

# Getting started with Pacific research: Finding resources and information on Pacific research models and methodologies

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## Question:

*Where do I start looking for Pacific Island resources and information about Pacific research models and methodologies?*

## Pacific Island resources

### **Introduction**

The study of the Pacific has traditionally been located in different academic disciplines (such as anthropology, geography, history, linguistics, literature and sociology to name just a few). Pacific Studies has a history of collaboration between disciplines and an interdisciplinary approach to multidisciplinary research problems (Hviding, 2003). Today there is an extensive body of published and unpublished literature in English, French, German, Dutch and Spanish which bears witness to the scientific, colonial, anthropological and later multidisciplinary study of the Pacific Islands. This has created a rich range of print and electronic resources available online, in museum collections, in archives, in libraries and organisations around the world. Searches therefore need to be cross disciplinary and use a range of subject specific terminology.

### **Historical accounts**

While Pacific Studies as a discipline and its approach to incorporating the perspective of Pacific peoples is relatively new, the study of the Pacific Islands and Pacific peoples began with the first European explorers. The early accounts of famous European explorers include Ferdinand Magellan, De La Perouse and James Cook. Their exploratory and scientific voyages are important sources of secondary information, as are the research works of botanists like Joseph Banks and artists like William Ellis and Sydney Parkinson.

Missionaries and colonial administrators' accounts are also crucial historical sources of information about the Pacific Islands and peoples. The online project Anglicanism in Oceania (<http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/>) lists many missionary works and accounts in Papua New Guinea, Melanesia and Polynesia. The Western Pacific Archive in the University of Auckland Library is a significant regional resource from the British colonial administrators and is searchable via the catalogue. Other secondary information comes from traders, settlers and individual accounts such as the poet and writer Robert Louis Stevenson known in the Pacific as *Tusitala* or teller of tales.

### **Directories, Bibliographies and Indexes**

The directory *Pacific Anthropologists* (1962, 1971, 1973–1974) lists anthropologists with research on, or relating to, the Pacific peoples in the 1960s and 1970s. Bibliographies are another useful source of research literature. These include the *South Pacific Bibliography*, *The Journal of Pacific History bibliography*, the online *AnthroGlobe Bibliographies* ([http://coombs.anu.edu.au/Biblio/biblio\\_index.html](http://coombs.anu.edu.au/Biblio/biblio_index.html)) and the bibliographies of Snow (1969), Taylor (1940, 1948, 1951, 1965), Coppel (1983), Thawley

(1997), McLean (1995) and Furuhashi (1994, 1996, 2008) amongst others. Individual universities may also have their own research registries, indexes and repositories often searchable and accessible online. For example, the *Bibliographic index of Pacific theses in New Zealand universities* lists doctoral and masters' theses conducted in New Zealand universities to 2008 in print and CD-ROM format. The *South Pacific Programme I (1963)* and *South Pacific Programme II (1965)* list research conducted by the University of Auckland during that period. The University of the South Pacific's *South Pacific Research Register (1983-1991)* recorded research work in the Pacific region. See <http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/subjects/pasifika/pase-books.htm> for more reference material.

### **Other Sources**

Some authors list their work on a website e.g. Dr Melani Anae:

[http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/staff/index.cfm?S=STAFF\\_mana001](http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/staff/index.cfm?S=STAFF_mana001)

There are also institutional research databases like PacificResearchOnline where you can search for an author's name or subject of research:

<http://www.pacificresearchonline.com/>

Pacific organisations like the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, government ministries and non-government organisations are increasingly publishing materials on their websites. Also check local resources identified by your university Department and Subject Librarian, including print or electronic books, journals, conference papers, catalogues, databases, indexes, organisations and websites. Subject librarians often provide online guides with this information, including links to other University collections, digital archives and web resources e.g. see Judy McFall-McCaffery's Pacific Studies web pages on the University of Auckland website:

- Reference material (includes bibliographies, directories, guidelines, Pacific studies)  
<http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/subjects/pasifika/pase-books.htm>
- Internet resources (includes business, health and history guides):  
<http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/subjects/pasifika/pasifik-internetResources.htm>
- Databases:  
<http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/subjects/pasifika/pasifikadbase.htm>

### **Conceptual frameworks and research models**

When conducting Pacific research it is also important to consider Pacific knowledge systems and conceptual frameworks. They provide for perspectives of Pacific peoples to be represented in culturally appropriate ways. A conceptual framework (also called a theoretical model or research model) is a theoretical approach that provides a structure for all aspects of your research design and methodology. From the 1980s, Pacific scholars have continued to develop research models that represent the diversity of Pacific Island indigenous epistemologies (cultural worldviews and theories of knowledge; Gegeo, 2008).

The word Pasifika is increasingly used in Aotearoa New Zealand to include all people of Cook Island, Niue, Tokelau, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and other Pacific ethnicities who live in New Zealand. It is important to be aware that the "Pacific" is not homogeneous, but represents a diverse and distinct range of cultures and languages. Pacific ethnic groups speak different languages and have different cultural practices and customs.

Pacific research models can also be adapted to different disciplines, or when using an interdisciplinary approach to Pacific research. Models have emerged in education and social science, including Kakala, Vaka, Ta Va, Teu La Va and Tivaevae. In the health sector the Fa'afaletui and Falefono models are two examples of Pacific approaches to research addressing Pacific health issues (see further reading).

## Research methodologies and guidelines

Guidelines for conducting ethical Pacific research have also been developed, particularly in the areas of health, education and government affairs (refer to further reading). Along with developments in conceptual frameworks, Pacific researchers are seeking to develop appropriate research methodologies. The Talanoa process is a good example of both a method and a methodology which uses formal or informal discussion in Pacific Island research. The Talanoa process is a data-gathering interviewing method which can be used in one-on-one interviews or focus group discussions, and is also a useful method/methodology to use across disciplines. Selina Tusitala Marsh gives an excellent example of how she has applied the Talanoa process in her article Teaching Pacific literature (see this issue of Mai Review).

More examples of conceptual frameworks, research methodologies and research guidelines in health, education and social sciences are listed below under further reading.

## Search tips and hints

When searching for additional information talking to researchers or experts in your topic area and identifying their publications and bibliographies is one good strategy. Keep in mind that different countries use different terms so it is a good idea to use multiple terms and do multiple searches. Compare results when searching for the following keywords in a library catalogue, database, or on the internet:

(pacific\* OR pasifika\* OR oceani\*) AND (framework\* OR guideline\* OR method\*)

- Use the truncation symbol \*, or ?, or \$ (different databases use different symbols) to find variations in word endings (e.g. method\* finds method, methods, methodology, methodologies)
- Add keywords from your topic, e.g. educat\*, health, develop\*, politic\*, govern\*
- Use different words e.g. research\*, worldview\*, epistemolog\*, paradigm\*, knowledge\*
- Search for a region if you want to be more specific e.g. Polynesia, Micronesia, Melanesia OR more specifically by country Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, etc. (also use the truncation symbol)
- Search for your keywords in the *subject heading* field as a useful way to limit your search e.g. *Pacific Islanders Research, Pacific Island Literature, Oceania Bibliography*.

## Future directions in Pacific research

Although there is a very significant body of work on the Pacific, most of it represents the perspectives and interpretations of outsiders or non Pacific peoples (Baba, Mahina, & Williams, 2004; Grover, 1984; Quanchi, 2006; Smith, 2004). The desire for Pacific indigenous interpretations of their own history, heritage and development is emerging as a significant movement in Pacific Studies and Pacific research (Helu-Thaman, 2008; Gegeo 2008).

## Further reading

### ***Conceptual frameworks and research models***

Health Models

Agnew, F., Pulotu-Endemann, F. K., Robinson, G., Suaalii-Sauni, T., Warren, H., Wheeler, A., Erick, M., Hingano, T. & Schmidt-Sopoaga, H. (2004). *Pacific models of mental health service delivery in New Zealand ("PMMHSD") project*. Auckland: Health Research Council of New Zealand.

#### Kakala Model

Helu-Thaman, K. (1988). *Ako and faiako: Educational concepts, cultural values and teacher role perceptions in Tonga*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of the South Pacific, Suva.

#### Vaka Model

Nelisi, L. (2004). *Ko e vaka fakaako he faiaoga Pasifika he moana Okalana: Teaching from the heart*. Unpublished MEd Research project, University of Auckland.

#### Tauhi Va/Teu le Va

Anae, M. (2008). Teu Le va: Theorising the importance of nurturing relationships in research praxis. *Women's Studies Journal. Special Issue: Pacific Knowledges*. Forthcoming.

Ka'ili, T. O. (2008). *Tauhi vā: Creating beauty through the art of sociospatial relations*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Washington.

### **Research methodologies**

Halapua, S. (2000). *Talanoa process: The case of Fiji*. Honolulu, HI: East West Centre.

Manu'atu, L. (2003). TalanoaMālie: Innovative reform through social dialogue in New Zealand. *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, 27(4) 39–41.

Otsuka, S. (2006). Talanoa research: Culturally appropriate research design in Fiji. *Proceedings of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) 2005 International Education Research Conference: Creative Dissent-Constructive Solutions*. Melbourne, Australia. Retrieved January 13 from, <http://www.aare.edu.au/05pap/ots05506.pdf>

Robinson, D., & Robinson, K. (2005). *Pacific ways of talk – hui and talanoa*. Unpublished research project for the New Zealand Institute for Economic Research. Retrieved January 13, 2010, from [http://scpi.org.nz/documents/Pacific\\_Ways\\_of\\_Talk.pdf](http://scpi.org.nz/documents/Pacific_Ways_of_Talk.pdf)

Vaiioleti, T. M. (2006). Talanoa research methodology: A developing position on Pacific research. *Waikato Journal of Education*, 12, 21–34.

### **Research guidelines**

Anae, M., Coxon, E., Mara, D., & Wendt-Samu, T. (2001). *Pasifika education research guidelines: Final report*. Wellington: Ministry of Education Research Division, Auckland UniServices. Retrieved January 13, 2010, from [http://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/tk/en/folklore/creative\\_heritage/docs/pasifika\\_education\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/tk/en/folklore/creative_heritage/docs/pasifika_education_guidelines.pdf)

Health Research Council of New Zealand. (2005). *Guidelines on Pacific health research* (3rd ed). Auckland: Health Research Council of New Zealand. Retrieved January 13, 2010, from, <http://www.hrc.govt.nz/assets/pdfs/publications/May%202005%20Pac%20Guidelines.pdf>

Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs. (2005). *Pacific consultation guidelines 2008*. Wellington: Ministry of

Pacific Island Affairs. Retrieved January 13, 2010, from,  
<http://www.mpia.govt.nz/resources/pdfs/resources-pacificconsultationguidelines.pdf>

Tiatia, J. (2008). *Pacific cultural competencies a literature review*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.  
Retrieved January 18, 2010, from <http://www.leva.co.nz/file/PDFs/pacific-cultural-competencies-may08.pdf>

### **Pacific Studies**

Baba, T. L., Mahina, O., Williams, N., & Nabobo-Baba, U. (2004). *Researching Pacific and indigenous peoples: Issues and perspectives*. Auckland: Centre for Pacific Studies, The University of Auckland.

Fairbairn-Dunlop, T. P. (2008). Reconnecting to our sea of islands: Pacific studies in the next decade  
*AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 4(1), 45–56.

Gegeo, D. W. (2008, April). Shifting paradigms in Pacific scholarship: Towards island-based methodologies, epistemologies and pedagogies. Paper presented at *Building Pacific Research Capacity and Scholarship Fono 2008*, Fale Pasifika, University of Auckland.

Grover, R. (1984). Preserving original Pacific source materials. *Archifacts: Bulletin of the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand*, 1984 December (4), 2–6.

Helu-Thaman, K. (2008, April). Challenges for Pacific research: A personal view. Keynote paper presented at *Building Pacific Research Capacity and Scholarship Fono 2008*, Fale Pasifika, University of Auckland.

Hviding, E. (2003). Between knowledges: Pacific studies and academic disciplines. *The Contemporary Pacific*, 15, 43–73. (See other articles in the special issue of this journal)

Quanchi, M. (2006). The imaging of Samoa in illustrated magazines and serial encyclopaedias in the early 20th-Century. *Journal of Pacific History*, 41(2), 207–217.

Smith, L. T. (2004). Building research capability in the Pacific, for the Pacific and by Pacific Peoples. T. L. Baba, O. Mahina, N. Williams, & U. Nabobo-Baba (Eds.), *Researching the Pacific and indigenous peoples: issues and perspectives* (pp. 4–16). Auckland: Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Auckland.

### **Author Notes**

The author thanks Jenny Hobson (Learning Services Librarian at the University of Auckland Library) for her valuable input and editorial assistance.

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