but simply being refined to fit in with a changing world. For example, educated daughters engaged in two way conversations with mothers where both daughter and mother challenge or question each other places both generations on equal levels. Such a situation, however, is not characteristic of the *fa’asamoa*. Answering back to one’s mother is not the *fa’asamoa* (Liki 5-1-07). A mother feeling embarrassed or ashamed because of her lost authority is not usually the case, however, the point is that changing patterns of verbal

discourse are influencing cultural practices. Expectations are not being fulfilled and mothers are being forced to transition to accompany the change.

The preservation of individual Samoan identity is another matter of which is difficult to assess. Some feel that communication with mothers further ties them to their roots for they are constantly learning about their past and traditional practices. Some daughters are unable to identify with their Samoan heritage due to the absence of Samoan language and the domination of English in schools, literature, and family discourse. A passage from Celestine Vaite's work illustrates the importance of the Samoan language to individuality and cultural identity. "But he, because of his own experiences, which was different from his brothers' and sister's, hung on to his mother tongue. He felt that if he lost it, he would lose himself, since it was the only thing that belonged to him. His only sure possession" (Vaite 2004: 206-207). Cultural deterioration is present and the consequences are disruptive, yet is this loss necessarily a bad thing?

Perhaps the erosion of cultural aspects is more deeply impacting verbal discourse and thus creating an inevitable cycle of destruction. Some might see non-verbal communication and traditional Samoan mother-daughter relationships as detrimental or negative to child development or learning, however it is important to remember author Sia Figiel's words regarding discourse in Samoa and its origin within Western framework and thought. These nonverbal gestures and mannerisms are essential to Samoan behavior and interaction. What one in Western culture might perceive as verbal or physical child abuse and lack of emotional or physical affection is in fact a plethora of messages, thoughts, and orders all carried out in non-verbal or aggressive verbal manners. With this cultural understanding, words, speech, and discussion begin to take on a different light which Figiel elegantly captures in her novella:

Still there were the words. The ugly ugly *ugly* words that were never once transformed into a conversation but that passed between us incessantly... Hypnotising our every thought, so that in a strange strange way we couldn't exist without them. So that if words had suddenly ceased to exist altogether we would become nothing more than skeletons without flesh, flesh without blood, bodies without spirits, spirits without souls. Paradoxically, the very nature of the words we used brought us together and divided us all the same at any given time. The accusations. The commands. The curses (Figiel 1999: 174).



Figiel brings to light the importance of communication and language to the mother-daughter relationship and illustrates how despite the traditional one-way exchange and lack of substance in discussions, there is still a powerful non-verbal but communicative connection between mother and daughter that is in some very small way satisfying and essential to existing “My mother who never talks to me. Whose face I’ve never really seen. But whose shadow overwhelms me always. *Always*” (Figiel 1999: 5) Figiel reveals a hidden and deeper relationship or meaning and many layers between mothers and daughters. Despite the lack of communication, the lack of verbal and physical affection, the verbal abuse, there is evidently an overwhelming bond that both daughter and mother retain, a bond which can not really be described in words. In the words of both authors Sia Figiel and Celestine Vaite, “But the invisible cord was there (Figiel 1999: 173) [and] once “linked with the cord, we’re linked for eternity” (Vaite 2004: 132).

**Say What? : Samoa’s Future**      “*Language binds us together*” (Figiel 1999:165)

Communication between mothers and daughters will continue to transition in Samoa. The culture will adapt and the nature of discourse will adjust accordingly. Verbal discussion has and will continue to become more open and casual between mothers and daughters as Western structures of discourse, English and speech further influence Samoa, deteriorating more traditional conventions of speaking. This concept is excellently portrayed toward the end of Sia’s novel, They Who Do Not Grieve, where the youngest female generation makes a promise to change the way she will live her life as well as the way she will bring up her own daughter.

I’m going to sit there, right there, and I’m going to tell that girl-child of mine to scream!..But I will not let my girlchild be silenced. The way I’ve been silenced all these years. From the day I was born to the day I went to school (Figiel 1999: 227).

She will not be silenced. Her voice, a celebration of survival...[She will] breathe a new air, void of the despair of her own history. Her dead mother’s history. Her dead grandmother’s history. Her dead great-grandmother’s history. The history of all the women that ever stepped foot into that house (Figiel 1999: 270).

Younger generations are changing the ways in which they educate their daughters. Some might label this generational change while others might call it preventing the future from resembling the past. Many

women exclaimed that had they had daughters they would have shown them greater affection, would have discussed more social issues at an earlier age, such as preparing and celebrating female periods, and would have worked harder to build greater confidence in female youth through sports, academics and church (Peteru 4-27-07). Figiel stresses the importance of speech and having a voice in the future and this has definitely taken affect in Samoa.

“Independent discussion has not come exclusively from Western influence but from within Samoa as well” (Kruse-Va’ai 4-25-07) In addition to the natural path of communication development there has been tremendous efforts by Samoa’s Ministry of Women to encourage healthy dialogue and verbal communication. The Ministry utilizes innovative models based on “informal interactions, small group processes, pairing of mothers and their daughters [and] the usual big group debates and discussions to create a workshop in villages that promotes discussion on issues such as sex and pregnancy” ( Tago 2007: 3). In this way, Samoa’s female youth will be informed on issues such as AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases in the hopes that these health issues become a matter of life and death rather than simply topics of conversation (Kruse-Va’ai 4-25-07). The objectives of the Ministry’s model are:

to provide participatory processes that encourage dialogue, basic communication techniques and a series of traditional learning methodologies; to emerge on health and societal issues which widen the communication gap between the mother and daughter; to determine linkages between realities that are the determinants of conflicts and family problems; [and] to ensure sustainability and continuity of these processes within communities and more so the family unit (Tago 2007: 3).

The opportunity to participate in the workshop is unique for many mothers and daughters because the “process provide[s] them with the first opportunity to dialogue with their daughters on reproductive and sexual health issues” (Tago 2007: 3). These studies are crucial in preserving mother-daughter communication in Samoa which is critical in the maintenance of familial commitments, church roles, and chiefly titles. As more and more women hold the title of *matai*, “their daughters may see themselves as the natural inheritors of these positions which will perhaps allow easier access to these statuses” (Simanu-Klutz 4-25-07).

## A Cultural Perspective

In order to better understand the ways in which Samoan culture has and continues to shape mother-daughter verbal discourse, it is important to examine communication across cultures. The types of generational issues raised between mother and daughter are universal, however, many are specific to cultural upbringing and different peoples adapting to transitioning times at different speeds. Celestine Vaite's Frangipani, provides a remarkable account of the mother daughter experience in Tahiti, French Polynesia, just south of Samoa, and presents some interesting differences of which to compare communication.

One aspect of Vaite's novel which can be compared to the traditional Samoan mat weaving process is the customary 'Welcome into Womanhood' talk where mother and daughter sit down to discuss the rules of womanhood which are passed on from generation to generation. The objective of the talk is:

to enlighten the new woman and pass on [the mother's] experience(s) as a woman of many years so that her daughter's life will be a bit easier. Cleaning tricks may be revealed, secrets that are not meant for the grave, recipes that fill the stomach and take less than ten minutes to prepare, advice on curtains, plants, men, life in general (Vaite 2004:81).

The practice of transferring oral knowledge is commonplace in many island countries and has become a means of stimulating two way discourse between mother and daughter. Another similarity is the realization that new generations will always have different cultural perspectives and thus communication must reflect accordingly. This awareness is again reflected in Vaite's novel. "Materena is not going to give her daughter the traditional Welcome into Womanhood talk. She's going to do it the new way. Let's move on to the new century"(Vaite 2004:82). It must be acknowledged that things are different and it is hoped that interpersonal relations will be improved between mothers and daughters as a consequent of generational changes ( Figiel 5-3-07).

On another note, many aspects of the novel greatly differentiate from Samoan cultural practices. The openness and expression of feelings displayed by daughters is evident in Vaite's novel. "[She] also informed her mother of news regarding herself: my tooth hurts, my belly hurts, I feel constipated, I've got nits, my bum is itchy" (Vaite 2004: 167). The fact that such personal issues are revealed to one's mother contrasts with the silence and lack of personal communication of daughters and mothers in Samoa. Another example clearly illustrated is the distinction between knowledge acquired within the education system and that obtained through verbal discourse with the mother. "Ask me about the ancestors, the old days, cleaning tricks, budgeting, who's who in the family album and at the cemetery, plants, words of wisdom Tahitian-style, traditions. Don't ask me why it doesn't snow in Tahiti. Ask your teacher" (Vaite 2004:53). Academic knowledge is encouraged by the mother in Tahiti whereas mothers in Samoa continue to act and be the sole educator of their daughter. Furthermore, this passage illustrates the extent to which mothers define themselves for their daughters in terms of knowledge acquisition and the extent to which they are the sole providers of thought. Vaite provides an example of mothers accepting the reality of changing times and the fact that daughters will inevitably surpass them in their knowledge of the world.

Another difference in communication is the openness of what would traditionally be taboo subjects in Samoa. "Why didn't you tell me you had a boyfriend?" Loana said (mother of Materena). "You used to tell me everything. I would have told you about contraception. But now it's too late, you're about to give birth." When the mothers don't know what's going on, they can't help" (Vaite 2004:167). Vaite places the responsibility of commencing discourse on the daughter while in Samoa the task of initiating verbal discussions is placed on the mother for she is socially superior. The fact that daughters maintain closed and private lives, as explained here, comes back to haunt them for their mothers are unaware when to provide needed instruction and guidance.

Thoughts on communication across the Pacific were also gathered from surveys issued to seven female daughters from Fiji, Tokelau, and Tonga who attend the University of the South Pacific in Alafua

<sup>5</sup>. In terms of the types of issues discussed between mothers and daughters, results indicated that the majority of the females discuss topics related to dreams and the future (5/7), friends and family (4/7), and school related situations (3/7). One hundred per cent of the daughters said that school accomplishments and failures influenced communication with their mothers. Only one of the daughters noted discussion about pregnancy and reproduction. Additionally, four out of seven girls recorded that they spoke every day with their mothers and six out of seven indicated that their mothers always initiated the conversation. Despite the majority of daughters feeling only sometimes comfortable talking about personal issues, results revealed that daughters spoke more often with their mothers as they've become older. Similar to survey findings from local Samoan females, topics of reproduction and pregnancy continue to be relatively rare within certain mother daughter discussions, however, the frequency of discussion is notable. This survey, though small in size reveals similar cultural communication patterns and trends across all four island countries.

### **Final Words**

“Samoan culture is quite resilient though it is also quite adaptable” (Kruse-Va'ai 4-25-07). Verbal discourse and exchange between Samoan mothers and daughters takes on a similar nature as it rapidly changes within both urban and rural settlements and among young generations of girls. The contributions of modernization, Western values and the spread of English as the universal language, greatly affect this period of transitioning dialogue. Despite this alteration and adjustment of language, culture, and generations, traditional practices will continue to dictate the ways in which mothers and daughters communicate among one another. “Social relationships will always be characterized by the *fa'asamoa*” (Liki 5-1-07).

Despite a more intellectual balance between mother and daughter or a distant connection where daughter and mother are worlds apart from one another, a mother-dominated respect relationship will always be maintained (Simanu-Klutz 4-25-07). “Samoan upbringing is such that [one] has to maintain love and reverence for ones mother” (Kruse-Va'ai 4-25-07). Additionally, a well-educated daughter will

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<sup>5</sup> Appendix C: Survey Results

defer in respect and in knowledge in certain situations such as at a traditional village meeting where only her mother's voice culturally and politically can voice and represent her daughter's concerns. A good communicative relationship will often work to the daughter's advantage in such cases where the *matai* framework suppresses certain voices from being heard in the village. Mother-daughter verbal discourse, in the context of the *matai* system which maintains order and harmony in the village, would never be compromised for a fully modern communicative relationship (Kruse-Va'ai 4-25-07). Since Samoan society came into contact with the rest of the world, the basis of *fa'asamoa* has remained intact despite any outward appearances of change and adaptation. (Toleafoa, 2005:1)

In addition to serving elders, the *fa'asamoa* is founded on the bond of the extended *aiga* and the connection with oneself and one's family. Despite instances of lost or fractured communication relationships between mothers and daughters from overseas influences or other factors, daughters learn to rebuild their bonds with their mothers and to rekindle their ability to have substantial conversations and discussions about issues of life, both past and future. It is this association with one's family and the traditional cultural expectations of respect and courtesy for elders and titled persons that will continue to preserve that which is Samoan in terms of speaking and verbal discourse between generational females. That Samoan aspect will never disappear but communication will be different because of the Western values and lifestyles which are more readily being accepted and adopted. (Warren 4-23-07). Let verbal discourse continue to change but let the relationships between Samoan female generations remain all that is Samoan.

►» *Pau Lava,*

*Just Because...*

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**Glossary of Samoan Terms**

*aiga*- family unit

*fa’asamoa*- the Samoan way

*faleoloa*-shop or store

*feagaiga*- covenant, traditional relationship where brothers acted with sisters’ interests in mind

*matai*-chief title

*papalagi*-person of non-Samoan heritage, white foreigners or outsiders



*pau lava*-just because, it is what it is,

## Appendix A: Interview Questions

- 1)-Based on your personal experiences how would you characterize communication between mothers and daughters in Samoa today?
- 2) - Does communication within these relationships follow any type of traditional (post-1831) framework in the sense that are there specific cultural etiquettes or customs that have shaped the way mothers and daughters interact?
- 3) – What factors contribute to the nature of communication in mother-daughter relationships in Samoa? (Education, rural/urban environment, cultural upbringing....)
- 4) - What types of information, messages, or knowledge are most often exchanged? (Personal subject matter, non-personal information, instructions, traditional ideas or teachings...)
- 5)-How mutual is the communication relationship between mothers and daughters in terms of initiating and engaging in discourse?
- 6) – How meaningful is the communication relationship in terms of emotional or personal satisfaction?
- 7) – In what ways is communication changing between mothers and daughters in Samoa? (Quantity of discourse, reciprocity of communication, types of information or knowledge exchanged...)
- 8) - What is causing these changes in discourse? (Western influences, migration, politics and democracy, economy and tourism.....)
- 9)-What is the impact of these changes? (Influence on traditional knowledge or histories, family structure, identity, productivity, emotional satisfaction, physical well-being...)
- 10) – What is the role of communication and discourse in Samoan mother-daughter relationships in the future? Will the nature of communication change to reflect discourse in more independent and Western-style relationships or will it move in a different direction?

## Appendix B: Survey Questions

Your village (*lou nu'u*)\_\_\_\_\_ Your Age (*Ou tausaga*)\_\_\_\_\_.

Age of Mother (*Tausaga o lou tina*)\_\_\_\_\_ Age of Daughters (*Tausaga o lau tama teine*)\_\_\_\_\_.

### **1. What sorts of things do you talk about with your mother/daughter? (Circle all that apply)**

**(*O a ituaiga tala e te lua talanoa ai ma lou tina/tama teine?*)**

- a) boyfriends (*uo tama*) e) reproduction/pregnancy (*mai taga/to*) i) dreams/future (*fa'amoemoegai mo le lumana*)  
o) school issues (*mea o le aoga*) u) friends/family (*uo teine/aiga*) f) other (*isi mea...*)

### **2. How often do you talk with your mother/daughter about the issues you circled above?**

**(*E faafia na lua talanoa ma lou tina/tama teine i mataupu ua lio i luga?*)**

- a) every day (*aso uma*) e) every few days (*isi lava aso*) i) every few weeks (*isi lava aso o le vaiaso*)  
o) every few months (*isi lava aso o le masina*) u) seldom (*seasea*) f) other (*isi aso...*)\_\_\_\_\_.

### **3. When you speak with your mother/daughter about these issues, who most often initiates the conversation? (*Pe lua talanoa ma lou tina/lau tama i mataupu nei, o ai e masani ona amataina le talanoaga?*)**

- a) myself (*o a'u*) e) my daughter (*o lau tama*) i) my mother (*o lou tina*)

### **4. What languages do you speak with your mother/daughter? (Circle all that apply)**

**(*O lea le gagana e faaoga pe a lua talanoa ma lou tina/tama?*)**

- a) Samoan (*fa'asamoa*) e) English (*faaperetania*) i) Samoan and English (*fa'asamoa ma le Faaperetania*)  
o) other (*isi gagana...*)\_\_\_\_\_.

### **5. What sorts of situations or events have influenced the way you talk with your mother/daughter?**

**(Circle all that apply) (*O a mea ua tutupu e aafia ai le tulaga o lua talanoa ma lou tina/lau tama?*)**

- a) pregnancy (*mai taga/to*) e) death (*oti*) i) school accomplishments or failures (*taunuuga o le aoga pe fa'aletonu*)  
o) boyfriend issue (*uo tama*) u) other (*isi mea...*)\_\_\_\_\_.

### **6. When you want to talk about personal problems or feelings how comfortable are you approaching your mother/daughter? (*A e fia talanoa I lou tina I ou faafitauli o lea se lagona ia oe pea e fia talanoa?*)**

- a) always comfortable (*loto tele*) e) sometimes comfortable (*isi taimi e loto tele*)  
i) rarely comfortable (*e fefe*) o) never comfortable (*e leai se faamoemoe*)

### **7. How has communication with your mother/daughter changed as you have become older? ( circle all that apply) (*O lea se suiga o le lua talanoaga ma lou tina/tama pe a e matua?*)**

- a) speak less often (*seasea talanoa*)  
e) speak more often (*talanoa soo*)  
i) speak the same amount (*talanoa lava pei na masani ai*)  
o) speak about more personal issues (*talanoa I mea tau oe lava ia*)  
u) speak about less personal issues (*seasea talanoa I ou faafitauli*)  
f) speak about the same issues (*talanoa lava i mataupu masani*)  
g) other (*isi mea...*)\_\_\_\_\_.

**8. How would you describe your relationship with your mother/daughter?**

*( E faapefea na e faamatala le lua mafutaga ma lou tina/lau tama?)*

(I) -We communicate (*Ma te talanoa*):

**a**) often (*soo*)    **e**) sometimes (*seasea*)    **i**) rarely (*isi lava taimi*)    **o**) never (*le taitai*)

(II) - We understand each other (*Ma te femalamalama ai*):

**a**) often (*isi taimi*)    **e**) sometimes (*isi lava taimi*)    **i**) rarely (*seasea*)    **o**) never (*le taitai*)

(III) Other (*isi mea*): \_\_\_\_\_.

**Appendix C: Survey Results**

NOTE: Percentages and numbers below represent the number of survey applicants who marked the respective response. Some questions asked applicants to mark multiple responses.

**I) Non-Samoan Pacific Island Students (7surveys)**

Response→ Question Number	<b>a</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>i</b>	<b>o</b>	<b>u</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>1</b>	3 (43%)	1 (14%)	<b>5 (71%)</b>	3 (43%)	4 (57%)		
<b>2</b>	4 (57%)	1 (14%)	2 (28%)				
<b>3</b>	1 (14%)		<b>6 (86%)</b>				
<b>4</b>	1 (14%)	1 (14%)					Bible/personal
<b>5</b>	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	<b>7 (100%)</b>	2 (28%)	1 (14%)		
<b>6</b>	1 (14%)	<b>5 (71%)</b>	1 (14%)				
<b>7</b>		<b>6 (86%)</b>		2 (28%)	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	
<b>8a</b>	<b>6 (86%)</b>						Family/finance
<b>8b</b>	2 (28%)	4 (57%)					

**II) Samoan Females Living in Rural Areas (11 surveys)**

Response→ Question Number	<b>a</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>i</b>	<b>o</b>	<b>u</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>1</b>	3 (27%)	2 (18%)	<b>11 (100%)</b>	6 (54%)	5 (45%)		
<b>2</b>	4 (36%)	4 (36%)		3 (27%)			
<b>3</b>	6 (54%)	1(9%)	5 (45%)				
<b>4</b>	<b>10 (91%)</b>	1(9%)	1(9%)				Daily activities
<b>5</b>	1(9%)		<b>8 (72%)</b>	2 (18%)	2 (18%)		
<b>6</b>	4 (36%)		2 (18%)	4 (36%)			
<b>7</b>		5 (45%)	4 (36%)	3 (27%)	1(9%)	3 (27%)	
<b>8a</b>	<b>7 (63%)</b>	2 (18%)					Christianity Family Development
<b>8b</b>	4 (36%)	5 (45%)					

**III) Samoan Females Living in Urban Areas (24Surveys)**

Response→ Question Number	<b>a</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>i</b>	<b>o</b>	<b>u</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>1</b>	4 (16%)	4 (16%)	<b>19 (79%)</b>	<b>14 (58%)</b>	10 (42%)	4 (16%)	Life, work to be done.

<b>2</b>	10 (42%)	9 (37%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	Future of family
<b>3</b>	8 (33%)	2 (8%)	<b>16 (66%)</b>				
<b>4</b>	9 (37%)	2 (8%)	<b>12 (50%)</b>	1 (4%)			Curch, family work
<b>5</b>	3 (12.5%)	2 (8%)	<b>19 (79%)</b>	7 (29%)	3 (12.5%)		Change in life
<b>6</b>	8 (33%)	<b>11 (46%)</b>	5 (21%)	1 (4%)			
<b>7</b>	1 (4%)	8 (33%)	10 (42%)	6 (25%)	3 (12.5%)	10 (42%)	
<b>8a</b>	<b>16 (66%)</b>	2 (8%)	4 (16%)				
<b>8b</b>	13 (54%)	6 (25%)					

#### IV) Females with no Daughters (Two-Generation Comparison) (24 surveys)

Response	a	e	i	o	u	f
<b>Question Number</b>						
<b>1</b>	5 (21%)	3 (12.5%)	<b>21 (88%)</b>	14 (58%)	10 (42%)	
<b>2</b>	6 (25%)	8 (33%)	4 (16%)	2 (8%)	4 (16%)	
<b>3</b>	9 (37%)		17 (71%)			
<b>4</b>	13 (54%)	1 (4%)	9 (37%)	1 (4%)		
<b>5</b>	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	<b>18 (75%)</b>	7 (29%)	3 (12.5%)	
<b>6</b>	6 (25%)	9 (37%)	5 (21%)	4 (16%)	1 (4%)	
<b>7</b>	1 (4%)	9 (37%)	10 (42%)	5 (21%)	2 (8%)	7 (29%)
<b>8a</b>	<b>14 (58%)</b>	4 (16%)	3 (12.5%)			
<b>8b</b>	11 (46%)	8 (33%)				

#### V) Females With Daughters (Three-Generation Comparison) (11 surveys)

Response	a	e	i	o	u	f
<b>Question Number</b>						
<b>1</b>	2 (18%)	3 (27%)	9 (81%)	6 (54%)	5 (45%)	
<b>2</b>	6 (54%)	5 (45%)	1(9%)			
<b>3</b>	6 (54%)	2 (18%)	3 (27%)			
<b>4</b>	4 (36%)		7 (63%)			
<b>5</b>	3 (27%)	2 (18%)	9 (81%)	2 (18%)	1(9%)	
<b>6</b>	6 (54%)	3 (27%)	3 (27%)	1(9%)		
<b>7</b>		5 (45%)	4 (36%)	5 (45%)	1(9%)	5 (45%)
<b>8a</b>	9 (81%)		1(9%)			
<b>8b</b>	6 (54%)	3 (27%)				

