

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION & SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

#### **Statement of the Problem**

The present research examines, from a cross-cultural perspective, the major factors that are responsible for the considerable differences between the academic performances of ethnic Fijian students and their Indo-Fijian counterparts. This research focuses on cultural influences on academic performance, and in particular with these two ethnic groups, their cultural values, beliefs, and practices, with respect to formal education. The study represents an application and critique of theories of cultural influences on academic achievement. The theoretical perspective on cultural influences on academic performance is initially examined via a review of the relevant literature. The empirical research involves face-to-face interviews, a survey, and archival research (examination results and attendance records) in six racially integrated secondary schools, in both urban and rural areas in the Nadroga/Navosa Province of Fiji. The study focuses in particular, on one semi-urban ethnic Fijian secondary school where 37.5% of the school enrolments are boarders, with the rest from neighbouring ethnic Fijian villages. In addition to the collection of data from these institutions in 2004 and 2005, fieldwork was conducted in ethnic Fijian villages in this province.

#### **Research Questions**

Given my overall view as discussed above, this thesis is guided by the following five research questions:

1. Why do Indo-Fijian students generally have higher levels of academic achievement than their ethnic Fijian counterparts, despite the fact that the educational system has favoured ethnic Fijians? Examples of such affirmative action policies include: (1) there are a number of scholarship schemes reserved for ethnic Fijian students to complete their tertiary qualification; (2) ethnic Fijian tertiary-entry requirements are lower than those for Indo-Fijians; (3) allocating more funds to ethnic Fijian schools, than to Indo-Fijian and racially integrated schools; and (4) ethnic Fijian students being enrolled in ethnic Fijian school attend Form Seven without tuition fees, whereas ethnic Fijian students from racially-integrated schools, and Indo-Fijian students, pay seventh-form tuition fees.

Based on these questions, four further issues arise:

2. How are these educational differences related to child-rearing practices and attitudes/values?
3. How are ethnic differences in academic performances, influenced by school leadership and teacher expectations?
4. How do colonial policies reinforce ethnic differences in Fiji?
5. How do land-tenure issues affect differences in academic achievements?

Questions 4 and 5 have more political and historical factors involved. Research findings indicate that these two factors are just as significant as questions 1, 2 and 3. The British colonial policy during 1874-1970 reinforced ethnic differences, and established the rigid land-tenure system. These factors affected differences in academic achievements (see Chapters Two & Five).

My attempts to answer these questions include an informant-led inquiry, in order to examine each ethnic group's interpretations of educational achievements.

#### **Significance of the Study**

### ***Why Research in Fiji?***

Why was the research conducted in Fiji? The following are key factors in the decision:

Much cross-cultural research into cultural influences on academic achievement pays attention to the comparison between students from the West and those from the East, especially East-Asia. However, these cross-cultural investigations have major

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limitations and this often makes the West-East comparison very difficult (see further discussion in Chapter Three). By contrast, cross cultural investigations in Fiji can take advantage of the presence of a national education system that provides a large degree of uniformity. At all schools around the country, the same curricula, provided by the Ministry of Education, are used. Both ethnic groups take the same external examinations once a year and students generally take these examinations at the same time - usually at the end of the academic year. Both cultural groups, from all schools, use the same textbooks provided by the Ministry of Education. Both ethnic groups study school subjects in their second language (English), but at home they would usually speak their own mother tongue - Fijian dialects for ethnic Fijians, and the Hindi language for Indo-Fijians. Students normally have the same teachers for the same subjects, across both ethnic groups. Hence students' academic performances can vary, largely according to their own abilities for persistence, effort, hard work, and "luck", which may be more or less culturally influenced, and the orientation valued by teachers and within the schooling systems - matters such as leadership and management. Therefore, this large degree of uniformity helps investigate the research hypotheses as discussed below.

Furthermore, land-tenure issues and colonial policies have shaped ethnic differences in academic achievements. Therefore differences in academic performances can be measured largely by these factors. Despite colonial legacies which reinforced differences in academic achievement (see further discussion in Chapters Two, Five and Six), more ethnic Fijian students have attended racially integrated primary and second schools than ever, since Fiji became independent in 1970. For example, the present study indicates that approximately 40% of six racially integrated secondary schools' enrolments in the Nadroga/Navosa Province (i.e., Schools A, B, C, D, F & G) consist of ethnic Fijian students (see Table 44 in Chapter Five).

Ethnic Fijian students attend not only at ethnic Fijian schools but also Indo-Fijian managed secondary schools such as Schools A, B and D. More than 39% of these schools' enrolments consist of ethnic Fijian students. Even at Indo-Fijian religious secondary schools, such as Schools F and G, more than 37% of the schools' enrolments consist of ethnic Fijians. This school environment provides ethnic Fijian students with the opportunity to study with Indo-Fijian students in the same

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classroom. Ethnic Fijian students can learn the way Indo-Fijian students study and how they compete with each other (see further discussion in Chapter Two). However, many ethnic Fijian students are still under-achievers academically. For instance, more ethnic Fijian students in the Nadroga/Navosa Province leave school earlier than their Indo-Fijian counterparts (see Tables 54 & 55 Chapter Five).

This situation suggests that it is necessary to investigate the both ethnic groups' cultural values, beliefs and practices in affecting academic performance. In particular, students' socialisation processes and practices, such as their home environment, influencing their achievement need to be examined from a cross-cultural perspective.

### ***Scientific Merit of the Research***

The present study provides us with two different perspectives of learning about the different ways, interpretations and understandings placed on achievements in different cultures. The first of these perspectives is called “emic”. An “emic” type of analysis refers to findings that appear to be different across-cultures (intra-cultural differences and culture specific - see Matsumoto, 1994; Berry, 1969 & 1997). That is; emic is about the native’s point of view and the actors’ own understanding of the meaning of their actions/practices. “The emic is the level of meaningful contrasts within a particular language or culture” (Barnard, 2000, p. 114). From this perspective, we could learn more about the different ways of valuing formal education of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians, and the different interpretation of achievements as found in different cultures within Fiji.

The second perspective is called an “etic” perspective. This analysis refers to findings that appear to be consistent across different cultures (inter-cultural differences - see Harris, 1990; Matsumoto, 1994; Leff, 1999). That is; etic is about the analytical perspective of the anthropologist, the level of universals or the level of things which may be observed by the objective observers’ understanding gained independently of the actors own subjective meanings (Barnard, 2000). From this analysis, the research outcomes may assist educators and teachers in understanding factors influencing the dynamics of minority-group performances elsewhere.

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The emic-etic dichotomy was introduced into cultural anthropology by Harris (1990). However, this typology was first introduced by the linguist, Kenneth Pike (Pike, 1967; Headland, 1990). Pike derived these concepts from the linguistic distinction between phonetics and phonemics. Phonetics refers to the objective relationship between sounds, and phonemics refers to the objective relationship between the meaning of sounds (see Pike, 1943; Eriksen, 2001).

### ***Intended Outcomes & Benefits of the Research for Policy Implementations in Fiji***

The current special project for ethnic Fijian education: the Affirmative Action Programs (generally called the “Blueprint”) (see further discussion in Chapter Two), which is being undertaken by the Ministry of Education in Suva, have been implemented only since 2001, to reduce the “education gap” between the academic performances of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians for the long-term interests of the nation (although the first Affirmative Action Program in formal education started in the early 1970s - see White, 2001a). Leaders of both ethnic groups have acknowledged the problem of this “gap”, and argue that this is not an ideal situation for the long-term interests of both the ethnic groups, and of the country. The Affirmative Action Programs are funding policies whereby more public monies are allocated to ethnic Fijian schools in both urban and rural areas, to promote their facilities and resources, in order to improve their educational outcomes.

However, there has been unfairness for decades over different standards for tertiary scholarship allocations between these two ethnic groups, since many capable and hard-working students are, in practice, denied opportunities for learning. The relatively high failure- and attrition-rates of ethnic Fijian scholarship-holders at the tertiary level have fuelled this sentiment (Tavola, 2000c - see Chapter Two).

There are two main ironies of ethnic Fijian education in the view of many Indo-Fijians: (1) despite the fact that ethnic Fijian students receive more state assistance than their Indo-Fijian counterparts for educational purposes, the latter group generally continues to perform better than the former. Outcomes of ethnic Fijian education have

not improved nearly to the extent predicted. (2) While over half of all ethnic Fijian students attend racially-integrated schools, these ethnic Fijian students are left out by

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the Affirmative Action Policies, as the programs only allocate the government funds to ethnic Fijian schools. That is, the programs are not given on the basis of the composition of student rolls. Hence, it is difficult for these policies to achieve their objectives.

Based on the research findings, the present study suggests that the attitudes of ethnic Fijian parents need to change, in order for their children to achieve greater success. This is no simple matter, since it would involve fundamental re-adjustments to ethnic Fijian cultural-values and beliefs, in order to realise the changes that are necessary to release parents from some of their traditional obligations and commitments in *koro*, so that they may spend more time and money on their children's education (see Chapter Six).

### **Research Hypotheses**

The theoretical frameworks already established in the studies of cross-cultural influences on academic performance, regardless of age, gender and socio-economic differences, have helped guide the research findings. In particular, the research has a cross-cultural comparative perspective, and it looks closely at the academic performances of the two ethnic groups, and how these are related to their cultural values, beliefs and practices in respect of achievements. Most importantly, this study pays attention to how much cultural values and beliefs can influence one's thoughts and actions in education. In this regard, it is crucial to investigate child-rearing practices, as many comparative educationalists, and educational psychologists, believe that these processes and practices have a major impact on one's values and beliefs about achievements (Levinson & Holland, 1996; Gaine & George, 1999; Woolfolk, 2001).

The following hypothesis is proposed: cultural values and beliefs are key factors in explaining the ethnic differences. One of the most influential contexts in which individuals develop their own values and beliefs is their culture (Smith, 2000).

Cultural values and beliefs are normally internalised through a socialisation process (Eisenhart, 2001), especially in child-rearing practices (Bauman, 2000), and through interactions between individuals and their communities (Krause, Bochner &

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Duchesne, 2006). It should be noted that there are some individuals who do not achieve educationally well in their own culture. But these individuals may strive more in different cultural environments, after being to some extent re-socialised in their new cultural environments (Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987). For this reason, this thesis focuses on the values and beliefs of individuals, which are the basis for the different interpretations placed on achievements in different cultures (Maehr & McInerney, 2004). If this is the case, it is essential to examine how values and practices are related to individuals' performances and achievements in cross-cultural perspectives. In other words, what achievements are children culturally expected to value, via social support, especially from their trusted others: such as parents, guardians, siblings, relatives and elders? What cultural values and beliefs in education are major predictors of each ethnic group's academic "success" and "failure"?

In addition, the following factors are also examined, because these influence differences in academic achievement: (1) school leadership and teachers' expectations; (2) colonial policies; and (3) land-tenure issues.

## **Outline of the Dissertation**

Chapter Two provides the background to the present study; i.e. the contemporary demography, the educational system in Fiji, colonial influences on differences in the academic performances of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians, educational attainments of the two ethnic groups, from both historical and contemporary perspectives, and any geographical differences having an effect on academic performances.

Chapter Three reviews the literature with respect to cultural influences on academic achievement. It firstly discusses operational definitions for the concepts of culture and academic performance, and the overview concerning the relationship between one's cultural background and achievements. This chapter also includes a literature review of research conducted in Fiji over the last three decades: Part 1 focuses on sociocultural factors that influence academic performance in Fiji, while Part 2 focuses on institutional factors, Part 3 focuses on structural factors and Part 4 discusses psychological factors.

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Chapter Four includes aspects of the research design. Chapter Five analyses the data gathered regarding the academic performances of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians in the Nadroga/Navosa Province (characteristics of seven secondary schools in the province where I conducted my fieldwork, and the level of academic achievements of the two ethnic groups from these schools). Based on the research findings, this chapter then discusses major influences on academic performance such as the effect of the school leadership, and of teachers' expectations on ethnic differences in academic performance. Colonial legacies, such as the land-tenure system, which reinforce ethnic differences in academic achievements, are also treated. These comprise the priorities given to academic achievements in both ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian cultures. Other factors examined are cultural values, beliefs, and practices regarding formal education, socialisation influences such as social interests, social expectations, peer pressure, social conformity, social support, (like home environment), parental involvement in the children's formal education, aspirations, motivation, students' expectations, and time and financial management.

The final chapter (Chapter Six) outlines my conclusions and discusses the implications of my research regarding cultural influences on educational achievement, its limitations, and its recommendations for future research and policy implementations.

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter describes contexts of the present study: (1) geographical location; (2) the population; (3) the education system; (4) colonial influences on ethnic differences; and (5) differences in academic performance.

#### **The Regional Context**

##### ***Geographical Location of the Fiji Islands***

Fiji is one of the island groups in the south-west Pacific Ocean, approximately two-thirds of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand (The World Fact Book, 2005). The country is located between 175 degrees and 177 degrees West longitude and, between 15 degrees and 22 degrees South latitude, and about 2,720 kilometres north-east of Sydney in Australia, and immediately west of the International Dateline (White, 1997). The climate is tropical and humid, with only slight seasonal temperature

variations. Total land area is 18,270 square kilometres (slightly smaller than the State of New Jersey in the United States of America). Fiji comprises approximately 332 islands, of which approximately 110 are inhabited (The World Fact Book, 2005), most of which comprise mountains of volcanic origin surrounded by reefs (a very large sea area, estimated to be approximately 1,290,000 kilometres square) (Kearney, 1980). These islands include two major islands called Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, which together make up about 80% of the archipelago's land area (i.e., 14,616 square kilometres).

Viti Levu literally means "Great/Large Fiji" in the ethnic Fijian language, and it is the largest island of the country, approximately 10,426 square kilometres in size, about 50% of the archipelago's land area (White, 1997). Viti Levu has over 75% (670,015 people in July 2005) of the country's population (The World Fact Book, 2005). Most of the population live along the coastal fringe, or close to the river deltas, valleys of

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the rural areas, and the urban areas - such as Suva, Nadi, Lautoka, and Labasa which is located in Vanua Levu.

Viti Levu is the country's major industrial island. Tourism represents a major source of revenue, comprising approximately 30% of foreign-exchange earnings (White, 1997). Numerous resorts are located along coastal Viti Levu and the southern coast of Vanua Levu. Gold, coconut, oil, fish, timber, ginger, manufactured products, cocoa, and other foreign exchange earners now exceed the income from sugar. Fiji's exports are dependent largely on fluctuations of world-market prices. Furthermore, remittances are now one of the leading sources of foreign exchange (see Norton, 2005).

Vanua Levu ("Big Land" in the ethnic Fijian language) makes up 30% of the land area (5,481 square kilometres) and is home for about 18% (160,803 people in July 2005) of the country's population (The World Fact Book, 2005).

### ***Population of Fiji***

The leading chiefs voluntarily ceded the islands to the British Crown, and the British ruled Fiji as a crown colony in 1874. The British Colonial Government of Fiji began to bring people from India to work on the sugar-cane plantations. This was the beginning of the ethnic divide between Indians and ethnic Fijians.

When the indenture labour system was abolished in 1920, over 60,000 labourers had been brought to Fiji, many of whom decided to settle (Lal, 1983). Because of natural increase and a small volume of further migration from India, Fiji rapidly became a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual nation (Mangubhai, 1995). As a result, by 1946, Indo-Fijians became the largest ethnic group in the country (see Table 1 below).

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Table 1: Population of Fiji, 1921-1946

Ethnic Group 1921

No. %

1936

No. %

1946

No. %

Ethnic Fijians 84,475 53.7 97,651 49.2 117,488 45.3

Indo-Fijians 60,634 38.5 85,002 42.8 120,063 46.2

Europeans 3,878 2.5 4,028 2.0 4,594 1.8

Part-Europeans 2,781 1.8 4,574 2.4 6,142 2.4

Chinese 910 0.6 1,751 0.9 2,105 0.8  
 Others 4,588 2.9 5,373 2.7 9,246 3.5  
 Total 157,266 100.0 198,379 100.0 259,638 100.0

Source: Gillion, K. L. (1977). *The Fiji Indians: Challenge to European Dominance 1920-1946*. Canberra: Australian National University.

The 1996 Population Census (Rakaseta, 1999) recorded that the Indo-Fijian population steadily increased with a 2.0% average annual growth rate between 1966 and 1976, and 1.8% growth rate between 1976 and 1986 (see Table 2 below). However, the population declined somewhat in the following decade, partly as a result of political instability and the emigration of Indo-Fijians following coups.

Table 2: Growth Rates for the Census Years 1966-1996 (By Percentage)

Year	1966-1976	1976-1986	1986-1996
Ethnic Fijians	2.5	2.4	1.8
Indo-Fijians	2.0	1.8	-0.3
Total	2.1	2.0	0.8

Source: Rakaseta, V. (1999). *Fiji Islands Population Profile based on 1996 Census: A Guide for Planners and Policy-Makers*. Noumea, New Caledonia: Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

In 1986, Indo-Fijians made up 49.0% of the country's total population (i.e., 715,375 people), while 46.0% were ethnic Fijians and 5.0% other ethnic groups, such as Europeans, part-Europeans, Chinese, and other Pacific Islanders (Navunisaravi, 1988). In the following year, when the first coup was brought about, the population comprised approximately 47% Indo-Fijians, 45% ethnic Fijians and 8% other groups (Lawson, 1993).

With the growth of numbers in the Indo-Fijian population, the Labour-Federation coalition favoured by Indo-Fijians won the 1987 elections. A government with an Indo-Fijian dominated back-bench led by Prime Minister Dr. Timoci Bavadra was elected. In a cabinet of 14 members, 6 went to ethnic Fijians, 1 to a General Elector and 7 to Indo-Fijians (Premdas, 1995). Views presented in the local mass media,

12 stirred up racial antagonism. "Ethnic Fijians were told that the Bavadra government was a front for Indo-Fijian interests and that their immediate objective was to deprive ethnic Fijians of ownership and control of their land" (Premdas, 1995, p. 63). Land is crucial to ethnic Fijian culture (See Chapter Five). Exaggerated fears by ethnic Fijians (in particular, the fear of the loss of their land) led ethnic Fijians from rural communities to engage in massive street-demonstrations under the slogan; "Ethnic Fijians only to Lead Fiji!" (Premdas, 1995, p. 63). On 14 May 1987, Lt. Col. Rabuka, third-in-command of the Fijian Armed Forces, occupied Government Buildings in Suva. Prime Minister Bavadra and his government were evicted from office after 33 days in government, after Rabuka declared that the military had assumed power. Rabuka believed that only an ethnic Fijian-run government could protect ethnic Fijian interests. To this end, the military announced that "the old constitution was abrogated and a new one would be prepared to guarantee ethnic Fijian political paramountcy in perpetuity" (Premdas, 1995, p. 65). A new constitution was drafted to institutionalise Indo-Fijian, European and Chinese political inferiority (Lal, 1998a).

In the decade after the 1987 coup, the Indo-Fijian population as a proportion of the total population, slightly declined - by 0.3%. Their population had been decreasing year-by-year because of emigration between 1991 and 1996. 45.2% of all emigrants were Indo-Fijians (42.9% and 47.4% for males and females, respectively): 25,545

Indo-Fijians and 1,652 ethnic Fijians left the country, and a total of 4,700 residents emigrated each year during this period (Rakaseta, 1999).

Consequently, a decline of the Indo-Fijian population reduced the number of Indo-Fijian children. Total Indo-Fijian primary-school enrolments decreased by 16% between 1990 and 1999; there were 66,008 enrolled in 1990, but they decreased to 55,507 in 1999. By contrast, ethnic Fijian primary-school rolls increased by 1.3 times over the same period; there were 63,581 enrolled in 1990, but 82,238 in 1999 (Ministry of Education, 2000) (see Table 3 below).

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Table 3: School Enrolment in Fiji by Ethnicity, 1970-1999

Year Total Enrolment

Primary Secondary

Primary Roll

F. I. O.

Secondary Roll

F. I. O.

1970 121,374 15,965 49,102 65,004 7,268

(40%) (54%) (6%)

4,820 9,642 1,503

(31%) (60%) (9%)

1975 134,971 28,072 58,368 69,525 7,078

(43%) (52%) (5%)

9,330 16,827 1,915

(33%) (60%) (7%)

1980 131,072 34,134 56,682 67,517 6,873

(43%) (52%) (5%)

11,345 20,461 2,328

(33%) (60%) (7%)

1985 127,286 41,505 59,540 61,813 5,933

(47%) (49%) (4%)

16,964 21,588 2,953

(41%) (52%) (7%)

1990 135,925 53,235 63,581 66,008 6,336

(47%) (49%) (4%)

21,758 27,689 3,788

(41%) (52%) (7%)

1995 145,147 68,278 74,934 63,379 6,834

(52%) (44%) (4%)

31,060 33,392 3,826

(46%) (49%) (5%)

1999 144,284 68,229 82,238 55,507 6,539

(57%) (38%) (5%)

33,017 31,969 3,253

(48%) (47%) (5%)

2000 142,621 68,129 N/A N/A N/A 33,104 32,180 3,565

(49%) (47%) (4%)

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands*. Suva: Ministry of Education.

**Notes:**

- F. denotes Ethnic Fijians.
- I. denotes Indo-Fijians.
- O. denotes Other Ethnic Groups.

In addition, birth rates amongst Indo-Fijians fell. According to the 1996 Census

(Rakasetia, 1999), rural Indo-Fijian women had, on average, between 2 and 3 children, compared with between 4 and 5 children for their ethnic Fijian counterparts. Urban Indo-Fijian women averaged between 2 and 3 children, as compared with between 3 and 4 for their ethnic Fijian peers. Consequently, with falling birth rates, the proportion of Indo-Fijian schoolchildren has been reduced.

Furthermore, the Indo-Fijian dominated Labour Party (i.e., 30 Indo-Fijian and 7 ethnic Fijian members of parliament) won the general election in 1999 with 33.3% of the votes compared to 21% votes of the predominantly ethnic-Fijian government party - the Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei (SVT) - led by the 1987 coup leader, Sitiveni Rabuka (see Lal, 2000). The Labour Party's victory gave birth to the country's first Indo-Fijian Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhry. Despite the fact that there were more ethnic Fijian than Indo-Fijian representatives in parliament (see Table 4 below), Chaudhry formed a predominantly ethnic Fijian cabinet: 11 ethnic Fijian ministers were selected including 2 ethnic Fijian deputy Prime Ministers, compared to 6 Indo-Fijian ministers containing the Finance and Law Ministers.

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Chaudhry's appointment of his cabinet members took general ethnic Fijian feelings towards the election results into consideration. Nonetheless, the 1999 election results created feelings of fear, tension and turbulence among many ethnic Fijian communities towards Indo-Fijian achievement not only in politics, but also in business and education (Williksen-Bakker, 2002).

Table 4: Ethnic Composition of House of Representatives after 1999 Elections

Party	Ethnic Fijian	Indo-Fijian	General	Rotuman	Total
FLP	7	30	N/A	N/A	37
SVT	8	N/A	N/A	N/A	8
FAP	12	N/A	N/A	N/A	12
PANU	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	4
VLV	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	3
UGP	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	2
Other	1	1	2	1	5
Total	35	31	4	1	71

Source: Norton, R. (2000). Understanding the Results of the 1999 Fiji Elections. In B. V. Lal (Ed.), *Fiji Before the Storm: Elections and the Politics of Development* (pp. 49-72). Canberra: Australian National University.

**Notes:**

- FLP denotes Fiji Labour Party.
- SVT denotes Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei.
- FAP denotes Fijian Association Party.
- PANU denotes National Unity.
- VLV denotes Veitokani ni Lewenivanua Vakaristo.
- UGP denotes United General Party.

Chaudhry's administration favoured Indo-Fijian interests with respect to the land policy. Indo-Fijian sugar cane farmers were to receive compensation after their lease on ethnic Fijian land expired (Williksen-Bakker, 2002). Hence, the grumbling became more widespread and more directed towards the Indo-Fijians. The sensitive *vanua* issue was mentioned more and more in the newspapers, due to ethnic Fijian's dissatisfaction with Chaudhry's policy towards *vanua* (Fraenkel, 2000). Fear, tension and turbulence among ethnic Fijian's were growing, and were further fuelled by some populist politicians. On 19 May 2000, the coup occurred (which was the third coup

occurred in Fiji since 1987). The coup leader, George Speight, and his armed men burst into the Parliament Complex in Suva and took 30 hostages for 57 days including the Prime Minister and cabinet ministers (Lal, 2000). With Speight's slogan, "Making politics for ethnic Fijians!" he demanded: (1) abolition of the 1997 Constitution; (2)

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resignation of the President, Ratu Kamisese Mara; (3) amnesty to himself and his men for their role in the coup. He defended his action by saying, "our action (the coup) is an expression of ethnic Fijian frustration and anger towards Indo-Fijian oriented society! We make strong objection against Indo-Fijian 'colonisation' over our land!" (Otsuka, 2000).

This third coup aggravated not only the financial condition but also the political and psychological condition of the nation. The impact of this coup on Fiji's economy was catastrophic, especially for the tourism and garment industries which both relied heavily on foreign markets. The number of tourists fell sharply and major trading partners' economic sanctions drastically restricted the country's exports. For example, for the first 15 days following the coup, the country lost nearly F\$20.00 million (AUD\$13.4 million) of tourism earnings, a decline of 60% in the daily average arrival to 455 people, compared with 1,281 arrivals in the same period in 1999. As a result, a reduction of F\$160 million (AUD\$107.2 million) was expected in government revenue; Fiji was losing F1.3 million (AUD\$870,000) a day. A 13% decline in the economy was projected - the biggest in Fiji's history. Inflation was also projected to rise by 5% by the end of the year 2000. More than 7,000 people lost their jobs. Within 10 weeks after the coup, of 6,410 people working for hotels and resorts, 1,407 lost their jobs (21.9%). In the same period, 156 people working for tour companies lost their jobs (8%), and 1,483 people out of 16,243 garment-workers had to leave their jobs (9%) (Niumataiwalu, 2000). Civil servants, such as teachers, suffered a 12 ½% reduction in their wages (Bacchus, 2000).

In 2003, the ethnic proportion of the population became as follows (see Table 5 below).

Table 5: Numbers and Percentages of Total Population in Fiji, 2003

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
Ethnic Fijians	447,982	54%
Indo-Fijians	324,078	39%
Others	60,386	7%
Total	832,466	100%

Source: Bureau of Statistics (2004). Population. Suva: Bureau of Statistics. Available on: [http://www.spc.int/prism/country/FJ/Stats/key20%stats/population/2.2popu\\_pdf](http://www.spc.int/prism/country/FJ/Stats/key20%stats/population/2.2popu_pdf).

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By the end of 2004, the Indo-Fijian population rate had dropped further to 37%. In July 2005, Fiji's total population was estimated at approximately 893,354 people (The Word Fact Book, 2005).

As a note, the gender ratio of ethnic Fijians was exactly the same as for Indo-Fijians at the end of 2000 (see Table 6 below).

Table 6: Numbers and Percentages of Ethnic Origin & Gender

Ethnicity	Male	Female
Ethnic Fijians	216,107 50.8	210,136 49.2

Indo-Fijians 168,851 50.8 163,452 49.2  
 Others 27,634 53.3 24,241 46.7  
 Total 415,592 51.3 397,827 48.7

Source: Bureau of Statistics (2000). Provisional Statistics. Suva: Bureau of Statistics.  
 Furthermore, other minority ethnic groups in Fiji in 1996 were as follows (see Table 7 below).

Table 7: Numbers and Percentages of Minority Ethnic Groups in Fiji, 1996

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage of Fiji's Minority Population	Percentage of Fiji's Total Population	Percentage of Change (1976-1996)
Part Europeans	11,685	27.4	1.5	+0.2
Other Pacific Islanders	10,463	24.5	1.3	+26.5
Rotumans	9,727	22.8	1.2	+18.7
Chinese	4,939	11.6	0.6	+2.8
Europeans	3,103	0.73	0.4	-14.9
Others	2,767	0.65	0.4	-36.2
Total	42,684	N/A	5.4	N/A

Source: Secretariat of the Pacific Community (1999). *Fiji Islands Population Profile based on 1996 Census: A Guide for Planners and Policy-Makers*. Suva: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

Fiji became a more multi-cultural society, despite the fact that the ethnic Fijian population had been increasing, and the Indo-Fijian population had been decreasing because of political instability since the first coup in 1987.

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### ***Ethnic Fijians***

Archeological records show that the first settlers in Fiji were Austronesian people who came from island groups of New Caledonia and Vanuatu some 3,500 years ago. The Fiji archipelago rests between the two major cultural-heritage areas of Melanesia in the western South-west Pacific and Polynesia in the east (White, 1997). As a result, the Fijians exhibit striking differences in language, social, and political organisation, and in physical features. Melanesian cultural influences are pronounced in western and interior Viti Levu and in the Yasawa Islands in the far west. Polynesian physical traits and cultural influences are most clearly in evidence in the eastern islands of Vanua Levu, and especially in the Lau island group (Norton, 1990). Fiji appears to have been main source of migration east, to the widely scattered Polynesian islands. The migrants sailed first to Samoa and Tonga and developed distinctive patterns of social and political organisation, marked by divine chiefs with large political domains. Economically, culturally, socially and politically, Fiji's eastern islands together with eastern and southern Viti Levu had become part of a regional system long before the Europeans arrived. During the colonial period, archipelago was divided into 14 - since increased to 15 provinces. "These provincial boundaries are still recognised, and

provincial origins remain a significant marker of identity for ethnic Fijians” (White, 1997, p. 25). Almost all ethnic Fijians are Christians, about 60% of them adhering to the Methodist church, which has become an integral part of ethnic Fijian culture (see Table 8 below).

Table 8: Religious Affiliation by Ethnicity, 2003

Religious Groups	Ethnic Fijians	Indo-Fijians	Others	Total
Methodist	261,972	5,432	13,224	280,628 (36.2%)
Catholic	52,163	3,520	13,637	69,320 (9%)
Other Christians	76,245	11,767	11,522	99,534 (13%)
Hindus	864	262,851	458	264,173 (34%)
Muslims	324	53,753	246	54,323 (7%)
Other or No Regions	2,007	1,495	3,597	7,099 (0.8%)
Total	393,575	338,818	42,684	775,077 (100%)

Source: Bureau of Statistics (2004). *Religion*. Suva: Bureau of Statistics.

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It is significant to note that it is rare for Indo-Fijians to inter-marry across different religious groups because of the differences in religious beliefs and customs, although friendships across such differences are common (see Lateef, 1987). However, it is common for ethnic Fijians to marry each other across different religious beliefs. These differences are not as great as the differences between the Hindus and the Muslims.

### ***Indo-Fijians***

As mentioned earlier, from 1879 to 1916, approximately 60,965 Indians - men and women - were brought to Fiji by the British government to meet the growing needs of the sugar-cane plantations (Scarr, 1984). Of these Indians, over 45,439 came from Calcutta and the rest mostly from Madras (Lal, 1983 & 1998b; Trnka, 2002). The Indians were assigned to British-owned estates on western Viti Levu and northern Vanua Levu. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR Co.) extended its operations to Fiji in 1880. It soon became the largest employer of the indentured labour in Fiji (Norton, 1990). Indian labourers served five-year contracts under very harsh working and living conditions. Europeans (mostly CSR Co.) often beat the Indians who did not meet work expectations, and sexual assaults on Indian women by them were common (White, 1997).

When the five-year contracts were completed, the Indian workers had two options: (1) they sign on for another five-year indenture, and then take passage back to India at their own expense (Norton, 1990); and (2) they take free passage back to India after serving two consecutive five year terms. But mostly, they chose to stay on in Fiji and work as wage labourers for the CSR Co. Even now many Indo-Fijians live in the sugar-cane belts, which are in Ra, Ba and Nadroga in Viti Levu, and Macuata in Vanua Levu. Many of these people continue to be involved in the sugar industry,

some of them as canecutters (White, 1997). The export of sugar is one of Fiji's major sources of foreign exchange, more than 25% of the total GDP (Keith-Reid, 2002). This industry directly and indirectly supports over 250,000 people, nearly one-third of the country's population. Some Indo-Fijians are also engaged in vegetable farming for markets, while others are shopkeepers, and some operate other small businesses such as garment factories, or are employed by the government (Norton, 1990). Indo-Fijians

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continue to dominate the retail trade. Indo-Fijians dominate as owners not only of small shops, but also of the larger supermarket and store chains (Ali, 1979; White, 1997; Trnka, 2002).

### **Education System in Fiji**

#### ***Historical Perspective***

Formal schooling was introduced to Fiji by the missionaries who first arrived in 1835. Missionary schools, where ethnic Fijian children learnt reading (mostly religious matters) and writing, began in rural villages from 1836, and the schools quickly became popular. By 1900, it became common for ethnic Fijian children to attend school since there were four-year schools in most villages. By 1939, over 564 pupils went to mission schools (Tavola, 1991). The English missionaries established a literacy scheme. As a result, the ethnic Fijian literacy rate in the vernacular increased rapidly, even ahead of the Indo-Fijian literacy rate. Some ethnic Fijians became teachers in other mission schools, where they taught reading and writing in the vernacular, and arithmetic and scripture. In 1847, the New Testament was translated into the ethnic Fijian language (Government of Fiji, 1964). When the Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, visited ethnic Fijian schools in 1877, he was very impressed by their efficiency. He said, "A very large proportion of the natives can read and write and the amount of native correspondence would greatly surprise those who are inclined to sneer at native progress" (Government of Fiji, 1964, p. 1). In 1879, the Education Ordinance provided for the establishment of public schools, but it was not until 1939 that the first secondary education was provided for ethnic Fijians. In 1939, the Queen Victoria Memorial School (generally called QVS) was regarded as a secondary school for ethnic Fijian boys (the school was established in 1906), although its pupils had not completed a primary course beforehand. In the same year, the Marist Brothers' Secondary School (unassisted) in Suva accepted pupils, regardless of ethnic background, and prepared them for the Entrance Examinations of the University of New Zealand and the Cambridge Junior Examinations (Government of Fiji, 1939). In 1924, the New Zealand Education Department established a co-operative scheme to recruit teachers for service in Fiji, because of Fiji's difficulties in recruiting teachers from England (Government of Fiji, 1964). This system, which used the same syllabus,

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textbooks, examinations, and teachers, as in New Zealand, continued until the 1970s (Tavola, 1991). As a result, sixth formers (aged 17 years) used to sit for the New Zealand University Entrance (NZUE) Examinations until 1988. The examinations have been replaced with the Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examinations since 1989. Fifth formers (aged 16 years) completed the New Zealand School Certificate (NZSC) Examinations until 1988, but there are no external examinations for this form at present. However, this Western type of schooling was inconsistent with ethnic Fijian culture. Chapter Three discusses this issue in detail.

Prior to 1916, government exercised little control over education. In 1909, the first Education Commission was set up by the Governor, Sir Everard Thurn. Early in the

1900s, provincial schools were established for upper-primary education (mostly for boys). Most primary schools offered five grades and the provincial schools offered another three Grades. The provincial schools were organised and financed by ethnic Fijians through the colonial administration (Tavola, 1991). The Education Ordinance established the grant-in-aid scheme in 1916, as a result gross expenditure on education increased by over 12% from 1915 to 1925 (Government of Fiji, 1939). However, of 700 ethnic Fijian schools, scarcely more than 32 received grant-in-aid, with an average of approximately AU\$300 each by 1929 (Tavola, 1991). By contrast, until the late 1920s, little progress was made in the provision of education for Indo-Fijian children for the following reasons: (1) The absence of Indo-Fijian village organisation; (2) the religious and linguistic differences in many Indo-Fijian communities; (3) the engagement of Indo-Fijian children on farm and domestic duties, which did not give the educational opportunities for girls. As a result, many more ethnic Fijians were attending school than Indo-Fijians in the 1920s: the percentage of school-age population attending school was 91% for Europeans, 80% for ethnic Fijians and 17% for Indo-Fijians (Tavola, 1991). The dropout rate among Indo-Fijian children was higher than that of ethnic Fijians, despite the fact that the total number of Indo-Fijian primary schools had increased by the mid-1930s. Approximately 39% of Indo-Fijian children dropped out in the first year of schooling, compared with 34% amongst ethnic Fijians (Tavola, 1991). Very few schools provided education beyond the fourth or fifth grade because of a lack of qualified

21 teachers. Hence, the educational opportunity for ethnic Fijian children (boys and girls) outstripped their Indo-Fijian peers in the 1930s (see Table 9 below).

Table 9: Educational Provision for Children by Ethnicity & Gender (Number)

Ethnicity 1934

Male Female

1935

Male Female

1936

Male Female

1937

Male Female

1938

Male Female

Ethnic Fijians 8,015 5,377 8,823 6,386 8,972 6,597 9,474 7,014 10,914 8,666

Indo-Fijians 3,882 1,183 4,130 1,371 4,164 1,467 5,022 1,916 5,643 2,325

Total 11,897 6,560 12,953 7,757 13,136 8,064 14,496 8,930 16,557 10,991

% of

population

10.06 10.97 11.30 12.18 13.93

Source: Government of Fiji (1939). *Report for the Year 1939: Legislative Council of Fiji Council Paper No. 27 of 1938*. Suva: Department of Education.

The Methodist Mission and the Marist Brothers started the first Indo-Fijian schools in 1898. However, the government did not support Indo-Fijian education at all until 1916 (Tavola, 1991). In fact, in 1914, scarcely more than 1% of the colony's revenue was spent on education (Whitehead, 1981). By 1916, slowly, locally elected committees and organisations, such as Muslims, Anglican religious groups, the Arya Samaj, Sanatan Dharm and Sarmarga Ikya Sangam, had been establishing Indo-Fijian

schools (Government of Fiji, 1964; Kelly, 1991). The Arya Samai and the Santan Dharm were mainly for North Indians and the Then India Sarmarga Ikya and Sangam were for South Indians. Although there were approximately 14,000 Indo-Fijian children of school age, only 2,485 were attending school. The gender ratio of these Indo-Fijian schools was 87% boys and 13% girls. Traditionally, boys have been more involved in formal education than girls in Indo-Fijian society (see Chapter Three). “The Methodist Church provided its own teacher-training institute and established a technical training school, an agricultural school, and boarding schools for female students by the 1920s” (Tavola, 1991, p. 16). But, when more than 600 mission schools were handed over to local committees by 1931, the schools faced financial, staffing and facility problems (Hopkin, 1977). These local committee members were barely literate themselves and unskilled in management of schools, so that the number of mission schools declined. There were 1,046 mission schools and 17,695 enrolments in 1909, but by 1925, the numbers declined to 684 schools and 16,473 enrolments. In 1934, only 24 mission schools were operating with a mere 2,000 enrolments (Mann, 1935).

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In the 1930s however, because of their leaders’ pressure in the Legislative Council, Indo-Fijians received more grant-in-aid from the government than ethnic Fijians. From 1931 to 1941, the government expenditure on education increased by 19% for European students, 7% for ethnic Fijians and 97% for Indo-Fijians (Tavola, 1991). Thus the quality of ethnic Fijian schools became poorer than that of Indo-Fijian schools, although more ethnic Fijians attended primary school than Indo-Fijians. Ethnic Fijians did not demand education. They accepted the colonial policy that education was for the chiefs’ children (see further discussion in the following section). Mostly, chiefs’ children had a greater access to education than normal people, and the chiefs did not demand that the government provided villagers with educational opportunities. “The education of chiefs was sponsored at the expense of the ethnic Fijian majority, creating intra-ethnic educational disparities based on rank.” (White, 2003, p. 357). This was greatly influenced by the colonial policy which played down ethnic Fijian interest in advancing education. There were colonial influences on ethnic Fijian values and attitudes toward educating their children. Furthermore, the ethnic Fijian communal way-of-living affected their responses to educational participation: there was no place for individual competitiveness in the ethnic Fijian life-style, which stressed solidarity and harmony. Individual services were required everywhere by the program of communal work (Deane, 1921). That is to say, the importance of personal investment in education had not been a high priority among ethnic Fijians; instead, maintaining communal solidarity had been heavily emphasised. Attitudes of loyalty and respect for one’s chief, and communal demands, still continue to be strongly maintained in many ethnic Fijian communities today, especially in rural villages. Even among so-called well-educated ethnic Fijians, cultural values and supporting communal activities and traditions are still preserved strongly (Ewins, 1998).

As a result of increased amount of government grant-in-aid to Indo-Fijian schools, and with Indo-Fijians valuing of education, Indo-Fijians surpassed ethnic Fijians in their educational performance during the 1940s: more Indo-Fijian children enrolled in secondary schools than their ethnic Fijian counterparts. In 1946, 203 Indo-Fijian boys enrolled in secondary schools compared with their 187 ethnic Fijian counterparts. Although only 8 Indo-Fijian girls attended secondary schools, this was double the

ethnic Fijian girls at secondary school. Nine years later in 1955, 1,104 Indo-Fijian boys attended secondary school compared with their 502 ethnic Fijian counterparts. Male Indo-Fijian enrolments increased by 5.4 times, during this period of time (1946-1955) (Tavola, 1991). In 1958, 17.4% of the total Indo-Fijian population was attending school full-time. By 1960, the figure had risen to 18.2% and in 1963 it was 19.2% (Government of Fiji, 1964). In 1960, 2,299 Indo-Fijian boys attended secondary school: 2.2 times more than their ethnic Fijian counterparts in the same year (1,042 ethnic Fijian enrolments). 912 Indo-Fijian girls enrolled at secondary school, which was nearly 1.5 times more than their ethnic Fijian counterparts (620 students). In 1963, girls comprised 44.9% of the total Indo-Fijian primary-school rolls compared with 41.3% in 1960 (Government of Fiji, 1964). In 1963, at both the primary- and post-primary levels, including technical, vocational, and teacher training courses, more Indo-Fijians enrolled than their ethnic Fijian peers (see Table 10 below).

Table 10: Enrolment in Primary & Post-Primary Schools by Ethnicity & Gender 1963

Ethnicity Primary

Male Female

Post-Primary

Male Female

Total

Male Female

Grand Total

Ethnic Fijians 19,004 17,266 1,471 972 20,475 18,238 38,713

Indo-Fijians 23,260 18,955 2,657 1,244 25,917 20,199 46,116

Total 42,264 36,221 4,128 2,216 46,392 38,437 84,829

Source: Government of Fiji (1964). *Report for the Year 1963: Legislative Council of Fiji Council Paper No. 40 of 1964*. Suva: Education Department.

Indo-Fijian students gained higher qualifications than their ethnic Fijian counterparts. More Indo-Fijian students were enrolled in all form levels of secondary education than their ethnic Fijian peers (see Table 11 below).

Table 11: Enrolment in Secondary School by Ethnicity & Gender 1963

Ethnicity Form 3

M. F.

Form 4

M. F.

Form 5

M. F.

Form 6

M. F.

Form 7

M. F.

Total

M. F.

Grand Total

E/F 340 348 388 410 79 50 80 23 25 12 912 843 1,755

Total 688 798 129 103 37 1,755 1,755

I/F 910 509 1,008 489 270 101 299 86 46 4 2,533 1,189 3,722

Total 1,419 1,497 371 385 50 3,722 3,722

Source: Government of Fiji (1964). *Report for the Year 1963: Legislative Council of Fiji Council Paper No. 40 of 1964*. Suva: Education Department.

**Notes:**

- E/F denotes ethnic Fijians. I/F denotes Indo-Fijians.
- M denotes males. F denotes females.

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Significantly, the gender difference between the retention rates among ethnic Fijians was smaller than that of Indo-Fijians. Total figure indicated that the “gap” between ethnic Fijian boys and girls was only 69 compared to 1,344 among Indo-Fijians. Indo-Fijian culture valued males in education more highly than the ethnic Fijian culture did.

By 1968, more than twice-as-many Indo-Fijians attended secondary school as in 1960 (see Table 12 below).

Table 12: Enrolment in Primary and Secondary Schools by Ethnicity & Gender 1968

Ethnicity Primary School

Male Female

Secondary School

Male Female

Grant Total

Ethnic Fijians 23,767 21,637 2,276 1,802 49,482

Indo-Fijians 30,823 27,758 4,709 2,867 66,125

Total 54,590 49,395 6,985 4,669 115,607

Source: Government of Fiji (1969). *Education for Modern Fiji: Report of the Fiji Education Commission of 1969*. Suva: Government Printer.

The proportion of children aged from 6 to 13 in 1968 was: 88.7% and 82.3% for ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians respectively (see Government of Fiji, 1969). However, the total enrolments in both primary school and secondary school levels amongst Indo-Fijians in 1968 were higher than those of ethnic Fijians (see Table 11 above). 58,581 Indo-Fijian pupils attended primary school in 1968 compared with their 45,404 ethnic Fijian counterparts. At secondary schools, 7,576 Indo-Fijian students attended, while only 4,078 of their ethnic Fijian peers did.

It is important to note that more ethnic Fijians lived in rural areas than Indo-Fijians (as a note, around 50% of both ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians currently live in urban areas, see Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Generally speaking, there are more traditional and communal obligations and commitments for rural ethnic Fijians than for urban Fijians. People in rural areas are more committed to their village activities as compared with those from urban areas. People often involve children, especially secondary-school-aged children, in their community activities. Adolescents are often expected to help adults with preparing functions, cooking, washing, and pouring grog for participants in the ceremonies. Furthermore, parents are often absent from home when children come home from school, because of their commitments with village

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activities. Children typically do not have anyone to supervise their schoolwork at home. They have freedom to choose what to do, and so are often distracted from homework (see Chapter Five).

In the 1970s, enrolments increased markedly, especially in secondary education, although primary enrolments decreased, largely because of the declining birthrate. Secondary enrolments increased by approximately 150%, and female students outnumbered the males (Tavola, 1991). In 1971, there were 73 secondary schools

around the nation (9,777 male and 8,317 female enrolments). By 1981, the number of secondary schools had increased to 136 (22,693 male and 23,150 female enrolments) (Government of Fiji, 1985).

In the 1970s, education became an important political agenda. One of the major issues was about the disparities in the academic attainments of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians: in particular, Indo-Fijian “success” at external examinations at secondary school, contrasted with ethnic Fijian under-achievement. At the tertiary level, over 40% of first-year ethnic Fijian students failed their foundation courses at the University of South Pacific (USP) in 1977, by contrast, only 9% of students of other ethnic groups failed this course (Tavola, 1991). The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Fijian Affairs suggested that a new educational policy should be introduced to assist ethnic Fijian students to “catch up” by having a certain standard of education. It was proposed that 50% of all tertiary scholarships should be allocated to ethnic Fijians and that the rest should go to other ethnic groups including Indo-Fijians. This “positive discrimination policy in education” made Indo-Fijians feel as if they were “second class citizens” of this country. The policy (normally called the “50/50 policy”) was introduced in 1975, and administered by the Ministry of Education. In 1977, the government decided to grant scholarships for the University of South Pacific foundation-year Science Program. Ethnic Fijians, who had passed the NZUE Examinations with at least 216 marks, obtained scholarships, while it was necessary for students of other ethnic groups such as Indo-Fijians to gain a minimum of 264 marks (White, 2001b). Despite this “positive discrimination policy”, more ethnic Fijian students failed the USP Foundation Program in 1977 than their Indo-Fijian counterparts (Sharma, 1997).

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In the 1980s therefore, the government put more stress on promoting ethnic Fijian education. In 1984, another “positive-discrimination policy” was funded by a special annual grant of F\$3.5 million (AUD\$2.34 million). A total of F\$17.5 million, (AUD\$11.7 million) for a five year period (1984-1988), was allocated to assist ethnic Fijian education. After the 1987 coup, more than F\$4.5 million (AUD\$3.0 million) was allocated to ethnic-Fijian education annually (Sharma, 1997). This money was reserved only for ethnic-Fijian schools and for ethnic Fijians in Indo-Fijian schools, and was used for upgrading school buildings, science laboratories, technical workshops and so on. During the period of 1984-1988, 1,643 local and overseas scholarships were awarded to ethnic Fijians (worth over F\$5.4 million/AUD\$3.62 million).

Under the Ministry of Education’s umbrella (using the same curricula and guidelines), the majority of schools (both primary and secondary) operated privately (see Table 13 below). In the 1980s, over 97% of schools were managed by the non-government bodies, mainly religious organisations like the Methodist Church, community committees, Hindu, and Muslim organisations. These empowered parents: they could send their children to the school which best matched their interest and preference (Tavola, 1991). The government supported schools with financial assistance such as grants-in-aid, but each individual school allocated the fund. This structure created a diversity of schools, which still remains, in respect of their racial composition, administration, management, leadership, and tuition fees.

Table 13: Types of Educational Institutions & Administering Authorities, 1986

Institution	Government	Non-Government	Total
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Primary	14	658	672
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Secondary 11 129 140

Technical &

Vocational Schools

3 37 40

Special Schools N/A 7 7

Teacher Training 1 2 3

Source: Government of Fiji (1988). *Ministry of Education Annual Report for the Year 1988: Parliament Paper No.40 of 1988*. Suva: Government Printer.

“In 1986 a policy of concentrating resources at one secondary school in each province, creating ‘centres of excellence’, was proposed” (Tavola, 1991, p. 50). The ethnic Fijian schools, which were selected for “centres of excellence”, received extra

support from the government. This policy still exists. For example, a purely ethnic Fijian secondary school in the Nadroga/Navosa Province, which was named one of the “centres of excellence”, received a total of F\$330,000 (AUD\$284,790) from the government in 2002 - F\$15,000 (AUD\$13,200) for textbooks and F\$60,000 (AUD\$52,800) for hostel upgrading, as the school had a boarding system (Kaisau, 2002). In addition, from 2005, schooling would be free for ethnic Fijian students from Class 1 (aged 6 years) to Form 7 (aged 18 years). In contrast, Indo-Fijians must pay Form 7 fees. Under the current “positive discrimination policy in education” (the “Affirmative Action Programs” or “Blueprint”), more financial aid has been granted but only to ethnic Fijian schools to upgrade their facilities. Indo-Fijian schools and racially-integrated schools (which include many ethnic Fijian students) are excluded from government care. In fact, more than half of the ethnic Fijian students attend either Indo-Fijian-run secondary schools, or other racially-integrated secondary schools at present, yet these students are not eligible for the Affirmative Action Programs.

Despite this discrimination policy, Indo-Fijian students have mostly performed better than their ethnic Fijian counterparts at both secondary and tertiary levels (see “Ethnic Differences in Academic Performance in Fiji” below). In addition, total school enrolments increased: from 1970 to 1999, the primary-school enrolments increased by approximately 18%, while the secondary enrolments increased by 327%. In 1970, the number of secondary-school students was just over 13% of the number of primaryschool students. By 1999, this had increased to 47%. This means that far more students now have access to secondary education than they had 30 years ago (see Table 3 above).

In the education system in Fiji today, some primary schools have 8 years of schooling, ending with Class 8, but some end at Class 6. The students who complete Class 6 progress to Form 1 of secondary education, and those who finish Class 8 continue to the Form 3 level (see Table 14 below).

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Table 14: Progression of School Classes & Forms

Age Year of

Schooling

Class Form External

Examinations

6 1 1

7 2 2

8 3 3

9 4 4

10 5 5

11 6 6 Fiji Intermediate  
Examinations

12 7 7 1

13 8 8 2 Fiji Eight Year  
Examinations

14 9 3

15 10 4 Fiji Junior Leaving  
Examinations

16 11 5

17 12 6 Fiji School Leaving  
Examinations

18 13 7 Fiji Seventh Form  
Examinations

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands*. Suva: Ministry of Education.

Furthermore, there are secondary schools called junior secondary-schools. The junior secondary-schools offer schooling only up to Form 4. Students who complete junior secondary-school can transfer to Form 5 at secondary schools which offer up to Form 6 or 7. The first junior secondary-schools were established from the early 1970s to mid-1970s as a response to the 1969 Royal Commission Report. One of the major aims of establishing junior secondary-schools was to promote ethnic Fijian education, but, “in the 1980s, many junior secondary-schools were regarded as ‘inferior’ to complete secondary schools” (White, 2003, pp. 362-363). Most of these junior secondary-schools were located in rural areas and had practical orientations. Hence, by the late 1970s, many junior secondary-schools had added Form 5 and 6, and so became full secondary-schools (Tavola, 1991). By the end of 2003, there were only 20 junior secondary-schools (13%) out of 155 secondary schools across the nation. There are five external examinations organised by the Ministry of Education: the Fiji Intermediate Examinations (normally called FIEE) for Class 6 students (aged 11 years), the Fiji Eight Year Examinations (FEYE) for Class 8 students (aged 13 years). At the secondary level, Form 4 students (aged 15 years) sit for the Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC) Examinations and Form 6 sit for the Fiji School Leaving Certificate

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(FSLC) Examinations. At the Form 7 level, the Fiji Form Seven Examinations (FFSE) are conducted for 18-year-old candidates at the end of the academic year. In order to pass each subject, students are required to receive at least 50 marks out of 100. Those who pass the external examinations can go up to the next form level. Those who fail the examinations can repeat the same form the following year and try for the examinations again.

In 2003, the Ministry of Education selected 50 secondary schools from around the country for the Ministry’s “pilot study” in a new assessment system for Form 4 students. Fourth formers sit for the FJC Examinations at the end of the academic year. Results of the examinations have determined whether students can continue at the Form 5 level or not. However, the new assessment system is that the FJC Examinations should be worth 50%, rather than 100%, and the rest (50%) should be internally-assessed at the third-form level. One of the major purposes of this new assessment system is that those who are not good at external written-examinations should be given their “second chance” by being assessed internally. A problem arises

with this new assessment system in that teachers' workloads increase, since they have to assess students' performances not only externally but also internally, i.e. when students were at the third-form level. However, many students and parents approve of this new assessment system. The Ministry of Education hopes that this new assessment system will reduce ethnic disparities in educational attainment, because, by the time of the FJC Examinations, a large number of ethnic Fijian students will have dropped out (see the retention rate below).

In conclusion, Indo-Fijians have put heavy emphasis on academic work at school. Under the government "positive discrimination policy in education", ethnic Fijian schools have received substantial financial support from the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, Indo-Fijian academic performance has continued to outstrip ethnic Fijian performance.

In addition, the British colonial policy reinforced ethnic differences in academic achievement. The next section discusses briefly effects of colonial legacies on differences in academic performance.

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### **Effects of the British Colonial Policy on Ethnic Differences in Academic Performance**

Nearly one century of British colonial policy in Fiji (1874-1970) has reinforced ethnic differences between ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians. As briefly discussed earlier, ethnic disparities were introduced by the British, when they ruled Fiji as a crown colony in 1874. The British governor, Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon, introduced Indian indentured labour for sugar-cane plantations to Fiji. Most ethnic Fijians were compelled to remain in villages as subsistence farmers. The recruitment of people from other Pacific Islands was very limited and costly. But the cost of transporting the Indian labourers was shared with the planters, who provided wages and housing. In 1879, the first Indians were brought to Fiji for sugar-cane plantation programs. Indo-Fijians had only one representative in colonial parliament from 1916 to 1929 (Norton, 1990), whereas ethnic Fijians had several representatives chosen by the governor from among leading chiefs. Europeans had several elected representatives from early 1900s.

Gordon established a number of important policies for labour and land. Previously, Gordon had served in other multi-racial countries such as New Brunswick, Trinidad and Mauritius, where he had learnt of the difficulties of cooperation among different races. So Gordon introduced the so-called "indirect rule" to Fiji. The policy separated an indigenous administration, which kept most ethnic Fijians in isolation from colonial politics and the modern economy. The colonial policy imposed great restrictions on ethnic Fijian emigration to urban areas from rural areas (White, 2003). This continued until 1967 and this law was abolished, as this did not work (Nayacakalou, 1975). As a result, 89% of ethnic Fijians were living in rural areas (i.e., 73% of ethnic Fijians were living in rural villages and a further 16% in rural areas outside villages) (Ward, 1987). This reinforced ethnic differences between the academic achievement of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians who were living in more urban areas (see further discussion in the "Geographical Differences" section in Chapter Two).

Gordon's "indirect rule" policy entrenched the unity of ethnic Fijian society, and supported ethnic-Fijian chiefly authority (the chief was representative of his

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community interests). The policy imposed a certain uniformity of ethnic Fijian culture

and enhanced the chief's position, especially in the eastern regions. As Norton (1990) argued, chiefs in the east had long been politically more powerful than those in the west.

Colonial rulers centralised a hierarchical ethnic Fijian society: each province had chiefs appointed with the title of *Roko Tui* (administrative officer). The title of *Roko Tui* originated from the heads of lineages in the eastern region. The province was divided into districts (*Tikina*) each headed by a chief (*Buli*). Each village appointed a headman (*Turaga-ni-koro*) to manage local affairs. The highest body of the ethnic Fijian society was the Great Council of Chiefs (*Bose Vaka Turaga*). The council organised the annual meeting, which *Roko Tui* from each province or *Toko* attended. They discussed local interests, and the decisions they made were subject to the approval of the Legislative Council. If approved, they became law. However, "it was not until the 1960s that ethnic Fijians were first given the opportunity to participate in government on an elective basis" (Lawson, 1991, p. 71).

In the 1910s, one of the most important chiefs, Ratu Sukuna, an Oxford graduate and a barrister in London, became the most dominant ethnic Fijian leader in the colonial period. Lawson (1991) argued:

Sukuna's attitude to the chiefly system and (ethnic) Fijian communal life, and to more open, democratic values and principles, reveals a thoroughgoing conservatism which has left its mark on (ethnic) Fijian consciousness" [pp. 111-112; ( ) is mine].

By the late 1940s, Sukuna and Governor Mitchell re-established "indirect rule" after a period of its decline. The new ethnic-Fijian administration resisted ethnic Fijians becoming more democratic and individualistic. In fact, the status, authority and influence of chiefs, in particular those from the East, was retained in its politics and administration. The British colonial policy and Sukuna's administration encouraged ethnic Fijians' efforts to preserve their culture, traditions, and customs strongly. In the name of "protecting" indigenous interests, the colonial policy held ethnic Fijians "captive" in their community. "The interests of the Fijian race were safeguarded and a guarantee given that Fiji was to be preserved and kept as a Fijian country for all time"

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(Lawson, 1991, p. 59). The colonial rulers kept ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians segregated. Every step was taken to ensure these two ethnic groups did not mix and mingle and this was achieved by placing restrictions on Indo-Fijian settlements away from ethnic Fijian villages and educating children at schools segregated on racial lines (Nandan & Alam, 2005).

Sukuna's view towards ethnic Fijian education was biased in favour of the chiefs' interests. The colonial government provided chiefs' sons with a selective education commensurate with their high rank (White, 2003). Chiefs' sons had access to a selective form of education with an academic curriculum and English- Language instruction. The Council of Chiefs requested more academically oriented schools for chiefs' sons. As a result, a very academically oriented upper primary boarding school, Queen Victoria School, was founded in 1906 (see the previous section in the present chapter). The school admitted only male students with a chiefly background. The school was recognised as the most prestigious school in the country.

On the other hand, agricultural and vocational education was provided for children with a non-chiefly background. Sukuna believed that education should train boys to become good farmers, mechanics, boat-builders, and acquire handicraft-skills. For girls, education was about acquiring the practical knowledge of domestic duties:

home-cleaning, cooking, washing, sewing, and nursing (Scarr, 1982). Sukuna emphasised the importance of agricultural and vocational education for children with a non-chiefly background. Most ethnic Fijian leaders agreed with Sukuna that an agricultural education was most suitable for an indigenous population, and that this would encourage ethnic Fijians to retain control over most of their land. Therefore, the majority of ethnic Fijian children (i.e., those with a non-chiefly background) did not have access to academically oriented schooling. In fact, under the Sukuna regime, there was a strict policy of sending children to ethnic Fijian schools (mostly District schools). According to the ethnic Fijian regulations made by the Fijian Affairs Board (FAB):

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Every child between the ages of five and fourteen shall attend school and any parent or guardian who without just cause refuses or neglects to keep his child in regular attendance at school shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding ten pounds and in default to imprisonment for any period not exceeding two months (Government of Fiji, 1948, p. 168).

However, the standard of education at District schools was very low - over 51% of the children were in Classes 1 and 2; 73% in Classes 3 and under, 89% in Classes 4 and under. Ethnic Fijian children receiving primary education in District schools did not reach on the average a standard of Class 2 (White, 2003). District Officers were solely responsible for staffing their respective schools and ethnic Fijian parents had minimal input in assessing the qualifications of teaching staff. Hence, poor supervision characterised the typical District schools. District schools, especially those in rural areas where most ethnic Fijian children attended, were being identified as “substandard” (White, 2003).

Consequently, the Colonial policy created intra-ethnic educational disparities based on rank between children with a chiefly background and those with a non-chiefly background. The Colonial policy also reinforced inter-ethnic educational disparities between ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians.

Indo-Fijians demanded an academic curriculum and English language instruction (see previous discussions in this chapter). Indo-Fijians believed that an academic formal education would be a vehicle for them to gain access to the civil service and professional employment. That is; Indo-Fijians saw education as the opportunity to escape from farming and survive in the Western market economy. Indeed, many Indo-Fijians were critical of the incorporation of agricultural and vocational education curricula into the school system for their children. There was the notion among Indo-Fijians that they should have access to schools with an academic emphasis. They demanded for more schooling, the English language and academic curriculum. Indo-Fijian communities were increasingly regarding schools as avenues to raise their social and economic status in the country. Many Indo-Fijian communities preferred to maintain greater autonomy of their schools from the central government to ensure that an academic curriculum would be promoted and the use of school facilities be preserved (White, 2003). Indo-Fijians increased access to formal schooling and striving to retain a level of autonomy over their schools. By the 1940s, Indo-Fijian

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schools were widely regarded as providing more years of schooling and higher standards of education than those of their ethnic Fijian counterparts (White, 2003). Under the “indirect rule”, ethnic Fijians hardly mixed at all with Indo-Fijians in school and at work. Ethnic Fijian children went to their own village schools. Indo-Fijian pupils attended Indo-Fijian-run schools. This separate system not only

reinforced ethnic differences, but also sheltered them from “competition”. A male ethnic Fijian teacher highlighted this difference when recalling his unusual experience of enrolling in an Indo-Fijian school:

I attended Indo-Fijian primary and secondary schools. I had something to learn there, which I really liked and that was competition. I was so fortunate to learn individual competition. In the ethnic Fijian village, everything has to be done by a group (Interview SET/1).

The colonial policy did not give the opportunity for ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians to study together and compete with each other in the same learning school-environment. Ethnic Fijian students from racially-integrated schools generally tended to be influenced by the academic performances of other ethnic groups within the school, including Indo-Fijian students who were usually good performers. Ethnic Fijian students often tried to compete with these culturally-different groups to excel academically. This was a strong encouragement for ethnic Fijian students to strive for academic excellence, and their overall performances often became better than those of ethnic Fijians from purely ethnic Fijian schools (see White, 2001b).

The colonial policy enhanced ethnic disparity and especially tended to keep ethnic Fijians behind in educational achievement. As Tavola (1991, p. 15) argued, “Ethnic Fijian education was largely ignored” by the colonial policy. As a result, by the 1930s, Indo-Fijian children’s academic results were superior to those of ethnic Fijians (see Mann, 1935; see the “Historical Background of Ethnic Differences in Academic Performance” section below). Mann (1935) noted that social and economic conditions as well as a school curriculum contributed to a major gap in performance between these two ethnic groups. White (2003) further argued that such disparities in academic achievement suggested group differentials in access to a “quality” education between ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian schools. Teachers at Indo-Fijian schools tended to be

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better trained than those from ethnic Fijian schools due to the high standards of teaching demanded by Indo-Fijian parents.

The British colonial policy has reinforced ethnic differences in educational attainment for ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians. The colonial legacies of protection to the ethnic Fijians, racial segregation and leasing land (see further discussion in Chapter Five) are very much alive today, and this affects ethnic disparities.

### **Ethnic Differences in Academic Performance in Fiji**

#### ***Academic Performance***

Academic performance largely relies on the value pupils and their parents place on education, that is on the degree to which students aspire to do well in school and attain higher levels of education (see Chen & Stevens, 1995). The present study examines differences between the results of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians in the FFSE, the FSLC Examinations and the FJC Examinations. Results of the following subjects in these examinations are considered: (1) English; (2) Mathematics; (3) Biology; (4) Chemistry; (5) Physics; (6) Geography; (7) History; (8) Accounting; and (9) Economics. The results of these subjects are significantly different between the two ethnic groups. In addition, results in both the external University Entrance Examinations (UEE) (1963-1968) and the New Zealand University Entrance (NZUE) Examinations (1966-1988), which were replaced by the FSLC Examinations in 1989, are discussed from a historical perspective.

This research also looks at retention rates, which differ between ethnic Fijian students and their Indo-Fijian peers. Ethnic Fijian secondary-schoolers are more likely to drop

out of school than their primary school counterparts. In particular, many ethnic Fijian students tend to drop out after the examinations mentioned above, especially the FSLC Examinations; nearly 80% of ethnic Fijian students dropped out after taking the FSLC Examinations in 2002, compared with 56% of Indo-Fijian students (Government of Fiji, 2003).

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The following section describes differences between the academic achievements of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians, from both a contemporary perspective and a historical perspective.

**Examination Results at the National Level**

At both upper-secondary (especially from Forms 5, 6 and 7) and tertiary levels, Indo-Fijian students often perform better than their ethnic Fijian counterparts.

Recent figures (Government of Fiji, 2003) indicate that of the Indo-Fijian candidates who sat for the FFSE in 2002, 7.1% received Grade 1 for the compulsory subject of English, contrasted with 2.2% for their ethnic Fijian counterparts. For Mathematics in the same examinations, 7.9% of Indo-Fijians received Grade 1, but only 0.4% of their ethnic Fijian counterparts did similarly (see Table 15 below).

Table 15: Fiji Form Seven Examination (FFSE) Results, 2002 per Subject by Ethnicity (per cent)

Subject	Total Number of Candidates	Sat			E.F. I.F.			Ethnic Fijians			Indo-Fijians		
		1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
English	1,265	2.2	6.4	11.5	20.1	7.1	8.6	13.9	29.6				
Mathematics	1,207	0.4	2.8	8.1	11.3	7.9	11.1	16.7	35.7				
Biology	388	2.6	3.8	9.8	16.2	9.1	12.5	19.7	41.3				
Chemistry	360	1.1	2.2	11.1	14.4	8.5	11.7	21.6	41.8				
Physics	246	0.8	4.9	15.8	21.5	14.4	17.0	20.4	41.8				
Geography	669	1.1	5.6	7.0	13.7	3.4	8.1	10.1	21.6				
History	334	1.8	1.5	8.3	11.6	10.8	N/A	N/A	10.8				
Accounting	363	0.3	2.5	4.1	6.9	6.7	12.2	13.0	31.9				
Economics	576	0.7	3.0	2.8	6.5	7.5	10.9	13.0	31.4				

Source: Government of Fiji (2003). *Ministry of Education Annual Report for the year 2002*. Government of Fiji, Suva: Parliamentary Paper No. 97 of 2003.

**Notes:**

- E.F. denotes Ethnic Fijians.
- I.F. denotes Indo-Fijians.
- Grade 1 denotes ‘excellent standard of achievement’ and approximately top 5% of all the candidates who sat for the Fiji Seventh Form Examinations in 2002.
- Grade 2 denotes ‘very high standard of achievement’ and top 8% of all the candidates.
- Grade 3 denotes ‘high standard of achievement’ and top 13%.

Likewise, in 1999, 66.1% of female Indo-Fijians passed English in the FSLC Examinations at the end of Form 6, as compared with 54.2% of their ethnic Fijian

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counterparts. Of male Indo-Fijians, 45.5% passed Mathematics in the same examinations, whereas 25.8% of male ethnic Fijians passed that subject. (see Tables

16 & 17 below - Ministry of Education, 2000).

Table 16: Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) by Ethnicity (Girls), 1999

Subject	No.	Sat	% pass	Mean
Indo-Fijians (Female)				
Ethnic Fijians (Female)				
No. Sat % Pass Mean				
English	3,080	66.1	55.3	2,834 54.2 51.3
Mathematics	3,067	35.3	46.6	2,769 19.6 40.4
Biology	1,282	52.4	52.1	1,258 31.4 44.2
Chemistry	1,181	55.5	52.6	1,001 35.2 43.4
Physics	474	54.4	53.5	328 28.7 43.6
Geography	1,220	55.8	50.9	1,424 46.6 48.1
History	71	64.8	54.3	560 43.2 47.4
Accounting	1,748	57.7	53.7	742 45.7 48.6
Economics	1,527	55.5	52.1	1,130 34.5 45.4

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands*. Suva: Ministry of Education.

Table 17: Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) by Ethnicity (Boys), 1999

Subject	No.	Sat	% Pass	Mean
Indo-Fijians (Male)				
Ethnic Fijians (Male)				
No. Sat % Pass Mean				
English	2,652	57.6	52.3	2,355 43.1 47.0
Mathematics	2,725	45.5	51.1	2,339 25.8 42.3
Biology	886	50.1	50.8	728 37.9 43.8
Chemistry	1,219	58.1	54.4	842 37.1 44.3
Physics	1,021	60.7	55.6	852 23.9 40.2
Geography	840	53.7	50.2	959 47.1 48.1
History	44	45.5	49.9	377 50.9 48.8
Accounting	1,092	60.0	55.3	405 49.1 47.4
Economics	1,009	57.6	53.2	670 33.4 45.5

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands*. Suva: Ministry of Education.

At the primary school level however, ethnic differences are modest. Indeed, ethnic Fijian students perform better than their Indo-Fijian counterparts in subjects such as English. The results of the FIEE in 1999 (Ministry of Education, 2000), for which students sat at the end of primary school Class 6 of primary education, revealed the following findings (see Tables 18 & 19 below).

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Table 18: Sample of 1999 Intermediate Examination Marks, by Ethnicity (Girls)

Subject
Ethnic Fijians (Female)

Sat Pass Pass (%)

Indo-Fijians

(Female)

Sat Pass Pass (%)

English Composition 639 628 98.2 476 455 95.5

English Comprehension 639 627 98.1 476 458 96.2

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands*. Suva, Fiji: Ministry of Education.

Table 19: Sample of 1999 Intermediate Examination Marks, by Ethnicity (Boys)

Subject

Ethnic Fijians

(Male)

Sat Pass Pass (%)

Indo-Fijians

(Male)

Sat Pass Pass (%)

English Composition 672 634 94.3 567 507 89.4

English Comprehension 672 630 93.7 567 529 93.2

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands*. Suva, Fiji: Ministry of Education.

At the final primary-school level, Class 8, academic performance slowly begins to favour Indo-Fijians. Class 8 students sit for the FEYE at the end of the academic year. The examinations were previously known as the Fiji Secondary Schools Entrance Examinations, and those who passed the examinations can enrol in Form 3 at a secondary school. For these examinations, the Indo-Fijian students' overall performances are slightly better than those of their ethnic Fijian counterparts in three major subjects: English, Mathematics and Basic Science (see Tables 20 & 21 below).

Table 20: Samples of Fiji Eight Year Examination (FEYE) Results by Ethnicity

(Girls), 1999

Subject

Ethnic Fijians

(Female)

Pass (%)

Indo-Fijians

(Female)

Pass (%)

English 91.8 88.9

Mathematics 88.3 89.1

Basic Science 85.0 90.2

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands*. Suva, Fiji: Ministry of Education.

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Table 21: Samples of Fiji Eight Year Examinations (FEYE) Results by Ethnicity

(Boys), 1999

Subject

Ethnic Fijians

(Male)

Pass (%)

Indo-Fijians

(Male)

Pass (%)

English 83.3 83.5

Mathematics 81.0 88.3

Basic Science 82.3 88.7

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands*. Suva, Fiji: Ministry of Education.

### **Retention Rate**

A larger number of ethnic-Fijian children leave school earlier than their Indo-Fijian counterparts (Puamau, 2002). The progress of the 1988 cohort over 13 years by ethnicity shows that, by Class 4 (aged 9 years) at primary school, starting in 1991, 16% of ethnic Fijian children had already dropped out of the school, while only 4.4% of Indo-Fijians had done so (Ministry of Education, 2000) (see Table 22 below).

Table 22: Progress of the 1988 Cohort for 13 Years by Ethnicity & Gender

Year

Class

Ethnic Fijians

Male Female Total

Indo-Fijians

Male Female Total

1988 Class 1 5,846 5,271 11,117 5,053 4,685 9,738

1989 Class 2 n.a. n.a. n.a. n.a. n.a. n.a.

1990 Class 3 n.a. n.a. n.a. n.a. n.a. n.a.

1991 Class 4 9,325 9,311

1992 Class 5 4,829 4,790 9,619 4,889 4,677 9,566

1993 Class 6 4,566 4,518 9,084 4,603 4,476 9,079

1994 Class 7/Form 1 4,486 4,508 8,994 4,479 4,487 8,966

1995 Class 8/Form 2 4,213 4,010 8,223 4,602 4,587 9,189

1996 Form 3 3,614 3,785 7,399 3,919 4,343 8,262

1997 Form 4 3,283 3,623 6,906 3,601 3,938 7,539

1998 Form 5 2,858 2,953 5,811 2,763 3,159 5,922

1999 Form 6 2,632 3,101 5,733 2,830 3,182 6,012

2000 Form 7 1,247 2,604

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands*. Suva: Ministry of Education.

When the final year (mostly Class 8) of primary schooling in many urban areas began in 1995, another 12% of ethnic Fijian children had dropped out, compared with 1.4% of Indo-Fijians who left school between Class 4 and Class 8 in the same period. By the time the FJC Examination were conducted at the end of Form 4 in 1997, 48% of ethnic Fijian students had dropped out. 52% of ethnic Fijians continued to Form 5

40 (aged 16 years), compared with 61% of Indo-Fijian counterparts who went on to that form level. 52% of ethnic Fijians reached Form 6 in 1999 (48% dropped out of the school before Form 6). Out of these 5,384 dropouts, 3,214 were male and 2,170 were female (dropout rates of 55% and 41%). Eventually, only 22% of ethnic-Fijian Sixthformers progressed to Form 7. That is to say, 11% of ethnic Fijians attained Form 7 and 89% had left school before that level. In particular, at the secondary level according to the Government of Fiji (2003), approximately 32% of the total enrolment of Indo-Fijian secondary took up Form 7 enrolment in 2002, while only 17% of their ethnic Fijian counterparts did so.

In conclusion, until the Class 6 primary-school level (the FEYE) the difference between the academic performances of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians is relatively modest, but ethnic-Fijian performance is slightly better than that of Indo-Fijians in some subjects such as English. At the final year of the primary school (Class 8) differences in academic achievements begin to widen (see results of the FEYE as described above). At secondary level, the Indo-Fijians' performance usually outstrips that of ethnic Fijians'. At Form 4 level, while the overall pass rates at the FJC Examinations are still similar, the Indo-Fijians are over-represented at the high end of the achievement distribution at these examinations, and beyond it (the FSLC Examinations and the FFSE). Furthermore, the data on the ethnic-Fijian retention rate clearly indicate that ethnic Fijians are more likely to drop out at secondary levels than at primary school levels (see Table 22 above).

***Historical Background of Ethnic Differences in Academic Performance***

This pattern of ethnic performance is of long standing. In 1933, Australian researchers selected a number of schools in Fiji for the purpose of investigating both ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian abilities in reading English, and Arithmetic (Mann, 1935).

Approximately 350 ethnic Fijian children and 300 Indo-Fijian children (aged between 11 years and 16 years) were tested. Children from all types of schools, such as Mission, Government, and Indo-Fijian-run schools, were included in the tests in order to get a comprehensive sample. The tests used were those standardised in the 1930s by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). These tests were standardised on the results of approximately 39,000 children from the whole of

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Australia. For cross-cultural application, the tests developed were free from cultural and language bias, and which produce no problems in administration, in order to be reliable and valid. In both standardised tests, ethnic Fijian primary-schoolers scored higher than their Indo-Fijian counterparts did. However at secondary level, Indo-Fijian children scored higher than their ethnic Fijian peers - in both tests.

Another significant fact is, in both Reading and Arithmetic tests, that “while the results of the Indo-Fijians are progressive from age group to age group, the results of ethnic Fijians at 16 years are not much better than those of the 11 year group” (Mann, 1935, p. 127). Indo-Fijian children typically get more involved in their studies when they reach their teens. Parents usually push them to study even harder at both home and school when they reach adolescence. Socialisation is most likely to influence the ethnic differences in academic achievement during the adolescent period. Chapter Five discusses this issue with more detail about students' home environments based on my fieldwork conducted in the Nadroga/Navosa Province in Fiji.

In the secondary school entrance examinations of 1963 (30 years after the above research), 38.4% of Indo-Fijians passed, but only 16.9% of their ethnic Fijian counterparts (Government of Fiji, 1964) (see Table 23 below).

Table 23: Secondary School Entrance Examination Results by Ethnicity (1961-1963)  
Year Ethnic Fijians

Year	Sat Passed	%
1961	1,395	12.9
1962	1,558	13.6
1963	1,698	16.9

Source: Government of Fiji (1964). *Report for the Year 1963: Legislative Council of*

*Fiji Council Paper No. 40 of 1964.* Suva: Education Department.

Also, Indo-Fijians outperformed the ethnic Fijians at upper-secondary level. In the NZUE Examination of 1963 for Form 6 students, a pass rate of 49.1% for Indo-Fijians, compared with only 25.8% for their ethnic Fijian counterparts (Whitehead, 1981) (see Table 24 below).

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Table 24: University Entrance Examination Results by Ethnicity (1963-1965)

Year Ethnic Fijians

Sat Passed %

Indo-Fijians

Sat Passed %

1963 31 8 25.8 59 29 49.1

1964 32 12 37.5 59 24 40.7

1965 41 17 41.5 68 45 66.2

Source: Annual Report of the Department of Education for 1963, 1964 & 1965.

*Fiji Annual Report.* London: H.M.S.O.

The higher Indo-Fijian pass rate at the NZUE Examinations was continuous between 1966 and 1988 (see Tables 25 & 26 below).

Table 25: New Zealand University Entrance (NZUE) Examination Results for Fiji Students (1966-1973)

Year Schools Presenting

Candidates [No.]

Ethnic Fijians

Sat Passed %

Ino-Fijians

Sat Passed %

1966 8 45 16 35.5 106 64 60.4

1967 12 88 22 25.0 200 78 39.0

1968 17 80 23 28.7 281 87 30.9

1969 17 131 44 33.6 404 132 32.7

1970 20 202 45 22.3 501 167 33.3

1971 23 224 55 24.6 585 146 25.0

1972 25 252 63 25.0 684 225 32.9

1973 26 202 58 28.7 709 232 32.7

Source: Annual Reports of the Ministry for Education, Youth and Sports (1972 & 1973). *Fiji Annual Reports.* London: H.M.S.O.

The mean pass-rate for Indo-Fijian students, who sat for the NZUE Examinations from 1966 to 1969, was 40.8% compared with 31.0% for their ethnic Fijians.

Table 26: Pass Rates of Students at the New Zealand University Entrance (NZUE) Examinations, 1970-1988

Year Ethnic Fijians Indo-Fijians

1970 22% 33%

1975 26% 33%

1980 20% 33%

1985 27% 35%

1988 23% 39%

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands.* Fiji: Ministry of Education.

From 1970 to 1988, the average pass rate among Indo-Fijian students who sat for the

NZUE Examinations was 34.6%, compared with 23.6% for ethnic Fijians.

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Ethnic disparities in academic achievement continued after the FSLC Examinations were introduced for sixth formers in 1989 (see Table 27 below).

Table 27: Results of Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examinations by Ethnicity, 1990-1995

Year	Ethnic Fijians	No.	Sat Passed	%
	Indo-Fijians			
		No.	Sat Passed	%
1990	3,366	42.2	4,006	56.5
1991	3,844	41.5	4,603	56.9
1992	4,317	35.1	4,894	61.4
1993	4,750	38.0	5,280	60.9
1994	5,012	37.9	5,340	61.6
1995	5,274	39.1	5,720	60.5

Source: Sharma, A. N. (1997). *Positive Discrimination Policy in Education: A Critical Review*. Unpublished Paper, Suva.

However, at the lower-secondary level, such as Form 4, ethnic differences in academic performance were modest with respect to students' pass rates between the late 1960s and the early 1970s (Whitehead, 1981) (see Table 28 below).

Table 28: Fiji Junior Certificate (SJC) Examination Results (1969-1973)

Year	Schools Presenting	Candidates [No.]	Ethnic Fijians	Sat Passed	%		
			Indo-Fijians				
				Sat Passed	%		
1969	55	1,534	917	59.8	2,965	1,865	62.9
1970	57	1,698	890	52.4	3,268	1,803	55.2
1971	65	1,942	1,055	54.3	3,598	2,180	60.6
1972	74	2,258	1,172	51.9	4,152	2,193	52.8
1973	84	2,938	1,405	47.8	5,037	2,447	48.6

Source: Annual Reports of the Ministry for Education, Youth and Sports (1972 & 1973). *Fiji Annual Reports*. London: H.M.S.O.

Nevertheless, Indo-Fijians were often over-represented at the high end of the achievement distribution at the FJC Examinations (Tavola, 1992) (see Table 29 below).

Table 29: Fiji Junior Certificate (FCJ) Examination Results in 1987 (per cent)

Grade	Indo-Fijians	Ethnic Fijians
A Grade	16.0	4.0
B Grade	30.0	27.0
C Grade	35.0	47.0
Pass Rate	80.9	78.3

Source: Tavola, H. (1992). Race is not the Only Issue in Education in Fiji. *Directions*, 14(2): 34-40.

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Moreover, completion rates by ethnic Fijians for tertiary qualifications tend to be low, despite the existence of a number of scholarship schemes reserved for ethnic Fijian

students. The Ministry of Fijian Affairs Scholarship Scheme for example, allocated a higher education award to 6,252 ethnic Fijians between 1984 and 1999, but only 39.4% of these students graduated from tertiary institutions (Robertson & Sutherland, 2001). As a note, the percentage of graduates from the Fiji College of Advanced Education (FCAE) (100%) was over four times that of the University of South Pacific (USP) (24.7%). However, the number of graduates from the former school was only 2 people, in comparison with 774 graduates from the latter school. Generally speaking, the smaller the sample is, the less reliable the result. (Burns, 1990). Hence, it could be suggested that ethnic Fijian under-achievement at the tertiary level is a consistent pattern across institutions over the fifteen-year period (see Table 30 below).

Table 30: Ministry of Fijian Affairs Tertiary Scholarships, 1984-1999

Institutions	Scholarships	Graduates	% Graduating
Overseas	526	319	60.7
University of South Pacific	3,133	774	24.7
Fiji Institute of Technology	2,369	1,220	51.5
Fiji School of Medicine	66	43	65.2
Fiji College of Agriculture	67	50	74.6
Corpus Christian Teachers' College*	20	12	60.0
Fiji College of Advanced Education **	2	2	100.0
Fulton College***	14	10	71.4
Pilot Training	55	36	65.5
Total	6,252	2,466	39.4

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands*. Suva: Ministry of Education.

**Notes:**

\* The Corpus Christian Teacher's College is a private Teachers' College.

\*\* The Fiji College of Advanced Education is a public teachers' college for secondary teaching.

\*\*\* The Fulton College is a private teachers' college for primary teaching.

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An analysis of selected 1994 USP units has shown that ethnic Fijian students were approximately three times as likely to fail as their Indo-Fijian counterparts (Narsey, 1994) (see Table 31 below).

Table 31: Performance in EC102 & EC203 at USP (per cent)

Unit	Ethnic Fijians	Grade A/B	Grade C	Fail
Ethnic Fijians				
Grade A/B				
Grade C				
Fail				

Indo-Fijians

Grade A/B Grade C Fail

EC102 6 57 37 16 71 13

EC203 43 40 17 80 15 5

Source: Narsey, W. (1994). *Fijian Academic Performance at University of South Pacific: Where are the Problems?* Unpublished paper, University of South Pacific, Suva.

Historically, high educational achievement by Indo-Fijians at the tertiary level has been continuous. For example, in 1968, out of 637 graduates at the University of South Pacific, 464 were Indo-Fijians (73%), 77 ethnic Fijians (12%), and 96 others (15%) (Gibbs, 1982). From 1976 to 1980, of the 82 Indo-Fijian students admitted to the Medical I Year, 63 (77%) passed their course. By contrast, of 64 ethnic Fijian students admitted, only 19 passed (30%) (Vasil, 1984).

Consequently, more Indo-Fijian graduates than their ethnic Fijian counterparts entered so-called "high" professions (Premdas, 1995) (see Table 32 below).

Table 32: Numbers Qualified in Selected Professions, 1958

Profession	Ethnic Fijians	Indo-Fijians	Europeans	Others	Total
------------	----------------	--------------	-----------	--------	-------

Lawyers	N/A	38	17	1	56
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Doctors	1	12	51	2	66
---------	---	----	----	---	----

Dentists	1	8	6	N/A	15
----------	---	---	---	-----	----

Total	2	58	74	3	137
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Source: Premdas, R. S. (1995). *Ethnic Conflict and Development: the Case of Fiji*. Aldershot, England: Avebury.

In conclusion, the higher the academic level, the higher scores Indo-Fijian children produce, relative to their ethnic Fijian peers. This trend is basically the same as scores in the current examinations gained by both Indo-Fijians and ethnic Fijians as described in the previous section. This is to say that ethnic Fijians at the primary level (up until Class 6) have generally performed slightly better than their Indo-Fijian counterparts, whereas Indo-Fijian performances at both the secondary and tertiary levels have usually outstripped their ethnic Fijian counterparts.

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### **Geographical Differences**

Of some significance, in regard to the lower achievements among ethnic Fijian students than their Indo-Fijian counterparts, is the fact that more Indo-Fijians live in urban areas, while ethnic Fijians more often retain strong ties with rural communities. Approximately 1.25 times more ethnic Fijians live in rural areas than Indo-Fijians do (Rakaseta, 1999). 60% of ethnic Fijians between 5 and 19 years of age group live in rural communities compared with 53.0% of Indo-Fijians of the same age group living in rural communities (although nearly 50% ethnic Fijians live in urban areas of late). This situation makes it even more difficult for ethnic Fijian children to perform well, since achieving academic standards in rural communities is generally lower than in urban areas (see Table 33 below).

Table 33: Results of Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examinations by Rural/Urban 1997-1999, Number of Candidates and Passes

Year	Urban	Rural	Total
------	-------	-------	-------

Sat Passed	Passed	%	
------------	--------	---	--

Rural			
-------	--	--	--

Sat Passed	Passed	%	
------------	--------	---	--

Total			
-------	--	--	--

	Sat	Passed	Passed %						
1997	7,645	4,845	63.4	3,979	952	23.93	11,624	5,797	49.87
1998	7,934	4,949	62.4	4,081	1,075	26.34	12,015	6,024	50.14
1999	8,423	4,902	58.2	3,028	1,327	45.83	11,451	6,229	54.50

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands*. Suva: Ministry of Education.

There are several factors that create this significant rural-urban gap. Firstly, poor infrastructure is characteristic of many rural areas. Some schools do not receive regular water supply, hence, they rely on sources such as bore holes, rivers, tanks, wells, and so on (Tavola, 2000a). Many rural secondary schools use sealed toilets and even pit ones. However, poor sanitation may cause some health problems among children.

In addition, many rural schools and houses have no electrical supply, thus teachers often have to go to towns to get their notes and test papers typed and photocopied, and children often find it difficult to complete their homework without lights. Schools are often located far from homes, and transportation services in rural areas are poor. Hence, children have to go to school on foot from a great distance each day. Many roads are not paved. Children struggle to walk considerable distances along muddy roads on rainy days. Therefore some children stay at boarding school. In 1999, 81

primary schools had 4,015 boarders (Tavola, 2000a). Facilities at many rural boarding schools, areas such as kitchens, dormitories and bathrooms, are often poor. Moreover, “90% of schools are unable to provide appropriate levels of nutrition” (Tavola, 2000a, p. 171), partly because of a lack of finance, and a lack of knowledge of good nutrition. Therefore students’ well-being is a serious issue.

Secondly, as Tavola (1992) has argued, communities in rural areas are less able to provide well-equipped schools (Ministry of Education, 2000) (see Table 34 below).

Table 34: Telephones in Schools

Classification of Schools

No. of Schools with Telephone

Urban Rural

No. of Schools relying on Radio Telephone

Urban Rural

No. of Schools Without Telephone

Urban Rural

Primary

Urban Rural

Secondary

Urban Rural

Primary

Secondary

Urban Rural

Urban Rural

Urban Rural

Urban Rural

Urban Rural

Urban Rural

Urban Rural

Urban Rural

Urban Rural

Urban Rural

Urban Rural

Urban Rural

Urban Rural

Primary	172	231	0	104	10	195
Secondary	75	60	0	8	0	11

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands*. Suva: Ministry of Education.

A lack of adequate educational materials, such as cardboard, crayons, computers, photocopiers and fax machines, and the poor quality of the necessary school facilities, such as tables, desks and chairs, often make teaching, learning, and liaison between school and the Ministry very difficult. These difficult teaching and learning

environments do not encourage teachers and students to work hard. Tavola (2000a) reported that a lack of basic teaching and learning resources is a source of frustration for many rural teachers and students. Veramau (1986) has suggested that these problems should be sorted out with better planning and budgeting by school administrations. This might lead to a base level of resources that inspires commitment and creates an environment more conducive to teaching and learning.

Many rural communities often are unable to raise sufficient funds to supplement government grants to maintain an “acceptable” standard of school quality. Rural communities are also expected to provide housing for teachers. This places an extra burden on rural schools. Moreover, school management committees control the finances of the schools. They handle the grants from government, and the money from fund-raising. However, they have a strong tendency not to maintain their schools well,

nor to provide properly resources like books – textbooks, library books and stationery - and they must pay for water, electricity, and telephone, as well as maintain the staff salaries - which they are required to do. In other words, the maintenance of their schools does not reach adequate standards. A further problem is that the mismanagement of school funds has been “endemic” in rural schools. This is also an indication of a lack of experience in finances, and a lack of knowledge of expectations about management.

Thirdly, rural teachers are less well qualified. Many rural secondary schools have a relatively high number of diploma holders, in their first- or second-year of teaching, whereas more than half of the numbers of teaching staff in urban schools are university graduates. 61.5% of the numbers of staff in the 23 urban secondary schools in 1999 are university graduates, compared with 40.5% of staff at 22 rural secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2000). Many teachers at ethnic Fijian schools in rural areas are newly-appointed grant-in-aid teachers who hold temporary positions. According to the Ministry of Education (2000), there were 1,077 grant-in-aid teachers in 1998 and 1,153 in 1999. Teachers often go to a rural school for their first appointment to gain a position in the teaching service, and then move to an urban school to secure a promotion (Tavola, 1991). However, the Ministry of Education has recently decreed that all graduates from the FCAE should serve their first three years at rural schools. At both primary and secondary levels, Indo-Fijian teachers are generally more qualified than their ethnic Fijian counterparts, although both ethnic groups had higher qualifications than those at primary schools (see Tables 35 & 36 below). But they are significantly under-represented at rural schools, especially secondary schools on the smaller islands.

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Table 35: Primary Teachers Classified by Qualifications, 1999

Qualifications Non-Government Schools

Ethnic Fijians Indo-Fijians

M. F. M. F.

Total

Ethnic Fijians Indo-Fijians

University Graduates

- Trained

- Untrained

7 11 24 11

N/A N/A N/A N/A

18 35  
 N/A N/A  
 Diplomates  
 - Trained  
 - Untrained  
 25 22 115 74  
 N/A 1 2 2  
 47 189  
 1 4  
 Completed Form 7  
 - Trained  
 - Untrained  
 175 198 327 328  
 2 2 3 4  
 373 755  
 4 7  
 Completed Form 6  
 - Trained  
 - Untrained  
 474 585 242 264  
 6 22 2 11  
 1,059 506  
 28 13  
 Completed Form 5  
 - Trained  
 - Untrained  
 243 43 N/A 265  
 1 3 8 7  
 286 265  
 4 15  
 Completed Form 4 and  
 Lower Forms  
 - Trained  
 - Untrained  
 108 303 58 164  
 1 6 30 9  
 411 222  
 6 39  
 Total 1,042 1,196 811 1,139 2,237 2,015  
 Grand Total 4,188 4,252

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands*. Suva: Ministry of Education.

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Table 36: Secondary Teachers Classified by Qualifications, 1999

Qualifications Non-Government Schools

Ethnic Fijians Indo-Fijians

M. F. M. F.

Total

Ethnic Fijians Indo-Fijians

University Graduates

- Trained

- Untrained

200 184 482 450

44 57 130 146

384 932

101 276

Diplomates

- Trained

- Untrained

224 252 324 287

36 25 62 38

476 611

61 100

Completed Form 7

- Trained

- Untrained

3 2 10 3

7 3 7 12

5 13

10 19

Completed Form 6

- Trained

- Untrained

21 21 7 7

21 10 5 5

42 14

31 10

Completed Form 5

- Trained

- Untrained

13 19 4 4

9 6 5 1

32 8

15 6

Completed Form 4 and

Lower Forms

- Trained

- Untrained

N/A 4 1 N/A

3 N/A N/A

4 1

3 N/A

Total 582 586 1,037 953 1,164 1,990

Grand Total 3,158 3,154

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fiji Islands*. Suva: Ministry of Education.

Rural schools in Fiji generally work within strong traditional norms and values. The more traditional ethnic-Fijian communities value communal cultures highly,

especially ceremonial activities and *yagona* drinking (extracted from the root of piper methysticum and it is a favoured ethnic Fijian practice). Ethnic Fijian teachers are expected to join these cultural activities, and this often prevents them from completing their preparations for school work (such as class preparation, test-making, marking and record-keeping). Also, the English language is not necessarily spoken often in rural communities. Teachers often use the native Fijian language or the Hindi language for instructional purposes to explain things, especially difficult concepts, not only at primary school but even at secondary school (Tavola, 2000a). A consequence is that poor examination results among rural students are often in part because of limited English-language competence. Students find it very hard to comprehend some subjects, especially Science, because it is difficult for them to cope with the terminology (Muralidhar, 1992).

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A teacher's care for her/his teaching subject(s) and students can encourage students greatly. However, from my own experience in working with both ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian teachers for two-and-a-half years (1997, 1999 and 2000), I have observed that many young teachers who have just completed diplomas and degrees often find it very difficult to teach effectively, because of a lack of teaching experience. Furthermore until quite recently, schools had to appoint people who had completed only secondary-school diplomas to their teaching staff, because of a serious shortage of properly-qualified teachers. For instance, in the first four months following the coup of 1987, over 150 primary and 70 secondary school teachers resigned (Tavola, 1991). It was particularly difficult for high-school graduates to manage the classrooms where some students cause trouble, and so some "slow" learners are left behind. Thus, having experienced teachers at rural schools is of vital importance. A further and related problem noted by Tavola (1991) is that some bright rural children from relatively well-off families leave to attend urban schools, leaving the less-capable behind, which lowers the overall academic performance in rural areas even further.

### **Conclusion**

Historically, some degree of difference between the academic achievements of ethnic Fijians and of Indo-Fijians has persisted for the last 70 years. In particular, at both upper secondary- and tertiary-levels, Indo-Fijian higher academic performance has been demonstrated commonly in Fiji. This pattern persists despite the fact that a government's "positive discrimination policy" for ethnic Fijian students has been practised since 1975. However at the primary level, ethnic Fijian students perform well. Indeed, in some subject areas such as English, their performance has often outstripped that of their Indo-Fijian counterparts. Both ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian students at urban schools often perform better than those at rural schools. It is particularly notable that colonial policy reinforced ethnic disparities in educational attainments: the "indirect rule" kept ethnic-Fijian children behind in educational achievement, and Indo-Fijian children had to strive for academic "success". The next Chapter reviews previous research on cultural influences on academic performance in the Fiji context.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

The present chapter reviews previous work regarding the relationship between culture and achievement, in particular cultural influences on academic performance. The first

section of this chapter identifies what culture means and cultural influences on one's valuing of education, since it is argued that one's cultural values and beliefs are typically consistent with their culture. Secondly, the present chapter focuses on values, beliefs and practices as influences on academic achievement from a cross-cultural perspective. The section reviews the work of Max Weber and David McClelland with respect to their views on culture and achievement. The third section reviews four possible major factors influencing ethnic differences between the academic performance of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians.

### **Concepts of Culture**

According to Sapir (1994) and Schafer (1998), working from the perspective of cultural anthropology, the following five elements of culture are usually distinguished: (1) "reality culture" which includes technology, economics and systems of production; (2) "value culture" which includes law, values, philosophy and religion; (3) society as a framework, i.e., social structure, such as kinship; (4) national character (Yamamoto, 1964) or ethos (Austin, 2003); and (5) language, in which one expresses oneself (see Hofstede, 2001) and a system of significant symbols for communication (Geertz, 1993). Another obvious symbol is religion. According to Geertz (1993):

A religion is a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in us by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (p. 90).

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'Value culture' includes not only values but also knowledge, beliefs, ideas, habits, custom, morals, attitudes and any other capabilities acquired, shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society (Linton, 1963). In particular, Pepitone (1994) has defined beliefs as:

Relatively stable cognitive structures that represent what exists for the individual in domains beyond direct perception or inference from observed facts. More particularly, beliefs are concepts about the nature, the causes, and the consequences of things, persons, events, and processes. Beliefs are social constructions that are part of a culture and have guided the socialisation of those who share that culture and more or less adopted from what is already there in the culture (p. 140).

Beliefs, while personal, are, in a sense, drawn from cultural traditions of which they are part. They are normally developed over many years, even centuries, and present in a relatively systematic form.

What are values? According to Hofstede (2001), values are an attribute of individuals as well as collectivities. Values have to do with what members of the society believe are good. They are different from preferences, however. Preferences can be individual matters, whereas values reflect a whole culture's interpretation (Condon, 1974).

Therefore, value influences contexts. Importantly, values change slowly, they are not held to change like fashion. They usually endure over time, giving intensity, stability, direction, order and predictability to all aspects of one's life (Condon, 1974; Hofstede, 2001).

However, each individual person has a different value system, which is culturally and socially influenced (see e.g., Vygotsky, 1986). Accordingly, even identical twins' own beliefs and values, for example, are usually likely to become different from each other as a result of what they learn from their surroundings (Shapcott, 2001). For example, we can

see some cultural differences between Western-born Indians and the Indians who come to Western countries with respect to their academic achievement and performance (Gibson, 1983). Many Indians who come to study at schools in English speaking background countries, such as the United States of America (USA), perform better than their USA<sup>54</sup> born counterparts (Gibson, 2000). Newer Indian arrivals in USA, such as Sikhs from the Punjab, the north-west of India, tend to receive higher test marks than those who have lived in the USA for all or most of their lives (Gibson, 1988). Emigrant Indian students have grown up in and absorbed the cultures of their home countries, whereas local-born Indians are more likely to be influenced by their families' adopted culture. That is, Indian-born Indians are more involved in their own cultural backgrounds than their overseas-born counterparts.

Overall, the Indian way of valuing education is still greatly influenced by sacred texts such as the Bhagavad-Gita, the Quran and their learning. The Bhagavad-Gita was introduced to the Hindus over 2,300 years ago (Morrish, 1971). The Bhagavad-Gita, which "provides a synthesis of three forms of *yoga*: the path of knowledge, or *jnana*; the path of work, or *karma*; and the path of devotion or *bhakti*" (Morrish, 1971, p. 116), has always respected and valued education highly (Moser, 1986). Knowledge is developed by being yoked to the *guru*, a teacher, who encourages his students to increase their store of information by oral repetition and written reproduction. According to the Bhagavad-Gita, "the wise say a man is learned when his plans lack constructs of desire, when his actions are burned by the fire of knowledge" (Moser, 1986). Thus, a knowledgeable person is generally highly regarded. "The man of knowledge is a master of the scriptures and he may also be a brilliant speaker. The man of true knowledge is a living example of what he has learnt" (Lal, 1970, p. 174). Muslim people have been also valuing the importance of learning. Their sacred text, such as the Quran, has encouraged them to acquire knowledge by inference, observation and personal experiences. The Quran was introduced approximately six hundred years before the Christian era (Rippin, 1990). According to the Quran, "to seek knowledge is the duty of every Muslim man and every Muslim woman" (Sharif, 1958, p. 8), thus, "those who do not observe and understand are worse than cattle" (Sharif, 1959, p. 8). The Quran further advises that "those who do not hear, understand and speak are the vilest of animals in God's sight" (Sharif, 1958, p. 8). The teaching of the Quran has encouraged Muslim people to learn greatly, so that education has always been important to the Muslim community (Lateef, 1990; Sahai, 1993). In Fiji, as described in Chapter Two, over 15.8% of Indo-Fijian population are

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Muslims and more than 77.5% are Hindus. In total, over 93.3% of Indo-Fijian population are either Muslim or Hindus. This means that, even outside India, such as Fiji, a majority of Indo-Fijian people is influenced greatly by the teaching of such sacred texts as the Quran and the Bhagavad-Gita. Therefore, traditional Indian socialisation is closely linked with the value of learning.

This is to say, individuals think and behave according to cultural norms and values (Gabrenya, Wang & Latane, 1985; Alloy, Jacobson & Acocella, 1999), and they tend to preserve their cultural norms and values strongly, even after they transfer to a different culture (Montagu, 1974; Martin & Nakayama, 2000). Human beings have universal attributes but also have particular cultural ones. Culture proceeds by the use of shared symbols, which are not only cognitive but also material (Geertz, 1993). They are embedded in both thought and practices. Thus, symbol systems are embodied in social

inter-action. We are expected to adapt to these cultural factors (Gabrenya, Wang & Latane, 1985), and they are created, recreated, produced and reproduced by us over time. We interpret these embodied practices, talk and material culture (Geertz, 1983).

Cultural anthropologists have attempted to define culture, and their definitions are universally applied to all cultures. According to Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1963):

Culture consists of patterned, explicit and implicit ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially *their attached values*; products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action (p.357, my emphasis).

Culture is a powerful determinant of how people think, talk, react and use communicative codes both verbally and non-verbally. What is happening in a particular society and what is happening within an individual person are influenced by each other (Otsuka, 1996).

“Culture markedly influences how individuals behave towards other individuals”

(Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963, p. 308). Therefore, culture might be defined as what human beings produce and reproduce, and how they associate with their products, e.g., language, 56

norms, rules, beliefs, values, motives, virtues, religion, attitude, ideas, social structure, ethos, technology, communication, kinship, ritual, science, economics, education, etc..

Of these cultural products, education (a selection of desired knowledge and of modes of learning and authority) is probably a key form of cultural reproduction (Williams, 1986).

“In every culture, education is a form of transfer of culture from one generation to the next” (Van Baal, 1964, p. 1). Socially, the most dominant group’s cultural norms and values tend to transfer to the next generation through a form of learning at school. Hence, for non-dominant group children, there tends to be a low success rate in school tests and examinations due to the cultural bias in all aspects of schooling (Harker, 1990).

Educational systems tend to reproduce social inequalities because of the way they reproduce the culture of the dominant group (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Even so, Indian students in English-speaking background countries perform relatively well as compared with other cultural groups including the most dominant social group in those countries. In Britain, for example, Indian students perform better on examinations taken at age sixteen than those of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish origin (Gibson & Bhachu, 1991). Not only do more Indian students take their “O Levels”, an examination for senior secondary school pupils, but also they sit for examinations in more subjects and receive higher grades than their Caucasian counterparts. Equally, at the end of primary school, all students take verbal reasoning tests: while the majority students’ performance is not impressive, Indian students’ achievement is solid. These Indian students often demonstrate a high degree of success even in a different educational system (Gibson & Bhachu, 1991) at times surmounting the influence of prejudice and discrimination in these countries (see e.g., Ballard & Vellins, 1985). That is, although Indian students born in the foreign countries such as UK and USA do not have much higher attainment levels than their Indian-born peers, students of recent Indian background still value education, even while they are involved in socio-culturally different learning environments.

It follows that an individual’s valuing of achievement and form of achievement is culturally based. People’s valuing of education, socialisation processes and practices,

learning strategies, meaning of achievement and beliefs about achievement are likely to differ from culture to culture (Triandis, 1989, 1990, 1995a & 1995b).

Within a culture, so-called sub-cultures, such as those of gender and social class, exist. They have some distinctive cultural values and traditions. In some ethnic groups, males are more confident about their abilities in school, particularly in Mathematics and Science (Woolfolk, 2001). For example, in Fiji in 1991, for a given Form 7, Economics as well as Mathematics marks, Indo-Fijian males on average were likely to score significantly higher than their female counterparts, (and ethnic Fijian males and females) (Narsey, 1995). In general, Indo-Fijian female performance is comparable to the ethnic Fijian performance. Many parents think that girls should be readied for marriage when they are young (often when still teenagers). In particular, many young Indo-Fijian women (aged between 16 and 18 years) are often engaged, and, as soon as they finish high school, they will marry (see Lateef, 1987). In the traditional Indo-Fijian view, “too much” education will make a girl too independent in her views and behaviour, (thus, it tarnishes her reputation and possibly jeopardises marital prospects). A highly educated woman also might find it hard to take up her proper role within her future husband’s family. A female Indo-Fijian student said:

In Indian culture, they believe that girls are sort of ‘burden’ of the family, so some parents encourage girls to marry young. My mother always says that she doesn’t have a son, so she should do something for her son in law. I feel bad, because in a way she is just thinking about her son. I’m just a girl, so I’m a ‘burden’ for her (Interview SBS/2).

Nevertheless, with respect to the relationship between children’s education and parents’ occupation and educational level in Fiji, it is clear that, not only Indo-Fijians of relatively well-educated parents but also those of non or little-educated parents perform well. Parents from “lower” socio-economic status and those with an “uneducated” background still encourage their children to do well at school. Accordingly, these parents often tell children to do home work before going to bed. Therefore, among Indo-Fijians, it is impossible to make a direct casual linkage between parental background and a child’s “success” at school (Tavola, 1991). For ethnic Fijian parents, however, educational level

and occupation often matter to a child’s academic performance. Children of relatively well-educated ethnic Fijian parents often perform better at school than those whose parents are relatively “little-educated” (Otsuka, 2003). Accordingly, within a culture, subcultures

such as those of gender, and socio-economic differences play their own role, which is nonetheless influenced by values and traditions of that whole culture. The next section reviews the relationship between culture and achievement.

### **Culture and Achievement**

Most research that has been conducted in the area of cultural influences on academic achievement in the cross-cultural perspective originates in cross-cultural psychology. Specifically, most studies generally investigate the influence of students’ cultural background and achievement motivation on their academic performance.

Another starting point, however, is the sociological work of Max Weber. Weber’s (1930) work, “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism”, played a key role in the conceptualisation of David McClelland’s (1961) influential work on the relationship between culture and achievement motivation. Weber (1930) suggested that the difference

between the level of economic productivity in Protestant and Roman Catholic countries was not just a function of capacity, ability or resources. It was a function of ideology, of values, attitudes and motivation, which were developed in a given context.

Achievement motivation theorists such as McClelland (1961 & 1971) and McClelland and Winter (1969) extended Weber's (1930) idea. They argued that a significant aspect of a given achievement situation is the pattern of norms that guide family behaviour and child-rearing practices, in particular, establishing the child's early learning experiences. It is because culture is composed of habits, i.e., learned tendencies to react, acquired by each individual through her/his life experience after birth (Murdock, 1940; Wicker, 1997; Bauman, 2000; Triandis, 1995a & 1995b; Biggs, 2001; Salili, Chiu & Lai, 2001).

According to McClelland (1961 & 1971), these early learning experiences create enduring personality patterns that persist through adulthood, and determine the  
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individual's level of achievement motivation. McClelland and his colleagues (1969) hypothesised that individuals need to achieve in a competitive society and this trait, whose experience is different from person to person, is acquired in childhood.

McClelland's (1961) influential work, "The Achieving Society", proposed the basic notion that when a society characteristically fosters the development of the personality trait of achievement motivation, this eventuates in economic growth (Maehr & Nicholls, 1980).

A number of criticisms have been levelled against McClelland's (1961) hypothesis, and much criticism relates to personality as the critical variable in determining achievement behaviour. For example, Maehr (1974) argued that when achievement motivation is treated as a personal trait, the possibility of diverse modes of achievement in different cultures is almost ignored. He further argued that "different cultural groups are not only likely to establish different tasks as achievement tasks, but to expect these goals to be pursued in different ways" (Maehr & Nicholls, 1980, p. 224). That is, McClelland and his colleagues (1969) stressed that the goal of an achievement motivated student is to seek individual success. This concept, however, does not necessarily apply to the nature of achievement behaviour in different cultures, such as that revealed in ethnic Fijian culture, which stresses co-operative behaviour. Within that culture, achievement is less an individualistic phenomenon than it is defined as being in Western cultures (Kishor, 1983). It is something that occurs within a group and serves group goals. That is, the ethnic Fijian concept of achievement is generally associated with communal role and status, especially within the village (Nabobo, 2001). Hence, the ethnic Fijian achievement question is not anything like: "Am I competent?" Rather, "Am I a good member of the community?" Ethnic Fijian achievement motivation, then, is related to fulfilling one's role within a group (Otsuka, 2003 & 2005c).

Welch (1985) also criticised McClelland's work as deriving from a structuralfunctionalist perspective, which is deeply concerned with efficiency, at the expense of ethics. He argues that "nowhere in McClelland's discussion of exposure to foreign 'educational influences' which might increase development is there any discussion of the  
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notion of primacy of respect for the values of the host culture" (Welch, 1985, p. 12). In fact, McClelland's only respect for personality-structures under the Western educational influence is that there is the technical efficiency of a wide range of cultural interactions and their effect on achievement motivation. McClelland ignored any fundamental

discussions of education of the politics and ethics of cultural discourse. That is to say that McClelland did not take local cultural traits into consideration in his discussion of achievement motivation.

Some cross-cultural psychologists have paid attention to cultural influences on students' academic achievement, focusing on a situational-contextual analysis of achievement motivation. The achievement situation or context, especially students' home background, e.g., their socialisation process, are these psychologists' major concern in considering variation in achievement motivation across social and cultural groups (see e.g., Kearney, Lacey & Davidson, 1973; Maehr, 1978 & 1984; Davidson, 1988; Pekrun, 1993; Biggs & Watkins, 1996 & 2001; Levinson & Holland, 1996; Salili, Chi-Yue & Lai, 2001). Most work that has been carried out by educational psychologists in this area of research is based on cross-cultural comparisons and contrasts between students from the West and those from the East, particularly East-Asian societies. This developing research field is based on these researchers' strong interest in East-Asian students' high academic achievement in English-speaking societies (see Salili, 1995; Chen & Stevenson, 1995; Chao, 1996; Hattie & Purdie, 1996a & 1996b; Eaton & Dembo, 1997; Bempechat & Drago-Steverson, 1999; Iyengar & Lepper, 1999; Earley, Gibson & Chen, 1999; Dandy & Nettelbeck, 2000; Ng, 2001; Markus, Kitayama & Heiman, 2003).

However, the work of most of these researchers (e.g., Salili, 1995; Chen & Stevenson, 1995; Hattie & Purdie, 1996a & 1996b; Eaton & Dembo, 1997; Iyengar & Lepper, 1999; Earley, Gibson & Chen, 1999; Dandy & Nettelbeck, 2000) has major limitations. This is not only because of difficulties involved in making comparisons of different educational systems across countries, but also because there are especially great cultural differences between English speaking countries and East-Asian societies such as China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan. These differences are often derived from Western

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misconceptions of the East-Asian way of learning, e.g., repetition and memorisation.

Western misconceptions make cross-cultural research in East-Asian countries even more difficult.

For example, each East-Asian country and Western society has a somewhat different from cultural values and beliefs concerning achievement. East Asians generally believe that achievement through effort and hard work is more highly valued than achievement through ability, which is positively correlated with Western achievement scores (Otsuka, 2005a; Otsuka & Smith, 2005). The difference between beliefs in achievement of East-Asians and Westerners influences the way students learn. The learning strategies typically used by Japanese students, for instance, demand a great amount of persistence (Hess & Azuma, 1991). In Confucian-influenced philosophy of learning, repetition is highly valued in order for learners to acquire the depth of understanding of given tasks (Biggs & Watkins, 1996). East-Asian philosophy of learning believes that repetition is a route to understanding. This way of learning simply requires learners to repeat the same activities over and over again. This "sticky-probing approach" as it is called by Hess and Azuma (1991), also consumes a large amount of learner's (and often teachers') time. Hess and Azuma (1991) found that Japanese children engaged in a drawing activity for an average of 80.5 seconds, whereas their North American counterparts lasted only 55.3 seconds. The Japanese students made 9.9 errors on average, while US children made 11.4. Japanese children tend to take longer time on given tasks than those from the US. They typically take more time to complete tasks and make fewer errors than do their

North American counterparts. However, the Westerners generally believe that repetition does not enhance understanding. But the East-Asian view towards repetition is different from the West. East-Asians generally believe that their understanding of the subject would increase if they repeated it and memorised it. For East-Asians, “a view of understanding and memorising are intertwined” (Marton, Dall’Alba & Lai Kun, 1996, p. 75).

Also, the following elements make the West-East comparison far more difficult, because these are all culturally dependent, therefore culturally unique: (1) languages (including

62 dialects within the language); (2) individualism versus collectivism influencing one’s self-efficacy and self-concept, which is generally regarded as a major influence on one’s thought and action (e.g., Higgins, 1987; Markus & Wurf, 1987; Bong & Skaalvik, 2003); (3) religious beliefs; and (4) traditions. These cultural elements are very influential over one’s cultural values, beliefs and practices, including academic achievement.

Nevertheless, these studies, such as Salili (1995); Chen & Stevenson (1995); Hattie & Pardie (1996a & 1996b); Eaton & Dembo (1997); Iyengar & Lepper (1999); Earley, Gibson & Chen (1999); and Dandy & Nettelbeck (2000), have often suggested that there is a strong linkage between students’ academic performance and their socio-cultural background.

### **Influences on Academic Performance in Fiji**

Numerous studies have examined factors creating the considerable differences in achievement between Indo-Fijian students and their ethnic Fijian counterparts (e.g., Tierney, 1971; Kishor, 1984; Tavola, 1990; Dakuidreketi, 1995; White, 1997; Bole, 2000). Most of these studies are rather dated, having been published 5 to 34 years ago. These studies have attempted to examine the major issue, focusing on ethnic Fijian “under-achievement”, rather than their academic “success”, from the following four different perspectives: (1) socio-economic, political and cultural factors; (2) institutional factors; (3) structural factors; and (4) psychological factors. According to Baba (1982), Puamau (1999) and the Ministry of Education (2000), each category is identified in the following way (see Figure 1 below):

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### **Figure 1**

#### **Four Possible Factors influencing Academic Performance in the Fiji Context**

##### **Socio-Economic, Political & Cultural Factors Institutional Factors**

- Individualism vs. Collectivism - Urban vs. Rural
- Cultural Conflict - Quality of Leadership
- Tradition of Academic Scholarship - Management Styles
- Home Background - Quality of Teaching
- Poverty/Low Social Class, Lack of Privacy - Provision & Quality of School
- Lack of Assistance by Parents/Guardians Resources
- Race - Gender - Student - School Climate
- Ownership of the Land - Time Management
- Employment Opportunities
- Emphasis on Social Obligations
- Prayer Meetings - Church
- Community Activities - Drinking *Yaqona*
- Valuing vs. Under-Valuing Formal Education
- Values, Beliefs & Practices in Achievement

##### **Students’ Academic Performance**

##### **Structural Factors Psychological Factors**

- Curriculum Issues - Attitudes to Schooling
- Too “Academic” - Interest
- Abstract & “Irrelevant” - Motivation & Aspiration
- “Mismatch” between Contents & Children’s - Need of Achievement
- Personal Experiences - Locus of Control
- Contradiction between Cultural Values & School Values - Cognitive Styles
- Pedagogical Issues - Self-Concept
- Contradiction between School Culture & Home Culture - Self-Efficacy
- “Mismatch” between Western Styles of Teaching - Self-Esteem

&

Students’ Learning Styles

- Practical Nature of Students’ Learning

vs.

Emphasis on Theoretical Nature of Learning at School

- Emphasis on Individual Achievement
- Assessment Issues
- Emphasis on “Rote-Learning”
- Examination –Oriented Assignments
- Language Issues
- English is a Foreign Language to Students

Source: Otsuka, S. (2003, June). *Cultural Influences on Academic Performance: A Case Study in the Fiji Islands from a Contextual Perspective*. Paper presented at the PESA Research Forum, Faculty of Education & Social Work, University of Sydney, Australia. Based on Puamau, P. Q. (1999). Understanding Fijian Under-Achievement: An Integrated Perspective. *Directions*, 21 (2): 100-112.

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Of the categorisations identified by Baba (1982), Puamau (1999) and the Ministry of Education (2000), not only are the (1) socio-economic, political and cultural factors, but also other factors, such as (2) institutional factors, (3) structural factors and (4) psychological factors, are different between ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians.

Most studies concentrate on the effect of cultural values and traditions on children’s education, by examining different factors (i.e., socio-cultural, institutional, structural and psychological elements) (see e.g., Tierney, 1971; Kishor, 1981, 1983 & 1984; Elley, 1982; Nabuka, 1983 & 1984; Sofield, 1983; Stewart, 1983 & 1984; Veramu, 1986 & 1992; Tavola, 1990, 1991 & 1992; Thaman, 1990; Tuvuki, 1992; Nabobo, 1994; Dakuidreketi, 1995; White, 1997; Bole, 2000).

### **Socio-Economic, Political & Cultural Factors**

Students’ home environment is one of the major factors influencing differences between the academic achievement of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians. Nabuka (1983) made comparison between 400 ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian Form 4 students in urban areas. He investigated scores in the FJC Examinations such as English, Mathematics, Basic Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Social Science and History. Nabuka (1983) found that Indo-Fijian students performed better on all subjects, other than Geography. He further compared ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian students according to home background variables. They were: (a) parents’ educational level; (b) living with parents; (c) distance from home; (d) how many people there are in the household; (e) study habits; (f) receiving assistance for homework; (g) how many books they have at home; (h) access to textbooks; and (i) aspirations for education and future career. Nabuka (1984) reported on the basis that ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians were different from each other, on the variables as follows: (1) living with parents; (2) how many books at home; (3) the parents’ educational level; and (4) access to textbooks. He concluded that these factors were more critical variables to explain differences between these two groups’

achievement levels. Consistent with Elley's (1982) study, Nabuka (1984) argued that ethnic Fijians have more disadvantages in their home environments than Indo-Fijians, 65

particularly with respect to a lack of privacy and assistance by parents. By contrast, Indo-Fijians are more individualistic and have greater opportunity to study at home.

There are ethnic differences in parents' aspirations towards their children's education. Sofield (1983) administered a survey to 45 ethnic Fijian and 55 Indo-Fijian fourth formers at an urban racially integrated secondary school. She examined the following variables: (a) socio-economic status; (b) learning environment; (c) parents' educational and occupational aspirations for their children; (d) individualistic-collective value orientations; and (e) level of personal independence and use of English at home. She found that Indo-Fijian families structured significantly different learning environment for children. Indo-Fijians showed greater aspirations for children's education and career than ethnic Fijians.

Child-rearing processes and practices also influence academic achievement. Dakuidreketi (1995) investigated cultural factors contributing to academic achievement of first year science students at the University of South Pacific. His research was based on a qualitative and quantitative study that used interviews and questionnaires as the main research methodology for data collection. Interviews were conducted with 20 ethnic Fijian science students and 6 science lecturers together with data collected from 80 firstyear

students. His study found that the key factors contributing to the academic performance could be explained with respect to: (1) students' home background; (2) institutional characteristics; (3) students, and (4) external influence. There was a "mismatch" between students' cultural norms and those required by the USP to be successful. Ethnic Fijian cultural upbringing tends to hinder their academic performance. In addition, low socio-economic status among ethnic Fijians had some effect on academic performance. The problem is much deeper than these socio-economic factors, however, as ethnic Fijian students' performance is also affected by the characteristics of their schools. In particular, the majority of ethnic Fijian schools tend to place more emphasis on sports rather than on academic work. The lack of resources in most rural ethnic Fijian secondary schools affected the quality of teaching, which further affected the quality of students coming to the USP during their first year studies.

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Other external factors found to affect ethnic Fijian students' performance at the University of South Pacific included: (a) the sponsoring of ethnic Fijian students with low entry marks; (b) the students' poor ability to adapt to the university environment; (c) the absence of ethnic Fijian student role models and a supporting environment; (d) the attitude of lecturers towards students and the lack of parental involvement in educational assistance; and (e) the influence of peer groups.

In addition to children's cultural upbringing, peer pressure is another influential factor in students' academic performance. White's (1997) thesis examined cultural influences on academic performance, by conducting a case study at a racially-integrated secondary school on the island of Viti Levu. She administered a questionnaire to 70 students (54 ethnic Fijians, 13 Indo-Fijians, 2 Pacific Islanders and 1 Chinese). She also conducted face-to-face interviews with Form 2 and 3 students. She found that not only ethnic Fijian cultural values and behavioural norms, but also peer group influences (e.g., the influence

of teasing on academic performance) and teacher responses (e.g., teachers' negative assumptions and reactions towards ethnic Fijian students) are the most significant factors in the school setting that influence academic performance. In particular, in the absence of parental or teacher support, the peer group becomes the most important agent directly influencing students' performance.

### **Institutional Factors**

Some researchers such as Tierney (1971), Stewart (1983; 1984), Veramu (1986; 1992), Tavola (1990; 1991; 1992), Tuvuki (1992), Nabobo (1994) and Bole (2000) have argued that institutional factors are more influential than ethnic differences in accounting for differences in academic achievements. Institutional factors include such variables as quality of leadership and teaching, provision and quality of school resources and time management at school. Tavola (1990) administered a survey to fourth formers from eleven secondary schools to examine factors that contribute to high achievement. She found that institutional factors, i.e., factors associated with the school itself, were more important than students' background, such as socio-economic status and culture. On the

67 basis of her research (1990 & 1991), Tavola challenged conventional accounts in her article entitled, "Race is not the Only Issue in Education in Fiji" (1992). She argued that more important than racial difference in influencing educational achievement are the quality of school management, principal leadership and the use of physical facilities. She sampled differences in academic performance between single-race schools and multiracial

schools from different regions. She concluded that students' educational achievement is geographically distinct, whether the school is mono-racial or multi-racial. Overall, ethnic Fijians (aged 15 years) perform better, on the FJC Examination, in the mixed race schools than at the purely ethnic Fijian schools in the Nadi area, in the western part of the country approximately 120 kilometres from the capital Suva. By contrast, in the Sigatoka area, 50 kilometres south-east of Nadi, ethnic Fijians do poorly in integrated race schools compared with ethnic Fijian schools alone. In Suva, while ethnic Fijians at some mono-racial schools perform better than at multi-racial schools, ethnic Fijians at some well-integrated schools do better than those at either purely ethnic Fijian schools or at other multi-racial schools. Tavola (1990 & 1992) has stated that strong management (e.g., an enthusiastic principal) and no financial problems within the school are more effective factors than school facilities, in helping students to achieve well. Leadership remains central in creating the environment where students learn the best, and this has implications for cross-cultural settings. A case study (Amirrachman, 2004) conducted in Indonesia suggests that the principal's role is significant not only in building collaborative relationships between school members and the community, but also in nurturing effective relationships between the school and the local government, which are conducive to student achievement.

Of course, school facilities and teachers also play a significant role in affecting students' performance. Bole (2000) pointed out that a well-equipped school with good classroom conditions, useable furniture and appropriate aids, could give students, teachers and parents confidence in a school. Veramu's (1986) account in his article, "Fijian Education, The Community and the Teacher", partly echoed Tavola's (1990 & 1992) view. Veramu (1986) has argued that the problem of poor equipment in science laboratories, and a lack of appropriate books, readers, textbooks and furniture at school, for example, could be

alleviated with better planning and budgeting by school management. But he emphasised the importance of a teacher's role in improving ethnic Fijian academic performance. In this regard, Veramu (1986) has suggested that teachers should display greater personal and pedagogical skills in order to inspire and facilitate a love of learning among ethnic Fijian children. Teachers should promote education outside the classroom, around the *yaqona* bowl (also known as "*kava*"), at PTA meetings, on radio programs (Veramu, 1986).

Likewise, Tuvuki (1992) pointed out that institutional factors such as teachers' expectations affect students' performance. Tuvuki (1992) investigated teachers' perceptions and expectations of their students' general ability and achievement. Twenty two teachers, 410 ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian third form students were chosen from four urban schools in Fiji. Teacher ratings of students' performance on their internal examinations and a combination of two IQ tests, i.e., English Vocabulary Test and Standard Progressive Matrices Test, measured teacher expectations. It was apparent that ethnic Fijian students were not expected to perform as well as their Indo-Fijian counterparts in their Mid-Year examinations. Ratings of students on their IQ test also revealed that ethnic Fijian students were predicted to score lower than their Indo-Fijian counterparts. Both ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian teachers assigned positive attributes to Indo-Fijian students and negative attributes to ethnic Fijian students. Classroom observations revealed that Indo-Fijian students received more praise, while ethnic Fijian students received more disapproving responses. Tuvuki's (1992) study suggested that teachers based their impressions and expectations of their students on past academic records, students' family history, classroom behaviour, their past teaching experiences and stereotypes of the two ethnic groups. The study concluded that Indo-Fijian students are academically successful, and ethnic Fijian students are unsuccessful, due to teachers' stereotypical and biased expectations of their students, which are explicitly displayed in the classroom.

Over twenty years ago, Stewart's (1983; 1984) research sought to examine some possible factors creating the difference in academic performances between the two racial groups.

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He analysed results of the "Fijian Education Achievement Project", which was conducted by Elley (1982) and Nabuka (1982) with a random sample of 44 secondary school students and principals from 22 ethnic Fijian schools and 22 Indo-Fijian schools. Based on his analysis of that project, Stewart (1983) concluded:

The quality and style of educational leadership in the role of the Principal was of great importance. The Principal's personal qualities, organisational skills, willingness to delegate and consult, and to give individual counselling and assistance to both staff and students are key factors (p.15).

Stewart's (1983) suggestion here is closely related to arguments presented by Tavola (1990; 1992) and Veramu (1986). Stewart (1983) has claimed that ethnic Fijians do not appear to value education as highly as other ethnic groups, like Indo-Fijians, do. He stresses the need to undertake research into what motivates ethnic Fijian people. He emphasised the psychological need of ethnic Fijians to "feel good about what they are engaged in". He has suggested that ethnic Fijian qualities of group loyalty could be used in school, such as a form of peer tutoring, group methods of learning and project work. I should note here another of Stewart's (1983) observations regarding ethnic Fijian

students from boarding school performing better than those from home. Stewart (1983) argued that ethnic Fijians at boarding school are released from some family and village obligations and pressures. Thus, these ethnic Fijian students can better concentrate on their studies than those who live at home.

### **Structural Factors**

Most researchers who point out structural factors influencing academic achievement have mainly focused on curriculum issues. Dakuidreketi (1995) called for a more ethnic Fijianbased

education curriculum with an emphasis on group learning and group assessment, in order to promote ethnic Fijian academic performance. Typical ethnic Fijian society is a communal organisation, which is structured and hierarchical. Things are organised by the group. The school curriculum could relate closely to this ethnic Fijian way of life.

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Nabobo (1994) has suggested that education should accord with ethnic Fijian traditional values and cultural identity. Nabobo (1994) has emphasised the importance of introducing a concept of an ethnic Fijian term, “*yalomatua*”, to education. According to Nabobo (1994), *yalomatua* entails both a spiritual dimension and the realisation that accumulation of knowledge can bring about a better quality of life. “*Yalomatua* is to develop a sense of wisdom in mind and spirit to be able to face the challenges of life more effectively” (Nabobo, 1994, p. 45). Children with *yalomatua* can develop a sense of independence, can be trusted with responsibility, and will display humility and willingness to accept the advice and tutelage of others. These children will commit themselves to education and, thus, their academic performance will improve.

Social studies curriculum, for example, includes building skills for cross-cultural understanding, conflict resolution, co-operative learning, which is “discussing materials with other students, sharing materials among participants, helping each other” (Johnson & Johnson, 1987, p. 12). Williams (2002) suggested a number of positive elements about group work in a collaborative learning environment, such as:

- (1) It instils a sense of responsibility in students.
- (2) There is a sense of excitement, expectation and creativity.
- (3) There is a spirit of sharing.
- (4) Ethnic Fijian children are able to tap into the experience and knowledge of other students.
- (5) This may allow students to participate in learning and open discussion.
- (6) This could also promote a sense of ownership in the courses and develop a strong camaraderie between students.
- (7) It could develop good time management and planning.

Accordingly, the integration of students is achieved through co-operative learning groups. Children may learn and play together. Children may be protected from exclusion, which may reduce their ability to learn. Children are grouped together taking into consideration their mixed abilities in each group (Williams, 2000).

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Similarly, Tierney (1971) and Nabobo (1994) examined ethnic Fijian academic performance by examining structural factors. They both suggested that education must be totally “ethnic Fijian” in order for them to perform well. Tierney (1971) meant that education must move away from the Western education system, and that instead, group learning should be introduced. He emphasised the importance of the involvement of

village, community and parents in children's education. According to Nabobo (2001), the way typical ethnic Fijians view the world is culturally very different from what they are told at school, which is so strongly influenced by Western culture. The education structures and system in Fiji were inherited from a British colonial past (Puamau, 1999). Ethnic Fijians tend to see the world as "one" - everything is related to everything else. Land (which is called *vanua* in ethnic Fijian), for example, means "everything" to ethnic Fijians (Ewins, 1998). When they talk about land, they are talking about everything on the land, such as stones, trees, mountains, animals, insects and people. They are all interrelated

to each other. Likewise, a person does not exist alone. S/he exists in relation to other people. If someone is talked about in public, s/he is usually mentioned in relation to her/his family, village and tribe. This may be a reflection of the typical ethnic Fijian communal way of living. Within the village, "people tend to look at how you are performing and perceptions of other people on what you are doing" (Interview SAT/3). Similarly, life on earth (*vuravura*) is closely tied to spiritualism and the supernatural such as nature, heavens and so on. Interestingly, this epistemology and cosmology is much more reflective of totemism and animism than Christianity. According to Johnson (1995): Totemism is a way in which people worship their own societies by attributing supernatural power to totems associated with that society. The totems are regarded as representations of the sacred elements of society itself rather than of external deities. Typically, totems consist of natural objects such as plants or animals (p. 299).

In general, animism is based on the belief that spirits inhabit both living and non-living objects, such as trees, rocks, clouds, winds or animals (Johnson, 1995). When someone is sick, ethnic Fijians tend to think of her/his illness as a result of her/his "misbehaviour". People tend to say; "That's God's punishment!" This is very different to the scientific

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approach, emphasised by contemporary Western culture. For children, there is a huge "gap" between what they are taught at school and what they are told by parents and peers, which is influenced by their own culture. The typical ethnic Fijian world is, therefore, composed of inter-related parts (Nabobo, 2001). Hence, ethnic Fijians do not separate work from their kinship relationships. Children do not separate studies from play, which is very practical. The typical ethnic Fijian approach to learning is very practical (Veramu, 1992; Puamau, 1999). However, the traditional Western concept of education and knowledge is manifested in abstract rather than practical ways (Giddens, 1997). Learners are more likely to compartmentalise theory and practice. The Western concept of education is inconsistent with the ethnic Fijian mind (Nobobo, 2001), therefore, it is not culturally appropriate for the way ethnic Fijian children learn.

Nevertheless, at present, all primary and secondary schools in Fiji receive the same curriculum plan from the Ministry of Education with respect to syllabuses, prescriptions and textbooks (Nabobo, 2001), regardless of the ethnic composition of each school. Thaman (1990) suggested that, despite the fact that schools have the same syllabuses and curriculum materials, each school could implement these plans differently according to its needs and demands. Hence, the school could make use of these curriculum materials in ways that are culturally appropriate way to local requirements. Thaman (1990) further argued that schools and teachers may make something better or worse than what curriculum developers have in mind. The "gap" between the curriculum in theory and

that in practice all depends on teaching practitioners.

Obviously, the typical ethnic Fijian way of learning is culturally different from the way Westerners value on learning. An Ethnic Fijian approach to learning, which is more spiritual, relational and group-oriented, should be introduced to their education in culturally appropriate ways. This will help promote ethnic Fijian education.

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### **Psychological Factors**

Ethnic differences in respect to self-esteem, self-concept and academic motivation influence the differences in academic achievement of the two groups. Kishor (1981, 1983 & 1984) has attempted to account for the differential academic performance of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians from a psychological perspective. Kishor (1981) compared English, Mathematics and Science tests performance of 272 ethnic Fijian third formers and their Indo-Fijian peers at school in an urban area. He correlated a number of psychological variables with test scores, according to: (1) motivation towards academic work; (2) aspirations for future career; and (3) the degree to which family valued education formally. He found that Indo-Fijian students scored higher on all these subject tests than did their ethnic Fijian peers. Kishor (1981 & 1983) has suggested that the difference between an internal locus of control and external locus of control may contribute to the difference in academic performance. According to Kishor, Indo-Fijian children have a more internal locus of control orientation than their ethnic Fijian counterparts, and “the internally oriented person, who normally believes ‘success’ is dependent on one’s own hard work, would be more willing to expend effort toward academic goals” (Kishor, 1983, p. 298). He concluded that individuals with greater internal orientation, such as Indo-Fijians, achieve at higher levels than externally oriented individuals such as ethnic Fijians. As a note, Woolfolk (2001) explained the difference between an internal locus of control and an external locus of control:

When learners consistently attribute ‘success’ or ‘failure’ to internal factors such as their own ability or effort, they are said to have an ‘internal’ locus of control. Those with an ‘external’ orientation (or ‘external’ locus of control), however, are more likely to attribute ‘success’ or ‘failure’ to external causes such as luck, task difficulties, a noisy classroom or perhaps poor teaching (p. 224)

Kishor (1984) conducted further research to assess the difference in self-esteem of the two groups. He administered a survey of 110 ethnic Fijian form five students (49 males and 61 females) and their 114 Indo-Fijian counterparts (62 males and 52 females) from two racially mixed private secondary schools in Suva. Participants had either middle or upper-middle socio-economic background. The respondents’ mean age was 17.6 years.

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For the data-collection, self-esteem was measured by Coopersmith’s (1967) Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI), which was developed free from cultural and language biases. On both standardised tests, computed from the data in his study, ethnic Fijian primary schoolers scored 0.83 higher corrected split-half reliability of the Coopersmith’s Self-Esteem Inventory.

Kishor’s research found a significant difference in self-esteem between Indo-Fijian and ethnic Fijian adolescents. Self-esteem is the value each individual places on their own characteristics, abilities and behaviours. “The Indo-Fijians viewed and evaluated themselves more positively than the ethnic Fijians” (Kishor, 1984, p. 31). An analysis of Kishor’s data has shown in Table 37 below.

Table 37: Ethnic and Sex Comparisons on Self-Esteem

Sex Ethnic Fijians

Mean S.D.

Indo-Fijians

Mean S.D.

Male 30.28 7.4 37.08 6.5

Female 32.52 6.7 35.83 6.8

Group 31.53 7.1 36.51 6.7

Source: Kishor, N. (1984). Self-Perceptions among Adolescents in Fiji: Ethnic Comparisons. *Directions*, 12: 28-32.

Table 38 below indicates the difference between the mean level of Indo-Fijian males' self-concept and their ethnic Fijian counterparts.

Table 38: Ethnic and Sex Comparisons on Self-Concept

Sex Ethnic Fijians

Mean S.D.

Indo-Fijians

Mean S.D.

Male 52.34 11.68 62.06 11.36

Female 53.82 12.09 59.94 11.24

Group 53.07 11.99 61.03 11.40

Source: Kishor, N. (1984). Self-Perceptions among Adolescents in Fiji: Ethnic Comparison. *Directions*, 12: 28-32.

Using the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers, 1969) with the inventory measures called "The Way Children Feel about Themselves", Kishor (1984) administered a survey of 272 ethnic Fijian third formers (137 males and 137 females) and their 273

Indo-Fijian counterparts (141 males and 137 females). His inventory had a split-half reliability of 0.82 and 0.84 for ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians, respectively. The participants were from two predominantly ethnic Fijian, two predominantly Indo-Fijian and two racially integrated secondary schools in Suva and Nausori, approximately 20 kilometres from Suva. The respondents' mean age was 14.5 years and 14.6 years for ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians, respectively. Ethnic Fijian participants were from higher socio-economic backgrounds than their Indo-Fijian counterparts with respect to the occupational and educational level of their parents. However, this better socio-economic background of the ethnic Fijians did not advantage them.

Kishor's study has suggested that Indo-Fijians' self-esteem and self-concept were higher than among ethnic Fijians. Hence, Indo-Fijian self-discrepancy was lower than that of ethnic Fijians. Ethnic Fijians are encouraged to focus on how their behaviour affects their relations with others and how their behaviour affects the overall harmony of the group. Succeeding in "collective" cultural tasks requires the individual to change and adapt her/himself to the needs of the group (Weisz, Rothbum & Blackburn, 1984).

Consequently, a characteristic feature of ethnic Fijians is that they maintain a perpetual sense of dissatisfaction about themselves. This dissatisfaction indicates a perceived discrepancy between ethnic Fijian individual current states and their aspirations for social approval. For ethnic Fijians, dwelling on their inadequacies and shortcomings is of great importance – those aspects that render them vulnerable with respect to securing their group' approval. Hence, Kishor (1984) has suggested that Indo-Fijian achievements in

education often became higher than those of ethnic Fijians.

Self-concept is generally regarded as a major influence on one's thought and action. It is defined by Pajares and Schunk (2001, p. 243) as "consisting of beliefs, hypotheses and assumptions that an individual has about her/himself. It is the person's view of her/himself as conceived and organised from her/his inner vantage and includes the person's ideas of the kind of person s/he is". An individual's self-concept develops into a relatively stable characteristic (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976), whereas self-efficacy beliefs are more situation specific (Bandura, 1997; Zimmerman, 2000).

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However, the differences between these two constructs are beginning to blur, with attempts to measure general self-efficacy (Bong & Clark, 1999). Self-concept consists of a person's self-perceptions that are formed and shaped through socialisation experience with, and interpretations of, one's cultural environment (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995a). According to Mead (1934) and Johnson (1985), the self arises from a reflective process through "symbolic interaction" (e.g., language) with social groups and other individuals, especially the parents who usually communicate with their child from a very early stage of her/his life. Such interaction is "an effective means of transmitting the beliefs, attitudes and values which lead to the social control of individuals' behaviour" (Smith, 1992, p. 149).

A child receives much information and feedback from her/his parents. In other words, s/he seeks out information about her/his actions, consciously and unconsciously, to structure and interpret her/his world (Earley, Gibson & Chen, 1999). Information sought by the child is tied to her/his self-concept, which in turn is tied to cultural values and beliefs (Erez & Earley, 1993). That is, one's self-concept is a "cultural product". It is accessed differently depending on one's cultural background (Trafimow, Triandis & Goto, 1991). Thus, "a person's self-concept can be derived from different referents of information based on cultural background" (Earley, Gibson & Chen, 1999, p. 596). It generally develops through parents' child-rearing practices. "Child-rearing patterns correspond to the dominant syndromes of a society" (Triandis, 1995b, p. 11), and one's self-concept can be a "looking-glass" reflection of how one believes significant others perceive that person (Marsh, 1984).

Self-esteem is the evaluative and affective dimension of self-concept. The self-evaluations often stimulate an emotional reaction (see Santrock, 1999). Self-evaluations involve both cognitive and affective assessments of how a person is perceived by significant others, such as parents, peers and teachers (Smith, 1992). The emotional content of self-esteem make children and adolescents sensitive to the comments passed about them by such persons and make the teachers' role an especially important one in their development (Owens, 2002). Self-esteem is also referred to as self-image and self-worth, which is "the individuals' evaluative appraisal of her/himself. In the broadest sense, it is more or less synonymous with such concepts as self-esteem, self-respect and personal acceptance" (Convington & Beery, 1976, p. 5).

### **Conclusion**

Previous studies suggest that factors, such as (1) socio-economic, political and cultural factors, (2) institutional factors, (3) structural factors and (4) psychological factors, influence significant differences between the academic achievement of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians. Socio-economic, political and cultural factors include: (a) students' home environments; (b) parents' aspirations and involvement in their children's education; and

(c) the effects of peer groups on children's academic performance. Study of institutional factors suggest: (a) the quality of school management, principal leadership and the use of physical facilities are of great importance; and (b) Teachers' negative, biased and stereotypical assumptions, attitudes and responses towards students affect students' academic performance. It is often a case that both ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian teachers assigned positive attributes to Indo-Fijian students and negative attributes to ethnic Fijian students. In respect to structural factors, it is suggested that: (a) a more ethnic Fijianbased education curriculum with an emphasis on group learning and group assessment devised; (b) villages, communities and parents should be involved more in children's education, which should accord more strongly with ethnic Fijian traditional values and cultural identity; and (c) in order to implement these cultural factors, the school should make use of all curriculum materials in the culturally appropriate way. A consideration of psychological factors suggests that: (a) individuals with greater internal locus of control orientation, such as Indo-Fijians, achieve at higher levels than externally oriented individuals such as ethnic Fijians; and (b) typically, Indo-Fijians' self-esteem and selfconcept are higher than for ethnic Fijians. Therefore, Indo-Fijian students have higher academic motivation. The next chapter outlines the research design.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN: CASE STUDY**

#### **Introduction**

The focus of this study is ethnic differences in academic performance, with a particular emphasis on cultural, institutional, political and psychological influences. This investigation is based on a sampling survey of the effects of the participants' cultural values, beliefs and practices in the academic performance of both ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians. In addition, this study investigates other possible factors influencing ethnic differences in academic achievement, such as especially the role of school leadership, teacher attitudes towards students and land-tenure issues. This chapter describes the research design in the present study.

#### **Case Study**

The method of the case study approval was applied to investigate cultural influences on academic achievement, as this methodology has been well established as appropriate in the area of comparative education research (see Burns, 1990; Neuman, 2003). Face-toface

interviews and survey analyses were used for the data collection. The interview schedule included a combination of closed- and open-ended items. The former can achieve high reliability, as the answers are very easily coded. It can save time, as it is not hard for respondents to choose between alternative answers to the same question. In particular, this aids those who are not used to conducting interviews. The advantages of open-ended items are that they allow the interviewer to go into more depth in probing interviewees' answers. The interviewer can clear up any misunderstanding. They can test respondents' knowledge about the subject, and they may give an opportunity to establish a rapport with respondents before the formal interview begins, and this helps the researcher to draw more responses from the participants. Also, unanticipated answers may be elicited. Face-to-face interviews also help the researcher observe the respondent's

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non-verbal communication cues (Anderson, 1990). Such cues include five major areas (movement, distance, time, use of the eyes and touch). Moe's (1987, p. 108) study has shown that "communication for the most part is 'non-verbal', and only about 7% of it consists of spoken language. Of the remaining 93%, tone of voice, (e.g., inflection, modulation, etc.) accounts for about 38% while the remaining 55% comprises these five major non-verbal areas." Another study (Eakins & Eakins, 1978, p. 147) suggests that "the non-verbal message carries 4.3 times the weight of the verbal message." The participant's non-verbal cues may communicate what s/he really means. For example, if the respondent made a long pause to answer a particular question, this hesitation might mean that s/he may not want to answer it fully. However, because this is a cross-cultural research, it is essential to interpret such responses within cultural contexts (see the discussion of "emic" perspectives in Chapter One). Typical ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians, especially children of both ethnic groups, are not culturally encouraged to freely express their opinions and ideas (Otsuka, 1999). This constraint may have affected both ethnic groups' responses to my interviews. Thus, as a researcher, I always tried carefully to assess the meaning of a pause during an interview with response, to ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian cultural contexts.

Nevertheless, this type of interview also allows the researcher to explain to the participant what the question means and the respondent can ask the researcher what her/his question really means.

### **The Overall Research Sample**

#### ***Face-to-Face Interview Sample***

Face-to-face interviews (see "Face-to-Face Interview Questionnaires" in Appendix Four) were conducted with 48 respondents in the following categories (see Table 39 below and "Face-to-Face Interview Schedule in the Nadroga/Navosa Province" in Appendix Three):

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Table 39: Face-to-Face Interview Sample by Ethnicity & Gender (Number)

Participants Ethnicity

E.F. I.F. R. P.E.I.

Gender

Male Female

Total

Principal 2 3 1 6 6

Vice-Principal 1 1 1 1 2

Assistant Principal 1 1 1 1 2

Teachers 7 7 1 8 7 15

Students 8 7 8 7 15

Parents 2 3 1 4 5

Guardians 1 1 1

Senior Education

Officer

1 1 1

Senior Pastor 1 1 1

Total 23 22 2 1 28 20 48

#### **Notes:**

- E.F. denotes Ethnic Fijian.
- I.F. denotes Indo-Fijian.

- P.E.I. denotes Part Ethnic Fijian & Part Indo-Fijian.
- R. denotes Rotuman.

The ethnic ratio of these interviews was 48% ethnic Fijians, 46% Indo-Fijians, 4% Rotumans and 2% part ethnic Fijian and part Indo-Fijian. The interviews were conducted at 5 parents' homes, 1 guardian's home, 1 ethnic Fijian church and 5 racially integrated secondary schools and one ethnic Fijian secondary school. These 5 racially integrated schools were selected because the ethnic ratio differed from school to school (see Chapter Five). Fifteen Form Six students were interviewed (students in this form were expected to sit for external examinations at the end of the academic year (i.e., the FLSC Examinations). The levels of the academic performances of these students in class were average. Most parents, whether students' parents or teachers' parents, were primary school graduates (Class 6 and Class 8) while a few were lower-secondary graduates (like Form 4). However, some of the ethnic Fijian teachers' parents were school teachers. Overall, students' socio-economic background was below average. Most parents, especially Indo-Fijian parents, were either sugar-cane farmers or vegetable farmers, whether they were students' parents or teachers' parents. "Parents' average annual income ranged from F\$3,500 (AU\$3,033) to F\$6,000 (AU\$5,200), depending on how much they produce yearly" (Interview SDP/1). The ratio of parental average annual income to the country's Gross Domestic Products (F\$5,900; AUD\$5,113) in 2004 was 81

59% and 102% for F\$3,500 (AUD\$3,033) and F\$6,000 (AUD\$5,200) respectively (The World Fact Book, 2005). The subjects that teachers teach varied from teacher to teacher (English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, History, Economics, Social Science, Basic Science, etc.). The ages which they taught also differed (from 3 years to 16 years). In addition, the number of schools where they taught differed. (e.g., from 1 school to 5 schools). The leadership experience of Principals ranged from 9 years to 22 years, and the mean number of schools where they have served as a Principal was 3.5 (see more detail in "Face-to-Face Interview Implementation Procedures" below).

### **Survey Sample**

The survey (see "Survey Questionnaire" in Appendix Five) was administered to 132 ethnic Fijian students, i.e., 56 males and 76 females (43% and 57% respectively), and to 177 of their Indo-Fijian counterparts, i.e., 72 males and 105 females (41% and 59% respectively). The total ethnic ratio was 43% and 57% for ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians, respectively. One of the reasons why there were more Indo-Fijian participants than their ethnic Fijian counterparts in the survey was because three out of four racially-integrated secondary schools where the survey was administered had more Indo-Fijian enrolments than their ethnic Fijian counterparts. Hence, this reflected the ethnic ratio of participation in the survey. All these schools were selected because each school was composed of both ethnic groups, but the ethnic ratio from each school differed from school to school (see Table 40 below).

Table 40: Survey Sample by Ethnicity (Number)

School Form 4

(E.F.) (I.F.)

M. F. M. F.

Form 6

(E.F.) (I.F.)

M. F. M. F.

Form 7

(E.F.) (I.F.)	
M. F. M. F.	
Total	
(E.F.) (I.F.)	
M. F. M. F.	
School A	7 3 6 6 6 9 5 10 5 7 8 11 18 19 19 27
School B	6 3 13 16 5 17 2 8 3 9 10 12 14 29 25 36
School C	10 5 4 14 8 10 8 14 N/A 18 15 12 28
School D	6 7 12 8 0 6 4 6 N/A 6 13 16 14
Total	29 18 35 44 19 42 19 38 8 16 18 23 56 76 72 105

**Notes:**

- E.F. denotes ethnic Fijians. I.F. denotes Indo-Fijians.
- M. denotes males. F. denotes females.

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Form 7, 6 and 4 students from each school were asked to take part in this survey research, and it was 100% of the students who were asked to participate, who actually took part in the survey. These three forms take external examinations at the end of the academic year. They are the FFSE, the FSLC Examinations and the FJC Examinations. However, half of these four schools did not have seventh-form classes. At these two schools (Schools C and D) Form Six and Form Four students participated in the survey.

**Research Site**

**Regional Site**

The Nadroga/Navosa Province, which is located approximately 60 kilometres to the west of Suva, was chosen for this fieldwork, as the province consists of a racially wellintegrated population, and is the second largest province in the country. The total population of the Nadroga/Navosa Province reached 56,977 people in 2003: 29,758 ethnic Fijians (52%); 26,549 Indo-Fijians (47%); and 670 others (1%) such as Chinese, Europeans, Part-Europeans, Rotumans and other Pacific Islanders (Ministry of Regional Development, 2003) (see Figure 2 below).

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**Figure 2: Ethnic Composition of Figure 3: Fiji's Ethnic Nadroga/Navosa Province, Composition, 2003**

Others (1%) Others (7%)  
 Ethnic Fijians  
 29,758 People (52%) Ethnic Fijians  
 447,982 People (54%)  
 Indo-Fijians Indo-Fijians  
 26,549 People (47%) 324,078 People (39%)

Source: Ministry of Regional Development (2003). *District Administration: Nadroga/Navosa District Annual Report 2003*. Suva: Ministry of Regional Development.

This illustrated diagram represents the country's overall ethnic ratio well: in 2003, approximately 54% of the Fiji's population consisted of ethnic Fijians (447,982 people), about 39% Indo-Fijians (324,078 people), and nearly 7% other groups such as Europeans, Chinese and Pacific Islanders (Bureau of Statistics, 2004) (see Figure 3 above). The minority non-ethnic populace who came to Fiji have increased by 17,702 from 1996 to 2003. The occupational background of people in this province was largely divided into

two groups: (1) sugar-cane and vegetable farming; and (2) tourism such as resort/hotel industries. The province was considered to be the tourist centre of the country, with so-called five-star major international hotels, and many motels around the beautiful coral coast of the province. Tourism has indeed surpassed the sugar industry as the country's main source of foreign exchange. In 1997, tourism earned over F\$450 (AUD\$301.5) million annually compared with approximately F\$200 (AUD\$134) million from sugar industries (Bureau of Statistics, 1998). In 1999, the Fiji Visitors Bureau recorded 409,955 arrivals, which was the highest in Fiji's history (Keith-Reid, 2002).

**School Site**

There are 10 secondary schools and 2 junior secondary schools, which offer Form Four, in the Nadroga/Navosa Province at present. Of the 10 secondary schools, five offer Form Seven, and the rest offer Form Six. Despite a large degree of uniformity of the present national education system in Fiji (see Chapter One), the characteristics of these secondary schools, such as ethnic and gender compositions of students and teaching staff, management, leadership, locations and historical and socio-economic backgrounds, are all different from school to school. However, due to transportation difficulties in reaching schools in very remote areas, and some schools being unwilling to participate in my fieldwork, the present fieldwork focused on the following seven secondary schools (see Table 41 below). It should be noted that School G participated only in the matter of: (1) composition of teaching staff by ethnicity and gender; (2) ethnic differences in teacher qualifications; (3) total enrolment by ethnicity and gender, and fourth-, sixth- and seventh-form enrolment; and (4) external examination results (the FFSE, FSLC and FJC Examinations in 2003). The school took part in neither the face-to-face interviews nor the surveys.

Table 41: Location of Six Secondary Schools in the Nadroga/Navosa Province

School Location
School A Urban
School B Semi-Urban
School C Rural
School D Rural
School E Semi-Urban
School F Rural
School G Urban

Table 41 above indicates that the location of these secondary schools was all varied, from rural to urban areas. Fiji's Ministry of Education defined rural schools as those located

more than 10 kilometres from the capital town of each province (Ministry of Education, 2004).

School A was located to the east of the Nadroga/Navosa capital, Sigatoka Town, and approximately 500 metres away from the town. The school was established in 1982. School B was located to the west of Sigatoka Town and approximately 7 kilometres away from there. The school was established in 1959. School C was located to the west of Sigatoka Town and approximately 35 kilometres away from there. The school was established in 1973. School D was located on the Eastern Bank of Sigatoka Valley, which was approximately 16 kilometres away from the north of Sigatoka Town. The school was

established in 1975 as a junior secondary school, and in 1989, it became a full-secondary school (up to Form 6). School E was a purely ethnic Fijian secondary school, which was located to the west of Sigatoka Town and approximately 7 kilometres away from there. The school was established in 1977. It should be noted that this school had boarding facilities. Of its total enrolment, (242 students), 85 students (35%) were boarders in 2004. School F was an Arya Samaj managed secondary school. Arya Samaj is one of the Indo-Fijian religions and had already been operating the school for Indo-Fijians by 1916 (see Chapter Two). The school was located to the west of Sigatoka Town and approximately 25 kilometres away from there. The school was relatively new - established in 1998 with Form Three. At present, the school offers Form Seven, which was started in 2002. School G was Andhra Sangam managed secondary school. Ikya Sangam was south Indian members of Then India Sanmarga Ikya Sangam, and had been already running Indo-Fijian schools in the 1910s (see Chapter Two). The school was located approximately 3 kilometres east of Sigatoka Town and established in 1941. The management and leadership of each school differed from school to school (see Table 42 below).

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Table 42: Management & Leadership of Six Secondary Schools in the Nadroga/Navosa Province, 2004

School Management Leadership

School A Methodist Church

Indo-Fijian Manager

Rotuman Principal

School B Indo-Fijian Manager Indo-Fijian Principal

School C Ethnic Fijian Manager Ethnic Fijian Principal

School D Indo-Fijian Manager Indo-Fijian Principal

School E Ethnic Fijian Manager Ethnic Fijian Principal

School F Arya Samaj Management

Indo-Fijian Manager

Indo-Fijian Principal

School G

Andhra Sangam

Management

Indo-Fijian Manager

Indo-Fijian Principal

Of these seven secondary schools, two were based on ethnic Fijian management and five were Indo-Fijian management. As for leadership, two schools had an ethnic Fijian Principal and other four had an Indo-Fijian Principal, and the seventh (17%) had a Rotuman Principal. Chapter Five describes: (1) composition of teaching staff by ethnicity and gender at each school; (2) ethnic differences in teacher qualifications; (3) total enrolment by ethnicity and gender, and fourth-, sixth- and seventh-form enrolment; and (4) external examinations results (the FFSE, FSLC and FJC Examinations in 2003).

### **Construction of the Case Study**

#### ***Construction of Face-to-Face Interviews***

Face-to-face interview questions with students were constructed mainly around themes covered in the questionnaire. This includes as follows: (a) the supporting environment provided by the school (if any), to meet students' problems (Questions 1, 3, 4 & 5 of the

“At School” section in the Interview Questionnaire); (b) home environment (Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 & 11 of the “Home Environment” and Questions 1 & 2 of the “Specific Questions” for ethnic Fijian students); (c) involvement in any activities at home, other than studies (Questions 6 & 7 of the “Home Environment”); (d) perceptions of the importance of formal education (Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 of the “Future Plan”); and (f) perceptions of each ethnic group’s attitude towards studies (Questions 3, 4 & 5 of the

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“Specific Questions” for ethnic Fijian students and Questions 1, 2 & 3 of the “Specific Questions” for Indo-Fijian students).

To gain more information on the problem faced by students, their subject teachers were interviewed. The questions were focused on as follows: (a) perceptions of ethnic differences in academic performance (Questions 7, 9 & 11); (b) perceptions of the causes of differences in academic performance (Questions 6, 7, 8 & 9); (c) perceptions of ethnic differences in student home environments (Question 8); (d) perceptions of the availability of any sort of supporting environment for students (Question 10 & 13); (e) suggestions on ways of improving the academic performance of students at school (Question 10); and (f) perceptions of ethnic differences in achievement (Questions 6, 7, 8 & 9).

To gain further information on the problem faced by students, their Principals, vice-Principals and assistant-Principals were interviewed. The questions were focused on as follows: (a) perceptions of ethnic differences in academic performance (Questions 6, 8 & 10); (b) perceptions of the causes of differences in academic performance (Questions 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8); (c) perceptions of ethnic differences in student home environments (Question 6); (d) perceptions of the availability of any sort of supporting environment for students (Questions 6, 9, 11, 12, & 14); (e) suggestions on ways of improving the academic performance of students (Questions 9, 11 & 12); and (f) perceptions of ethnic differences in achievement (Questions 4, 5 & 8).

Parents/guardians were also interviewed regarding: (a) occupational background (Questions 3, 4, 6 & 7); (b) educational background (Questions 5 & 8); (c) perceptions of the importance of investing in children’s formal education (Questions 9, 10, 11, 14, 17 & 24); (d) perceptions of children’s attitude towards studies (Question 23); (e) perceptions of the kinds of achievement which is valued most highly (Question 26); (f) perceptions and aspirations of children’s future studies and career (Questions 12 & 13); (g) perceptions and expectations of the schools (also of the Principals and teachers) in the role of educating children (Questions 15, 16, 18, 19 & 20); (h) children’s involvement in

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domestic duties such as helping parents/guardians, any community activities and so on (Questions 22 & 25); and (i) difficulties in sending children to school (Question 21).

Senior Education Officer was interviewed regarding: (a) the Ministry of Education’s Affirmative Action Programs (Questions 8, 10 & 11); (b) the Ministry’s future vision towards educational policies, which endeavour to reduce ethnic differences in the academic achievement (Questions 9, 13 & 14); and (c) perceptions of ethnic differences in academic achievement (Questions 6, 7 & 13).

Senior Pastor was interviewed regarding: (a) the importance of church in the ethnic Fijian culture (Questions 3, 4, 5, 7 & 12); (b) contributions/donations to the church, which are contributed by ethnic Fijian villagers (Questions 6, 8, 9); and (c) villagers’ involvement in church activities (Questions 10 & 11).

### **Construction of Survey**

The present survey consisted of a total of 15 questions (see Appendix Five). Out of all these questions, three different questions were prepared for students according to their ethnicity (12 questions for each ethnic group). The questions for ethnic Fijian students were: “What do you think about typical Indo-Fijian student attitudes towards studies?” “Do you think that Indo-Fijian parents are strict about their children’s education?” and “Do you think that Indo-Fijian parents are relaxed about their children’s education?” The survey listed the same questions for Indo-Fijian students: “What do you think about typical ethnic Fijian student attitudes towards studies?” “Do you think that ethnic Fijian parents are strict about their children’s education?” and “Do you think that ethnic Fijian parents are relaxed about their children’s education?”

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## **Implementation Procedures**

### ***Face-to-Face Interview Implementation Procedures***

I visited a Principal at each secondary school to ask for her/his permission to conduct face-to-face interviews with the Principal, (either) the vice-Principal or the assistant-Principal, the subject teachers, and the students at the school premises. I asked the Principal and teachers to arrange the place (e.g., a classroom and an office) to conduct the interview and the interview time schedule, which would be suitable for all participants in the interview and me. Following the advice of the Principal and teachers, the most appropriate samples of students to interview face-to-face were selected, according to their academic performances. I also mixed the students’ ethnic backgrounds carefully, to achieve a good balance. Principals or teachers introduced me to the participants. I further asked the students whom I interviewed to ask their parents/guardians for their permission to participate in the face-to-face interview at their home. Importantly, prior to the interview, both the “Participant Information Sheet” was provided for Principals, teachers, students and parents/guardians in order for them to understand the research purpose. However, I explained orally to ethnic Fijian parents/guardians what was written in both sheets, as this approach was more culturally appropriate for them (see Morrison, Vaioleti & Vermeulen, 2002; Mo’ungatonga, 2003; Vaioleti, 2003). The interview respondents filled in the “Participant Consent Form”. In order to seek permission from the education officer and the church pastor, I contacted them directly and explained to them the aims of my research. I further asked them to read through both sheets as mentioned above. When the education officer and the church pastor signed the “Participant Consent Form”, I arranged the time and the place to conduct the face-to-face interview with them. Both the sheet and form were written in English, and respondents (i.e., parents/guardians) were asked to fill in the “Participant Consent Form” in English. The overall face-to-face interview procedure was taken as follows: (a) Rapport - Introducing myself to the respondents in a friendly way; (b) Stating the purpose of the interview to the participants; (c) Sharing responses together with the participants; (d) Identifying instances of different types of question style I used. This helped the interview to expand in order to obtain more

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interesting, and significant information from the respondents; (e) Complete and accurate audio-recording of the interview was made (see Burns, 1990); and (f) Note-taking was also undertaken, where necessary.

The total time spent on the 48 face-to-face interviews was approximately 22 hours and 15 minutes. The time spent on each interview differed from interview to interview, depending on how willingly respondents answered each question, and on how much they

were interested in each question during the interview. Most interviews took approximately 30 minutes to conduct, but a few interviews took 45 or even 60 minutes, while some took less than 20 minutes. Overall, each interview took on average 25 minutes.

However, prior to my interview with both ethnic groups, I took time to have a rapport with them. In particular, this was culturally required and appropriate, in order to establish an interpersonal relationship with ethnic Fijians (see Chapter Six). For instance, prior to my interview with an ethnic Fijian female vice-Principal, we chatted with each other while having lunch together at the school. This occasion helped us to feel at ease in order to communicate with each other more openly during the interview. Another example was that I took an ethnic Fijian male student home by car after school. On our way to his house, we chatted in a friendly manner with each other. When we arrived at his village, he showed me around there: such as the church and the meeting place. He explained to me what the people we came across in the village were doing. After all this chatting, we sat together on the mat outside his house and conducted the interview. At another ethnic Fijian village where I visited, an ethnic Fijian female guardian showed me her house and village. We chatted with each other outside her church for some time. After we felt relaxed about each other, I conducted the interview with her in her house. Two ethnic Fijian male students from the secondary school where I conducted face-to-face interviews showed me around their village. They also showed me themselves playing rugby. I sat down in the rugby field and watched their play for approximately two hours. This made them feel good about me to some degree, and I interviewed one of the boys. He was positive in giving his interview to me. He even introduced me to five other ethnic Fijian

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peers from his village. We all sat down together, and chatted with each other. They explained to me some important ethnic Fijian cultural concepts such as “*matanigasau*” (which literally means to present *yaqona* someone to ask for her/his “forgiveness”), “*mataqali*” (clan), “*yavusa*” (tribe), “*kere kere*” and so on. The time spent together with informants prior to the interview gave me the opportunity not only to establish a good rapport with ethnic Fijians, but also to learn something about their culture. Even with Indo-Fijian participants, I took time to make them feel comfortable with me, although many people in Sigatoka already knew me. I had stayed there previously as a language teacher. I had a cup of tea with most Indo-Fijian and ethnic Fijian staff members during the recesses at the schools, to make myself and my research purposes better known to them. At two schools where my fieldwork was conducted, I was asked by the Principals to deliver a short speech at the ceremony conducted there to celebrate the “World Teachers’ Day”. Through my public speech at these schools, not only the staff members, but also most students came to know that I was visiting there for my research. Two Indo-Fijian Principals from the schools where my fieldwork was carried out, invited me to lunch at their homes. Accordingly, I spent a larger amount of time with my research informants than the time actually spent on my interviews with them, in order to establish good interpersonal relationships with them.

Throughout the interviews, I encouraged my respondents to add whatever they thought necessary that had not been covered in the questions, since I thought this was a great opportunity for me to explore different perceptions of the same question and issue amongst interviewees. As a note, no translation had been required for the interview, because all the informants were able to converse with me in English.

### ***Survey Implementation Procedures***

The survey was administered in the English language, but the level of English competence of students in these four schools was shown to be comparable across the schools, and sufficient to comprehend the written English in the survey. Either a Principal, or a vice-Principal, from each school organised the time and class to conduct this research. These surveys were administered by class teachers under my guidance. As researcher, I explained to participants how to fill in the survey and responded to common questions about the survey items, such as “What does your father do for a living?” During the survey research, class teachers and I moved around in the classroom to ask constantly of the students if they had any questions about the survey. This was important because both ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian cultures generally, do not encourage children to ask teachers and visitors questions (see Chapter Six). So, we always set students free to ask us their questions. The survey was completed during a class period of approximately 30 to 35 minutes. However, it took some students longer; a few students took 40 minutes.

### **Analysis Procedures**

#### ***Face-to-Face Interview Analysis Procedures***

Prior to my analysis of these face-to-face interviews, the following two tasks were completed in order to organise the interview raw material/data. (1) Accurate and full transcriptions, which totalled over 120,000 words in length, including participants’ nonverbal

cues, e.g., joy, sobbing, laughter, smile, unhappiness, anger, excitement, surprise, tone of voice (such as inflection and modulation), and particular hesitations, were made carefully in written form. As discussed above, non-verbal cues are often able to communicate even more clearly what the speaker really means. Hence, I prepared my observation sheet to check details about non-verbal codes that both ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian interviewees used, such as eye-contact, gestures, movements, which by themselves are capable of conveying information, and so on. The observation sheet had a section where I could check how many times a particular respondent hesitated while

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answering the question, how many times s/he smiled and laughed at a particular topic and so on (see Wilson, 1998). The respondents had a relatively good command of English as their second language; therefore all the interviews were conducted and transcribed in English.

(2) Coding was carried out as follows: (a) code was not overlapped too much, e.g., “education” stands for “school”; (b) no participants’ names were used; (c) every interview transcription had an initial and a number, such as S1 (which stands for Student 1), S2, S3,..... SA (which means School A), SB, SC,..... (see Figure 4 below).

#### **Figure 4: Coding of Participants**

Interaction with Others

School A (SA)

Student 1 Principal 1 Teacher 1 Education Officer [EO] Church Pastor

[SAS/1] [SAP/1] [SAT/1] (Ministry of Education) [CP]

Father 1 Mother 1 Guardian 1

[SAS/1F/1] [SAS/1M/1] [SAS/1G/1]

Source: Otsuka, S. (2005). [A Fieldwork Report in Fiji]. Unpublished raw data.

(d) Informants’ background and evidence were described as fully and accurately as

possible in following categories (see Figure 5 below): What kind of person was the participant? What was my perception of the participant? Under what circumstances was the interview carried out?

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### **Figure 5: Validity of the Information**

Quality of Interactions

Degree of Comfort Topic Discussed

Anxious Desired Happy Level Subject

Sought Avoidance Superficial Feelings Ideas

Functional Social Personal

Source: Sullivan, G. (n.d.). *Interview Analysis*. Sydney: Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney.

(e) The “Statistical Table” of some key interview results, that can create and influence students’ academic performance, was set up (see Tables 62, 63 & 64 - “Home Environments Section” in Chapter Five). These were: (i) home environments; (ii) land issues; (iii) affirmative programs; (iv) considerable social pressure from peers; and (v) attending church. Furthermore, (f) what kind of pattern from this statistical table was revealed was analysed. This helped to find major topics and issues from the data (see Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Findings of the interview were analysed from the following seven different perspectives: (1) participants, i.e., Principals, vice-Principals, assistant-Principals, teachers, students, and parents/guardians; (2) both ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian cultural values, beliefs and practices in affecting achievement; (3) both ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian students’ academic performances; (4) students’ home environment, and parental involvement in children’s education; (5) institutional factors such as school leadership and teachers; (6) security issues such as land-tenure systems; and (7) the future, i.e. policy implications and further research.

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### **Survey Analysis Procedures**

Descriptive statistics was employed to analyse the survey, since “the descriptive aspect of statistics allows researchers to summarise large quantities of data using measures that are easily understood by an observer” (Burns, 1990, p. 23). Descriptive statistics reduces a large mass of data to simpler, more understandable terms. For example, question 7, i.e., “What does your father do for a living?” shows statistically (as an example) how many ethnic Fijian fathers are farmers. Question 9: “Does your father have more than one job for a living? If so, what does he do?” shows statistically the number of Indo-Fijian fathers who have more than one type of job for a living. Also, it shows statistically how many Indo-Fijian fathers are drivers, e.g., a taxi, a sugar-cane truck etc, for their second job. Question 11: “Do you think that typical Indo-Fijian parents are strict about their children’s education?” shows statistically how many ethnic Fijian students think that typical Indo-Fijian parents are strict about their children’s education. This also shows if there are any differences between forms and genders, with respect to students’ perceptions of Indo-Fijian parental involvement in their children’s education.

After working on students’ responses in the survey, tables were prepared to indicate the statistical data (see Appendices Seven, Eight & Nine). The data show easily if there are any particular kinds of patterns being revealed within each statistical table. Based on these statistical tables, I explored some findings, results, and issues, regarding students’ cultural values, beliefs, and practices, with respect to their academic performances. For

instance, are there any linkages between the students' socio-economic backgrounds and their perceptions of the value of formal education? Are there any relationships between parental education levels and children's aspirations for higher education? These analyses aided in examining initial hypotheses: (1) how cultural values and beliefs are related to student performances and achievements from a cross-cultural perspective; and (2) what achievements the children are expected to value highly, via cultural support from their trusted elders, parents, relatives, and siblings.

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### **Conclusion**

Case study methodology was applied to the present study, in order to make an investigation into ethnic differences in academic achievement. For the data collection, face-to-face interviews were used, since this methodology is culturally appropriate for indigenous culture. In addition, the survey of 12 questions was administered to both ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians. The next chapter analyses results based on the case study.

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DATA ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION**

#### **Introduction**

The present chapter analyses the results based on my fieldwork. At first, characteristics of seven secondary schools in this region are clarified according to ethnic and gender compositions of school enrolments, teaching staff and their academic qualifications. Secondly, the academic performance in each secondary school is analysed. Finally, this chapter discusses factors influencing differences in the academic performance, with respect to institutional factors, home environments and land tenure issues.

#### **Characteristics of Seven Secondary Schools in the Nadroga/Navosa Province**

As described in Chapter Four, six racially-integrated secondary schools and one ethnic Fijian secondary school were examined. The ethnic and gender composition of teaching staff at each school was as follows (see Table 43 below):

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Table 43: Composition of Teaching Staff by Ethnicity & Gender (Number & Percentage) in the Nadroga/Navosa Province, 2004

School	Ethnic Fijians	
	Male	Female
Total	Indo-Fijians	
	Male	Female
Total	Grant	Total
School A*	6	10
	(16.6%)	(27.7%)
	16	(44.3%)
	9	10
	(25%)	(27.7%)
	19	(52.7%)
	35	(97%)
School B	3	5
	(7.5%)	(12.5%)
	8	(20%)
	18	14
	(45%)	(35%)
	32	(80%)
	40	(100%)
School C	5	5
	(20%)	(20%)

10 (40%) 10 5  
 (40%) (20%)  
 15 (60%) 25 (100%)  
**School D** 1 2  
 (8%) (15%)  
 3 (23%) 7 3  
 (54%) (23%)  
 10 (77%) 13 (100%)  
**School E\*\*** 8 10  
 (32%) (40%)  
 18 (72%) 2 1  
 (8%) (4%)  
 3 (12%) 21 (84%)  
**School F\*\*\*** 0 1  
 (0%) (5%)  
 1 (5%) 9 9  
 (45%) (45%)  
 18 (90%) 19 (95%)  
**School G** 5 2  
 (21%) (8%)  
 7 (29%) 12 5  
 (50%) (21%)  
 17 (71%) 24 (100%)

**Notes:**

\* There is one male Rotuman teacher (3%).

\*\* There are two female voluntary teachers (8%) and one male Filipino teacher (4%) and one male Rotuman teacher (4%).

\*\*\* There is one female part ethnic Fijian and part Indo-Fijian teacher (5%).

Clearly, the ethnic composition of teaching staffs reflected well ethnic differences in management and leadership of the school (see Table 42 in Chapter Four). For example, a majority of teaching staff at Schools B, D and G was Indo-Fijian (see Table 43 above). Both schools had Indo-Fijian management and leadership. Most obviously, School F was an Indo-Fijian religious school, so that of 20 teaching staff, there was only one ethnic Fijian part-time teacher teaching the ethnic Fijian language. The rest, (95%), were all Indo-Fijian teachers, including one part ethnic Fijian and part Indo-Fijian teacher. By contrast, School E had more than 70% ethnic Fijian teachers, because this was a purely ethnic Fijian school, whose management and leadership were all ethnic Fijians. School C also had both ethnic Fijian management and leadership, but the teaching staff was racially well integrated (40% ethnic Fijian and 60% Indo-Fijian teachers). This was partly because previously, the school had an Indo-Fijian Principal, who appointed many Indo-Fijian teachers during his term. School A was most racially integrated, due to the Methodist management. Despite the fact that over 66.5% of ethnic Fijians in Fiji are Methodist (see Chapter Two), the school appointed not only an ethnic Fijian Principal, but also a Principal from another ethnic background. Currently, the school has a Rotuman

Principal, but previously, there was an Indo-Fijian Principal. Prior to this, an ethnic Fijian Principal had been appointed. In general then, flexibility in school management was reflected by the ethnic composition of leadership and teaching staff.

The ethnic composition of teaching staffs also reflected, to some extent, ethnic

differences of students at the school (see Table 44 below).

Table 44: Total Enrolment by Ethnicity & Gender (Number & Percentage), 2004

School Ethnic Fijians		
Male	Female	
Total	Indo-Fijians	
Male	Female	
Total	Grant	Total
School A *	98	132
(19%)	(26%)	
230	(45%)	137
(27%)	(28%)	
280	(55%)	510
		(100%)
School B**	139	182
(16%)	(21%)	
321	(37%)	268
(31%)	(32%)	
549	(63%)	870
		(100%)
School C	62	68
(25%)	(27%)	
130	(52%)	87
(35%)	(13%)	
120	(48%)	250
		(100%)
School D	39	43
(19%)	(21%)	
82	(40%)	61
(29%)	(31%)	
124	(60%)	206
		(100%)
School E***	122	120
(51%)	(49%)	
242	(100%)	N/A
		N/A
		242
		(100%)
School F	40	61
(11%)	(17%)	
101	(28%)	126
(36%)	(36%)	
251	(72%)	352
		(100%)
School G	96	95
(23%)	(22%)	
191	(45%)	104
(24%)	(31%)	
238	(55%)	429
		(100%)

**Notes:**

\* The school has five forms, from Form 3 to Form 7.

\*\* The school has seven forms, from Form 1 to Form 7.

\*\*\* Of this total enrolment, 35% (85 students) are boarders; 44 male (52%) and 41 female (48%) boarders.

Table 44 above indicates that the ethnic composition of school enrolments was, to some extent, paralleled by that of the teaching staff. In particular, the lower secondary level, such as Form 4, may indicate more accurately the ethnic proportion of the school; since generally the higher the level students go to, the more they tend to drop out of the school (see Table 22 in Chapter Two). Therefore it is pertinent to examine the ethnic composition of form-four students and teaching staff at each school in more detail.

Table 45: Fourth Form Enrolments by Ethnicity &amp; Gender (Number &amp; Percentage), 2004

School Ethnic Fijians		
Male	Female	
Total Indo-Fijians		
Male	Female	
Total Grand Total		
School A	20	24
	(16%)	(20%)
44	(36%)	33
	(27%)	(37%)
79	(64%)	123
		(100%)
School B	24	36
	(15%)	(23%)
60	(38%)	46
	(30%)	(32%)
95	(62%)	155
		(100%)
School C	4	11
	(9%)	(23%)
15	(32%)	14
	(30%)	(38%)
32	(68%)	47
		(100%)
School D	6	7
	(16%)	(18%)
13	(34%)	14
	(37%)	(29%)
25	(66%)	38
		(100%)
School E	41	38
	(52%)	(48%)
79	(100%)	N/A
		N/A
79		79
		(100%)
School F	11	9
	(13%)	(11%)
20	(24%)	32
	(39%)	(37%)
62	(76%)	82
		(100%)
School G	17	13
	(26%)	(16%)
30	(40%)	24
	(31%)	(27%)
45	(60%)	75
		(100%)

Table 45 above indicates that School F had a majority of Indo-Fijian fourth-form students, i.e. in 2004, Indo-Fijian enrolments were over 3.16 times greater than their ethnic Fijian peers. This was also because the school was based on the Indo-Fijian religious management, viz: an Arya Samaji organisation. Hence the school organises any functions and ceremonies in the Arya Samaji religious way. Arya Samaji is one of the Indian religions, therefore the school consists of many Indo-Fijian students. Table 44 above indicates that nearly 2.6 times more Indo-Fijians attended the school compared with their ethnic Fijian peers in 2004. Furthermore, over 7.1 times more Indo-Fijians were enrolled in Form 7 than their ethnic Fijian counterparts (see Table 54 below).

Moreover, a majority of teaching staff consisted of Indo-Fijians (see Table 43 above). Most students at Schools B, C, D and G, were also Indo-Fijian, not only because of Indo-Fijian management (Schools B, D and G) but also because in these regions there were belts of sugar cane plantations where many Indo-Fijian farmers worked and lived with their families. Thus the local characteristics were reflected in the school enrolment. Generally speaking, Indo-Fijian parents wish to send their children to the Indo-Fijian managed schools. This is reflected in the ethnic proportion of the school's enrolment. A purely ethnic Fijian school (School E), was the most obvious example in this regard. There were no Indo-Fijian students, despite the school regulations which accept students from all ethnic backgrounds.

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There is another factor underpinning the ethnic composition of school enrolment. School B for example, had an Indo-Fijian oriented primary section located within the same school compound: 59 Indo-Fijian (89%) and only 7 ethnic Fijian students (11%) at class 6 in 2003. This primary school had a sister relationship with School B, so that most graduates from this primary school enter School B. Hence the school's enrolment tended to be predominantly Indo-Fijians.

What of academic qualifications of the teaching staff at these seven secondary schools? Tables 46 and 47 below indicate that Indo-Fijian teachers were more highly qualified than their ethnic Fijian counterparts.

Table 46: Ethnic Fijian Teachers by Qualifications (Number & Percentage), 2004  
School (Total & Percentage) Ethnic Fijian Teachers

School	Total	D	D/T	T/D	T	T/T	T/C
School A (12 Teachers & 33.3%)	12	1	1	3	6	1	N/A
	(2.8%)	(2.8%)	(8.3%)	(16.6%)	(2.8%)		
School B (8 Teachers & 21%)	8	1	3	N/A	3	1	N/A
	(2.6%)	(7.9%)	(7.9%)	(2.6%)			
School C (10 Teachers & 40%)	10	3	1	4	2		
	(12%)	(4%)	(16%)	(8%)			
School D (3 Teachers & 23.1%)	3	1	2				
	(7.7%)	(15.4%)					
School E (18 Teachers & 78.2%)	18	**	3	3	9	3	
	(12.9%)	(12.9%)	(38.7%)	(12.9%)			
School F (1 Teacher & 5 %)	1	***	N/A				
School G (7 Teaches & 29%)	7	2	4	1			
	(9%)	(16%)	(4%)				

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Table 47: Indo-Fijian Teachers by Qualifications (Number & Percentage), 2004  
School (Total & Percentage) Indo-Fijian Teachers

School	Total	D	D/T	T/D	T	T/T	T/C
School A (23 Teachers & 63.9%)	23	16	2	1	4		
	(44.4%)	(5.5%)	(2.8%)	(11.2%)			
School B (30 Teachers & 78.9%)	30	9	2	8	9	2	
	(23.7%)	(5.2%)	(21.1%)	(23.7%)	(5.2%)		
School C (15 Teachers & 60%)	15	6	3	3	3		
	(24%)	(12%)	(12%)	(12%)			
School D (10 Teachers & 76.9%)	10	6	3	1			
	(46.1%)	(23.1%)	(7.7%)				
School E (3 Teachers & 12.9%)	3	**	1	2			
	(4.3%)	(8.6%)					

School F (18 Teachers & 90%) \*\*\* 9 1 4 4  
(45%) (5%) (20%) (20%)

School G (17 Teachers & 71%) 8 2 5 2  
(33%) (8%) (22%) (8%)

**Notes:**

- D denotes university degree holders (mostly Bachelor's Degree).
- D/T denotes a university degree and teaching diploma holders.
- T/D denotes any tertiary certificates other than a teaching certificate and university degree holder.
- T denotes teaching diploma holders.
- T/T denotes a teaching diploma and any tertiary certificates holders.
- T/C denotes a tertiary certificate with a teaching subject.

\* There is one male Rotuman teacher; hence the school has a total of 36 teachers.

\*\* There are one male Rotuman teacher, one male Filipino teacher, and two female voluntary teachers from the Japanese Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). Thus, the school consisted a total of 25 teachers.

\*\*\* There is one female ethnic Fijian teacher who has a secondary school diploma (i.e., Form 7) and one female part-ethnic Fijian and part Indo-Fijian teacher, hence the school has a total of 20 teachers.

As discussed earlier (see Chapter Two), more Indo-Fijian teachers had a university degree compared with their ethnic Fijian peers. Some Indo-Fijian teachers held both a university degree and another tertiary qualification - such as a teaching diploma and a computer certificate. At most schools, more ethnic Fijian teachers held a teaching diploma than their Indo-Fijian peers. Indo-Fijian teachers' higher qualifications were mirrored in ethnic differences in the academic performance amongst students from these seven secondary schools. The next section analyses ethnic differences in academic performance in the province.

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## **Academic Performance in Seven Secondary Schools in the Nadroga/Navosa Province**

### ***Examination Results***

Details of external examination results by ethnicity and gender at Schools A, B, C and D are indicated, because the survey was applied to these four schools alone. Table 48 and 49 below indicate that amongst both boys and girls, Indo-Fijian students performed better than their ethnic Fijian peers in the FFSE in 2004. At School A, ethnic differences between the examinations pass rate of ethnic Fijians and their Indo-Fijian peers were: 4.6% and 11.9% percentage points different for boys and girls respectively. At School B, the differences were much greater: 42% and 37.4% percentage points different for boys and girls respectively. It should be noted that among these seven secondary schools, four schools offering seventh form in 2004, (Schools A, B, F & G), but since 2005, School C has also begun to offer a Form 7 education.

Table 48: Fiji Form Seven Examination (FFSE) Results by Ethnicity (Boys), 2004

School

Ethnic Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

School A 12 73.8 57.3 20 78.4 60.9

School B 8 24.5 45.1 24 66.5 60.0

School C N/A N/A

School D N/A N/A

Table 49: Fiji Form Seven Examination (FFSE) Results by Ethnicity (Girls), 2004

School

Ethnic Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

School A 19 61.9 57.7 24 73.8 61.0

School B 9 34.8 48.8 29 72.2 58.5

School C N/A N/A

School D N/A N/A

Significantly, female ethnic Fijian seventh-form examination results at School A were markedly superior to those of School B (see Table 49 above). Male ethnic Fijian student pass rates in the same examinations were more than three times higher than those of

School B (see Table 48 above). Clearly, student performances at School A were much better than that of School B.

Results of the sixth form external examinations (the FSLC Examinations in 2004) indicate as follows (see Tables 50 & 51 below).

Table 50: Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examination Results by Ethnicity (Boys), 2004

School

Ethnic Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

School A 29 68.6 51.8 35 89.2 65.3

School B 35 38.8 46.9 35 63.7 58.3

School C 5 15.7 36.3 11 68.3 51.1

School D 8 21.0 43.4 14 30.5 48.5

Table 51: Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examination Results by Ethnicity (Girls), 2004

School

Ethnic Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

School A 29 60.3 51.8 36 75.4 61.1

School B 20 36.9 48.8 48 59.7 53.7

School C 13 30.9 43.4 11 43.8 49.3  
 School D 6 12.4 40.6 12 72.2 61.8

Evidentially, Indo-Fijian students performed better than their ethnic Fijian peers at all these racially integrated schools in 2004. School A performed best of all these secondary schools across genders. However the significant fact is that even amongst the same ethnic group, performances differed considerably from school to school. The pass rate of male ethnic Fijians from School A was more than 4.36 times higher than that of School C. The pass rate of female ethnic Fijians from School A was even higher than that of School D: the female performance at School A marked over 4.86 times higher than that of School D. Although the difference between the pass rates amongst female Indo-Fijians from Schools A and D was modest, male performance of these two schools was significantly different from each other. The pass rate of male Indo-Fijians from School A scored over 2.92 times higher than that of School D.

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How about ethnic differences at Form 4? Tables 52 and 53 below indicate results of the FJC Examinations in 2004.

Table 52: Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC) Examination Results by Ethnicity (Boys), 2004

School

Ethnic Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

School A 20 84.2 56.7 33 97.9 71.0

School B 32 64.3 56.8 47 73.2 60.5

School C 4 50.0 56.0 14 83.4 61.9

School D 6 33.3 47.9 14 79.9 60.3

Table 53: Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC) Examination Results by Ethnicity (Girls), 2004

School

Ethnic Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

School A 24 91.4 65.1 46 94.7 71.5

School B 36 71.6 57.3 49 86.7 65.9

School C 11 89.4 56.5 18 88.8 66.1

School D 7 88.1 57.1 11 71.7 62.8

Among male students, Indo-Fijians performed better than their ethnic Fijian peers (see Table 52 above). In particular, at Schools C and D, ethnic differences between the pass rates of male ethnic Fijians and their Indo-Fijian peers were significant. Significant differences were evident between the pass rates amongst male ethnic Fijians and their Indo-Fijian peers at School C, such that male Indo-Fijian “success” rates were over 1.6 times higher than their ethnic Fijian peers. At School D, ethnic differences between the pass rates of these two groups were even more considerable - male Indo-Fijian “success”

rates were approximately 2.4 times higher than their ethnic Fijian peers. Like the FSLC Examination results, School A produced the best performers of both boys and girls at these seven secondary schools.

Another significant fact was that, at Schools C and D, female ethnic Fijians performed better than their Indo-Fijian peers (see Table 53 above). In particular, at School D, the difference between the pass rate of female ethnic Fijians and their Indo-Fijian peers was 16.4% percentage points different. At School A, ethnic differences between the pass rates of female ethnic Fijians and their Indo-Fijian peers were modest at 3.3%. However at

106 School B, female Indo-Fijians performed much better than their ethnic Fijian peers; ethnic differences in the pass rate were 15.1%. Ethnic differences between the pass rates among female ethnic Fijian students and their Indo-Fijian peers at Schools A and C were modest: the differences were 3.3% and 0.6% for Schools A and C respectively. The next section describes the retention rate in the province.

**Retention Rate**

Table 54 below indicates the higher retention rate among Indo-Fijian students than their ethnic Fijian peers in 2004.

Table 54: Seventh Form Enrolments by Ethnicity & Gender (Number & Percentage), 2004

School	Ethnic Fijians	Male	Female	Total	Indo-Fijians	Male	Female	Total	Grand Total			
School A	12	19	(16%)	(25%)	31	20	24	(27%)	(32%)	44	75	(100%)
School B	8	9	(12%)	(13%)	17	24	29	(34%)	(41%)	53	70	(100%)
School C	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
School D	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
School E	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
School F	2	3	(4.8%)	(7.1%)	5	20	17	(47.6%)	(40.5%)	37	42	(100%)
School G	3	14	(6.5%)	(30.5%)	17	10	19	(22%)	(41%)	29	46	(100%)

At School F, the Indo-Fijian seventh-form enrolments were over 7.1 times higher than those of their ethnic Fijian peers. At School B, the number of Indo-Fijian seventh-formers

was 3 times higher than that of their ethnic Fijian peers. At School A, over 1.4 times more Indo-Fijians were enrolled in Form 7 than their ethnic Fijian peers.

Similarly, at the sixth-form level, more Indo-Fijian students were enrolled than their ethnic Fijian peers at all these secondary schools in 2004 (see Table 55 below).

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Table 55: Sixth Form Enrolments by Ethnicity & Gender (Number & Percentage), 2004

School	Ethnic Fijians	Male	Female	Total Indo-Fijians	Male	Female	Total Grand Total
School A	29	29		29	29		58
	(22%)	(22%)		(44.9%)	(27%)	(28%)	71
School B	35	20		55	35	48	83
	(25%)	(15%)		(39.8%)	(25%)	(35%)	138
School C	5	13		18	11	11	22
	(13%)	(33%)		(46.0%)	(27%)	(27%)	40
School D	8	6		14	14	12	26
	(20%)	(15%)		(35.0%)	(35%)	(30%)	40
School E	24	26		50	N/A	N/A	50
	(48%)	(52%)		(100%)	N/A	N/A	50
School F	6	11		17	15	28	43
	(10%)	(18%)		(28.0%)	(25%)	(47%)	60
School G	11	16		27	6	12	18
	(25%)	(35%)		(60.0%)	(13%)	(27%)	45

In particular, at school F, over 2.5 times more Indo-Fijians were enrolled in Form 6 than their ethnic Fijian peers. Likewise, at School D, over 1.8 times more Indo-Fijians were enrolled than their ethnic Fijian peers. School B had over 1.5 times more Indo-Fijians than their ethnic Fijian peers, and Schools A and C had over 1.2 times more Indo-Fijians than their ethnic Fijian peers (see Table 55 above).

In conclusion, both in external examination results and in the retention rate, Indo-Fijian students outstripped their ethnic Fijian peers. This trend is echoed, to some degree, by ethnic differences in academic performance at the national level (see Chapter Two). The next section discusses institutional factors influencing differences in academic achievement.

### **Discussion**

Researchers like Veramu (1986), Singh (1991) and Tavola (1991) argued that institutional factors, such as the quality of Principal leadership, was more important than ethnic backgrounds in influencing their performances (see Chapter Three). Tavola (1991) argued:

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In Fiji, the role principal is perceived as one of high authority; therefore, such position holders have much power vested in them. In both Fijian and Indian cultures, status and authority hold great sway. Principals are the proverbial captains of the ships - they have the capacity to steer the ship on a course that will weather the storms. Society in Fiji watches the changing fortunes of schools closely. When school reputations and fortunes go down or come up, the principals are normally held responsible" (p. 82).

The present fieldwork also suggests that school leadership plays a significant role in influencing students' achievements.

### ***School Leadership***

The retention rate is a measurement of student academic achievement (Chen & Stevens, 1995). School A produced the highest retention rate among ethnic Fijian seventh-formers, in both boys and girls, in all of the secondary schools in the province in 2004 - more than 1.6 times higher than School B, and over 3.4 times higher than School F (see Table 54 above). Furthermore, School A had the highest pass rate amongst the ethnic Fijian seventh-formers in 2004 (see Tables 48 & 49 above). Why could School A encourage so many ethnic Fijians to excel at the upper secondary level? The key reasons were that the Principal from School A encouraged students by providing them with many internal examinations throughout the academic year, and that the school offered extra coaching to students, in addition to their regular classes. According to the male Rotuman Principal from School A:

We have evening classes. Actually, it is a study. We have realised difficulties of these two (neighbouring ethnic Fijian) villages in terms of students doing homework at their home. So, we have opened up our classroom for them at night. It is not compulsory, but it is very good attendance. Sometimes, it depends on the subject for the night. I have noticed that if tonight is Mathematics, a big crowd will turn up [laugh]. They have a lot of problems in Mathematics. We also have Saturday Classes. Even after school, some weak students have extra coaching - tutoring. In fact, our teachers come back according to their availability [Interview SAP/1, ( ) is mine].

Saturday Classes were provided for Forms 4, 6 and 7 students to revise and prepare for their external examinations. The Saturday classes were offered on a normal school-hours basis, from 8:00a.m to 3:00p.m. Significantly, these Evening, and Saturday Classes are

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free-of-charge, and teachers were there to supervise the students on a voluntary basis. As the Principal mentioned, School A was willing to support academically weak students

The male Indo-Fijian teacher from School A further explained:

We give weaker students extra work or extra assistance. Or sometimes,

we put weaker students together and give them individual attentions during the class. Students come to attend evening classes after 7:00 and finish about 10:00 from Monday to Friday. Teachers are there for every subject and every level, especially exam classes: Form 4, Form 6 and Form 7. Students have to bring some questions in order for us to give them individual assistance. Sometimes, students don't bring the questions, so teachers set some task sheets and give them to students. They do them at home and bring them over for the discussion during the evening session (Interview SAT/3).

In addition to the Principal's involvement in providing students with extra classes, such as Evening and Saturday Classes, caring for academically weak students is one of the key factors promoting the school academic performance (see Fullan, 1992; Harris, Day, Hadfield, Hopkins, Hargreaves & Chapman, 2003).

Likewise, the Principal from School F also encouraged academically weak students, by providing them with extra tutoring. The male Indo-Fijian principal explained:

I am very concerned about weaker students. We take them to extra classes, additional classes outside the normal class. The normal class starts from 8:30 to 3:40. Now, we are getting closer to external examinations. We take some classes from 8:00 to 8:30 for Form 4, 6 and 7. Also, in the afternoon, from 3:40 to 4:10, we take other extra classes. We also have Saturday Classes. We also take some Holiday Classes. They are for everybody. We take some separate classes during the school hours for weaker students. But, teachers do not get paid to teach extra classes (Interview SFP/1).

Students were encouraged to attend extra classes. In particular, Form 4, 6 and 7 students had to sit for short tests regularly and five internal examinations, in addition to the external examinations. The Principal encouraged all students to participate in English, Mathematics, and Science Competitions from time to time, organised both nationally and internationally. Some students did very well in these competitions. For example, in the Mathematics Competition organised by the Fiji Mathematics Association in 2003, one student was awarded the Special Prize and three students were awarded the Distinctions.

In the Australian Mathematics Competition, a student was awarded the Special Prize and thirteen students were awarded Distinctions. In the Team Mathematics Competition, three teams were awarded the Consolation Prize. Another student came second in the English Oratory Competition held in the Nadroga/Navosa Province. In the Hindi Oratory Competition, a student came second in the province.

Furthermore, the school was chosen for one of the pilot studies carried out by the Ministry of Education in 2003 and 2004. Under this project, fourth-formers were assessed both internally and externally for Form 3 and Form 4 respectively. The FJC Examination results became worth 50%, and the rest was assessed internally at Form 3 (see Chapter Two). This might help both ethnic students promote their performances. The Principal further explained:

Internal assessment carries certain percentage of marks towards the final assessment in examinations. People have to work and concentrate throughout the year, because it is a continuing assessment. But I think it's a more fair system than just having a two-hour examination (i.e., FJC Examinations). The new assessment gives a true picture of performance of a student [Interview SFP/1, ( ) is mine].

Furthermore, the Principal encouraged parents to be aware of the children's performances. The school provided 12 Parents' Days in 2004. Teachers and parents met,

and discussed a child's performance. Consequently, the teachers' workload increased. A female Indo-Fijian from School F admitted, "We get a lot of pressure from our Principal that we produce better exam results!" (Interview SFT/1). However the Principal argued: We found that teachers are quite committed. They know that if they perform well, they will have a chance to promote. In our school, we have grant-in-aid teachers: community paid teachers. They are paid by the school committee: 80% paid by the government and 20% paid by the school committee. I think that this is a strong factor to encourage teachers to do well. They have a chance of re-employment the following year! (Interview SFP/1)

Teachers also play a very important role in the promoting of the student performances. Under the Principal's strong leadership, School F became a very academically orientated secondary school in such a short period of time since its establishment in 1998.

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The Principals from both Schools A and F have successfully promoted their students' academic achievement over the years. School A has been the most "successful" in promoting both ethnic groups' achievement in 2004 (see Tables 48, 49, 50, 51, 52 & 53 above).

Like the FSLC Examination results, School A produced the best performers of both boys and girls among these seven secondary schools. At School A, ethnic differences between the pass rates of female ethnic Fijians and their Indo-Fijian peers were modest at 3.3%. Not only in 2004, but also in 2003, the school had the highest pass rate in both the FJC and FSLC Examinations in the seven schools (see Tables 56 & 57 below).

Table 56: Fiji Junior Certificate Examination Results in Nadroga/Navosa Province, 2003

School	No. Sat	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Passed	Highest Mark	Lowest Mark	No. Over 500 Marks	Average
School A	130	124	6	95.38	559	221	13	402.58
School B	177	130	47	73.4	553	172	8	358.48
School C	48	41	7	85.4	549	239	1	362.3
School D	39	32	7	82.05	515	243	1	361.56
School E	33	27	6	81.8	459	274	N/A	338.9
School G	52	46	6	88.4	531	273	4	376.3

Table 57: Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examination Results in Nadroga/Navosa Province, 2003

School	No. Sat	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Passed	Highest Mark	Lowest Mark	No. Over 300 Marks	Average
School A	131	102	29	77.86	344	155	18	242.3
School B	139	80	59	57.55	358	138	11	219.4
School C	41	20	21	51.2	302	143	1	200.6
School D	42	20	22	47.6	306	139	2	200.9
School E	44	15	29	34.0	267	148	N/A	190.79
School G	40	27	13	67.5	331	126	3	230.8

**Notes:**

- Results at School F were not recorded in these lists (Table 8 & 9 above).

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Similarly, School F had the highest pass rate in the FFSE in 2003 in this region, despite the fact that the Form Seven started only in 2002 (see Table 58 below).

Table 58: Fiji Form Seven Examination (FFSE) Results in Nadroga/Navosa Province, 2003

School	No. Sat	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Passed	Highest Mark	Lowest Mark	No. Over 300
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## Marks

### Average

School A 75 57 18 76.00 337 170 7 240.08

School B 70 50 20 71.42 334 167 6 234.58

School F 39 35 4 89.74 323 169 1 231.35

School G 46 24 22 52.17 309 148 1 211.65

The school's pass rate was more than 1.4 times higher than School G in an urban area and nearly 1.3 times higher than School B in a semi urban area. It was 1.2 times higher than School A in a mostly urban area and was considered the most academic school in the province.

It is important to note that the present research suggests that institutional factors are more important than geographical factors to promote better student performances. Although School A is located approximately 500 metres away from the Sigatoka Town border, some students live in very remote areas such as the Kavanagasau region and the Valley Road areas, approximately 16 to 20 kilometres away from the Sigatoka Town. Also, School F is located in a very rural area, approximately 25 kilometres away from the Sigatoka Town. Notwithstanding my discussion in Chapter Two, some rural schools can perform as well as urban schools.

Similarly, the predominantly ethnic Fijian secondary school (School E) had improved its performance over the years, despite the fact that the school is located in a semi-urban area, approximately 7 kilometres away from the Sigatoka Town. Table 59 below indicates that from 2001 to 2003, the FJC Examination results had been improved significantly in English, Mathematics, Basic Science, Social Science and Economics.

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Table 59: Results of the Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC) Examinations by Subject (Mean Mark) 2001-2003

Subject	2001	2002	2003
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English	42	60	76
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Mathematics	25	58	70
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Basic Science	33	58	82
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Economics	62	69	70
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Agricultural Studies	23	32	47
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English examination results in 2003 were 1.8 times higher than in 2001. For Mathematics, it was nearly 3 times higher than in 2001. Basic Science improved 2.4 times, and Economics 2 times.

The major reasons why this school had improved fourth-form performances were: (1) the Principal made the class sizes smaller. By 2002, there had been two fourth-form classes, and each class had approximately 35 students. However in 2003, the Principal set up one more class for this form, viz: 26, 23 and 30 people for each class. This helped the teachers pay more attention to individual students and retain a more of a personal touch with her/him. Therefore, teachers became able to care for each student's work more closely. This also helped most students participate in class discussions more actively. (2) Teachers spent longer hours on students' work than before. By 2002, under the Principal's supervision, the school had been offering Saturday Classes for fourth- and sixth-formers to prepare for the FJC and the FSLC Examinations. In addition, since 2003, the school has begun to offer Evening Classes from Monday to Friday. Initially, the Evening Classes were provided only for boarders, however the Principal decided that,

since 2004, the classes were opened to students from nearest villages, too. For these students, the school arranged transportation, such as a mini bus, in order for these students to go home safely after the class. At both Saturday and Evening Classes, the Principal advised subject teachers to be always there to supervise students in their revisional work and preparation for the next class. The Principal believed that the smaller class size for the fourth form students and extra classes, such as Evening and Saturday Classes, assisted students in promoting their academic performance significantly, and they would eventually be able to reduce ethnic differences in academic achievement in Fiji. The male ethnic Fijian Principal explained:

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The number one factor contributing to bridge the gap between the academic performance of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians is the leadership at the school, which is something to do with the leader's motive and objectives (Interview SEP/1)

He clearly understood that the school leadership had the potential to reduce ethnic difference in academic achievement. Like the Principals from Schools A and F, he also believed that teachers are very important factors contributing to promote students' performance. He further explained:

Teachers are committed and very much dedicated to the work and they did some sacrifice in terms of giving their extra time in the afternoon and in the evening, and doing extra tutorial work. Teachers had the classes after school hours for free for Form 4 students (Interview SEP/1).

One of male teachers from School E added:

Under our Principal's direction, we've been trying to work really hard to improve the school results (Interview SET/4).

As a result, student examination results became significantly better over the years. It should be noted that, as discussed in Chapter Two, this school received a substantial amount of financial aid from the government in 2002 under the Affirmative Action Programs. The school could offer transports and Evening Classes to students after the class.

By contrast, School B had the lowest pass rates in the FJC Examinations in the province in 2003 (see Table 8 above). It is significant to note that the school had a higher Indo-Fijian population than School A. For example, School B had more Indo-Fijian seventh formers and teaching staff than School A had in 2004 (see Table 60 below).

Table 59: Ethnic Composition of Seventh Formers & Academic Staff at Schools A & B (Number & Percentage), 2004

School Ethnic Fijians

Enrolments Academic Staff

Indo-Fijians

Enrolments Academic Staff

School A 31 (41%) 16 (45%) 44 (59%) 19 (54%)

School B 17 (25%) 8 (20%) 53 (75%) 32 (80%)

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This means clearly that predominantly Indo-Fijian schools such as School B failed to produce high achievers in the FJC Examinations (see Table 56 above), despite the following circumstances: (1) the teaching staffs' academic qualifications did not differ significantly from School A to School B (see Tables 46 & 47 above); and (2) a number of students come from large urban areas such as the Sigatoka Town and the Olosara area,

approximately less than 1 kilometre away from School A. The students who live in Olosara pass School A to get to School B, although School B is located in a semi-urban area. As discussed earlier, geographical differences are not as important as institutional factors.

Why has School B failed to encourage students to excel academically over the years? The school did not support academically weak students sufficiently. The male Indo-Fijian Principal from School B explained:

Low achievers are dealt with by the vice-principal, the assistant principal, the head of department and even the principal. They call them and advise them. Questions are asked why they did not perform well in classes and tests in particular. In addition, we take tests if they don't do them well. We take exercises on the same subjects that have been taught and have been tested and haven't done well (Interview SBP/1).

But the Principal provided neither Evening Classes nor Saturday Classes for students. Furthermore the students were committed to extra school curricula such as functions and ceremonies according to the Principal's plan. A male Rotuman teacher from the neighbouring secondary school explained:

One of the reasons why they (i.e., School B) had a low percentage of pass rates over the exam was because they had lots of distractions last year. They constantly had extra curricula programs, which sometimes took the whole one week. Because I have a friend over there, and sometimes he came and told me that, for whole one week, they had no classes. Most of their time, they prepared for the program like organising the Open Day, so they couldn't have classes. This affected their results last year [Interview SET/4, ( ) is mine].

The Principal organised the Open Day only two months prior to the FJC Examinations in 2003. The Open Day was relatively a new event for the school. One of the reasons why

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they started this event was because, since School F was opened in 1998, enrolments at School B had dropped. Some students from School B had transferred to School F, because some students had to travel some distance to get to School B. The better the academic results School F had produced, the more students from School B had moved there. Therefore the Principal from School B had to make the school more attractive to local students. The Open Day was one of expressions of the school's eagerness to recruit students. However these extra curricular programs affected student studies. As a result, their performance qualities had dropped. The Principal organised the Open Day at the end of September in 2004, too. It was only 6 weeks prior to external examinations. The school spent one week on their preparation for the event. During the preparations, the school did not provide any classes for any students. In addition, the Principal organised many other events for students during the academic year, such as the Inter House Athletics Day (i.e., all the students participated in the event), the College Sports Awards Day (i.e., a special day for all the top students in sports and they were acknowledged), the College Annual Prize Giving Day (i.e., students were awarded prizes for their outstanding

performance in examinations) and the Language Week and its Celebration Day. Students' involvement in many school ceremonies and functions distracted them from their concentration on their study.

It should be noted that School B had its primary division located in the same school compound. The academic performances at this primary school were not as high as School

A's primary division (see further discussions below). In 2003, the school ranked the 15<sup>th</sup> in FIE results in the province. Moreover most ethnic Fijian pupils whom School B had recruited were graduates from neighbouring predominantly ethnic Fijian schools, whose academic performances were either average or below average.

On the other hand, most ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian students at School A were graduates of its related primary school, located in the same school compound as School A. The Methodist Church managed both primary and secondary schools, so that this primary school acted an "escalator" to send its graduates to this secondary school. As mentioned earlier, over 66.5% of the ethnic Fijian population are Methodist (see Chapter 117

Two), thus the school attracted many ethnic Fijian children and their parents. In 2005, the school enrolment consists of 431 ethnic Fijian (49%) and 450 Indo-Fijian children (51%). Importantly, both ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian students at this primary school relatively performed well, compared with the national average in external examinations, such as the FIE and the FEYE. In 2003, the school had 98% pass rates in the FIE. As a result, the school came fourth out of 59 primary schools in the province. In 2004, the school produced 100% pass rates in the both examinations (see Table 61 below).

Table 61: Results of the Fiji Intermediate Examinations (FIE) & Fiji Eight-Year Examinations (FEYE) in 2004

External Examinations No. Sat. No. Passed Pass %

FIE 115 115 100

FEYE 96 96 100

The highest mark in the FIE was 487 out of 500 (97.4%) in the following five subjects: English Comprehension; English Composition; Mathematics; General Subjects; and Hindi. The highest mark in the FEYE was 484 out of 500 (96.8%) in English, Mathematics, Basic Science, Social Science and Hindi. The top student in the FIE was an Indo-Fijian boy and in the FEYE, it was an Indo-Fijian girl. Indo-Fijian girls came second and third in the FIE. An Indo-Fijian boy and girl came second and third in the FEYE respectively. Students were used to taking many internal examinations throughout the academic year in order to prepare for these external examinations. For example, students at Class 6 took the following short revision every Friday: English Comprehension; English Composition; Mathematics; General Subjects such as Health Science and Elementary Science; and either Fijian or Hindi. The results were usually returned on following Monday. Students' academic performance during their primary school days may also predict their future performance at the secondary school level.

How about School D? Despite its rural location (i.e., the school is located approximately 16 kilometres away from the Sigatoka Town), School D's FJC pass rate in 2003 was 82% (see Table 56 above). Under the leadership of its principal, the school offered both Saturday and Holiday Classes. The male Indo-Fijian Principal from School D explained:

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Considering the time factor, the bus timing, it is difficult to offer Evening Classes. So, what we do is that we offer Holiday Classes to Form 4 and Form 6. In two week-holidays, we did in the first term. We did it for Form 4 and Form 6. Then, they came. Then, in the last term, we had two weekbreak. We had classes. We run Saturday Classes for Form 4 and Form 6.

Each period has one hour, instead of 40 minutes. If we do not do that, the failure rate is high. Our pass rate of FJC and FSLC is not bad compared to the nation (Interview SDP/1).

The school produced better results in the FJC examinations in 2003 than those from School B, which is located in a more urban setting than School D (see Table 56 above). The most rurally located school in the Nadroga/Navosa Province (i.e., School C), approximately 35 kilometres away from the Sigatoka Town, had the third highest pass rate in the FJC examinations in 2003, which was (much higher than that from School B; see Table 56 above). For academically weak students, the Principal's arranged different fourth form classes for different ethnic groups. The male ethnic Fijian Principal explained:

We now have a group of students here according to the race. If students cannot understand concepts in English, they are to translate them into their own language. Once they understand the concepts, they go back into English. So, 403 is an Indian stream. 402 is a Fijian stream. 401 is a mixed stream for those who are targeting either A Grade or B Grade. It's working. It's working! (Interview SCP/1)

The Principal believed that ethnic Fijian students should be taught in the culturally appropriate way, and this would encourage them to work more effectively. He further explained:

I think Fijians should be taught the Fijian way. We should also respect their culture. We try to encourage them to learn in a group. That's the strength of Fijians but the weakness of Indians. Brighter ones are able to adjust to the way in which Indians are working on their own. But a large number and average and below average of students need to work on their strength. That is the work in a group. You provide students with an opportunity for their culturally appropriate way of learning. Teachers must know how to make Fijian students learn (Interview SCP/1).

As Tierney (1971), Nabobo (1994) and Dakuidreketi (1995) suggested (see Chapter Three), group learning assists ethnic Fijian students in promoting their academic

119 performance. Ethnic Fijians are more comfortable about co-operative learning than individualistic learning which is highly placed by Indo-Fijian culture (Williams, 2000). Co-operative learning is consistent with ethnic Fijian culture, which emphasises the importance of sharing one's knowledge, experiences, times, emotions and even spirits (Nabobo, 2001). Ethnic Fijian culture is communal and group-oriented (Ravuvu, 1988). Through group learning, ethnic Fijian students could study in culturally appropriate way (see Veramu, 1992). The Principal from School C provided students with the culturally appropriate way of learning. The ethnic Fijian culture also stresses the establishment of interpersonal relationship and rapport (Puamau, 1999). The Principal from School C further explained:

Interpersonal relationship is very important. That's Fijian culture. It's a cooperative way. If the relationship between teachers and students are good, they will respond positively. You have to respect students. The Fijian way of learning is that you talk to Fijian students as you respect them. You've got to respect them. Once you insult them, they will not respond. They will not respect teachers. And, they will hate teachers. So, I disagree to corporal punishment over students (Interview SCP/1).

The Principal's view is also consistent with Thaman's (1990) suggestion (see Chapter Three). The Principal from School C introduced culturally appropriate ways of learning to the fourth form class. As a result, fourth form academic performance has improved since these classes were introduced in 2001 (see Table 62 below).

Table 62: Fiji Junior Certificate Examination Results (School C) 2000-2003

Year % Passed

2000 53.0

2001 74.0

2002 84.0

2003 85.0

Culturally appropriate school curricula assists students in striving for their academic excellence (see Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003).

Schools A, C, D, E and F made tremendous efforts to assist students in promoting their academic performance, under difficult circumstances: (1) four out of these five schools  
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are located in rural areas; and (2) the schools had limited facilities such as text and library books (and many books were dated), a small number of computers, limited use of photocopiers, old classrooms and so on. School B did not encourage their students to promote their academic performance as much as Schools A, C, D, E and F, although School B had good facilities and physical resources. According to the Principal from School B:

We have resources more than enough. I'm very satisfied that I'm ended up with this school. The management is so good. They provide us with anything we ask for in a few days or on the same day (Interview SBVP/1).

Clearly, Principal leadership is one of the major factors influencing differences in academic achievement.

### ***Teachers***

School B appointed many Indo-Fijian teachers (see Table 43 above): 80% of teachers were Indo-Fijians and the rest were ethnic Fijians in 2004. This could be the situation, which tends to create teacher "effectiveness" and "ineffectiveness" in influencing differences in academic performances. Nevertheless, despite a large number of Indo-Fijian teachers at School B, student performances were not impressive. In particular, ethnic Fijian performances in external examination, such as the FFSE and FSLC, were much lower than those of Indo-Fijians. Results of the FFSE in 2004 indicate that the difference between pass rates of male ethnic Fijians and their Indo-Fijian peers were 42 marks (see Table 48 above). It was more than 37 marks among girls (see Table 49 above). In the FSLC Examinations, this difference was nearly 25 marks among boys (see Table 50 above) and more than 22 marks among girls (see Table 51 above). Why was ethnic Fijian performance significantly lower than Indo-Fijians at School B? As Tuvuki (1992) pointed out, it may be that teachers' expectations influenced ethnic Fijian performances (see Chapter Three). In particular, the stereo-typical and even biased views, towards students by the teachers, play significant roles in influencing student performances. A Principal from School A explained:

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Teachers have a stereotypical attitude towards students! Yes, I've seen that. Even Fijian teachers know when they come into the class, they see a lot of Indian students. They know that they would have a good year. They are happy, because they know that they will do well. But, if you walk into the classroom of all Fijians, they know that they will struggle (Interview SAP/1).

In contrast to School B, the ethnic composition of teaching staff at School A was racially well-integrated (see Table 43 above). This means that students may be treated by teachers more fairly than those at the school consisting of one ethnically-dominated teaching staff.

It is often said that ethnic Fijian teachers favour ethnic Fijian students, as do Indo-Fijian teachers for Indo-Fijian students. A female Indo-Fijian student explained:

I've noticed that most Fijian teachers are anti-Indians. Most Fijian teachers don't like Indian students. Some Fijian teachers are quite rude to Indian students, like the way they talk to students and the way they answer students' questions. Some Fijian teachers have more favour for Fijian students (Interview SAS/3).

On the other hand, some Indo-Fijian teachers do not favour ethnic Fijian students. An ethnic Fijian teacher from School A further explained:

Some teachers, especially Indian teachers, look down on Fijian children. You can say that by the way they talk to children, especially teachers' comment on children's work. It's always negative, you know, if the child is academically not good. The teachers will be off handed in the Fijian class, because he or she already has got an idea that Fijian students are not only academically poor, but also they are not self-disciplined. I would suspect that Indian teachers talk negatively about Fijian children. Teachers already had their stereotypical view towards students. This affects how they teach in the class, because their attitude was already developed psychologically. When the teachers approach the class with their negative attitude, it affects students' learning (Interview SAT/2).

It may be fair to say that if this were the case, the more Indo-Fijian teachers the school had, the more it might affect ethnic Fijian performance and vice versa. School F also appointed many Indo-Fijian teachers: 90% were Indo-Fijians and 5% were ethnic Fijians (see Table 43 above). Despite school "success" in producing high achievers in the FFSE in 2003, most students who passed the examinations were Indo-Fijians. The school roll indicates that there were only 5 ethnic Fijian seventh-formers in 2003 in contrast to 37 Indo-Fijians.

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On the other hand, if the school had many ethnic Fijian teachers, the class might often start late. This affects student performance. As pointed out by Nabobo (2001), the typical ethnic Fijian pattern of behaviour with respect to their time-management is more relaxed than that amongst Indo-Fijians. Many teachers and students often noticed that most ethnic Fijian teachers tend to be late for the school and class. A male Indo-Fijian Principal from School F said:

We have one Fijian language teacher. She takes the Fijian language. We offer the Fijian language up to Form 6. She is working part-time four days a week. She lives in the village. She is very casual about time. She is late for the school may be one or two days every week. She makes all excuses like no transports or waking up late or things like that. And she should learn from the rest members of the staff. And other members of the staff are hardly late for the school (Interview SFP/1).

A female Indo-Fijian student further said:

Fijian teachers are relaxed. Some teachers always come to the class late. Indian teachers are more punctual and organise the class better than Fijian teachers, because their things are always up-to-date. I think that Fijian teachers should improve, because if they are going to give quality of education, Fijian students are going to improve (Interview SAS/3).

A male ethnic Fijian Principal explained the typical ethnic Fijian way of time management in relation to his culture:

I am convinced of one major reason (for ethnic Fijian underachievement). It has something to do with Fijian time management. And managing time is very closely linked with our home village life style. We

Fijians are brought up in very much communal living. We do things together. We are not used to do individualistic way of living [Interview SEP/1, ( ) is mine].

The ethnic composition of teaching staff influences differences in academic achievement. The next section discusses home environment.

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### ***Home Environments***

Researchers such as Nabuka (1983), Sofield (1983) and Dakuidreketi (1995) argued that students' home environment is one of the major factors that influence ethnic differences in the academic achievement. Of 48 participants in my face-to-face interviews, 20 ethnic Fijian respondents (87%), 20 Indo-Fijian informants (91%) and 3 others (100%), such as 2 Rotumans, and 1 part ethnic Fijian and part Indo-Fijian, said that a student's home environment is one of the major factors influencing differences in the academic performance (see Tables 63, 64 & 65 below).

Table 63: Major Factors Influencing Academic Achievement (Ethnic Fijians)

Major Factors cited Response

(N =23)

% Affirmative

Responses

Home Environment 20 87%

Land Issues 19 82%

Affirmative Programs 15 65%

Peer Pressure 21 91%

Regular Church Goers 23 100%

Table 64: Major Factors Influencing Academic Achievement (Indo-Fijians)

Major Factors cited Response

(N=22)

% Affirmative

Responses

Home Environment 20 91%

Land Issues 22 86%

Affirmative Programs 18 82%

Peer Pressure 14 64%

Regular Church Goers N/A N/A

Table 65: Major Factors Influencing Academic Achievement (Rotumans and Part Ethnic & Part Indo-Fijian)

Major Factors cited Response

(N=3)

% Affirmative

Responses

Home Environment 3 100%

Land Issues 3 100%

Affirmative Programs 3 100%

Peer Pressure 3 100%

Regular Church Goers 2 66%

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Home environments are cultural products (see Marzano, 2003), it is therefore necessary

to investigate how cultural values, beliefs, and practices affect school achievements. What does each culture (i.e., ethnic Fijian versus Indo-Fijian culture) expect children to value? Ethnic Fijian culture expects children to develop a strong sense of their loyalty to *vakaturaga* in *vanua* ethos. The concept of *vanua* is of vital importance in understanding their cultural values and beliefs. The term refers to the land area with which a person or a group is identified, i.e., the totality of an ethnic Fijian community. The land is a source, not only of identity, but also of strength, insurance, and livelihood (Nabobo, 2001). In fact, ethnic Fijians hold title to 83% of the archipelago's land, while Indo-Fijian farmers hold long-term leases as farmers (White, 2001 - see Chapter Two). *Vanua* also refers to a group, the members of which relate socially and politically to one another. According to Ravuvu (1987) and Halapua (2003), the term embodies the ethnic Fijian values and beliefs which people of a particular locality have in common. "It includes their philosophy of living, and their beliefs about life in this world and in the supernatural world" (Ravuvu, 1987, p. 15). Life on earth (*varavura*) is closely tied to spiritualism and the supernatural: nature and the heavens. Ewins (1998) explained:

To the Fijians, land is not something that will help them economically; land is everything. It's like God. Everything on that land matters..... They pray to the land..... They call the land *vanua*; that stone, that animal, that insect, all these are part of *vanua*. When the Fijians talk of *vanua*, they are not just talking about acreage, they are talking about everything on that land, which is very sacred to them (p. 153).

Therefore, an appreciation of the cultural *vanua* is the key to one's actions and thought processes. In addition, *vakaturaga* (the chiefly manner) is probably the most important concept among ethnic Fijians, and it refers to actions and personal characteristics befitting the presence of a person of high status, such as a chief and her/his representatives and counterparts. Hence, those who are *vakaturaga* in behaviour know their place in the community, and act appropriately. According to a male ethnic Fijian teacher:

You have to respect your chief, no matter how much you are educated. In some Fijian villages, especially in rural villages, you can't wear a T-shirt when you meet your chief (Interview SAS/1M/1).

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In the head village in each province, people even cannot meet their chief face-to-face straight away. There is an intermediary (*matanivanua*) in the village who delivers a villager's message to the chief. People comply with their various social obligations, their service to others, and respect for those who have defined authority over them. In particular, the practice of respect, especially among *mataqali* (an ethnic Fijian land owning unit, which is an agnatic social unit and usually a lineage of the larger clan), is an important aspect of the *vakaturaga* concept. Like *vakaturaga*, *mataqali* is also a very important division within ethnic Fijian society. Members of the *mataqali* are responsible for caring for orphans, illegitimate children, and elders who belong to it. The *mataqali* is a group whose communal activities cover many aspects of ethnic Fijian village life. (Geddes, 2000).

Practically speaking, one's involvement in communal activities in the village, such as preparation and attendance at ceremonies like funerals and weddings, is of great importance in order to express one's appreciation for *vakaturaga* in *vanua* ethos. Ceremonies highlight critical points of ethnic Fijian life: initiation of the young into their communities, marriage, repair of ruptured relationships, and death. (Ravuvu, 1987). It

often takes weeks to conduct funeral ceremonies in ethnic Fijian villages, especially in rural communities, and it takes even longer to get things done for funerals, including long-term preparation for that occasion - sometimes it takes nearly a year, depending on who passed away. This includes cultivating gardens, raising pigs, cattle, and so on. To ethnic Fijians, ceremonies are essential in providing fulfilment, identity, and co-operation among themselves and others. Also, one's participation in ceremonies maintains one's social links, status and recognition. It is one's expression of genuine love, care, support, and concern one has for her/his fellow men. Ravuvu (1988) further explained that the ethnic Fijian ideals of sharing and caring are embodied in such terms as *veibukei*, (giving a helping hand), *veinanumi*, (consideration of others), *veilomani*, (being loving and friendly to one another), and *yalo vata*, (being of the same spirit). Thus: "apart from those who are directly involved or formally informed of any happening, many others who casually know about the occasion, or accidentally come across it, often feel obligated also to participate" (Ravuvu, 1987, p. 330). Ethnic Fijian attitudes towards loving and caring

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about each other develop their senses of generosity, co-operation, solidarity and harmonious social relations. "It's natural for ethnic Fijians to care for people. They welcome tourists and visitors, because their heart is there" (Interview SDT/1). The ethnic Fijian valuing of sharing also reflects their attitudes towards colleagues at work. According to a female ethnic Fijian teacher from a racially-integrated rural secondary school in the Nadroga/Navosa Province: "For ethnic Fijians, when they have ideas, they think that they should share them, because those ideas might help other colleagues" (Interview SDT/2). It is therefore, an important cultural norm for ethnic Fijians to share things with each other.

Moreover, one's contribution to the Christian church, commonly the Methodist church (see Ewins, 1998), is the most obvious manifestation of ethnic Fijian *vanua*. Even among ethnic Fijians who live overseas (such as in Sydney), adhering to a church is of vital importance. Over 92% of ethnic Fijians in Sydney are practising church members in Sydney (Stanwix & Connell, 1995). For ethnic Fijians, church generally has three functions: (1) it provides ethnic Fijians with a place of religious service; (2) it facilitates the exchange of information like social events and issues; and (3) it encourages interaction and communication between people from different villages. Thus the church can be a point of liaison between participants from different communities, since different provincials come to attend a church, even from a distance. That is to say, commitment to the church by ethnic Fijians is very strong. My fieldwork indicated that 100% ethnic Fijians regularly attended church, (see Table 63 above), and some of them were totally committed to regular church activities. Even those who live apart from the village still go to church. According to an ethnic Fijian mother:

We have three sessions a day (at church). On Saturday morning, we start it at 9:00. We have lessons from 9:30 to 10:30 in the morning: children learn singing. For adults' sessions, we study words of God and learn worship. From 11:00, we listen to preachers like a pastor. Then, we have lunch. After lunch, we have other departments within the church. From 1:30 to 2:30 every Saturday, we have kid's club to learn the Bible and do different activities. We have another program at the same time, so different departments have different activities. At 4:30, we finish there, then we have the Youth Program. The Youth has their program from 4:30 to sunset [Interview SAS/1M/1, ( ) is mine].

Participation in ceremonies and church activities enhances one's total commitment to communal expectations and requirements. Thus: "the ethnic Fijian society promotes communal living and work, as opposed to individual aspirations for the sake of individual advancement" (Nabobo, 2001, p. 59). An ethnic Fijian male student from a racially integrated

secondary school used to spend all day on Sundays at the village church. On Saturdays, he prayed at a Youth Club for two-and-half hours to three hours. He said:

For the rest of Saturdays, we sometimes had to clean up in the village. Children usually do it. It takes about one whole day! In the village life, you know, I used to attend many ceremonies and functions. I used to go out a lot with my friends and played rugby and volleyball with them, and went out for fishing with them. I didn't do much homework, because my friends usually came and visited, so I played everywhere. During holidays, I used to drink grog almost every night. We sometimes drank it from 9:00 to 4:00 early in the morning [laughter]. Also, we presented *yaqona* to visitors, often European people, so I helped it (Interview SCS/1).

Now however, he stays at his uncle's house in his school compound, because he teaches Social Science, Geography and English at the school. He moved to his uncle's place when he was in Class 8, because there was only one primary school in his village. His parents sent him to his uncle's place. He continued:

At the moment, I don't go out with my friends. After school, I go home and have some sleep from 5:00 to 6:00. I do some help for my uncle and aunty, like looking after goats. And, I have a bath and dinner, then I study. I work by myself from about 7:00 to 9:00. My homework is sometimes very tough, so I usually ask my uncle to help me. He encourages me to work hard. On Saturdays, I usually attend the Saturday Class from 8:00 to 2:00. It helps me with my study (Interview SCS/1).

Like this ethnic Fijian boy's uncle, Indo-Fijian culture generally expects children to value education highly. Indo-Fijians espouse great respect for schooling and indeed, they value formal education highly and it is rooted in their culture. As discussed in Chapter Three, overall the Indo-Fijian way of valuing education is still greatly influenced by either Hindu (or Muslim) thinking. In particular, the *guru* has been always of great importance at any stage, and in any field of learning. An Indo-Fijian Principal added:

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Lord Krishna had a *guru*. A (Indian) King's son had to have a *guru*. A teacher is something valued in our community. Education is valued as well as religion [Interview SBP/1, ( ) is mine].

Hence, traditional Indo-Fijian socialisation is closely linked with the value of learning.

According to a common saying among Indo-Fijians that often appears in their conversations, and even at a wedding ceremony: "People can steal anything from you, but they cannot steal your education (knowledge)!" [Interview SDP/1, ( ) is mine].

Indo-Fijians believe that education can open new worlds. Indo-Fijian parents and children alike, view formal education as an investment in their future. They perceive a strong and positive correlation between the amount of education s/he has and the type of employment s/he can expect to obtain.

Therefore, Indo-Fijians believe that an uneducated person has no value, and "education is their life! They have to die or live for education!" (Interview SAT/4). Both boys and girls repeatedly receive much the same advice from their elders, parents, and guardians,

with respect to their school behaviour. Although boys are traditionally more expected to receive higher formal education than girls, parents encourage their children, both daughters and sons, to acquire credentials that can lead to well-paid employment. In India, indeed educated people have generally occupied business and professional niches, as well as public-sector employment (Gibson, 2000). Likewise in Fiji, most private-sector businesses are run by Indo-Fijians. They greatly outnumber ethnic Fijians in business, as seen in the following Table 66.

Table 66: Major Occupational Groups by Race (per cent)

Ethnicity	White	Collar	Manual	Business	Uniformed Forces	Farmers	Others	Total
Ethnic Fijians	11.5	26.1	0.3	6.4	48.6	7.1	100	
Indo-Fijians	13.6	24.8	10.6	3.5	37.2	10.3	100	
Others	25.0	37.5	12.5	6.2	12.5	6.3	100	

Source: Tavola, H. (1991). *Secondary Education in Fiji: A Key to the Future*. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, USP.

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Nevertheless, many parents of “lower” socio-economic status, and those with a “not well educated” background, are still willing to encourage their children to do well at school. The present fieldwork suggests that nearly 85% of participants across ages and genders said that Indo-Fijian parents always encouraged them to study hard. These parents often tell children to do homework before going to bed.

Therefore among Indo-Fijians, it is impossible to make linkages between parental background, and a child’s success at school (see Tavola, 1991). Parents’ income and education is no predictor of school grades for Indo-Fijian youth. My survey results indicate that, of 177 Indo-Fijian informants, 66 fathers are sugar cane farmers (37%). 15% are drivers, such as taxi, bus and truck drivers, and 7% work for tourism industries such as hotels and gift shops. Significantly, over 11% have more than two jobs such as farming, fishing, carpentry and driving – taxis and trucks. Most Indo-Fijian mothers do not have paid jobs: 66% are housewives. A very few mothers do paid jobs: 5.6% are sugar cane farmers and 4.5% shopkeepers (see Appendix Eight). In fact, average household weekly incomes by province (see Table 67 below), shows that the Nadroga/Navosa Province ranked the second-lowest weekly income in the country. The average household earned F\$150 (AU\$133) per week in 1997. This means clearly that despite Nadroga/Navosa being one of the lower socio-economic provinces, many parents in the region are still keen to educate their children at school.

Table 67: Average Household Weekly Incomes by Provinces

Province Income (F\$) Province Income (F\$)

Rewa 291 Kadavu 170

Ra 220 Tailevu 157

Ba 212 Namosi 156

Serua 191 Cakaudrove 152

Macuata 186 Bua 152

Naitasiri 182 Nadroga/Navosa 150

Lamaiviti 172 Lau 130

Source: UNDP (1997). *Fiji Poverty Report*. Suva: UNDP & Government of Fiji.

The present survey results indicate that many mothers and quite a few Indo-Fijian fathers have themselves had only very limited schooling: 52% of fathers and 51% of mothers left school before Form Five (see Table 68 below; also see Appendix Seven).

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Table 68: Parents' Education Background by Ethnicity (Number & Percentage)

Parents' Education Ethnic Fijians

Father Mother

Indo-Fijians

Father Mother

Lower Primary School

(Class 1 – Class 4)

0 (0%) 0 (0%) 0 (0%) 0 (0%)

Upper Primary School

(Class 5 – Class 8)

31 (23%) 14 (11%) 45 (25%) 40 (22%)

Lower Secondary School

(Form 3 – Form 4)

24 (18%) 24 (18%) 49 (27%) 52 (29%)

Upper Secondary School

(Form 5 – Form 7)

49 (37%) 66 (50%) 64 (36%) 64 (36%)

Tertiary Institution 7 (5%) 4 (3%) 9 (5%) 7 (4%)

Never Attended 0 (0%) 0 (0%) 0 (0%) 0 (0%)

**Notes:**

• Of 132 ethnic Fijian informants, 21 informants did not answer their fathers' education and 24 informants did not answer their mothers' education.

• Of 177 Indo-Fijian informants, 10 informants did not answer their fathers' education and 18 informants did not answer their mothers' education.

As a matter of fact, in Indo-Fijian culture, even if parents themselves have little education, they nearly always have access to highly-educated individuals through their extended-kin group, or through the local Hindi and Muslim temple. Such individuals are held up as role models for their children. As a female Indo-Fijian teacher said:

I was willing to study, because I saw other cousins: one of them became a flight attendant and another one was a teacher. They were my role models. I saw how their life changed (since they got these positions) [Interview SBT/3, ( ) is mine].

Accordingly, parental involvement in children's education is of great importance. Indo-Fijian parents want their children to receive higher education, whether or not they

themselves have had the opportunity to finish high school. A male Indo-Fijian teacher said:

My father is a Form 3 graduate, and my mother has never been to school. So, they were advised by my father's older brothers and his family of the idea of getting educated to excel in life. Whatever I've achieved today is always going back to my parents. Definitely! Nothing else!

(Interview SBT/2)

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Consequently Indo-Fijian parents have a tendency to place pressure on their children to excel academically. Indo-Fijians urge children to place schoolwork first, ahead of housework,

jobs, and social activities - even those sponsored by the schools. Parents often admonish children to do better by trying harder, and by asking their teachers, cousins, uncles and aunties, who are more educated, for help. A male Indo-Fijian teacher explained:

Indian parents spend their time wisely on their children. They are always guiding them. They remain at home most of the time to see children do their homework and go to school regularly, and do not go out and mix around with other people and the community (Interview SBP/1).

Indo-Fijian folk-beliefs say: "Hardship breeds success and one can only become successful if one has known hardship!" Practically speaking, if a child does not do well at school, parents often blame her/him. Thus self-discipline is a crucial factor for Indo-Fijian academic success. A female Indo-Fijian teacher said:

I remember when I came 8<sup>th</sup> in Class 3 or 4, my father beat me up. He said, 'How come you came eighth!' He was really beating me up. From that day, I knew I shouldn't come eighth. It should be the first, second or third" (Interview SBT/3).

Another female Indo-Fijian teacher remembered that her parents often checked her workbook:

When I was in school, every fortnight, my parents asked me to show my books to them. Oh, God. They did not tell us that today they were going to check our books. When we sat down at the table, they looked at our handwriting. They looked at our papers and asked for our exam files. Even though my parents are not really educated, they always did that (Interview SFT/1).

It may even be fair to say that typical Indo-Fijian parents have a strong tendency to control their children's study. The survey results, indeed suggested that over 85% of respondents perceived that typical Indo-Fijian parents are very strict about their children's studies, compared with 35% of respondents, who stated that typical ethnic Fijian parents were strict about their children's formal education. Over 61% of

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respondents perceived that typical ethnic Fijian parents were relaxed about children's formal education, and more than 32% of respondents perceived that typical ethnic Fijian students were relaxed about their studies, while no-one responded that typical Indo-Fijian students were relaxed about their formal education (see Table 69 below; also see Appendix Nine).

Table 69: Perceptions of Parental Involvement & Students' Attitude towards Education by Ethnicity (Number & Percentage)

Attitudes Ethnic Fijian

Parents

Ethnic Fijian  
Children  
Indo-Fijian  
Parents  
Indo-Fijian  
Children

Strict/Serious 63 (35%) 51 (28%) 113 (85%) 113 (85%)  
Relaxed 108 (61%) 54 (32%) 5 (4%) 0 (0%)

**Notes:**

- Of 132 ethnic Fijian informants, 19 informants did not answer.
- Of 177 Indo-Fijian informants, 6 informants did not answer.

A male Indo-Fijian principal further explained:

Indo-Fijian parents do not give much freedom to children. For every step, children are taken care of (by their parents), like any mistakes children make are corrected [Interview SDP/1, ( ) is mine].

Another Indo-Fijian vice-principal added:

If a village man sees an Indian child in town, he will report him to his parents. The child will have a problem. Parents want to know where their child is. At night, their child should be home (Interview SBVP/1).

Indo-Fijians generally see education as bringing credit to the whole family. Indo-Fijians believe that if one relative gets educated, the whole sub-caste raises its status. They can get better matches for their daughters and sons. They can also get help from an educated person and cite her or him as example to the younger generation to create an even more educated set of people. Accordingly, parents constantly remind their children to think of themselves as being as good as anyone else.

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For example, children are often told stories of those who have overcome adversity - perhaps the death of one's father at an early age, or being born of parents in very humble circumstances - and become highly-respected doctors and lawyers. Furthermore, parents and elders often say to their children: "Obey your teachers!" "Do your schoolwork!" "Stay out of trouble!" "You are there to learn!" "Keep trying harder!" "Keep pushing yourself!" Thus a child who brings home a poor report card is told s/he has not tried hard enough, and is made to feel a "failure". When word of poor performance reaches relatives and family friends, children may even be ignored socially! Parents believe that this sanction generally serves as a deterrent to mediocre academic performance, and helps instil a desire to acquire top marks.

If a child failed in education, it's his family's embarrassment. That's how Indian people look at, because everybody in the family is concerned, even the married sisters and brothers who are living separately, they will make sure that the child has already done his requirements for the school. When he is at school, they ask and call the school about his exams, school fees, uniforms and books required. They want exam results, even the mid-year exams' (Interview SAT/3).

Parents monitor their children's (especially girls) out-of-school activities carefully, even during the late teenage-years, in order to avoid "bad company" that might distract from the main goal of getting on in the educational systems. Children are taught that their teens are a time for diligence at school and they will be able to enjoy themselves socially later on. A female Indo-Fijian student said:

When I'm living with my family, I don't much communicate with my friends, because my parents don't give me much freedom to be involved

in my friends. My parents often tell me what to do, but it's up to me to decide what I want to do. Sometimes, I feel that they control me. They over control me! (Interview SCS/4)

My face-to-face interview results indicate that 63% of Indo-Fijian informants receive peer pressure (see Table 64 above; also see Table 69 above). Indo-Fijian children often feel pressure from their work and parents' expectations and demands. Moreover Indo-Fijians feel pressure from competition with others. A female Indo-Fijian student said:

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I feel pressure, because I have to compete with my friends! (Interview SFS/2).

However, excessive pressure on children for academic success often causes serious psychological problems and, in extreme cases, leads teenagers to suicide. A male Indo-Fijian vice-principal explained:

Indians don't accept 'failures'. It's very serious. When they fail, this is something they cannot accept. You will see the suicide rate. When the (examination) results come out, some people commit suicide. We have not heard of it in the Fijian community, but in the Indian community. This is a very sad thing [Interview SBVP/1, ( ) is mine].

The high suicide rate among Indo-Fijians has always been a major concern. In 2000, more than 91% of people who committed suicide were Indo-Fijians (i.e., 203 Indo-Fijians versus 20 ethnic Fijians). In the following year, out of 248 people who committed suicide, 214 were Indo-Fijians (86%). In particular, the suicide rate among teenagers (aged from 13 to 18 years) has been increasing: 57 Indo-Fijians (45 boys and 12 girls), committed suicide in 2003, compared with 50 (36 boys and 14 girls) in 2002 (Narayan, 2003b). These rates were more than three times higher than those of ethnic Fijians. 18 ethnic Fijians (16 boys and 2 girls) committed suicide in 2003, compared with 13 in 2002 (10 boys and 3 girls). The high suicide rate among Indo-Fijian teenagers is closely related to their educational failure (Narayan, 2003a; Lutunauga, 2004). Many Indo-Fijian students tend to see academic failure as their "death" sentence (Vilsoni, 2003). "Indo-Fijian students who fail their examinations tend to think that this is the end of their life and there is no future for them" (Nawaikama, 2003, 1). A male ethnic Fijian teacher further explained:

Because fear is there: 'If I'm not going to achieve my goal, if I'm not going to pass (exams), if I'm not going to excel, my parents will be very angry about me.' What's happened is students hung themselves. That actually happened to an Indian student at school when I was there [Interview SDT/1, ( ) is mine].

Consequently parental involvement in education is a strong factor influencing children's school performance. Indo-Fijian children are culturally conditioned to be conformists and

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submissive to the mandates of their parents, relatives, and teachers. In general, Indo-Fijian children are often disappointed if their parents and teachers do not tell them what to do (Otsuka, 2005b). This cultural factor also plays an important role in encouraging children to work hard at school. International studies also recognise the importance of parental involvement in children's schooling (Baxter 1983; Irvin 2000). Carpenter (1985) reported that in Australia interpersonal influence of significant others - especially of parents, teachers and friends within children's academic achievement - is one of the most important predictors of children's academic achievement.

In sum, parents' aspirations for their children and the support which they give them, together with the students' own goals and assumptions about the value of schooling, are probably more important factors in explaining Indo-Fijian performance than parental education and income. The parental attitude towards educating children is culturally based. That is to say: academic achievements are seen as being representative of what an individual can accomplish. Indeed, Indo-Fijian children work hard at schooling, despite the fact that their parents often have had little formal education (see Table 68 above; also see Appendix Seven).

On the contrary, according to ethnic Fijian cultural values, parental investment in children's education is ultimately not as important as one's participation in communal activities (Otsuka, 2003). Indeed education as a topic is less discussed in ethnic Fijian homes than Indo-Fijian homes. Tavola's (1991) study suggests that approximately 62% of ethnic Fijians even did not know of their fathers' education levels, compared with 18% of Indo-Fijians. Similarly, 55% of ethnic Fijians did not know the level of their mothers' education, compared with only 20% of Indo-Fijians. Nevertheless ethnic Fijian parents in general, understand the importance of educating children at school (Ewins, 1998). For this purpose, some parents make tremendous efforts to support their children financially. Parents from rural areas even migrate to towns in order to find jobs that allow them to be close to their children's school, and in many instances throughout Fiji, some villagers make considerable efforts to raise money to improve the education of their children (Lasaqa, 1984; Otsuka, 2003). Such efforts are made by ethnic Fijians, not only because

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they regard the provision of a good education for their children as an obligation they cannot avoid, but also because it is hoped that through education the children will be able to bring knowledge and kudos to the family.

However, ethnic Fijian communal demands are enormous financially. Therefore, considerable pressures to maintain their moral and social obligations within the community mean that ethnic Fijians spend large amounts of time and money on ceremonies and church activities, possibly at the expense of their children's education.

According to an ethnic Fijian senior pastor in the Nadroga/Navosa Province:

We teach our people to donate to the church. It's normally 10% income: their weekly or fortnightly of their income. We don't force them, but we encourage them to give. We tell them God is going to bless them. Apart from their donation, we encourage them to give more when they feel like giving more. When we have a project, like a building project, we work out on the budget. We call people to donate freely whatever they can donate. We get money and all other things from people (Interview CP).

However "people in some ethnic Fijian villages are expected to contribute more money - 20% of their wages - to the church" (Interview SAS/1M/1). Therefore many ethnic Fijians suffer financially to participate in such social functions. For instance, according to Ravuvu's (1987) report, in some rural ethnic Fijian villages six ceremonies were carried out and involved residents, non-residents, foreign visitors, and ethnic Fijians. It took those ethnic Fijians eleven days to travel to each one of the ceremonies, and another ten days to conduct the ceremonies. The ceremonies involved a total of 1,411 people including one's relatives, neighbours, friends, and workmates, for an average of just over five days each. The cost was assessed at more than \$F81, 300 (AUD\$70,140) - or \$F57.00 (AUD\$49.2) per person, which was about a quarter of the annual per capita income of individuals from rural villages in the area. The goods alone were worth

\$F30.00 (AUD\$25.90) per person. Much of the resources actually came from those who were working in town, with an average income of between 30 cents and \$1.50 per hour. Some ethnic Fijians have to rely on remittances that are sent from their family and relatives living overseas. A study (Stanwix & Connell, 1995) suggested that more than 20% of remittances, which an ethnic Fijian family in Fiji received from their relatives in

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Sydney, were used for ceremonies and social obligations in 1994. In a year, almost two-thirds

of ethnic Fijian households in Sydney remitted A\$1,000 or more. In some cases, ethnic Fijians remitted up to 50% of their income! "Ethnic Fijian remittances are substantial and involve sacrifices to be made by the remitters, and this has had a considerable impact in Fiji at the household and village level". (Stanwix & Connell 1995, p. 85). Communal remittances have definite goals for the development and improvement of projects that affect the whole village in Fiji.

Another factor that forms part of the home environment is time use. The typical ethnic Fijian attitude towards the use of time (commonly called "Fiji Time"), often causes matters to be attended to at a leisurely pace. For example, it is not uncommon for a village meeting that is supposed to begin "after lunch", actually to start at 4:00p.m. or even later (Nabobo, 2001). Another example from my own experience is that it took a predominantly ethnic Fijian secondary school in the Nadroga/Navosa Province a whole day to conduct the "class photograph" session! It is therefore common to spend significant amounts of time to conduct most events. (e.g., ceremonies and church activities). "Fiji Time" also reflects student attitudes towards going to school. Many ethnic Fijian students tend to be late for the school. A male ethnic Fijian teacher said: The school official time for students is now 8:00 in the morning, but many Fijian students come late. Even most students from the nearest village, about a 5 minute-walk from the school, come about 9:30! (Interview SCT/1).

As discussed earlier, ethnic Fijian teachers also tend to be late for the class or be absent from school. An attendance record from School G indicates that more than 80% of ethnic Fijian teachers were often late for the school in term 2, 2004. A female ethnic Fijian teacher was late for the school for more than 22 days out of 134 days (16%). Another ethnic Fijian male teacher was late for 18 days (13%) whereas most Indo-Fijian teachers were more punctual. A male Indo-Fijian vice-principal from School B pointed out "relaxed" ethnic Fijian attitudes towards work:

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We've got the Open Day coming shortly. Indian teachers' work has been all completed by now. If you go around the school now, you will see that most Indian teachers are relaxed. But, Fijian teachers are still running, not completed. It seems that they have no time frame. But, we want to get things done quickly (Interview SBVP/1).

Ethnic Fijians are more likely to expect to see benefits from things that happen, including education, in the rather short term (Nabobo, 2001). Their attitude tends to reveal key attitudes towards spending, or sharing time and money. Important customs in the traditional ethnic Fijian socio-economic system, which persists to a great extent, set limits to savings, thrift, and capital accumulation. In particular, the survival of the ethnic Fijian custom, *kere kere*, has long been one of the barriers to ethnic Fijians being successful in the modern market economy. *Kere kere* literally means the practice of borrowing

amongst kin, at the will/request of the borrower - requests that are almost impossible to refuse. However, the *kere kere* system tends to make many ethnic Fijian students take for granted that their friends and fellow students should help them with the things that they need at any time. The practice of *kere kere* forms a hindrance to savings, therefore lack of capital is another major obstacle to ethnic Fijian economic advancement (see Nandan & Alam, 2005). Many ethnic Fijian shops, for instance, have closed because of this rigid and costly custom (Lloyd, 1982). Individuals are expected to be ready, at any time, to “lend” individuals within their group (often including those from other villages who are not related to them), not only their money, but also their “belongings”. This is largely due to their moral and social obligations within their community. Once borrowed, “belongings” are almost never returned. Due to this traditional ethnic Fijian custom, people often incur extra expenses, and this communal obligation is inimical to conventional business practices based on commercial principles (Nandan & Alam, 2005). It also has specific effects in the world of education. According to a male ethnic Fijian teacher:

No matter how often we remind Fijian students of having writing instruments like a pen, a ruler or a calculator, some people always have something missing, because they know that their friends or mates never say, ‘no’, if they ask for a pen (Interview SCT/1).

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Furthermore, *kere kere* also affects an interpersonal relationship among villagers from time to time. A male ethnic Fijian student mentioned that:

If someone in the village is running out of salt, for instance. He comes to *kere kere* salt. But we don’t have salt, either. We show the evidence. We show the salt container to him. Without showing him the evidence, he wouldn’t trust me. It’s very sad (Interview SDS/1).

Therefore “some ethnic Fijian people today try to escape from this traditional custom and culture, because it makes them poorer!” (Interview SAS/1M/1)

However, it should be noted that some ethnic Fijians have been able to overcome their financial hardship due to their *kere kere* custom. A male ethnic Fijian teacher explained:

One of the reasons why Fijians have survived, no matter what financial hardships they have been through, is because of the institution of *kere kere*: ‘Money!’ or ‘No Money!’ This institution has made them survive in hard times. In the institution of *kere kere*, if you look at education, it’s still very much placed. It goes down to the school level. In class, the only students who do not have any writing instruments are Fijian students, because they bring the institution of *kere kere* from the village to school. They know if other Fijian students have them, they will definitely lend them to them.

Unintentionally and naturally, they give when they are asked to give. Sharing and giving is just their way of life! However, a former Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry tried to abolish the power and the institution of *kere kere*. What he believed was that the reason why Fijians were poor, the reason why Fijians did not progress is because, what he thought, was one reason: the institution of *kere kere*. He tried to break Fijian tradition! Basically, it’s colonialism! Fijians got upset and irritated” (Interview SCT/1).

It was reported by Willikson-Bakker (2002) that Chaudhry attempted to expose where money had gone, which had been mismanaged by ethnic Fijian leaders from the National Bank of Fiji and the Fiji Development Bank (according to the ethnic Fijian culture, the money was, in fact, used based on their *kere kere* system). Hence, Chaudhry’s administration was disliked by many ethnic Fijians. While from Western perspectives and

perceptions, this practice may be identified as “corrupt”, according to the ethnic Fijian culture, this is not the case. They believe that there is nothing wrong with using public funds for great leader’s personal errands (Willikson-Bakker, 2002). This practice leads to people’s appreciation and respect for their leader. The practice of *kere kere* enhances ethnic Fijian sense of “sharing” within their community.

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As discussed earlier, it is important to note that the ethnic Fijian communal way of living encourages people to have a strong sense of “sharing”, “giving”, “being generous with others” and “being helpful to visitors and even strangers”. It is, therefore, an important cultural norm for ethnic Fijians to *kere kere* things with each other.

As a matter of fact, *kere kere* is a very important tradition for most ethnic Fijians. Some ethnic Fijian businesses have been successful partly due to this system (see Nandan, 1999). Ethnic Fijian business generally succeeds in the context of group support system (Nabalarua, 1998). They usually have an access to *kere kere* amongst close kin, not only from their villages but also from those who live in overseas countries such as Australia. A study (Stanwix & Connell, 1995) suggests that some people *kere kere* considerably from their relatives and even children in Sydney for development projects benefiting communities and business. That is; *kere kere* is a part of ethnic Fijian communal value and expectation.

It should be noted here however, that historically, many Indo-Fijians have been at a greater disadvantage economically than ethnic Fijians (Mann, 1935). In fact, Indo-Fijians often belonged to the poorest group of the country (Ministry of Education, 2000). This trend was still evident in the early 1990s; 31.0% of Indo-Fijians were below the basic poverty line, compared with 27.7% of their ethnic Fijian counterparts (Ministry of Education, 2000). 79.0% of ethnic Fijians, and 89.0% of Indo-Fijians belonged to the so-called

disadvantaged classes, such as small farmers, wage workers, the peasantry, unpaid family workers, and the unemployed (Robertson & Sutherland, 2001). According to Bacchus (2000):

Lower-income Indo-Fijian households are worse off in terms of their income levels than lower-income ethnic Fijian households, with the lowest 10.0% of Indo-Fijians having an average income that was 14.0% lower than the lowest-income ethnic Fijians” (pp. 44-45).

Nevertheless, the Indo-Fijian school attainment rate is higher than their ethnic Fijian counterparts (Government of Fiji, 2003; see Chapter Two), and Indo-Fijian parents encourage children to study hard. For Indo-Fijians, sending children to school regularly is

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of great importance. Therefore they spend money on children’s schooling, after feeding themselves. Even children themselves from an “under-privileged” background, try to make money for utilities for their study. At times, children as young as 10 years of age attempt to make money for this purpose, by selling fish and vegetables in the street and market (Baselala, 2003; Sharma, 2003), whereas for ethnic Fijians, it is inevitable to spend money on communal demands.

In practice, it is often very difficult for poor parents from each ethnic group to find money for their children’s education. They cannot afford their children’s basic educational utilities, such as school maintenance fees (commonly called “building fees” or “ground fees”), school/sports uniforms, stationery, bus fares (in Fiji, the major

transport for children is a bus), lunch, and so on (Puamau, 2002). Some well-equipped schools often charge so-called book guarantees of up to F\$100.00 (AUD\$88.00) and more per year, which covers hire of students' textbooks for one academic year, and is refundable according to certain conditions. Some primary schools even charge F\$40.00 (AUD\$35.00) per term (both primary and secondary schools have three terms a year at present). One primary school in Suva for instance, charges F\$70.00 (AUD\$61.00) just for enrolment fees, and this does not include other utilities like "building fees", "ground fees", sports uniform, etc. A racially-mixed urban Primary school in the Nadroga/Navosa Province requires F\$10.00 (AUD\$8.60) for each term of the academic year (a total of F\$30.00 (AUD\$26.00) a year to pay the school maintenance fees). There are some secondary schools which levy F\$60.00 (AUD\$52.00) to F\$70.00 (AUD\$61.00) "building fees" a year (Narayan, 2003b). Even in rural areas, it is common that schools charge fees. For example, School C required parents of Form 5 (aged 16 years) to pay a total of F\$81.00 (AUD\$70.00) in 2004. This comprises "admission fees" (F\$10.00; AUD\$8.60), "water fund" (F\$5.00; AUD\$4.30), "building fees" (F\$10.00; AUD\$8.60), "sports fees" (F\$6.00; AUD\$5.20) and "book guarantees" (F\$50.00; AUD\$43.00). Some ethnic Fijian secondary school students attend boarding school. Parents have to pay the boarding fees, which can be a burden. An ethnic Fijian secondary boarding school (School E) required F\$360.00 (AUD\$312.00) per year in 2004 across all form levels. In addition, parents had to pay the school utilities. For instance, Form 6 parents were supposed to pay the

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following utilities: "building fees" (F\$10.00; AUD\$8.60); "school fees" (F\$10.00; AUD\$8.60); "sports fees" (F\$10.00; AUD\$8.60); "caution fees" (F\$30.00; AUD\$26.00); "school magazine fees" (F\$5.00; AUD\$4.30), and "book guarantees" (F\$30.00; AUD\$26.00). In total, parents were required to pay F\$95.00 (AUD\$82.30) per year in 2004 in addition to the boarding fees.

As a matter of fact, many parents pay school fees late. A payment record of School G names some parents who pay fees late. In 2004, there were some parents who had not paid the term-three fees, even two months after that term started. For instance, the Form 5 payment record shows that, out of 50 students, 28 students (56%) had not paid the fees: approximately two-thirds of these unpaid people (18 parents) were ethnic Fijians (64%) and 36% were Indo-Fijians (10 parents). Surprisingly, of these unpaid parents, 7 parents had not yet paid the term-two fees, and another 2 parents were not only behind in the term-two fees, but also the term-one fees! These parents were all ethnic Fijians.

According to a male ethnic Fijian teacher:

Fijian parents spend money on fund raising for the church and for other village projects. Parents pay hundreds of dollars for the church and any other things in the village. But, they don't spend money on the bus fare to send their children to the school. Then, some parents even do not pay their children's school fees for a whole year! (Interview SCT/1)

It should be noted here that any financial difficulties of parents affect children's academic performance. This eventually becomes one of the major setbacks to children's educational progress. Although students are capable academically, their constant concerns and worries about financial hardships created at home tend to distract their concentration from their studies. For example, a male ethnic Fijian student from School D used to do very well at both primary and secondary school, until his family had a financial problem. He was usually placed 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> in class academically, not only

because of his hard work, but also because of his feeling of security about financial matters. He could rely on adequate finances. In his case, it was his grandfather who always supported him and his family financially. However, the grandfather's death has caused major financial problems for his family, and this eventually affected his studies profoundly. He admitted:

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I feel very hopeless and very discouraged. I have every bad feeling. Since I was five months old, my grandfather adopted me. I spent three years at kindergarten since I was three years old. I went to primary school for eight years. He paid my primary education. Since I started secondary school, my grandfather paid my fees for Form 3, 4 and 5. This is my fourth year of secondary education. Until he died, he paid my education. But, he's gone... He provided our family financially, but my parents didn't do anything at all when I was with him. When he died in April, I went back to my parents. Since he died, my parents haven't paid the school fees for Form 6 (Interview SDS/1).

It had been already 7 months since the academic year began, when this interview with him was conducted. But his parents had not paid the fees yet. The academic performances of this 16 year-old student dropped since his grandfather passed away, and he has now been placed around one-third from the top of the class academically. In other words, his family financial problems affected his school work greatly. The Principal of his secondary school still allows him to attend the school regularly. However the school policy was to withhold his school certificate, until his parents paid the school fees. Not just this school, but also most other secondary schools in the Nadroga/Navosa Province have the same policy. According to a male Rotuman Principal from School A:

We will not get students a certificate, if they don't pay. They pay very, very late. Every time they say, 'next week, next month, until the year ends, and the next year' [laughter]. This is a disappointing part, because they don't pay, they won't get the certificate (Interview SAP/1).

He also mentioned that this often occurs with ethnic Fijian parents. Many of them do not pay the school fees. He further argued that the parental attitude towards non-payment of children's school fees is reflected by their culture to some degree. He explained:

It is reflect of their culture. You know their casualness: no concern for their child's education. They are very less concerned for their child's education (Interview SAP/1).

Children are, therefore, reluctant to attend school. Some of them tend to be absent from school on consecutive days. Fear that the administrative staff from their school (or the Principal, or the secretary) might ask them for the fees, leads the children to a strong inclination to stop attending school. Children become embarrassed. According to a male Indo-Fijian principal from School D:

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Children feel embarrassed, if they miss the school one or two days. They will feel embarrassed to come back to the school. They are shamed in not going to the school. Teachers will see it and the Principal will see it (Interview SDP/1).

He argued that children's embarrassment, especially ethnic Fijian children's embarrassment, (which stems from their absence from school), relates to their culture: There is a traditional value of Fijian people. If they have a problem, they will not discuss it. They keep it to themselves. They feel too embarrassed to talk about it (Interview SDP/1).

Students tend to miss the class for some days continuously, and get behind with their

studies. Some of them eventually drop out of the school.

On the contrary, students who can depend on their parents' financial security often perform well at school. In other words, the parents' work to support their children influences the children's academic performance to some degree (see Tavola, 1991). For example, only 11 out of 52 Form Five students from School G paid the school fees regularly throughout 2004. The academic performances of those 11 students in the previous year's FJC Examinations was as follows: (1) every one of these students passed all the subjects at those examinations, except one student who failed two papers, such as Accounting (36 marks out of 100) and Home Economics (48 marks); (2) the mean mark of these 11 students' examination performances was 414 (59.1%) out of 700 in total; (3) three out of these students received over 500 marks (71.4%) in total (531) marks, 507 marks and 501 marks for Indo-Fijian female students; and (4) two students obtained over 400 marks in total (57.1%).

Therefore if parents were willing to support their children financially, despite their ongoing financial struggle, the children would tend to work very hard at school. For example, a female Indo-Fijian form-six student from School D, had been always placed either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> in the class academically. She had attended the primary school of School A since she was at Class 1. Because of her parents' financial hardship when she had

completed Form 4, she had to transfer to the present secondary school, where the fees were lower than those of her first school (see Table 70 below).

Table 70: Comparison of School Fees between School A & D (Form 5), 2004

Charges	School A	School D
Building Fund	F\$45.00 (AU\$39.00)	F\$20.00 (AU\$17.20)
Computer Lab	F\$10.00 (AU\$8.60)	F\$9.00 (AU\$7.80)
Sports/Stationery/Library	F\$30.00 (AU\$26.00)	F\$9.00 (AU\$7.80)
Book Rent	N/A	F\$40.00 (AU\$34.40)
SMC-PTA	F\$3.00 (AU\$2.60)	N/A
Circuit Levy	F\$3.00 (AU\$2.60)	N/A
Lab Caution Fees	F\$20.00 (AU\$17.20)	N/A
Total	F\$111.00 (AU\$96.00)	F\$78.00 (AU\$67.20)

As Table 70 above indicates, Form 5 fees at School A in 2004 were over 1.4 times more expensive than School D. Total fees at School A, from Form 3 to Form 6, in 2004 were F\$582.00 (AUD\$503.00), compared with F\$357.00 (AUD\$308.00) at School D. If a child attended Form 7 at School A, her/his parents would have to pay a total of F\$1,121.00 (AUD\$969.50), from Form 3 to Form 7. Form 7 fees were F\$582.00 (AUD\$503.35) in 2004. In addition, School A often asked parents for fund-raising fees, such as F\$5.00 (AUD\$4.30) or F\$10.00 (AUD\$8.63), throughout the year.

According to the new education policy announced by the Ministry of Education in November 2004, Indo-Fijian parents, including ethnic Fijian parents whose form seven children attending racially-integrated secondary school, still paid the tuition fees in 2005, although ethnic Fijian parents of those who are enrolled in ethnic Fijian schools do not have to pay this (as a result, some ethnic Fijian seventh formers from racially integrated schools moved to ethnic Fijian schools). A male Indo-Fijian Principal argued:

This is a discriminating policy among Fijian students! A very large proportion of Fijian students go to Indian schools. They get nothing! It is

not for them. It is for Fijian students going to Fijian schools. So, the system itself is discriminating among Fijians (Interview SFP/1).

This policy is part of the Affirmative Action Programs and has been implemented since February 2005. My face-to-face interview results indicate that 100% of Indo-Fijian informants pointed out that the “Blue Print” influences greatly the ethnic differences in

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academic achievement (see Table 64 above). Furthermore, tertiary entry requirements for ethnic Fijian students are lower than those for their Indo-Fijian peers. More tertiary scholarships are reserved for the former than the latter (see Chapter Two). A male Indo-Fijian assistant Principal from School D argued:

The Ministry of Education discourages Fijian students to work hard. They provide them with lots of scholarships. There are plenty scholarships for them, like the Fijian Affairs, Provincial, PSC... But, for Indians, there are a few scholarships available, so it's very hard to get the scholarship like Multi-Ethnic Scholarships. Indians have to work hard to get it (Interview SDAP/1).

The 16 year-old female student's parents, as mentioned above, wish their daughter to receive a scholarship for her tertiary education. Nevertheless, her parents' valuing education and hard work motivated her to study hard. Like typical ethnic Fijian home situations, it was very crowded at her home where no privacy was available because of the house plan. There was only one room to share with her father, mother and younger sister. There they dine, sleep, watch TV, and study. She did not have a study desk and chair, so that she always had to sit on the lounge and study on her lap.

Often, however, parents' financial difficulties force children to leave school. In particular,

ethnic Fijian children tend to drop out of the school earlier than their Indo-Fijian peers during the secondary years (Puamau, 2002). Some children have to end their schooling even at the primary school stage, despite the “tuition-fee-free” educational policy for both ethnic groups in Fiji (up to Form 6 in 2004). The present fieldwork suggests that many ethnic Fijian upper-secondary schoolers (both male and female students), such as sixth form students, do not perform as well as those from lower-secondary levels, such as Forms 3 and 4 (cf., Chapter Two). According to the male Indo-Fijian Principal from School D:

At the form four level, I must say that Fijian students are as good as Indian students. The percentage of pass rates sometimes surpasses Indian students in pass rates at the FJC level. But, most of Fijian students pass with C Grade. Some of them pass with B Grade and a very few pass with A Grade, whereas A Grades here are mostly Indian students (Interview SDP/1).

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Tables 50, 51, 52 & 53 above indicate that ethnic Fijian lower secondary schoolers, such as fourth form students, perform better than their upper secondary counterparts such as sixth formers. At school C, the most rurally located secondary school in the Nadroga/Navosa Province, the male ethnic Fijian pass rate in the FJC Examinations in 2004 was more than 3.1 times higher than that of their counterparts in the Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examinations in the same year. The female ethnic Fijian pass rate in the FJC Examinations in 2004 was nearly 2.9 times higher than that of their peers in the FSLC Examinations in the same year. Even at School A, which is considered as the best academic secondary school in this region, the male ethnic Fijian pass rate in the FJC Examinations in 2004 was more than 1.2 times higher than that of their counterparts in

the FSLC Examinations in the same year. The female ethnic Fijian pass rate in the FJC Examinations in 2004 was more than 1.5 times higher than that of their peers in the FSLC Examinations in the same year.

Also, at the primary school level, ethnic differences are modest (see Tables 18 & 19 in Chapter Two). However, at the final primary-school level, Class 8, academic performance slowly begins to favour Indo-Fijians (see Tables 20 & 21 in Chapter Two). These data (i.e., Tables 50, 51, 52, 53, 18, 19, 20 & 21 above) indicate that ethnic Fijian students perform better not only at lower secondary level but also at primary level than at upper secondary level. Also, at secondary level, the Indo-Fijians' performance usually outstrips that of ethnic Fijians'. At Form 4 level, while the overall pass rates at the FJC Examinations are still similar, the Indo-Fijians are over-represented at the high end of the achievement distribution at these examinations, and beyond it (the FSLC Examinations and the FFSE). Furthermore, the data on the ethnic-Fijian retention rate clearly indicate that ethnic Fijians are more likely to drop out at secondary levels than at primary school levels (see Table 22 in Chapter Two).

The progress of the 1988 cohort over 13 years by ethnicity indicates that, during the secondary school period (i.e., from Form 3 to Form 7), approximately 83.2% of ethnic Fijian secondary schoolers had dropped out (1996-2000), compared with only 26% of

148 ethnic Fijian students who left school during their primary school period (i.e., from Class 1 to Class 8). Ethnic Fijian children tend to drop out of the school earlier than their Indo-Fijian peers during the secondary years (Puamau, 2002).

The two major questions are asked here:

(1) Why do the vast majority of ethnic Fijian students drop out of the secondary school?

(2) Why does ethnic Fijian academic performance drop as they go up to the higher level of formal education (i.e., Forms 5, 6 and 7)?

The present field work suggests that one of the major factor influencing the drop of ethnic Fijian academic performance at the secondary school level is that, compared with ethnic Fijian primary and lower secondary schoolers, their adolescent counterparts (i.e. upper secondary and tertiary students) are expected to be more involved in their communal activities and obligations, and to participate in ceremonies including the related preparation and travelling. Ethnic Fijian adolescents spend a large amount of time working on communal activities, and "the older the ethnic Fijians get, the more commitment they have in the village" (Interview SDP/1). Thus, during the village ceremonial period, children are often absent from school. Ethnic Fijian Form 6 students have a greater tendency to be absent from school than their Form 4 counterparts. For instance, an attendance record at School D indicates clearly, a high rate of ethnic Fijian absenteeism. Out of 134 days of the second term in 2004, the average absence rate for ethnic Fijian Form 6 students was 28% compared with 4% for their Indo-Fijian counterparts. In the same period, the average absence for ethnic Fijian Form 4 students was 18%, compared with 8% for their Indo-Fijian counterparts. Although the Indo-Fijian absence rate fell from Form 4 to Form 6 (i.e., from 11 days to 6 days), the ethnic Fijian absence rate increased from 24 days to 37 days. During this period, 7 Indo-Fijian fourthformers

and 6 Indo-Fijian sixth-formers had perfect attendance at the school, compared with 2 ethnic Fijian fourth-formers and 1 sixth-former (see Table 71 below).

Table 71: Average Absence Ratio of Ethnic Fijians to Indo-Fijians at School D in the Second Term, 2004

Students' Performance Ethnic Fijians

Form 6 Form 4

Indo-Fijians

Form 6 Form 4

Absent Days 37 Days 24 Days 6 Days 11 Days

Perfect Attendance 1 Student 2 Students 6 Students 7 Students

Less Than 100 Day-

Attendance

6 Students 4 Student 0 Student 0 Student

A female ethnic Fijian teacher explained:

Even at the Form 7 level, when Indian students feel that they cannot be absent from that Form, most Fijian students don't realise it's important to be at school every day. Because they are not catching up with the work that they are supposed to do, they just give up, and they are finally dropping out (Interview SBT/1).

A female ethnic Fijian sixth form student admits:

The village is a difficult place to study, because we have many commitments. We have to do many things. I just try to study hard and get out of the village, and then I will be competent. Only sometimes, I commit myself to working, not every time, because there is function in the village nearly every week. We have to commit ourselves to the function. Also, many of my friends tell me not to study, but they ask me out. They say, 'Exams are still far! Just come!' I have pressure from my friends, too (Interview SAS/2).

Generally speaking, in the communal ethnic Fijian culture, it is not acceptable to refuse to be part of what is going on in the village. It can be even deemed rude to say "No!" to anyone who asks for help or company. Therefore village children often feel strong pressure to comply with such demands (see White, 1997). A male ethnic Fijian sixth form student said:

I feel pressure very strongly. My friends force me to go out and take alcohols and smokes. But, for me, it's very hard to do that (Interview SDS/1).

On the other hand, this student wants to be associated with his friends and relatives. He continued:

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I don't have any difficulties in my studies. But, sometimes I feel bad about studying alone, so I go out with my friends. I want to discuss my school or what I did at school that day with my cousins or relatives and ask questions about my homework. In our village, we are just like friends and brothers. You can openly discuss and ask questions about my homework. It's just like one whole big family! (Interview SDS/1)

The present fieldwork suggests that over 91% of ethnic Fijian respondents feel considerable pressure from their peers (see Table 63 above). It is particularly difficult to study at home during the ceremonial period in the village:

There is definitely no room for children to study at that time! Because if there is death in their family, other *mataqali* families are coming. They have to billet them in their house. So, they just don't have any places for children to study (Interview SBT/1).

In addition, the typical ethnic Fijian home situation is a difficult environment for children's study. Ethnic Fijian homes are usually crowded and have little privacy, and this

often deprives children of the time and space needed to study (Dakuidreketi, 1995). A male ethnic Fijian sixth form student said:

There are too many people in the house, so it is over-crowded. People cannot stay long in the house, so they just go out. I cannot study in the house. When I'm doing my homework in the sitting room, my brothers and sisters have nothing to do, so they are just playing around. They go somewhere and come back with their friends and play. It's hard to study. Also, Fijian houses are so close to each other. My friends pop in to see me any time. It's very hard to say 'No!' I say 'Yes!' But, I don't spend much time with them. I look around at the time. I have to be serious about my studies. I have to tell my friends that I have to go (Interview SDS/1).

Thus, concentration by children on their homework is often undermined. Ethnic Fijian secondary school students, especially at upper secondary level, find it very difficult to spare enough time for their homework and study.

Furthermore, the academic standard of the upper secondary level is very high and the requirements are very demanding. Hence, students need to work very intensively and steadily throughout the academic year. The male Indo-Fijian Principal from School F explained:

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It is very demanding in Form 5 and Form 6. You need a good background to be able to do well in Form 5 and Form 6. In order for you to do well in Form 5 and Form 6, you need a background. For Fiji Junior, a good background is not so important. Some general knowledge and all these things will make you go through. But, a work on senior Forms is very demanding. Very demanding. Then, they go in to specialisation. Like in Form 3 and Form 4, we have Basic Sciences, which are combinations of sciences - Physics, Chemistry and Biology. But once you go into Form 5, you do pure science. That is a very poor preparation for students to go to pure science. Many people are not able to do it. Indian students are relatively average, but Fijian students are not able to do Science, Mathematics, Economics and Accounting. Also, there is a big gap between Form 4 syllabus and Form 5, Form 6 and Form 7 syllabus. There is a big gap. So, we try to encourage students to take up some practical subjects like Home Economics and Wood Technology. I think that people are mind-set. They do not want to do a kind of job like a blue-colour is looking for. The job is not available. We have a number of Fijian students in Form 5 and Form 6. We feel unhappy that, I think, most people will not pass. Most of them will not pass (Interview SFP/1).

It is also important to point out that many ethnic Fijian upper secondary schoolers are committed to functions and ceremonies conducted in their village. They find it very difficult to do homework in their village. That is; ethnic Fijian primary and lower secondary schoolers are freer from their communal obligations than their secondary school counterparts, so they can better concentrate on their school work. Consequently, a number of ethnic Fijian students' academic performance at the upper secondary school level drops, and this is largely contributed by ethnic Fijian home environments (i.e., ethnic Fijian social and moral obligations towards their village activities).

That is to say, according to the ethnic Fijian cultural values, beliefs, and practices in respect of achievement, that formal education is not accorded the priority that it is in

Western or Indo-Fijian cultures (see Chapter Three). Moreover, other aspects of their culture are more highly valued. A male ethnic Fijian teacher explained:

There is a common saying among Fijians. They always say: '*lotu, vanua and vuli*'. *Lotu* means church, *vanua* means their land. *Vuli* means education. When they present any traditional protocol in every Fijian village you go to, they always mention that church is in front. In the middle, they always mention the land, and the last one, they mention education. Basically, in a hierarchy of the Fijian society, they always mention this: *lotu; vanua; and vuli*. So the emphasis is on church. Although they might not consciously say that education is the last, but a psychological effect on what they just mentioned in important gatherings is a sign for people on the grass-root level (Interview SCT/1).

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He further illustrated the vital importance of *lotu* and *vanua* for ethnic Fijians:

*Lotu* and *vanua* are not just the major factors influencing Fijian education, but they are in their blood! Fijians fight for them. If you talk about their religion, they will bite you. If you talk about their land, they will bite you. But, if you talk about their education, they will just laugh it away! They are not much concerned about education (Interview SCT/1).

Hence, the ethnic Fijian students who leave the village tend to perform better at school than those from villages, since the former can concentrate more on studies than the latter. For example, ethnic Fijians, who live independently in farming settlements which are normally apart from ethnic Fijian villages, often excel academically. With the permission of village chiefs, people can move to settle somewhere outside the village (see Frazer, 1973). My face-to-face interview results indicate that more than 33% of ethnic Fijian teachers (including Principals) grew up in independent farming settlements. A male ethnic Fijian student from a farming settlement who used to live in the village said:

In the village, after school I used to often play rugby and hung around with my friends. But, since we moved here (i.e., the farming settlement), I only sometimes play after school [Interview SAS/1, ( ) is mine].

His academic performance has improved since he moved out of his village. Students at the boarding school also experienced fewer interruptions to their academic work. It is uncommon that the school allows boarders to visit their friends in the ethnic Fijian village, even the nearest village, during the academic year, thus they have fewer distractions. This encourages boarders to study well. More than 33% of ethnic Fijian informants such as teachers and Principals, in my face-to-face interviews, attended boarding school when they were students. One of the ethnic Fijian informants who went to boarding school for 6 years said:

I learnt to use time wisely. In the evening, from 7:00 to 9:30, we studied, but we were not allowed to talk to anyone in class. We were not allowed to read any fictions. It was only school work I was so lonely at times. I used to cry and cry. I just believed that God would help me! (Interview SCVP/1)

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The present fieldwork included 65 boarders (29 boys and 36 girls), and 165 students from local villages, who attended School E. These boarders were originally from the villages which are very far from the school, thus they found it very hard to travel to school every day. Therefore their parents sent them to this boarding school. Despite not being selected on the basis of academic merit however, the school record shows that 100% boarders who sat for the FJC Examinations in 2003 passed Basic Science, compared with 40% of their counterparts from villages. Of the same boarding students who sat for the internal

Mid-Year Examinations in 2003, the average mark in English was 44.7, compared with 37.1 of village students. A male Rotuman teacher from this school, who teaches Basic Science, explained one of the major grounds in which these performance results differentiates between boarders and the village students:

Boarders have a program that we have given for their studies. From 7:00 to 9:00 every night, they go back to the classroom and study. Teachers are there to help them, if they need some help. But, students from the village do not normally have time or even discipline them to study hard, since Fijians are generally very social people. They like socialising. When parents go out for drinking grog, visit relatives or go to church for obligations and things like that, children are left home alone. I don't think they sit and study. They may be watching TV, playing rugby and volleyball or visiting friends, because there is no parental supervision for children to study. Some of them even don't have any space to study, like a room where they can study quietly (Interview SET/4).

Generally and historically speaking, a number of academically-strong ethnic Fijian students often have been boarders (See Table 72 below & Stewart, 1983; Puamau, 1999).

Table 72: Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC) Means by Place of Abode (Ethnic Fijians)

Mean S. D. Number Per Cent

Living with

Parents

353.7 104.0 336 73.6

Living with

Relatives

318.9 91.7 54 11.8

Boarding at

Schools

369.8 66.4 65 14.2

Other/Not

Stated

472.0 1 0.2

Total 352.2 98.8 456 100.0

Source: Tavola, H. (1991). *Secondary Education in Fiji: A Key to the Future*. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of South Pacific.

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Table 72 above indicates clearly that ethnic Fijian students from boarding schools tend to perform better than those living with parents and relatives. In particular, the mean scores of the FJC Examinations for ethnic Fijian students living with relatives are considerably lower than of those who live with their parents and attend boarding school. This suggests that ethnic Fijian children living with relatives are probably more distracted by their home environment, except those living with relatives who encourage them to study hard. According to Tavola's study (1991 p. 110), some typical comments from ethnic Fijian students living with relatives are: "Plenty work given by my aunty to do at home" and "Living with my relatives, we come back from school, we have many jobs to do, then we have not much time to do our homework". A male ethnic Fijian Principal from School E said:

For the last 3 years, our boarding students' external examination results have shown improvements, in comparison to the day students (i.e. those from villages). We observe that students who come from farming

settlements perform better than students who come from villages [Interview SEP/1, ( ) is mine].

It should be noted here, that because of the financial problems which many boarding schools face, and a lack of knowledge about nutritious food, more than 90% of boarding schools in Fiji cannot provide the appropriate levels of nutrition for students (see Tavola, 2000b). School E could only spend 47 cents on each meal for boarders. When I visited there, students were eating only one plate of cassava soup for dinner. Students shared a very small bedroom with four others in the dormitory without any ceiling fans. Despite this living situation, boarders excelled academically.

The higher achievement of ethnic Fijian students who reside apart from their villages at boarding schools may suggest that their motivation to achieve an education is more a personal investment, not only to cultivate and nurture their intellectual capabilities, but also to create for themselves future opportunities and possibilities (see, e.g., Maehr & McInerney, 2004). As a personal investment, formal education may be a very individualistic activity. One has to think, analyse critically, review, create, and express one's view independently, either in written form, or orally. The living situation in the

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daily farming settlement and the boarding school probably allows ethnic Fijian students to be more individualised. For many ethnic Fijians villagers however, it is more difficult to work independently, because of strong pressures and expectations from their community living. In fact, "people in the village tend to look at how you are performing there, and perceptions of other people on what you are doing" (Interview SAT/1). Thus it may be that many ethnic Fijians, (i.e. not boarders so much), develop a more external locus of control for their achievement. As discussed in Chapter Three, Kishor's study (1983), suggests that Indo-Fijian children have a more internal locus of control orientation than their ethnic Fijian counterparts (see Table 73 below).

Table 73: Means and Standard Deviation for Internal Locus of Control by Sex and Ethnicity

Gender

Ethnic Fijians

Mean S. D. N.

Indo-Fijians

Mean S. D. N.

Male 22.57 6.17 137 28.37 5.25 141

Female 23.50 6.40 135 27.84 6.55 132

Total 23.02 6.29 272 28.11 5.95 273

Source: Kishor, N. (1983). Locus of Control and Academic Achievement:

Ethnic Differences among Fijians. *Journal of Cross-Cultural*

*Psychology*, 14(3), 297-308.

In consequence, it is very difficult for ethnic Fijians to separate themselves completely from their own people or their *vanua* and *lotu*, although individual freedom of choice is growing. For example, marriages and mobility are not as restrictive for men or for women as much as they were in the past. Thus free interaction between the sexes with members of other groups is not as strictly limited and controlled any more. Nevertheless, becoming and remaining a good member of the community is still one of the most important priorities amongst ethnic Fijians. Most people, in fact, feel privileged to commit themselves to communal activities. In sum, the socio-cultural background of the

ethnic Fijians, in particular reference to their home environment, is one of the major disadvantages in children's educational progress.

The next section discusses land issues, in relation to ethnic Fijian academic underachievement.

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### ***Land Issues***

The British colonial policies (i.e., Gordon's policies) created a formal land-tenure system based on existing ethnic Fijian traditions regarding land ownership within the kinship group called *mataqali*. Colonial policies with respect to land were "designed to protect ethnic Fijians from loss of their identity which is entwined with land, and from social disruption, which it was thought, would follow from such loss" (Ward, 1995, p. 198). In 1876, the Council of Chiefs was asked by Gordon to submit the outline of the traditional tenure system. By mid 1880s, the Native Land Commission had continued the *mataqali* as the official land-owning unit. This secured the rigid and uniform system of tenure for ethnic Fijian interests. As a result, "until 1940, the individual members of a *mataqali* received 70% of the gross income from leases of surplus land" (Lloyd, 1982, p. 221). Today, ethnic Fijians own over 82% land, by contrast with only 1.7% Indo-Fijian-owned land. This land tenure issue has made alienation of native land to non-ethnic Fijians (i.e., mostly Indo-Fijians) an impossibility, hence cementing the historically constituted land structure (Nandan & Alam, 2005). To date, freehold land comprises only 8% of the total land area in the country (see Table 74 below).

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Table 74: Categories of Land Ownership

Categories of Ownership Area (Acres) Percentage of Land Area

Ethnic Fijian Customary

Owned Land

3,714,990 82.60

Rotuman Customary

Owned Land

11,000 0.24

Freehold Land (other than

State Freehold)

- Ethnic Fijians

- Indo-Fijians

- Europeans/Part Europeans

- Chinese

- Kioa Islanders

- Rabi Islanders

- Other Ethnic Groups

368,390

7,532

75,830

246,242

5,081

4,600

16,950

2,688

8.15

0.2

1.7

5.5

0.1

0.1

0.4

0.06

State Freehold Lands 161,690 3.57

Schedule A lands 149,500 3.31

Provisional Schedule

A Lands

40,910 0.90

Schedule B Lands 75,320 1.67

Source: Lal, B. V. & Vakatora, T. (Eds.) (1997). *Research Papers of the Fiji*

Constitution Review Commission. Suva: University of South Pacific.

“The majority of land remains under what is commonly described as ‘traditional’, ‘customary’ or ‘native’ land tenure system in a communal ownership” (Nandan & Alam, 2005, p. 15). The vast majority of Indo-Fijians remained landless in their adopted land, since the inalienability of ethnic Fijian land has remained unshakeable (Lloyd, 1982; Lawson, 1991). Indo-Fijians hold approximately 70% of the leases issued by ethnic Fijian landowners through the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB). In 1941, the NLTB was established to administer the leasing of ethnic Fijian land and to terminate leases where necessary so as to create “reserves” for future use by ethnic Fijians (Nandan & Alam, 2005). The NLTB is responsible for collecting rent and allocating it to different land owning groups according to the rank. In 1966, the colonial government oversaw the passage of the Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Ordinance (ALTO). This was later replaced by the Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Act (ALTA) in 1976. Under the ALTA, legislation leases were issued for a maximum period of 30 years and there was no provision for automatic renewal of leases.

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The members of the *mataqali* receive only 45% of the rent (i.e., the NLTB takes 25% of the rent received for administration and management of the leases, 5% goes to the head of the *vanua*, 10% to the head of the *yavusa*, 15% to the head of the *mataqali*) (see Nandan & Alam, 2005). As a note, the *yavusa* is composed of several *mataqali* whose members are in turn the agnatically related sons of the *yavusa* founder (see Ravuvu, 1983). Within each *mataqali*, there are one or more extended families (i.e., *tokatoka*) whose core members would be related according to the same principles (Ravuvu, 1988). It should be noted that in several instances, the head of the *vanua*, the head of the *yavusa* and the head of the *mataqali* can be the same person and s/he is able to accumulate as high as 30% of the total lease revenue (Ratuva, 2000).

Despite the limited amount of rent ethnic Fijian landowners receive, it is very significant for ethnic Fijians to own their land (i.e., *vanua*). As discussed earlier, for ethnic Fijians, *vanua* has a deep-rooted cultural significance and special meaning, embodying the very essence of their identity, culture, customs, traditions and their very existence as a community. For ethnic Fijians, “to sin against the *vanua* or chiefs is to sin against god!” (Ratuva, 2002, p. 6)

However, ethnic Fijians' strong and emotional attachments to *vanua* affect their attitudes towards formal education. Historically, most of the land in Fiji has been owned by ethnic Fijians. Tavola (1991) explained:

After cession to Great Britain in 1874, approximately 82% of land was placed in perpetuity as (ethnic) Fijian land which could never be bought or sold, but could be leased. Some 8% was designated freehold land, much of which had been taken over as large plantations by white European settlers. The remaining 10% was deemed crown land which could be leased. The land situation exacerbated the Indians' (i.e., Indo-Fijians') feelings of insecurity as they felt that they could easily be evicted from their leased land (p. 17).

Since ethnic Fijians own most of the land in Fiji, much of which they lease to Indo-Fijian farmers, from whom they receive money as a living (Pareti, 2002), they are more secure than Indo-Fijians. Therefore, many ethnic Fijian children are not very concerned to invest in themselves educationally. A female ethnic Fijian teacher explained:

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Fijians know that they have the land here, so they do not work hard. That's their source of life here. So, even if they do not do well at school, they can always go back to their own village and utilise their land, whereas Indians have to work hard in order to live their life (Interview SDT/2).

Today, more than 70% of ethnic Fijian landowners do not want to renew these leases since they wish to take over the farms themselves: from 1997 to 2001, a total of 3,044 leases (72%) out of 4,221 expired leases were returned to ethnic Fijian landowners. Another 2,115 leases are expected to expire from 2002 to 2005 (Pareti, 2002) (see Table 75 below).

Table 75: Leases in Fiji

Year Expired	Leases Renewed To Existing Tenants	Leases Renewed New Tenants	Not Renewed
1997	72	36	31
1998	157	45	107
1999	1,073	350	511
2000	1,708	311	469
2001	313	141	14
2002	457	N.A.	N.A.
Total	3,780	883	1,132

Source: Reddy, M. (2004). Farm Productivity, Efficiency and Profitability in Fiji's Sugar Industry. *Fijian Studies: A Journal of Contemporary Fiji*, 225-241.

Thus, many Indo-Fijian children might no longer take over their parents' land once the lease is expired. This may drive Indo-Fijian students to excel academically in order to leave the country, while ethnic Fijian students may have fewer such incentives. A female Indo-Fijian teacher explained:

I feel that most Fijian children in our school come from *mataqali* families and they own the land here and there. So, the attitude they have is like: 'We are the landowners. When we are grown up, we just take over the ownership. There is nothing much in life!' Many Fijian students are not worried about anything. That's the attitude carried on from Form 3 to

Form 7, because they know that their ownership is right here. Everything goes back to this idea. They are not worried about studies (Interview SAT/4).

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Consequently, the ethnic Fijian ownership of *vanua* makes them feel at ease, because they believe that they have security in their future. This does not help many ethnic Fijian children to strive for their academic “success”.

By contrast, ethnic Fijians, who do not have enough natural resources (i.e. land) for a living, usually try to work hard and invest more in their children’ education than those from other provinces which have the resources. It is often said that people in the Lau Province, a small group of islands which are located in the eastern region of Fiji and where it takes at least four days to get to from Suva by ship, strive for academic excellence. The province ranked the lowest weekly income area in the country. The average household earned F\$130 (AUD\$115) per week in 1997 (see Table 67 above). Nearly 98% of the population in the Lau Province is ethnic Fijian (Norton, 1990) and for them, education is a very important investment for them to make in their children. A male ethnic Fijian teacher explained:

Education is their top priority in Lau, because of their isolation of the main islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. Most parents from Lau send their children to Suva. Parents realise that it is a good thing to send their children to Suva, because they know that schools in Suva have better facilities and after that, they will get a better job. The highest employment in Fiji is from Lau. Our former Prime Minister Ratu Kamisese Mara is from Lau. He was the first and longest serving Prime Minister in Fiji after its independence (Interview SCT/1).

Even before Ratu Kamisese Mara became the Prime Minister in October 1970, Lau had been producing many Members of Parliament. In 1966, the province sent two people to Parliament, the second largest number of members in the Parliament, (which has a total of 14 members), after Tailevu Province, which sent six members (Norton, 1990).

Traditionally, many people from Lau have been appointed as civil servants. Norton’s (1990) study indicates that, from 1936 to 1938, 17 people from Lau had been appointed civil servants (such as senior administrative officers, senior police officers, medical officers, education officers and teachers). This was the second largest number, of those who obtained such jobs, amongst all the provinces. From 1950 to 1952, Lau had produced 34 civil servants and, between 1967 and 1969, 53 people had become civil

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servants. This was the largest number amongst all provinces which had produced civil servants. Clearly this indicates that the people in Lau are more qualified than the people in other provinces. The FJC Examination results in 2003 indicate pass rates of 86.3% in Lau, against a national average of 82.43% (Ministry of Education, 2004). An ethnic Fijian secondary school in Lau marked 100% pass rates in the examinations, compared with 87.8% ethnic Fijian pass rates in the FJC Examinations in 2004 of School A (see Tables 52 & 53 above).

Another ethnic Fijian secondary school in Lau had 47% pass rates in the FSLC Examinations in 2002, which were higher than ethnic Fijian average pass rates (35.6%) of

four racially-integrated secondary schools in the province - Schools A, B, C and D (see Tables 50 & 51 above).

At the primary level, students in Lau scored remarkable pass rates in the FEYE in 2003.

Twenty-seven out of thirty-eight primary schools had 100% pass rates, and the average pass rate of all the schools in Lau was 92.8%. White (2001b) argued that:

The reputation of the Lauan work ethic stems from a similar notion of landlessness as an incentive to invest in formal education and illustrates the analogous status of Fiji Indians (i.e., Indo-Fijians) and Lauans in popular theories of educational attainment and achievement motivation. Notions of relatively high levels of achievement-motivation for Lauans and Fiji Indians suggests their similar status in having limited access to arable land as representing a catalyst for turning to formal education as a safety net and an alternative source of livelihood [pp. 324-325, ( ) is mine].

Similarly, one of the other groups living in Fiji, Rotumans, has achieved high formal education attainment rates in their home island (see Tavola, 2000a). The island of Rotuma is very small and approximately 465 kilometres north of Fiji. The island has very limited resources, and their way of living is very similar to ethnic Fijian communal way of life. A male Rotuman teacher explained:

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We are very socialising people. We like to socialise a lot, just like Fijians. We also have lots of village commitments, church commitments and *kava* ceremonies at night. But, we value education! One of the ways we can keep our customs and traditions alive is through education. The school system is very closely linked with chiefs and villages, so parents tend to put more efforts into their children's education. The whole village goes to the school once every month and clean up the whole school compound and classrooms. Parents are interested in their children's education. When parents are sometimes invited to school, they sit and observe what is actually happening in the classroom: what a teacher does and how their children study. It creates a lot of teamwork over there. If parents do not turn up at school, it is going to be embarrassment to their child, because everybody is expected to turn up. Parents do support what teachers say! Also, the island of Rotuma is very small. Teachers come from the same villages as students come from, so if students have some problems at school, it is very easy for teachers to get in touch with their parents. This creates lots of interactions between teachers, parents and students. The link between teachers and parents is well established (Interview SET/4).

Landless people: the Indo-Fijians, the Lauans, and the Rotumans, all excel at school and at work, whereas the ethnic Fijians who have land have a strong tendency to be relaxed about investing their children in formal education.

In the name of protecting ethnic Fijian interests (see Chapter Two), colonial rulers created the rigid land tenure system. The system has influenced ethnic disparities in educational attainment not only for ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians but also for ethnic Fijians who own their land and those who do not own their land (i.e., the Lauans).

### **Conclusion**

It is important to note that the rigid land-tenure system, which excludes most non-ethnic-Fijians from ownership, is a product of the British colonial policy. Colonial legacies shape ethnic differences in academic achievement (see Chapter Two). Additionally, the Affirmative Action Programs not only reinforce the differences in academic achievements, but further discriminate against ethnic Fijians from racially-integrated schools in the matter of financial aid from the government. The policy weakens the ethnic Fijian work ethic by providing numbers of tertiary scholarships, and allowing lowertertiary

entry requirements. But the Blue Print pushes Indo-Fijians to study hard to obtain the limited numbers of scholarships available to them. Furthermore, the Indo-Fijians, by

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valuing education highly, and by their determination, have very strong motivation to excel academically. Parents are willing to support their children financially, and supervise them with their homework. Education has been always one of the most important priorities within the Indo-Fijian culture.

By contrast, ethnic Fijian culture values *lotu* and *vanua* more highly than formal education. Parents wish their children to become good members of their community. Although parents understand the importance of formal education, their commitments and moral and social obligations to church and ceremonial events within their community are substantial. It is therefore often very difficult for them to support their children financially, and to supervise them at home. Children receive considerable pressure from their peers and their involvement in village activities. These factors often affect their concentration on study.

Furthermore, school leadership is more important than geographical and ethnic differences in academic achievement. The purely ethnic Fijian secondary school, School E, outstripped the predominantly Indo-Fijian school, School B, in the FJC examinations in 2003. School E re-established Form 4 classes and provided students with a number of extra curricula such as Evening Classes and Saturday Classes. Effective leadership is as important as the students' aspirations and motivations towards work. Also teachers' expectations, and "stereo-typical" attitudes towards students, affect their academic performance.

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## **CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

### **Summary of Research Findings**

The present research investigated factors influencing differences between the academic performances of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians in the Fiji context. As reviewed in Chapter Three, there are four factors that influence differences in the academic achievements of these two ethnic groups; socio-economic, political and cultural factors which include 12 elements; institutional factors which include 7 elements; structural factors which include 13 elements; and psychological factors which include 9 elements (see Figure 1 above). However this research focused on cultural values, beliefs, and practices, as influences on achievement from a crosscultural perspective. For this investigation, the research addressed four issues: (1) institutional factors such as school leadership and teachers' expectations; (2) students' home environments - Indo-Fijian parental involvement in children's education versus ethnic Fijian communal obligations and commitment in affecting their academic performance; (3) security issues with respect to the land-tenure system that affect students' academic "success" and "failure"; and (4) colonial policies which reinforced differences in academic achievement.

Of these factors, as the results from face-to-face interviews with a range of stakeholders in the education system clearly indicate, home environment and parental involvement in children's education are major factors. Cultural values and beliefs persist - they do not change frequently like fashions. There are strong cultural residues in each ethnic group, as discussed in the research hypothesis of Chapter One. Typical Indo-Fijian parents see educating children as one of the top priorities in child-rearing

processes and practices. Parents are willing to support their children, both financially and by supporting them at home, to excel academically. Even if children fail, parents often encourage them to repeat the following year, or send them to some private vocational courses to acquire further skills and qualifications. It is also common, amongst Indo-Fijian parents, to discuss children's academic performance with others, such as relatives and friends, at occasions like functions and ceremonies which they

165 attend, or even while grocery shopping. Indo-Fijian ways of valuing education are deeply rooted in *Bhagavad-Gita* philosophy of learning and the *Quran* teaching, each of which emphasises the importance of increasing one's store of information and acquiring knowledge. Knowledge is developed by being yoked to the *guru*. People have a great respect for their *guru* and books. Hence, Indo-Fijian culture has always valued education and respected it highly.

Within ethnic Fijian culture by contrast, success and esteem are measured very differently. Ethnic Fijian culture encourages children to become good members of their community (clan and village church). For this purpose, one's total commitment to communal activities and requirements is vital. Typical ethnic Fijian parents spend a large amount of time and money in contributing to ceremonies and church, sometimes at the expense of their children's education. The financial hardships of parents often intensely affect students' academic performance. If students had financial security at home, they could then be assisted to strive academically. But parents' financial difficulties often disturb children's concentration on their school work, although Indo-Fijian parents are still willing to support their children at the expense of their financial problems.

Despite the fact that most ethnic Fijian parents are pleased with children's academic "success", their communal demands are in practice more important to them, and reduce their opportunities to supervise children at home. Ethnic Fijian adolescents are also often involved in ceremonies and functions in their *koro*, and are at such times, often absent from school. This can make them fall behind in class, or even lead them to withdraw from school. Also children often feel considerable peer pressure, which prevents them from prioritising their school work. Consequently, Indo-Fijian students generally become better performers in secondary school level, than their ethnic Fijian counterparts (however ethnic Fijian boarders, and those who live in independent farming settlements, often perform better than those living in villages, because they have fewer distractions from their study).

School leadership also greatly influences students' academic achievements. If a school exhibits strong leadership, students feel encouraged to excel academically, regardless of ethnic and gender differences. In addition, teachers' expectations and

166 stereo-typical views towards ethnic differences in students' academic achievements affect student performance. Teachers' positive attitudes and responses towards students enhance their learning chances, and thus they may strive for academic excellence. However, any teachers' negative attitudes and responses towards students will discourage them in their academic performances.

Socio-economic and political factors also play an important role in affecting ethnic differences between the academic achievements of these two groups. In Fiji at present, over 80% of land belongs to ethnic Fijians. They often lease their land to Indo-Fijian sugar-cane and vegetable farmers. Some ethnic Fijian children learn from a very early stage of their life that their parents receive money for a living from their

Indo-Fijian tenants. This means that typical ethnic Fijian children may come to question the value of extended formal education. Land ownership leads most ethnic Fijians to feel secure about the future, whereas a lack of land ownership leads Indo-Fijians to fear insecurity. This difference seems to account, at least in part, for relaxed ethnic Fijian attitude (by both parents and children) in achieving educational “success”, whereas it helps drive Indo-Fijians to strive for academic excellence. This is closely related to Indo-Fijian dependence on “success” in the market economy. When leases expire, the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB) often either increases the rent substantially, or it resumes the land. Hence, Indo-Fijian tenants often have to find a new place in which to live. In addition, the three political coups in Fiji since 1987 have heightened Indo-Fijians’ senses of insecurity about even remaining in the country. Many, especially highly qualified professionals, have been leaving the country for Australia, New Zealand, and the USA (see Table 76 below).

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Table 76: Emigrants from Fiji by Professions, 1987-1999

Year	Architects,	Engineers & Related Technicians	Accountants	Teachers	Medical, Veterinary & Related	Workers	Total
1987	127	103	125	83	438		
1988	135	97	166	86	484		
1989	114	96	188	72	470		
1991	127	81	173	66	447		
1992	113	61	167	65	406		
1993	80	62	99	60	301		
1994	49	40	90	30	209		
1995	110	94	175	55	434		
1996	102	94	211	63	470		
1997	90	79	182	72	423		
1998	115	98	175	93	481		
1999	149	97	205	91	542		

Source: Ministry of Education (2000). *Learning Together: Directions for Education in the Fijii Islands*. Suva: Ministry of Education.

Fiji no longer feels a secure and safe land for many Indo-Fijians (Trnka, 2002). This political context has led many Indo-Fijian parents to stress the value of education to their children even more, in order to encourage them to qualify for future opportunities overseas.

It is important to note that this rigid land-tenure system was established by the colonial policy.

The existence of the NLTB and an earlier decision of the colonial government to ban the sale of native land meant that bulk of the arable land remains in the control of its owners, some 83% of it (Pareti, 2002, p.

27).

The colonial policy reinforced ethnic differences. Ethnic Fijian children went to village schools and Indo-Fijian children went to Indo-Fijian run schools. They rarely studied together at schools, and so had a very little opportunity to learn to compete with each other.

Furthermore, the educational system in some ways favours ethnic Fijian students, providing them with a number of scholarship schemes and keeping tertiary entry requirements for them lower than for their Indo-Fijian counterparts. Some critics say

168 that this system of Affirmative Action may weaken ethnic Fijian students' efforts and aspirations towards academic "success". On the other hand, many Indo-Fijian students know that they need to strive for the limited scholarships and higher admission standards needed to further their studies. Thus, the current education system unintentionally enhances ethnic differences in academic performance of these two groups.

### **Other Possible Variables influencing Ethnic Differences in the Academic Achievement**

Researchers such as Gibson and Ogbu (1991) have argued that immigrant children often strive for academic excellence more greatly than the local people - including their locally born counterparts. Studies (Gibson, 1988 & 2000; Burchu & Gibson; 1991) suggested that Indian immigrants often perform academically better in other countries, such as the USA and UK, than their local peers. As mentioned in Chapter Three, even new Indian arrivals often perform better than their locally born counterparts despite their language difficulties and cultural differences. One of the reasons why immigrant children tend to perform well at school is because of their feeling of insecurity in their foreign land. They often feel that they do not belong to their country of immigration. Their strong feelings of insecurity tend to last for many years. Indo-Fijians generally consider themselves to be "second-class citizens" - or even "foreigners" - in Fiji. A male Indo-Fijian teacher explained:

Our past generations came here (i.e., Fiji) and they told the next generations where they came from. This has been perpetuated. We have been told time and again to that we are foreigners here, although we were born and have grown up here. And so, we have to struggle on. We have to make our careers ourselves. That probably makes us want to emigrate from Fiji to other countries. We have to move on. That is why many Indo-Fijian students work hard to pass exams to make their career, or to try to emigrate overseas. [Interview SAT/3, ( ) is mine].

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A male Indo-Fijian Principal further explained:

Indo-Fijians are immigrants here. I understand that immigrants tend to do better (than local people). They are highly motivated towards different sectors, too. In Fiji, Indo-Fijians do well not only in education, but also in other sectors like business and commerce. Indo-Fijians regard education as an asset for the future of their children. I think that this notion has no equivalent among ethnic Fijian community. They have another asset: they have land to go back to. Indo-Fijians feel that they have no permanent asset like land, especially in the rural sector. Farms in the rural sector belong to someone else. So, there is a strong motivating factor regarding education as their asset, not land. But ethnic Fijians look at land as their asset. So education has become less important to them, and it does not motivate enough of them to invest in it. [Interview SFP/1, ( ) is mine].

The economic situation in which Indo-Fijians live becomes their great motivator to strive for academic "success". This is most certainly another factor influencing

differences in the academic achievement. White (2001b) further argued:

A surviving colonial discourse on backward (ethnic) Fijians and advanced Fiji Indians (i.e., Indo-Fijians) as mediating discourse on differential education has been in evidence throughout post-independence Fiji [p. 317; () is mine].

White (2001b) further described that backward groups, such as ethnic Fijians, are often labelled as: “poor”; “lazy”; “traditional”; “inefficient”; “leisurely”; “easygoing”; “polite”; “unintelligent”; and “dependent”. On the other hand, advanced groups, such as Indo-Fijians, are labelled as: “money-hungry”; “successful”; “arrogant”; “cunning”; “intelligent”; “energetic”; “resourceful”; “serious”; “progressive”; “efficient”; “ambitious”; and “clever”. As “foreigners”, their social consciousness is for the Indo-Fijians a motivation to strive for academic “success”.

### **Cultural Generalisations & Individual Differences**

Much that is written about cross-cultural psychology and comparative education deals in broad generalisations about cultures. For instance, it is commonly observed that ethnic Fijian cultures generally stress that achievement motivation is to seek cooperative success, rather than the individual success that Western cultures generally stress (Veramu, 1992; Puamau, 1999; Nabobo, 1994 & 2001). These widely recognised “cultural generalisations” about achievement motivations may become

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“cultural stereotypes” if they are used too rigidly as principles without exceptions.

Within every culture, differences exist between individuals. Bandura has been critical of what he calls “contentious dualisms” in cross-cultural psychology, arguing that “intra-cultural diversity and intra-individual variation in psychosocial orientations across spheres of functioning underscore the multifaceted dynamic nature of cultures” (2002, pp. 269-270).

However, despite Bandura’s objections, “cultural generalisations” are of great significance for an individual’s adaptation to her/his environment. If every situation in which an individual tries to achieve differs, it may become confusing in terms of predicting her/his likely performance in a given achievement task. According to Triandis (1995a, p. 5), “people who have been raised in collective cultures tend to ‘cognitively convert’ situations into collective settings; people who have been raised in individualistic cultures tend to convert situations into individualistic settings”.

Every individual, to greater or less degree, tries to achieve within a given cultural perspective. Cultures expect every member of that particular society to follow their norms and values, in order to achieve in the culturally appropriate way. Consequently, expectations are culturally based. Jackson (1964) has stated:

People who interact, develop expectations about each other’s behaviour, not only in the sense that they are able to predict the regularities, but also in the sense that they develop preferences about how others should behave under certain circumstances (p. 225).

This tendency brings predictability to our lives. Thus, in the present thesis, I emphasise the importance of cultural differences rather than intra-cultural and intraindividual diversity. Here, the idea of cultural “false friends” should be taken into consideration. According to Breen (1989, p. 188), “an Englishman and an American will normally expect a Japanese to be culturally foreign and will welcome any sign of common ground. They will normally expect an Australian to be ‘just like us’ because of shared language and traditions”. In this regard, differences and similarities certainly exist across cultures. Individual differences are also admitted by a particular society to some degree, because they are culturally produced and shaped (Otsuka,

1996). Regardless of intra-individual and inter-individual variation within a culture, people are generally expected to achieve in a certain way, which differs between cultures. Hence, her/his achievement is socially indexed. Therefore, individual

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differences and similarities are a matter of degree within a culture and across-cultures. It is reasonable to rely on “cultural generalisations” to a limited extent. These “cultural phenomena” assisted my attempts to compare and make contrast with the most prominent factors influencing differences between the academic performances of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians.

### **Policy Implementations**

Under the current Affirmative Action Programs, the Ministry of Education has been trying to educate ethnic Fijian parents to be more aware of the importance of children’s education. Education officers visit local ethnic Fijian villages from time to time to conduct seminars, lectures and guidance for ethnic Fijian families, especially parents. These seminars attempt to encourage parents to realise that they should support children by supervising homework, seeing the children’s teachers at school on Parents’ Day, and paying school fees on time. The programs also encourage parents to make sure that their children attend school every day. Most parents, indeed, know theoretically the importance of children’s education. They are actually grateful to the school for providing children with extra curricular activities free, such as Saturday Classes and Evening Classes. This helps children prepare for their external examinations, such as the FJC Examinations, FSLC Examinations and the FFSE. A male ethnic Fijian senior officer at the Ministry of Education in the Nadroga/Navosa Province said:

We have to do more programs for parents, so they come to realise what their priority should be. That’s not their culture, but education! (Interview EO)

However, a male Rotuman principal explained:

Differences in academic achievement have been going on for the last decades or more, and countless researches on this issue have been done. The government has debated this over and over again. But, there is hardly any improvement. In order to improve this, the Ministry of Education will really have to dig into ethnic Fijian home situation! (Interview SAP/1).

The ethnic Fijian communal way of living imposes multifarious demands on parents, notably to attend many ceremonies. Hence, many parents find it very difficult to be at

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home to supervise their children in their homework. They even find it difficult to pay children’s school fees, because of financial demands from the community and the church (in the form of tithes). The present study suggests that: the Ministry of Education should offer more opportunities to parents to enhance their own literacy, whereby they could then assist their children more, and appreciate the importance of education more. “The more literate the parents, the more they become aware of how to assist in the education of their children” (Interview SAT/1). The present face-to-face interviews suggest that many ethnic Fijian parents, whose children are school teachers or education officers, are themselves well-educated. Such parents are often school teachers or church ministers. There is a strong and close linkage between parents’ education background and children’s education amongst ethnic Fijian communities. The more parents become educated, the more they encourage their children to become educated.

Important figures such as chiefs, headmen and assistant headmen from ethnic Fijian

villages, especially rural and big villages, need to realise that the village activities and functions rob families of large amounts of their time and money. In practice, this often reduces the resources within the family available to support their children's education. If the most important people in the village valued education more, the culture of the whole village might better support children and schools, to achieve academic excellence.

All schools should offer counselling services to students. This might give students the opportunity to express their problems and concerns about their teachers' expectations and attitudes towards students. This might help to reduce students' feelings of insecurity and disappointment which they tend to derive from their teachers.

The Ministry of Education should set up a monitoring system that checks regularly how public funds are allocated within the local school, especially rural ethnic Fijian schools. According to my face-to-face interviews with teachers, Principals, vice-Principals and assistant-Principals, these rural schools mis-use and mis-manage the funds. They are not always allocated for educational purposes, but go towards social activities like *yaqona*-drinking and related community functions. The Ministry should regulate how the funds are used to upgrade school facilities. The Ministry should also

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regulate students' attendance up to Form 4, where compulsory education ends. Many children drop out before this form largely because of parents' financial problems. Therefore, the Ministry should encourage children to complete their compulsory education by providing financial support for under-privileged children.

The current Affirmative Action Programs allocate public funds only to ethnic Fijian schools - in both urban and rural areas. Hence, more than half of ethnic Fijian students do not receive such support, since they attend racially-integrated schools including many Indo-Fijian controlled schools. It is essential for the Ministry of Education to realise the importance of changing their allocation of funds for educational purposes. The money should be allocated to all schools in the country fairly. Moreover, all students should be able to attend both primary and secondary schools free, like ethnic Fijian students at ethnic Fijian schools. As mentioned earlier, since 2005, only ethnic Fijian students at ethnic Fijian schools have been able to enrol in Form 7 free of charge. Therefore some ethnic Fijian students from racially integrated schools, enrolled in ethnic Fijian schools. However, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) states: equality of educational opportunity must be provided for the children of all citizens, so that they are able to obtain secondary education (Bellamy, 2004).

The current education system in Fiji should provide Indo-Fijian students with an equality of educational opportunity by providing them with more scholarship schemes at the tertiary level, and abandoning differential tertiary-entry requirements for Indo-Fijians. This would signal to all Fijians that the government supports education as a high priority for all the citizens.

However, the Fijian government policy of differential entry with their scholarship scheme is a longstanding one. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Fijian Affairs introduced the so-called "positive discrimination policy in education" to ethnic Fijians in 1975 in order for them to "catch up" with formal education (see further discussion in Chapter Two). Despite this "positive discrimination policy", more ethnic Fijian students have failed the USP Foundation Program over the years than their Indo-Fijian counterparts (Baba, 1983; Puamau, 1991; Sharma, 1997).

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Nonetheless, the Fijian government still allocates more scholarships to ethnic Fijian students than their Indo-Fijian counterparts. For example, the Ministry of Multi Ethnic Affairs Scholarship Scheme in 2006 grants scholarships for the University of South Pacific foundation-year Science Program. Ethnic Fijians, who passed the FSLC Examinations with 220 marks (at least 216 marks), obtain scholarships, whereas it is necessary for students of other ethnic groups such as Indo-Fijians to gain a minimum of 264 (White, 2001b). The Affirmative Action Program has wished to reduce ethnic disparities in educational attainment of these two groups.

The University of South Pacific (USP) requires all the candidates to score the following marks obtained in either the Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examinations or the Fiji Form Seven Examinations (FFSE) in order to enter the USP programs in 2006, regardless of the candidates' ethnic background. According to these required marks, the Fijian government sets up its Scholarship Policy, which is often different for ethnic Fijian candidates than that applying to their Indo-Fijian counterparts.

#### Admission from the Fiji Form Six

Sixth Form applicants must achieve the following in the Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examinations in order to enrol in the foundation programs offered by the University of South Pacific (USP):

1. Score – a minimum of 250 out of 400
2. Passes – 4 subjects including English
3. Passes – 4 subjects including English, Mathematics and two other Science subjects (for Foundation Science Program)

If a student scores 250 or above, but passes only 3 subjects or fewer, s/he will be permitted entry to the foundation preliminary courses and the two foundation courses. S/he will then be required to pass the preliminary course(s) before enrolling in the foundation program. Also, a Form Six student who scores between 200 and 249 in the FSLC Examinations can be admitted to the preliminary course(s), but s/he has to

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complete the number of courses according to her/his mark in the FSLC Examinations (see Table 77 below).

Table 77: Preliminary Programs, University of South Pacific, 2006  
Marks – Fiji School Leaving Certificate  
(FSLC) Examinations

Number of Preliminary Courses

240-249 1

230-239 2

200-229 3

Source: University of South Pacific (2006). *Admission Requirements from the Fiji Form 6 and Form 7*. Suva: University of South Pacific.

#### Admission from the Fiji Form 7

Seventh Form applicants must achieve the following in the Fiji Seventh Form Examinations (FSFE) to enrol in the degree course(s) offered by the University of South Pacific (USP):

1. Score – a minimum of 250 out of 400
2. Passes – 4 subjects including English

If a student scores 250 or above but passes only 3 subjects or fewer, s/he/ will be not be admitted to the degree program(s). S/he will be advised to complete one or two foundation course(s) and two degree courses, before enrolling in the degree programs.

Also, a Form Seven student who scores between 200 and 249 in the FSFE can be admitted to the foundation course(s), but s/he has to complete the number of courses according to her/his mark in the FSFE (see Table 78 below).

Table 78: Foundation Programs, University of South Pacific, 2006

Marks – Fiji Seventh Form Examinations

(FSFE)

Number of Foundation Courses

240-249 1

230-239 2

200-229 3

Source: University of South Pacific (2006). *Admission Requirements from the Fiji Form 6 and Form 7*. Suva: University of South Pacific.

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S/he will then be able to enrol in degree programs at USP. S/he will be asked to note specific requirements for admission to the programs and majors as follows.

- a) For admission to the Bachelor of Science, students must pass English, Mathematics and two other subjects.
- b) For admission to Computer Science, Information Systems, Accounting and Economics majors, students must pass English, Mathematics and two other subjects.
- c) For admission to the Bachelor in Engineering Technology, students must pass English, Mathematics, and score 60% in Physics, and in one other subject.
- d) For admission to the Bachelor of Laws or the Bachelor of Arts/ Bachelor of Laws, students must score 60 % in English, and pass three other subjects.
- e) For admission to the Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science students, they must provide the USP with a supporting letter from their school Principal, in addition to meeting the basic admission requirements listed above.

In addition, the Ministry of Education has been undertaking the “pilot study” in a new assessment system for Form 4 students since 2003 (see Chapter Two). Under the Affirmative Action Program, ethnic Fijian schools have received substantial financial support from the government (see Chapter Two). Despite all these Affirmative Action Programs, Indo-Fijian academic performance has continued to outstrip ethnic Fijian performance at both secondary (especially upper secondary) and tertiary levels (see Chapter Two). The present study suggests that there are four major factors affecting ethnic differences in academic achievement. They are: (1) institutional factors; (2) students’ home environments; (3) the land-tenure system; and (4) colonial policies. Hence, this study does not cover details about effects of the Affirmative Action Programs on ethnic disparities in educational attainment. What is required for the Affirmative Action Program to reduce ethnic differences in academic achievement? Therefore, future research needs to be conducted to answer this question. This will assist in solving this long-standing major education issue in Fiji.

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### **Limitations of the Study**

The present research was conducted by an outside researcher, albeit with first-hand experience. The researcher had been a Japanese language teacher in three Fijian schools for two-and-a-half years (two tertiary institutions and one secondary school). So he had an opportunity to observe Fijian community life closely. This afforded the research both strengths and weaknesses. As to the research strengths, the researcher was able to delve into the situation as an outsider, without being a member of either

culture. This helps to give the present thesis a degree of balance, although inevitably the researcher's own interests - cultural values, beliefs and practices in respect of achievement - are present.

On the other hand, it may be agreed that the researcher's non-ethnic/non-Indo-Fijian cultural background imposed limits on the insights and analyses. My face-to-face interviews taught me that if the research with ethnic Fijians was conducted in a culturally inappropriate and insensitive manner (e.g., protocols being ignored), the research findings would be neither reliable nor valid. Some informants' answers gave the researcher some doubts as to whether respondents answered questions truthfully but rather in a socially desirable way. For example, in the course of my face-to-face interviews with an ethnic Fijian mother conducted in rural *koro* (villages) in the Nadroga/Navosa Province, the mother used the so-called "white-lie" with the researcher. After the researcher mentioned to her that a sensitive question would be asked, she provided inaccurate information. According to her, she sometimes pays her son's school fees two weeks after the due date. But the boy himself admitted that his parents had not paid the fees at all since the beginning of academic year 2004, and his school record confirmed this. This was a useful reminder of the importance of data triangulation, and so the present research also used school archives, students' examination results (both external and internal results), students' attendance records, teachers' reports, and parents' payment records of school fees. Another example is that a male ethnic Fijian student who always spent long hours on daily homework and received regular assistance from his parents and relatives when he was studying at home. He also attended Evening Classes and Saturday Classes regularly. He said that he did not have any problems in studies. However, his school record clearly indicated

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that he often was placed 34th out of 35 students in his class. He repeated his form twice.

Therefore, the researcher paid particular attention to the "white lie" in research with Pacific Islanders such as ethnic Fijians. Apparently, many ethnic Fijian respondents in the present study attempted to "please" visitors, such as the present researcher, by "showing off" their performance based on the "white-lie". Despite a number of critiques (see e.g., Young & Juan, 1985), Freeman's (1983) controversial study claims that Margaret Mead's (1928) Samoan research contained inaccurate data that supported a false picture of a culture where the typical "storm and stress" of adolescence in Western societies did not exist. Freeman (1983) claimed that Mead's young female informants misinformed her as *totongi* (a reciprocal gesture) for her culturally insensitive questions and intrusion into their social lives. Pacific Island informants disclose information only when they feel and sense the time is right, trust has been established, and context is appropriate. If such protocol is ignored, they may invoke *totongi* to teach the researcher a lesson, to remind them of their obligations in this symbiotic relationship. However, it might not be easy for a non-ethnic Fijian researcher to know when or whether informants tell "white-lies" or not, while the research is being carried out. Therefore, the researcher should use the "*talanoa*" research method, and take time to establish a culturally-appropriate interpersonal relationship and rapport with ethnic Fijian participants, prior to conducting research in their community (see further discussions below).

In addition, difficulties in inter-cultural communication with both ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians may have been a barrier to conducting culturally appropriate face-to-face interviews with both ethnic groups. All the interviews were conducted in English,

since participants had a reasonably good command of English as their second language in which to express their ideas and opinions. However when the language differs, concepts also differ (Novak, 1977). People usually use their second language in their own cultural contexts. They may speak the second language translating directly from their mother tongue. This tends to lead to cultural mis-communication and mis-understanding between the research participants and the researcher. For example, the ethnic Fijian usage of an English term, “borrow”, is culturally based, therefore culturally different. Their concept of “borrowing” stems from *kere kere* (see

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Chapter Five). They understand that once they “borrowed” something from others, they are able to keep it forever. Thus, if someone from their *koro* borrowed something, they would not return it. Therefore they use the English term in a culturally different way. Most Indo-Fijian use of the English imperative: “Come”, is another example. In the Hindi language, which most Indo-Fijians commonly speak, they usually say to each other, “*Aaiye*”, which is equivalent to “come” in English. They use this particular Hindi term in a variety of situations. As a result, they still tend to simply say in English, “Come”, directly translating from their native tongue. Native Anglophones almost never use the word “come” in this way. Instead, they would say something like: “Come in!” “Come on!” “Come with me!” “Come this way!” “Come over here!” and so on. The Indo-Fijian way of using this word is quite different, and it could even sound rude to native English speakers or overseas researchers who may sometimes call their pets, (such as dogs), by simply saying, “Come!”, but would not usually say it to people (unless arrogantly). The Indo-Fijian usage of this English term can thus often make overseas researchers feel bad, or uncomfortable (Otsuka, 1997). The present researcher had to be very careful and patient and not be offended by either the ethnic Fijian or Indo-Fijian way of using English during his fieldwork, especially in his face-to-face interviews, in order to conduct them calmly.

Unlike ethnic Fijians who greet each other and visitors commonly by saying: “*Bula! Vinaka!*”(Hello! Thank you!), many Indo-Fijians generally do not use any English common phrases which mean, “You are welcome!” or “Don’t mention it!” as a response to “Thank you”. They mostly say nothing in response, partly because in the Indo-Fijian discourse, they usually do not orally reply to “Thank you”. Hence some researchers simply wonder if the informant understands what they mean. Some researchers may even interpret their silence as arrogance. Furthermore, Indo-Fijians usually ask questions in English differently from the way native English-speakers generally ask. This occurred with an Indo-Fijian female student at an urban secondary school. She wanted to have a look at the researcher’s camera prior to his face-to-face interviews with her. She simply said to him in English, “I want a camera!” instead of saying something like, “May I take a look at your camera please?” The researcher could not immediately comprehend what she meant, partly because he was unused to being asked that way. He had to ask her exactly what she meant. Thus, it can be

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clearly seen that limitations of the present research also stem from cross-cultural communication problems between the researcher and ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians.

### **Suggestions for Future Research in the Ethnic Fijian Community**

#### ***Talanoa Research Methodology***

Both ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian cultural values made the present fieldwork appear to proceed smoothly. The researcher often did not have to make an appointment

beforehand with Principals, teachers, and students from the school, and parents at their homes, and was able to conduct interviews from time-to-time at these places. In both ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian relationships, a sense of courtesy and moral obligation is valued highly. People generally understand that they should be ready for whoever wants to speak to them or visit them. Accordingly, it is no wonder that people often visit each other's places without any advance notice in both ethnic societies. In fact, some people even visit their friends or relatives, such as teachers and Principals at work, from a long distance without any advance notice. From their cultural perspective, it would be discourteous for such people not to be ready for whoever wants to speak to them or visit them, even without notice.

Nevertheless, the present research would suggest that *talanoa* research methodology should be applied to the fieldwork conducted in the ethnic Fijian community, because cross-cultural research must interpret the human condition in its social, cultural and historical context in order to understand it (see Krause & O'Brien, 2001). It is essential to conduct culturally-appropriate research with indigenous people such as Pacific Islanders, to ensure the production of accurate and valid data on local issues. A culturally-appropriate methodology makes fieldwork more credible and valid. In the Fiji context, the establishment of a good interpersonal relationship and rapport with study subjects is of vital importance to bridge the "gap" between researchers and participants, so that they may feel at ease to freely communicate with each other. For this purpose, *talanoa* research (see Vaioleti, 2003) is a very effective approach, since it encourages sharing the emotions of both parties; i.e. researchers and respondents.

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For Indo-Fijians, the establishment of rapport is of course also important in conducting research. However, Indo-Fijians are generally not as communal as ethnic Fijians. Rather, they are strongly individualistic. Researchers do not need to consider the importance of establishing a good personal relationship with them as much as with ethnic Fijians. As Indo-Fijians value individuality more highly than ethnic Fijians, they appreciate the importance of time more greatly than ethnic Fijians. For example, an ethnic Fijian vice-Principal, from the rural secondary school where the researcher visited without forewarning, turned her attention to him, instead of to the class that she was supposed to be with at that particular time. She asked her colleague to look after her class and spent her time talking with the researcher about his fieldwork. That is, the researcher's spontaneous visit to that school was welcome, and made his fieldwork there possible straight away. If the researcher took the same procedure with an Indo-Fijian teacher, s/he might take her/his class first. Generally speaking, Indo-Fijians consider their business more than ethnic Fijians.

*Tala* literally means to inform, tell, relate, command, ask and apply. *Noa* literally means any kind, ordinary, nothing-in-particular, purely imaginary (Vaioleti, 2003). Hence, *talanoa* literally means a face-to-face conversation whether it is formal or informal. It is commonly practised by Pacific Islanders, such as ethnic Fijians, as it stems from their culture in which oratory and verbal negotiation have deep traditional roots (Schmidt, 1988; Tavola, 1991; Vaioleti, 2003). It culturally connotes talking about "nothing in particular", and interacting without a rigid framework. Capell (1991, p. 214) describes *talanoa* as "to chat; to tell stories; to relate something; to chat to someone; to chat together; to chat together about; a story, and account legend." While *talanoa* is about chatting, it involves a deep, interpersonal relationship, the kind of relationship on the basis of which most Pacific activities are carried out (Morrison, Vaioleti & Vermeulen, 2002). The custom of *talanoa* encourages ethnic Fijians often

to hold *yaqona* sessions, social gatherings and *talanoa*, and it enhances people's sense of "sharing" and "caring" within their communities.

As discussed in Chapter Five, it is an important cultural norm for ethnic Fijians to share things with each other. In *talanoa* research, researchers and participants share not only each other's time, interest, and information, but also emotions of both parties. In fact, "*tala* holistically intermingles researchers' and participants' emotions, 182

knowledge, experiences, and spirits" (Vaiotele, 2003, p. 3). Hence, *talanoa* research is collaborative, and removes the distance between researchers and participants, and provides respondents with a human face they can relate to (Vaiotele, 2003), since *talanoa* research is about "sharing", based on face-to-face verbal interactions between researchers and participants. The value of *talanoa* supports the concept of rapport in Western social research. "A face-to-face interaction assists in the establishment of rapport and higher level of motivation among respondents" (Burns, 1990, p. 302). In order to establish a good interpersonal relationship and rapport with ethnic Fijian participants, researchers should be aware not only of their cultural values and beliefs in sharing and giving (e.g., time, labour, and knowledge), but ideally also have in-depth knowledge of other norms, practices, customs of ethnic Fijian culture, in order to conduct culturally-appropriate fieldwork in the ethnic Fijian community. In particular, the researchers need to ensure that knowledge is culturally and socially constructed. (see Giddens, 1997) (And ethnic Fijian knowledge is certainly not exceptional). There are two types of knowledge in the Polynesian culture: (1) communal knowledge, which is necessary for their every day living; and (2) highly specialised knowledge (Thaman, 1998). Special knowledge belongs to certain family kin (e.g., *mataqali*) and is held sacred by learned members. They decide to whom to pass on their knowledge, including spiritual and economic security, in order to safeguard themselves. The participants possibly pass on their knowledge on differently, depending on who carries out the research. As discussed in Chapter Three, the typical ethnic Fijian way of learning is closely related to animism and totemism. Everyone exists in relation to other people. Hence, the relationship between researchers and their participants is particularly important, as it often affects the research results. Therefore, it is crucial for the researchers to show their appreciation to the participants for sharing their knowledge with the researchers.

#### ***Considerations of Conduct in Talanoa Research***

In addition to being aware of the typical ethnic Fijian valuing of sharing, giving and knowledge, a researcher's knowledge of their communicative styles, especially their non-verbal communication cues, is of great importance for valid *talanoa* research.

The way ethnic Fijians use their time and talk is culturally inter-dependent. For 183

effective communication with ethnic Fijians, knowing that what one expects to get from conversations which are culturally different from typical Western transactions of discussion is of great importance (Bride, 1985). It is very common at the first meeting with ethnic Fijians to share each other's personal background by asking a lot about questions like: "Are you married?" "Do you have a wife/husband?" "Where do you live/stay at the moment?" "What is your religion?" "How old are you?" and so on. While these personal questions might make some researchers uncomfortable, it is necessary for the researcher to be tolerant and patient about answering these questions. As the field researcher, I was often asked such questions.

In addition, the way typical ethnic Fijians speak English is different from the way of

native speakers of English. (It is of course common to conduct fieldwork with indigenous people in English, as researchers often cannot speak the indigenous language.) In the course of conversations and interviews, many ethnic Fijians (and also Indo-Fijians) do not verbalise simple indications like “yes” or “no” clearly (Otsuka, 1999). They do not specify whether they mean “yes” or “no”, whether they “agree” or “disagree”. Hence, they generally do not expect to give clear statements of their position immediately when they discuss topics, and this often tends to give their discussion a rather indirect quality, by comparison with the “simplestraightforwardness” of general discussion more typical among native English speakers. The way ethnic Fijians speak English, tends to be lengthy and even ambiguous, which can sometimes confuse researchers. Researchers need to be aware of the general possibilities in the course of discussions with ethnic Fijians. This helps researchers to have close co-operation with ethnic Fijian participants and to establish good rapport with them, in order to conduct culturally appropriate *talanoa* research. It should be noted that because human interaction is nearly always symbolic, there is a tendency to assume that it is the symbols themselves which contain the emotion. Symbols cannot draw out emotion unless the individual is capable of emotion (Brittan, 1973). Sentiment factors in human interaction are likely to strongly influence what people say, how they say it, and what they think about the topic. The interviewees’ perceptions towards the topic, which may be influenced by their emotional feelings, affect the way in which they answer questions. The interview questions also affect the interviewees’ way of thinking and talking about the topic. If

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the question contains something to affect the interviewees emotionally, it is not easy for them to think about the question objectively and logically. The next section discusses in more detail the procedures of *talanoa* research.

#### ***Procedures underlying Talanoa Research***

*Talanoa* research required researchers to take culturally-appropriate procedures, when conducting fieldwork in an ethnic Fijian village, if they wish to collect reliable and valid data. Thaman (1997) described the *talanoa* procedures in relation to making *kakala*. *Kakala* is equivalent to *salusalu* in the ethnic Fijian language, and literary means that “fragrant Pacific flowers and leaves woven together in special ways according to the needs of the occasion for which it is woven, and it is worn either around the waist or around the neck” (Vaioleti, 2003, p. 5). At the first stage of making *kakala*, a selection of different flowers and leaves is made. In relation to the *talanoa* procedure, “the selection of the information available by *talanoa* determines the type of community that the research is to benefit, and the knowledge or solution sought” (Vaioleti, 2003, p. 6). At the second stage of *kakala*-making, (which is of vital importance), appropriate arrangements are made. This involves sorting, grouping, and arranging the flowers and leaves according to their cultural importance, before the actual weaving begins. For *talanoa* research, “stories, spirits, and emotions from the deep *talanoa* encounters are arranged and woven further. That is: the integration, synthesis and weaving of knowledge made available by the *talanoa*” (Vaioleti, 2003, p. 6). Culturally and appropriate skills are required for this arrangement. If they are culturally inappropriate, *talanoa* findings can easily be unreliable. The final stage is the giving away of the *kakala* to the wearer. In *talanoa*, the new know new knowledge is passed on to the researcher in the culturally appropriate way.

In addition, researchers are commonly expected to meet face-to-face a chief or a

person called a headman, or an assistant-headman. At a village meeting, the researcher will ask for her/his permission to conduct the fieldwork. At such a meeting, I was advised, by an ethnic Fijian secretary from the secondary school where I conducted my fieldwork, to present 1/2kg or 1kg of *yaqona*, which is prepared and used by ethnic Fijians as either a formal or a casual social and ceremonial drink.

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*Yaqona* is a sacred drink in ethnic Fijian culture and prepared for social gatherings (see Ravuvu, 1983). This act of giving not only indicates respect for the ethnic Fijian community, but also gives ethnic Fijians an opportunity to share social gatherings with the researcher. S/he will be asked to join the *yaqona*-drinking session in the village, where s/he will be expected to follow the customary procedures carried out in that session. An ethnic Fijian male teacher from a rural secondary school explained, "Once ethnic Fijians sit around the *yaqona* bowl, they have to share it in the respectful way. When they give the bowl, they have to clap their hands. After they drink it, they clap their hands three times. That's their respect and appreciation for drinks" (Interview SDT/1).

It is not polite to refuse to drink *yaqona* at these occasions. Indeed, in the communal ethnic Fijian society, it is generally not acceptable to refuse to be part of what is going on in the village. It can be even rude to say "no" to anyone who asks for help or company. Researchers should join in *yaqona* drinking to share emotions and experiences with villagers. Also, the researchers should behave accordingly in the ethnic Fijian village. Their dress code should be appropriate, their body language should be relevant (e.g., how to sit, stand and look). In particular, the researchers should watch out for older people in the village, as each situation may demand a different set of behavioural customs (Vaioleti, 2003). Within the ethnic Fijian village, no-one is allowed to wear a hat or a cap in the village, including visitors, as ethnic Fijians generally believe that one's head is spiritual so that it should be shown all the time. This rule is also about respect for village hierarchy.

To inform ethnic Fijian participants of the purpose of the research, I made an oral presentation. It is not culturally appropriate just to provide written information, such as a subject information sheet (see the "Participant Information Sheet" in Appendix One), because Pacific Islanders, including ethnic Fijians, highly value the importance of oral traditions. However for ethical reasons, researchers must also ask participants to sign the consent form (see the "Participant Consent Form" in Appendix Two), and store it in a secure place. The purpose of the consent form needs to be explained to all participants. This is a very important step in preparation for any problems that might arise during and after the research. This will "protect the participants' interests, their language, culture, welfare, and reputation before, during, and well after the project is

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completed" (Vaioleti, 2003, p. 9). Also, the researchers should take any possible effects of their research on their participants into consideration (Cohen, Lawrence & Morrison, 2001). Furthermore, the researchers should invite their participants to contribute to their research design. The participants may gain feelings of inclusiveness and humility, if they are so invited. This may be significant for people from communal cultures, such as ethnic Fijians, to be involved in the research, as they value the importance of sharing. The participants may be willing to suggest to the researchers, ideas on where to visit in the village (e.g., a church, a meeting place, a play ground, etc.), whom they should meet and talk to, and so on. The researchers should be flexible about any unexpected participants who join in the conversation with their participants. In the ethnic Fijian village, other people, especially children,

may become interested in the researchers' visit to the village.

Finally when I, as the field researcher, write up a fieldwork report, I send it to the Chief from the ethnic Fijian community where the research took place. This shows the researchers' appreciation to their community. The researchers should honour the efforts taken by participants, and their willingness to participate in the research. (Vaioleti, 2003). Also, doing that shares the research findings with the community. This is important, especially because sharing is at the heart of ethnic Fijian culture; ethnic Fijians generally understand that "they have to share and help each other" (Interview SDT/1).

### ***Conduct of Talanoa Research***

In face-to-face interviews with ethnic Fijians, it was expected that researchers and respondents will first chat about some irrelevant subjects, rather than focus on the subject straight away. Also, the researchers should understand the participants' situation. If there is something the researchers can do to help their participants, they should at least try to be helpful in what they are doing. This helps bridge the "gap" between the researchers and their participants, and the participants may feel more comfortable about their researchers. Mo'ungatonga (2003) explains as follows:

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At the beginning of my interviews, I would ask the mothers how their days had been while helping them with their chores, things that were totally irrelevant to my topic. They would ask several things, about my work and myself (sic), until they felt at ease. Once they accepted and trusted me as a person, out came their stories, including the information I was wanting to know about. The stories around the information I was looking for were what made me know that the information was authentic. I rarely needed to ask specific questions (cited in Vaioleti, 2003, pp. 3 & 4).

Not only prior to interviews, but also in the course of interviews with ethnic Fijians, *talanoa* was a very useful approach. An incident occurred during my face-to-face interview with an ethnic Fijian mother of a Form 6 secondary-school male student, which was conducted outside her house in a rural village. In the course of the interview, there was suddenly an unexpected noise in the village. A village pig, which was running after a chicken for food, was chased by a woman who was yelling: "Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!" The researcher interrupted the interview and asked his interviewee what was happening:

Interviewer: "Are they a pig and a chicken? What's happening?"

Respondent: "Wants to eat that chicken."

Interviewer: "That pig?"

Respondent: "Yeah."

Interviewer: "Really!"

Respondent: "Um..."

Interviewer: "Wah..." [Laughing in a surprised way for a short period] "OK. Shall we continue?" [With a smile]

Respondent: "Yeah!" [With a positive smile]

(Interview SDS/1M/1)

This short *talanoa*, irrelevant to the interview topic, gave not only a welcome short break to the interview, but also an opportunity for the respondent to share with the researcher what she knew; i.e., a pig chasing the chicken in the village. After the researcher and the participant laughed together, they went back to the subject even more positively and continued the interview with enthusiasm. The episode illustrates

how *talanoa* shares emotions of both parties during the interview and encourages them to carry it on. The incident helped to strengthen the rapport.

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While *talanoa* research often consumes much of the interviewer's and interviewee's time, in the interest of establishing good rapport, *talanoa* research should be conducted in the ethnic Fijian community. It is essential to employ culturally appropriate research methodology with indigenous people if the researcher is to obtain reliable and valid data. *Talanoa* research is a very appropriate approach for this purpose.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter concludes the present research conducted in the Nadroga/Navosa Province to investigate differences between the academic performances of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians. Strong leadership and effective teachers (without any stereotypical and biased attitudes towards students) within the institutions, are great motivators in enhancing students' learning, regardless of ethnicity and gender. Although Chapter Five discussed security issues, the audience reveals that it is likely that Indo-Fijians would still strive for academic "success", even if they gained greater ownership of land and had more leadership positions in society. Based on my research, it is unlikely that Indo-Fijians would become more "relaxed" about their academic work. The high academic achievement among Indian immigrants in overseas countries such as the USA and UK suggests that they would excel academically over generations, regardless of their political and financial security in their new land (See Chapter Three). Their aspirations and interests in learning are deeply rooted in their own longstanding culture and religion. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Two, the ethnic patterns of academic achievement are by no means new; indeed it was fostered by British colonial rule. Therefore, the present research would conclude that cultural values, beliefs, and practices are a key variable, if by no means the only one, influencing ethnic differences in academic achievements in Fiji.

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## **APPENDIX ONE**

### **• Participant Information Sheet**

#### **- Student**

#### **- Teacher**

**- Principal, Vice-Principal &  
Assistant Principal  
- Parent/Guardian  
- Education Officer  
- Church Pastor**

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**School of Policy and Practice**

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**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

**- STUDENT -**

**CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:  
A CASE STUDY IN THE FIJI ISLANDS**

You are invited to take part in a research study. The study is about cultural influences on academic performance. For this study, we need a face-to-face interview with you. The aim of this interview is to find out about how students' cultural background influences their academic performance and achievement in the Fiji context. The study is conducted by Setsuo Otsuka, a post-graduate research student who is currently enrolled in a Doctor of Education Degree Program at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, the University of Sydney. His research supervisor is Associate Professor Anthony Welch in the School of Policy and Practice of the Faculty.

This interview will take approximately 30 minutes in your school premises. You do not have to answer the questions that I ask if you do not wish to and we can stop the interview at any time. The interview will be audio-taped and all tapes and transcripts will be kept securely in the supervisor's office at the Faculty of Education and Social Work for a period of 7 years after which the material will be destroyed. All the information we collect will be treated as highly confidential. Only the researcher, Setsuo Otsuka, and his research supervisor, Associate Professor Anthony Welch, will have access to information on the participants. No names are included in the thesis the researcher is required to write. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. If you agree, with your parent's permission, you will take part in this interview.

If you have any inquires regarding this interview research, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher, Setsuo Otsuka, either by telephone, mail or e-mail (Phone: 9261819; Address: P.O. Box 933, Sigatoka; E-Mail Address: [sots4826@mail.usyd.edu.au](mailto:sots4826@mail.usyd.edu.au)).

This study has been approved by the Human Ethics Committee at the University of Sydney.

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**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

**- TEACHER -**

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A CASE STUDY IN THE FIJI ISLANDS**

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**- PRINCIPAL, VICE-PRINCIPAL & ASSISTANCT PRINCIPAL -**

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## **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

### **- PARENT/GUARDIAN -**

### **CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:**

### **A CASE STUDY IN THE FIJI ISLANDS**

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This interview will take approximately 30 minutes in your home premises. You do not have to answer the questions that I ask if you do not wish to and we can stop the interview at any time. The interview will be audio-taped and all tapes and transcripts will be kept securely in the supervisor's office at the Faculty of Education and Social Work for a period of 7 years after which the material will be destroyed. All the information we collect will be treated as

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**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

**- EDUCATION OFFICER -**

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This interview will take approximately 30 minutes in your department premises. You do not have to answer the questions that I ask if you do not wish to and we can stop the interview at any time. The interview will be audio-taped and all tapes and transcripts will be kept securely in the supervisor's office at the Faculty of Education and Social Work for a period of 7 years after which the material will be destroyed. All the information we collect will be treated as highly confidential. Only the researcher, Setsuo Otsuka, and his research supervisor, Associate Professor Anthony Welch, will have access to information on the participants. No names are included in the thesis the researcher is required to write. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. If you agree, with your parent's permission, you will take part in this interview.

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**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET****- CHURCH PASTOR -****CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:  
A CASE STUDY IN THE FIJI ISLANDS**

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This interview will take approximately 30 minutes in your church premises. You do not have to answer the questions that I ask if you do not wish to and we can stop the interview at any time. The interview will be audio-taped and all tapes and transcripts will be kept securely in the supervisor's office at the Faculty of Education and Social Work for a period of 7 years after which the material will be destroyed. All the information we collect will be treated as highly confidential. Only the researcher, Setsuo Otsuka, and his research supervisor, Associate Professor Anthony Welch, will have access to information on the participants. No names are included in the thesis the researcher is required to write. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. If you agree, with your parent's permission, you will take part in this interview. If you have any inquires regarding this interview research, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher, Setsuo Otsuka, either by telephone, mail or e-mail (Phone: 9261819; Address: P.O. Box 933, Sigatoka; E-Mail Address: [sots4826@mail.usyd.edu.au](mailto:sots4826@mail.usyd.edu.au)).

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**APPENDIX TWO**

- **Participant Consent Form**
- **Student**
- **Teacher**
- **Principal, Vice-Principal &**

# Assistant Principal - Parent/Guardian - Education Officer - Church Pastor

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## **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**- STUDENT -**

### **CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY IN THE FIJI ISLANDS**

I, \_\_\_\_\_

[Name]

of \_\_\_\_\_

[Address]

have read and understood the Information Sheet on the above named study and have discussed it with the researcher.

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Signature]

I am aware of the procedures involved in the study. I freely choose to participate in this study and understand that I can withdraw without compromise at any time. I also understand that the research study is strictly confidential.

I understand that the interview will be audio-taped and hereby agree to have the interview audio-taped.

I hereby agree to participate in this research study.

**Signature :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Witness:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**- TEACHER -**

**CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:  
A CASE STUDY IN THE FIJI ISLANDS**

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[Name]

of \_\_\_\_\_

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**Signature :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Witness:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**- PRINCIPAL, VICE-PRINCIPAL & ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL -**

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**Date :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Witness:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**- PARENT/GUARDIAN -**

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**A CASE STUDY IN THE FIJI ISLANDS**

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**Signature :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Witness:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**- EDUCATION OFFICER -**

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## A CASE STUDY IN THE FIJI ISLANDS

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of \_\_\_\_\_

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**Date :** \_\_\_\_\_

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## PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

- CHURCH PASTOR -

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I hereby agree to participate in this research study.

**Signature :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name :** \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

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## APPENDIX THREE

### Face-to-Face Interview Schedule in the Nadroga/Navosa Province

#### School A – Racially Integrated Secondary School in Urban Area

1. **Interview SAP/1** – Male Rotuman Principal, Principal’s Office, 2:45p.m. – 3:30p.m., Thursday 23 September 2004
2. **Interview SAT/1** – Male Ethnic Fijian Teacher, Staff Room, 2:00p.m. – 2:30p.m., Wednesday 22 September 2004
3. **Interview SAT/2** – Female Ethnic Fijian Teacher, Classroom, 3:30p.m. – 4:30p.m., Thursday 23 September 2004
4. **Interview SAT/3** – Male Indo-Fijian Teacher, Classroom, 3:00p.m. - 3:30p.m., Wednesday 22 September 2004
5. **Interview SAT/4** – Female Indo-Fijian Teacher, School Library, 2:00pm – 2:30p.m., Tuesday 21 September 2004
6. **Interview SAS/1** – Male Ethnic Fijian Form 6 Student, His Place, 5:30p.m. – 5:45p.m., Wednesday 22 September 2004
7. **Interview SAS/2** – Female Ethnic Fijian Form 6 Student, School Library, 1:00p.m. – 1:30p.m., Wednesday 22 September 2004
8. **Interview SAS/3** – Female Indo-Fijian Form 6 Student, Her Place, 5:30p.m. – 6:00p.m., Tuesday 21 September 2004
9. **Interview SAS/1M/1** – Ethnic Fijian Mother of Male Form 6 Student, Her Place, 4:30p.m. – 5:30p.m., Wednesday 22 September
10. **Interview SAS/3F/1** – Indo-Fijian Father of Female Form 6 Student, His Place, 4:45p.m. – 5:30p.m., Tuesday 21 September 2004

#### School B – Racially Integrated Secondary School in Semi-Urban Area

11. **Interview SBP/1** – Male Indo-Fijian Principal, Principal’s Office, 2:30p.m. – 3:30p.m., Wednesday 29 September 2004
12. **Interview SBVP/1** – Male Indo-Fijian Vice-Principal, Vice-Principal’s Office, 9:00a.m. – 9:40a.m., Tuesday 21 September 2004
13. **Interview SBT/1** – Female Ethnic Fijian Teacher, Staff Room, 11:00a.m. – 11:40a.m., Wednesday 29 September 2004
14. **Interview SBT/2** – Male Indo-Fijian Teacher, Bench on School Campus, 10:30a.m. – 11:00a.m., Wednesday 29 September 2004
15. **Interview SBT/3** – Female Indo-Fijian Teacher, School Library, 8:00a.m. – 8:30a.m., Thursday 30 September 2004
16. **Interview SBS/1** – Male Ethnic Fijian Form 6 Student, Bench on School Campus, 9:00a.m. – 9:20a.m., Thursday 30 September 2004
17. **Interview SBS/2** – Female Indo-Fijian Form 6 Student, Bench on School Campus, 10:30a.m. – 10:50a.m., Thursday 30 September 2004
18. **Interview SBS/1G/1** – Female Ethnic Fijian Guardian of Male Form 6 Student, Ethnic Fijian Village, 5:30p.m. – 6:00p.m., Monday 4 October 2004

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19. **Interview SBS/2M/1** – Indo-Fijian Mother of Female Form 6 Student, Her Place, 8:00p.m. – 8:30p.m., Thursday 30 September 2004

#### School C – Racially Integrated Secondary School in Rural Area

20. **Interview SCP/1** – Male Ethnic Fijian Principal, Principal’s Office, 8:30a.m. –

9:10a.m., Wednesday 6 October 2004

21. **Interview SCVP/1** – Female Ethnic Fijian Vice-Principal, Store Room of the School, 1:00p.m. – 1:30p.m., Wednesday 6 October 2004

22. **Interview SCT/1** – Male Ethnic Fijian Teacher, Classroom, 2:00p.m. – 3:30p.m., Tuesday 28 September 2004

23. **Interview SCS/1** – Male Ethnic Fijian Form 6 Student, Classroom, 1:00p.m. – 1:30p.m., Tuesday 28 September 2004

24. **Interview SCS/2** – Female Ethnic Fijian Form 6 Student, Bench on School Campus, 1:30p.m. – 2:00p.m., Tuesday 28 September 2004

25. **Interview SCS/3** – Male Indo-Fijian Form 6 Student, Bench on School Campus, 9:30a.m. – 9:50a.m., Wednesday 6 October 2004

26. **Interview SCS/4** – Female Indo-Fijian Form 6 Student, School Library, 12:30p.m. – 12:50p.m., Wednesday 6 October 2004

**School D** – Racially Integrated Secondary School in Rural Area

27. **Interview SDP/1** – Male Indo-Fijian Principal, Principal's Office, 10:30a.m. – 11:10a.m., Wednesday 22 September 2004

28. **Interview SDAP/1** – Male Indo-Fijian Assistant Principal, School Library, 1:00p.m. – 1:20p.m., Friday 24 September 2004

29. **Interview SDT/1** – Male Ethnic Fijian Teacher, School Library, 10:00a.m. – 10:20a.m., Friday 24 September 2004

30. **Interview SDT/2** – Female Ethnic Fijian Teacher, School Library, 9:00a.m. – 9:20a.m., Friday 24 September 2004

31. **Interview SDS/1** – Male Ethnic Fijian Form 6 Student, His Place, 5:30p.m. – 6:00p.m., Friday 1 October 2004

32. **Interview SDS/2** – Male Indo-Fijian Form 6 Student, School Library, 11:30p.m. – 11:50p.m., Friday 24 September 2004

33. **Interview SDS/1M/1** – Ethnic Fijian Mother of Male Form 6 Student, Her Place, 4:30p.m. – 5:30p.m., Friday 1 October 2004

34. **Interview SDM/1** – Indo-Fijian Mother of Female Form 6 Student, Her Place, 10:00a.m. – 10:30a.m., Friday 1 October 2004

**School E** – Ethnic Fijian Secondary School in Semi-Urban Area

35. **Interview SEP/1** – Male Ethnic Fijian Principal, Principal's Office, 1:30p.m. – 2:10p.m., Monday 4 October 2004

36. **Interview SET/1** – Male Ethnic Fijian Teacher, Outside on School Campus, 2:30p.m. – 3:00p.m., Monday 4 October 2004

37. **Interview SET/2** – Male Indo-Fijian Teacher, School Library, 10:30a.m. – 10:50p.m., Monday 4 October 2004

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38. **Interview SET/3** – Female Indo-Fijian Teacher, School Library, 10:00a.m. – 10:20a.m., Monday 4 October 2004

39. **Interview SET/4** – Male Rotuman Teacher, Staff Room, 8:00p.m. – 8:30p.m., Tuesday 5 October 2004

40. **Interview SES/1** – Male Ethnic Fijian Form 6 Student, School Library, 11:00a.m. – 11:20a.m., Monday 4 October 2004

41. **Interview SES/2** – Female Ethnic Fijian Form 6 Student, School Library, 12:00p.m. – 12:20p.m., Monday 4 October 2004

**School F** – Racially Integrated Secondary School in Rural Area

42. **Interview SFP/1** – Male Indo-Fijian Principal, Principal's Office, 9:00a.m. – 9:40a.m., Tuesday 5 October 2004

43. **Interview SFVP/1** – Female Ethnic & Indo-Fijian Vice-Principal, Staff Room, 2:20p.m. – 2:35p.m., Tuesday 5 October 2004
44. **Interview SFT/1** – Female Indo-Fijian Teacher, School Library, 2:40p.m. – 3:00p.m., Tuesday 5 October 2004
45. **Interview SFS/1** – Male Indo-Fijian Form 6 Student, School Library, 11:00a.m. – 11:30a.m., Tuesday 5 October 2004
46. **Interview SFS/2** – Female Indo-Fijian Form 6 Student, School Library, 10:00a.m. – 10:30a.m., Tuesday 5 October 2004
- Ministry of Education** (Nadroga Navosa Office) – Stigatoka Town in Urban Area:
47. **Interview EO** – Male Ethnic Fijian Senior Education Officer, School D Library, 10:30a.m. – 11:00a.m., Monday 27 September 2004
- Word Alive Chapel** – Cuvu, Semi-Urban Area
48. **Interview CP** – Male Ethnic Fijian Senior Pastor, Word Alive Chapel, 9:00p.m. – 9:20p.m., Sunday 10 October 2004

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## **APPENDIX FOUR**

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### **Face-to-Face Interview**

#### **Questionnaire**

**- Student**

**- Teacher**

**- Principal/Vice-Principal &**

**Assistant Principal**

**- Parent/Guardian**

**- Education Officer**

**- Senior Pastor**

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#### **FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE (STUDENT)**

Start by greeting a student at school premises and inform her/him that the purpose of the interview is to find out about how students' cultural background influences their academic performance and achievement in the Fiji context.

• Please note that, in Fiji, it is culturally more appropriate and important to make an agreement with research participants orally in order to interview them, rather than asking them straight away to fill in a written agreement form such as "Participant Consent Form" and "Consent Form". Therefore, my interview will start with conversations with a student.

**Background: Student's Biographical Information**

1. What is your name?
2. Are you an ethnic Fijian, an Indo-Fijian or other?
3. Which form are you at the moment?

**Home Environments**

1. Where do you usually do your homework?
2. How many hours on average do you spend doing your homework each day?
3. Do you have any difficulties doing your homework?
  - If 'yes', could you please describe what difficulties doing your homework?
4. Do you have anyone who can help you with your homework?
  - If 'yes', could you describe whom you ask for help?
5. How often do you get help with your homework, e.g., every hour, day, week or once a month?
6. Are you often involved in doing your community/village activities, e.g., prayer meetings, religious or other ceremonies, etc?
  - If 'yes', how often per week or month?
  - What do you do for them?
7. Do you often help your parent(s) at home?
  - If so, what do you do to help her/him/them?
8. Does/Do your parent(s) often tell you what to do?
  - If 'yes', what does/do s/he/they say to you?
9. Does/Do your parent/parents often give you freedom?
10. Do you often spend your time after school being with your friend(s)?
  - If 'yes', about how long?
  - What do you usually do with her/him/them?
11. Do you feel pressure from your friends, neighbours, relatives and so on?
  - If 'yes', how often?
  - What kind of pressure?
  - Do you feel strongly?

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**At School**

1. Do you attend the Saturday Class or Evening Class of your school, if the school offers?
  - If 'yes', how many hours do you attend Saturdays Class and Evening Class?
2. How important for you and your future is school?
3. Are you satisfied with your school facilities and resources?
  - If 'yes', why?
  - If 'no', why not?
4. Do you have a computer class at school?
  - If 'yes', how much time of a week do you spend on computer?
  - Are you able to use the computer alone in the computer class?
5. Do you think that your school is well organised, e.g., timetable, supervision, etc?
  - If 'yes', why?
  - If 'no', why not?

**Future Plans**

1. How far would you like to go in education?
  - Why?
2. What would you like to study at the tertiary institution, if you planned?
  - Why?

3. What are your plans for your future, e.g., work and career?  
- Why?
4. What work do you think you probably will do when you leave school?  
- Why?
5. What does/do you think your parent(s) want you to do in your future?  
- Why?

### **Specific Questions**

#### **• For Ethnic Fijian Students Only:**

1. Do you live in an ethnic Fijian village?  
- If 'yes', which village do you live in?
2. Do you live in an ethnic Fijian "farming settlement"?  
- If so, how long have you been living there?
3. What do you think about typical Indo-Fijian students' attitude towards studies?
4. Do you think that Indo-Fijian parents are strict about their children's studies?  
- If 'yes', why?
5. Do you think that Indo-Fijian parents are relaxed about their children's studies?  
- If 'yes', why?

#### **• For Indo Fijian Students Only:**

1. What do you think about typical ethnic Fijian students' attitude towards studies?
2. Do you think that ethnic Fijian parents are strict about their children's studies?  
- If 'yes', why?
3. Do you think that ethnic Fijian parents are relaxed about their children's studies?  
- If 'yes', why?

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### **FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### **(TEACHER)**

Start by greeting a teacher at her/his school, e.g., her/his classroom, and inform her/him that the purpose of the interview is to find out about how students' cultural background influences their academic performance and achievement in the Fiji context.

• Please note that, in Fiji, it is culturally more appropriate and important to make an agreement with research participants orally in order to interview them, rather than asking them straight away to fill in a written agreement form such as "Participant Consent Form" and "Consent Form". Therefore, my interview will start with conversations with a teacher.

1. What is your name?
2. Are you an ethnic Fijian, an Indo-Fijian or other?
3. Which form of the school are you teaching at present?
4. What are you teaching?
5. How long have you been teaching?
6. Has all of your teaching been at the present school?  
- If 'no', where did you teach previously?  
- If that school was an ethnic Fijian/Indo-Fijian school, are there any differences between the school culture of the previous school and the present school, e.g., students, parents, leadership, management, facilities, resources, etc?
7. How would you compare ethnic Fijian students to Indo-Fijian students in terms of their attitude towards studies, if any?
8. How would you compare ethnic Fijian parents to Indo-Fijian parents in terms of their attitude towards children's education, if any?

9. Generally speaking, Indo-Fijian students perform better than their ethnic Fijian counterparts especially at the secondary school level. How do you account for these performance differences?
  10. Do you think that there are any solutions to bridge the gap between the academic performance of these two ethnic groups?
  11. Do think that an ethnic difference of academic performance between these two groups in this country will continue in the future?
  12. When you were a student, did your parents often encourage you to study hard?  
- If 'yes', in what way?
  13. Do you have any problems in your school at present in terms of school resources, facilities, leadership, management and so on?
  14. Are there any comments that you would like to make on this issue?
- Thank you very much for your time.

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**FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE  
(PRINCIPAL/VICE-PRINCIPAL/ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL)**

Start by greeting a principal/vice-principal/assistant principal at her/his school, i.e., her/his office, and inform her/him that the purpose of the interview is to find out about how students' cultural background influences their academic performance and achievement in the Fiji context.

• Please note that, in Fiji, it is culturally more appropriate and important to make an agreement with research participants orally in order to interview them, rather than asking them straight away to fill in a written agreement form such as "Participant Consent Form" and "Consent Form". Therefore, my interview will start with conversations with a principal/vice-principal/assistant principal.

1. What is your name?
2. Are you an ethnic Fijian, an Indo-Fijian or other?
3. How long have you been a principal/vice-principal/assistant principal?
4. Has all of your position been held at the present school?  
- If 'no', where did you work as a principal/vice-principal/assistant principal previously?  
- If that school was an ethnic Fijian/Indo-Fijian school, are there any differences between the school culture of the previous school and the present school, e.g., students, parents, teachers, management, facilities, resources, etc?
5. How would you compare ethnic Fijian students to Indo-Fijian students in terms of their attitude towards studies, if any?
6. How would you compare ethnic Fijian parents to Indo-Fijian parents in terms of their attitude towards children's education, if any?
7. How would you compare ethnic Fijian teachers to Indo-Fijian teachers in terms of their attitude towards working/teaching, if any?
8. Generally speaking, Indo-Fijian students perform better than their ethnic Fijian counterparts especially at the secondary school level. How do you account for these performance differences?
9. Do you think that there are any solutions to bridge the gap between the academic performance of these two ethnic groups?
10. Do think that an ethnic difference of academic performance between these two ethnic groups will continue in the future?
11. Does the Ministry of Education do anything to bridge this gap, e.g., Affirmative Action Programs or New Assessment System for Form 3 and Form 4?

12. Do you do anything to help academically weak students at your school?

- If 'yes', what do you do?

- If 'no', why not?

13. When you were a student, did your parents often encourage you to study hard?

- If 'yes', in what way?

14. Do you have any problems in your school at present in terms of school resources, facilities, teachers, management and so on?

15. Are there any comments that you would like to make on this issue?

Thank you very much for your time.

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### **FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE (PARENT/GUARDIAN)**

Start by greeting parent(s)/guardian(s) at their home and inform them that the purpose of the interview is to find out about how students' cultural background influences their academic performance and achievement in the Fiji context.

• Please note that, in Fiji, it is culturally more appropriate and important to make an agreement with research participants orally in order to interview them, rather than asking them straight away to fill in a written agreement form such as "Participant Consent Form" and "Consent Form". Therefore, my interview will start with conversations with a parent(s)/a guardian(s).

1. What is your name?

2. Are you an ethnic Fijian, an Indo-Fijian or other?

3. (for a father) What do you do for a living?

4. Could you please describe your different kinds of work, if you have more than one job?

5. (for a father) How far did you go in formal education?

6. (for a mother) What do you do?

- Do you have any work that earns your money?

7. Could you please describe your different kinds of work, if you have more than one type of work?

8. (for a mother) How far did you go in formal education?

9. Do think that school studies are important for your child/children?

- If 'yes', why?

- If 'no', why not?

10. Would you expect your child/children to complete the current form at school?

- If 'yes', why?

- If 'no', why not?

11. If your child/children failed in the current form at school, would you like her/him/them to repeat it next year in order to finish it?

- If 'yes', why?

- If 'no', why not?

12. What level of school would you like your child/children to complete?

- Why?

13. What would you like your child/children to do for her/his/their career/future?

- Why?

14. Is/Are your child/children good at studies (or is/are your child/children academically good students)?

- If 'yes', why?

- If 'no', why not?

15. Are there any other subjects that you would like your school to teach your child/children within the school curriculum?

- If 'yes', what and why?

16. What else do you expect your school to do for your child/children, other than her/his/their study, e.g., cultural or sports activities, vocational course, etc?

17. Have you ever been to see your school teacher on the parent's day?

- If 'yes', what were you most interested in knowing about your child/children at school?

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18. Are you satisfied with your child's/children's school facilities and resources?

- If 'yes', why?

- If 'no', why not?

19. Are you satisfied with your child's/children's school leadership, i.e., principal and management?

- If 'yes', why?

- If 'no', why not?

20. Are you satisfied with your child's/children's school teacher?

- If 'yes', why?

- If 'no', why not?

21. Have you ever had any financial difficulties in sending your child/children to school?

- If 'yes', what did you do about it?

22. Do you regularly ask your child/children to help you out at home?

- If 'yes', what does/do your son(s) do?

- What does/do your daughter(s) do?

23. Does/Do your child/children do her/his/their homework regularly?

24. Does/Do you help your child/children with her/his/their homework?

- If 'yes', how much time do you spend on helping your child/children?

- What do you do to help her/him/them?

25. Do you always or often involve your child/children in doing things for any community activities, e.g., preparation for prayer meetings, religious or other ceremonies, etc?

26. What would you like your child/children to achieve most highly in her/his/their life/future?

- Why?

27. (for the parent(s)/guardian(s) who has/have a daughter)

At what age would you like your daughter to marry?

- Why?

Thank you very much for your time.

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### **FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE (EDUCATION OFFICER)**

Start by greeting a senior education officer at her/his office and inform her/him that the purpose of the interview is to find out about how students' cultural background influences their academic performance and achievement in the Fiji context.

• Please note that, in Fiji, it is culturally more appropriate and important to make an agreement with research participants orally in order to interview them, rather than asking them straight away to fill in a written agreement form such as "Participant Consent Form" and "Consent Form". Therefore, my interview will start with

conversations with a senior education officer.

1. What is your name?
  2. Are you an ethnic Fijian, an Indo-Fijian or other?
  3. What is your role at the Ministry of Education at present?
  4. How long have you been taking that role?
  5. What did you do previously?
  6. Generally speaking, Indo-Fijian students perform better than their ethnic Fijian counterparts especially at the secondary school level. How do you account for these performance differences?
  7. How would you compare ethnic Fijian parents to Indo-Fijian parents in terms of their attitude towards children's education, if any?
  8. Do you have any problems in urban/rural schools at present in terms of school resources, facilities and so on?
  9. Do you think that there are any solutions to bridge the gap between the academic performance of these two ethnic groups?
  10. Does the Ministry of Education do anything to bridge this gap, e.g., Affirmative Action Programs or New Assessment System for Form 3 and Form 4?
  11. Could you describe what the Affirmative Action Programs are, i.e., the "Blueprint"?
  12. When you were a student, did your parents often encourage you to study hard?  
- If 'yes', in what way?
  13. Do think that an ethnic difference of academic performance between these two ethnic groups will continue in the future?
  14. Are there any comments that you would like to make on this issue?
- Thank you very much for your time.

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### **FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE (SENIOR PASTOR)**

Start by greeting a senior pastor at her/his church and inform her/him that the purpose of the interview is to find out about how students' cultural background influences their academic performance and achievement in the Fiji context.

• Please note that, in Fiji, it is culturally more appropriate and important to make an agreement with research participants orally in order to interview them, rather than asking them straight away to fill in a written agreement form such as "Participant Consent Form" and "Consent Form". Therefore, my interview will start with conversations with a senior pastor.

1. What is your name?
2. Are you an ethnic Fijian, an Indo-Fijian or other?
3. Has the church been always the top priority in the ethnic Fijian culture?
4. According to the ethnic Fijian value system, the church is the most important priority, and land ("*vanua*") and then education?
5. Why is the church so important in the ethnic Fijian culture?
6. Is it compulsory for people from the village to attend the church?
7. Has the ethnic Fijian attitude towards attending the church been changing over the years?  
- If so, how has it been changing?
8. How do you run the church financially?
9. Does the church do something to those who cannot afford to pay for it?
10. Is it true that due to parents' commitment to church financially, some parents

cannot afford to send their children to school?

11. Is it also true that due to parents' commitment to church activities, some parents cannot be at home to supervise their children with their homework?

12. Do you think that the church will continue to contribute to the ethnic Fijian community in the future as it has been?

Thank you very much for your time.

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## APPENDIX FIVE

### • Survey

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#### SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

[Both Ethnic Fijians & Indo-Fijians]

1. What is your gender?

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2. What is your date of birth?

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3. Which form are you in this year?

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4. Are you an ethnic Fijian, an Indo-Fijian or other?

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5. How far did your father go in education?

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6. How far did your mother go in education?

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7. What does your father do for a living?

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8. What does your mother do?

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9. Does your father have more than one job?

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- If so, what does he do

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[Ethnic Fijians Only]

10. What do you think that typical Indo-Fijian students' attitude towards studies?

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11. Do you think that typical Indo-Fijian parents are strict about their children's education?

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- If so, why?

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12. Do you think that typical Indo-Fijian parents are relaxed about their children's education?

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- If so, why?

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[Indo-Fijians Only]

13. What do you think about typical ethnic Fijian students' attitude towards studies?

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14. Do you think that typical ethnic Fijian parents are strict about their children's education?

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- If so, why?

---

15. Do you think that typical ethnic Fijian parents are relaxed about their children's education?

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- If so, why?

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## **APPENDIX SIX**

### **Academic Performance in the Nadroga/Navosa Province**

#### **School A: Form 7**

Table 79: Results of the Fiji Form Seven Examinations (FFSE) at School A by Ethnicity, 2004 (Boys)

Subject Ethnic Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

English 12 58.3 53.5 20 90.0 62.7

Mathematics 12 75.0 54.7 20 75.0 60.7

Biology 4 50.0 51.5 2 100.00 66.0

Chemistry 5 60.0 57.2 6 66.6 61.6

Accounting 1 100.0 68.0 14 85.7 58.2

Geography 3 66.6 58.0 4 50.0 57.2

Economics 2 100.0 65.0 13 84.6 62.3

History 4 75.0 50.0 N/A

Physics 5 80.0 58.2 4 75.0 59.0

Computer Studies 2 50.0 45.0 11 81.8 57.1

Technical Drawing 2 50.0 62.5 4 75.0 54.5

Food & Nutrition 1 0.0 40.0 N/A

Table 80: Results of the Fiji Form Seven (FFSE) Examinations at School A by Ethnicity, 2004 (Girls)

Subject Ethnic Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

English 19 68.4 62.0 24 87.5 64.3

Mathematics 19 36.8 60.5 24 62.5 58.5

Biology 9 44.4 60.9 9 66.6 56.2

Chemistry 11 81.8 60.9 9 77.7 63.1

Accounting 4 50.0 53.2 14 78.5 60.8  
 Geography 6 83.0 56.0 3 66.6 64.0  
 Economics 7 42.8 51.8 13 84.6 65.6  
 History 4 50.0 52.7 N/A  
 Physics 4 100.0 62.0 3 66.6 56.0  
 Computer Studies 7 28.5 45.1 14 71.4 55.3  
 Technical Drawing N/A 1 100.0 63.0  
 Food & Nutrition 2 0.0 38.5 2 50.0 57.5

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**School A: Form 6**

Table 81: Results of the Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examinations at School A by Ethnicity, 2004 (Boys)

Subject Ethnic Fijians  
 (Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

English 29 55.1 48.6 35 94.2 62.9  
 Mathematics 29 58.6 46.7 35 91.4 67.4  
 Biology 14 64.2 53.5 13 100.0 69.8  
 Chemistry 15 66.6 52.6 24 95.8 71.5  
 Accounting 2 100.0 57.5 11 72.7 59.1  
 Geography 12 66.6 52.5 N/A  
 Economics 7 57.1 51.5 10 70.0 57.0  
 History 8 50.0 50.3 N/A  
 Physics 4 100.0 53.2 18 100.0 69.5  
 Computer Studies 2 50.0 40.5 11 90.9 58.4  
 Technical Drawing 4 16.6 37.3 11 100.0 62.3  
 Food & Nutrition 2 50.0 53.5 N/A  
 Agricultural Science 4 75.0 52.7 1 100.0 60.0  
 Fijian Language 6 16.6 37.3 N/A  
 Hindi Language N/A N/A

Table 82: Results of the Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examinations at School A by Ethnicity, 2004 (Girls)

Subject Ethnic Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

English 29 75.8 48.9 36 86.1 64.1  
 Mathematics 29 62.0 48.7 36 86.1 59.6  
 Biology 12 75.0 54.9 17 76.4 63.8  
 Chemistry 10 50.0 52.2 14 71.4 63.7  
 Accounting N/A 18 94.4 62.8  
 Geography 11 27.2 44.2 12 75.0 61.8  
 Economics 7 57.1 52.8 18 88.8 63.4  
 History 7 35.2 51.0 1 0.0 42.0

Physics 2 100.0 62.0 8 100.0 68.6  
 Computer Studies 10 20.0 48.7 7 100.0 64.5  
 Technical Drawing N/A N/A  
 Food & Nutrition 4 25.0 49.5 N/A  
 Agricultural Science 2 50.0 46.5 3 66.6 58.3  
 Fijian Language 4 25.0 44.7 N/A  
 Hindi Language N/A 5 80.0 54.6  
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**School A: Form 4**

Table 83: Results of the Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC) Examinations at School A by Ethnicity, 2004 (Boys)

Subject Ethnic Fijians  
(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

English 20 80.0 59.1 33 96.9 67.3

Mathematics 20 95.0 56.3 33 90.9 67.6

Basic Science 20 80.0 57.8 33 100.0 71.7

Social Science 20 90.0 54.9 33 100.0 72.0

Accounting 5 60.0 54.6 23 100.0 74.4

Economics Studies 5 100.0 57.4 26 100.0 73.1

Home Economics N/A N/A

Wood Work N/A N/A

Technical Drawing 16 50.0 52.8 27 81.4 62.6

Fijian Language 14 71.4 56.2 N/A

Hindi Language N/A 10 100.0 59.6

Table 84: Results of the Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC) Examinations at School A by Ethnicity, 2004 (Girls)

Subject Ethnic Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

English 24 91.6 65.7 46 95.6 70.4

Mathematics 24 83.3 60.5 46 97.8 69.2

Basic Science 24 87.5 63.5 46 95.6 75.2

Social Science 24 91.6 67.9 46 91.3 69.0

Accounting 8 100.0 70.1 32 93.7 72.4

Economics Studies 18 94.4 62.6 36 94.4 72.9

Home Economics 12 41.6 54.8 32 90.6 64.9

Wood Work N/A N/A

Technical Drawing 3 33.3 52.6 4 100.0 71.7

Fijian Language 17 76.4 60.1 N/A

Hindi Language N/A 8 100.0 67.1

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**School B: Form 7**

Table 85: Results of the Fiji Form Seven Examinations (FFSE) at School B by Ethnicity, 2004 (Boys)

Subject	Ethnic Fijians (Male)	Indo-Fijians (Male)
	No. Sat. % Pass Mean	No. Sat. % Pass Mean
English	8 37.5 47.2 24 50.0 53.8	
Mathematics	8 25.0 44.7 24 79.1 60.7	
Biology	3 33.3 45.8 8 75.0 62.3	
Chemistry	3 33.3 47.0 10 70.0 62.5	
Accounting	2 0.0 38.0 13 69.2 61.0	
Geography	3 100.0 51.6 2 50.0 58.0	
Economics	4 25.0 43.7 12 50.0 56.9	
History	2 0.0 43.5 N/A	
Physics	3 0.0 44.0 9 88.8 65.1	
Computer Studies	1 100.0 50.0 12 75.0 61.0	
Technical Drawing	1 100.0 66.0 1 100.0 69.0	

Table 86: Results of the Fiji Form Seven Examinations (FFSE) at School B by Ethnicity, 2004 (Girls)

Subject	Ethnic Fijians (Female)	Indo-Fijians (Female)
	No. Sat. % Pass Mean	No. Sat. % Pass Mean
English	9 22.2 46.8 29 75.8 59.3	
Mathematics	9 33.3 48.4 29 86.2 63.0	
Biology	5 0.0 43.8 13 84.6 67.0	
Chemistry	5 0.0 44.2 13 92.3 67.7	
Accounting	3 66.6 52.0 13 76.9 63.4	
Geography	3 66.6 54.6 4 75.0 59.2	
Economics	4 25.0 48.7 13 69.2 56.6	
History	1 100.0 54.0 1 0.0 24.0	
Physics	3 0.0 47.3 10 90.0 67.1	
Computer Studies	1 100.0 63.0 11 90.9 61.6	
Technical Drawing	N/A 1 100.0 66.0	
Food & Nutrition	2 0.0 ABS* 3 100.0 70.0	

**Notes:**

\* denotes students were absent.

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**School B: Form 6**

Table 87: Results of the Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examinations at School B by Ethnicity, 2004 (Boys)

Subject	Ethnic Fijians (Male)	Indo-Fijians
	No. Sat. % Pass Mean	No. Sat. % Pass Mean
English		
Mathematics		
Biology		
Chemistry		
Accounting		
Geography		
Economics		
History		
Physics		
Computer Studies		
Technical Drawing		
Food & Nutrition		

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

English 35 68.5 53.2 35 74.2 58.2  
Mathematics 35 25.7 43.9 35 42.8 54.6  
Biology 7 42.8 49.1 7 85.7 72.8  
Chemistry 19 26.3 42.0 10 70.0 67.9  
Accounting 6 33.3 43.3 20 50.0 52.5  
Geography 11 54.5 52.2 10 70.0 47.7  
Economics 14 28.5 47.7 23 60.8 53.3  
History 9 44.4 47.8 5 20.0 45.4  
Physics 7 28.5 43.4 8 100.0 72.5  
Computer Studies 4 100.0 53.5 13 76.9 61.8  
Technical Drawing 11 9.0 44.0 3 66.6 57.0  
Food & Nutrition 6 0.0 41.0 N/A  
Hindi Language N/A 2 0.0 36.5  
WOTE 8 0.0 44.6 2 0.0 38.0

Table 88: Results of the Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examinations at School B by Ethnicity, 2004 (Girls)

Subject Ethnic Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

English 20 60.0 53.6 48 77.0 60.2  
Mathematics 20 35.0 46.3 48 58.3 54.4  
Biology 7 28.5 48.2 17 88.2 61.5  
Chemistry 7 28.5 49.2 16 93.7 62.2  
Accounting 4 50.0 42.5 29 58.6 52.4  
Geography 9 66.6 54.6 9 11.1 43.5  
Economics 13 30.7 46.5 20 75.0 56.1  
History 9 33.3 49.8 2 0.0 35.5  
Physics N/A 12 75.0 57.1  
Computer Studies 4 75.0 55.2 22 81.8 58.6  
Food & Nutrition 6 16.6 44.0 5 40.0 51.0  
Hindi Language N/A 10 30.0 41.2

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**School B: Form 4**

Table 89: Results of the Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC) Examinations at School B by Ethnicity, 2004 (Boys)

Subject Ethnic Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

English 32 65.6 57.5 47 65.9 59.4  
Mathematics 32 62.5 54.6 47 72.3 60.5  
Basic Science 32 59.3 57.2 47 65.9 59.9

Social Science 32 65.6 59.6 47 72.3 60.9  
 Accounting 32 62.5 55.0 47 80.9 59.1  
 Economics Studies 27 70.3 56.7 38 81.6 62.9  
 Home Economics 6 66.6 48.3 3 66.6 50.0  
 Wood Work 13 23.0 48.8 13 53.8 51.8  
 Technical Drawing 11 90.9 59.5 24 91.7 63.5  
 Fijian Language N/A N/A  
 Hindi Language N/A 3 33.3 51.3  
 Agricultural Studies N/A 11 27.3 46.6

Table 90: Results of the Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC) Examinations at School B by Ethnicity, 2004 (Girls)

Subject Ethnic Fijians  
 (Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

English 36 72.2 61.0 49 83.6 66.9  
 Mathematics 36 61.1 57.4 49 83.6 64.0  
 Basic Science 36 75.0 57.9 49 83.6 62.3  
 Social Science 36 66.6 58.6 49 85.7 66.2  
 Accounting 35 74.2 52.0 49 87.7 63.0  
 Economics Studies 21 80.9 57.1 25 96.0 73.0  
 Home Economics 29 58.6 53.7 46 78.2 62.2  
 Wood Work 2 100.0 53.5 N/A  
 Technical Drawing 3 100.0 64.0 3 100.0 71.6  
 Fijian Language N/A N/A  
 Hindi Language N/A 15 100.0 65.8  
 Agricultural Science 9 22.2 48.0 3 0.0 42.0

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**School C: Form 6**

Table 91: Results of the Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examinations at School C by Ethnicity, 2004 (Boys)

Subject Ethnic Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

English 5 20.0 41.2 11 45.4 50.6  
 Mathematics 5 40.0 46.2 11 90.9 62.1  
 Biology 1 0.0 35.0 6 50.0 56.8  
 Chemistry 1 0.0 41.0 6 100.0 62.8  
 Accounting 4 0.0 35.0 5 60.0 53.8  
 Geography 4 0.0 40.7 N/A  
 Economics 2 50.0 51.0 2 100.0 58.5  
 Physics N/A 6 100.0 64.3  
 Computer Studies N/A 5 100.0 54.8  
 W.W./T.D. 3 0.0 34.6 3 33.3 48.3

Table 92: Results of the Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examinations at School C by Ethnicity, 2004 (Girls)

Subject	Ethnic Fijians (Female)	Indo-Fijians (Female)
	No. Sat. % Pass Mean	No. Sat. % Pass Mean
English	13 15.3 40.6 11 18.1 44.0	
Mathematics	13 46.1 47.4 11 81.8 57.0	
Biology	9 11.1 39.4 3 33.3 49.3	
Chemistry	9 44.4 49.2 3 33.3 51.3	
Accounting	4 0.0 24.7 8 25.0 42.8	
Geography	4 50.0 48.7 5 40.0 47.0	
Economics	N/A 8 75.0 53.6	
Physics	4 50.0 53.7 N/A	
Computer Studies	N/A 3 33.3 46.0	
Food & Nutrition	8 12.5 40.7 3 66.6 52.3	

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**School C: Form 4**

Table 93: Results of the Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC) Examinations at School C by Ethnicity, 2004 (Boys)

Subject	Ethnic Fijians (Male)	Indo-Fijians (Male)
	No. Sat. % Pass Mean	No. Sat. % Pass Mean
English	4 50.0 58.5 14 71.4 57.4	
Mathematics	4 50.0 53.5 14 85.7 64.4	
Basic Science	4 50.0 53.0 14 71.4 58.2	
Social Science	4 50.0 59.0 14 78.8 56.2	
Accounting	4 50.0 56.0 14 92.8 66.3	
Economics Studies	N/A 3 100.0 69.3	
Wood Work	4 25.0 50.5 11 18.1 46.4	
Technical Drawing	N/A 3 66.6 51.3	
Fijian Language	4 25.0 53.2 N/A	
Hindi Language	N/A 11 36.3 52.2	

Table 94: Results of the Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC) Examinations at School C by Ethnicity, 2004 (Girls)

Subject	Ethnic Fijians (Female)	Indo-Fijians (Female)
	No. Sat. % Pass Mean	No. Sat. % Pass Mean
English	11 100.0 56.8 18 88.8 67.4	
Mathematics	11 90.9 56.0 18 88.8 63.1	
Basic Science	11 54.5 53.0 18 77.7 63.7	

Social Science 11 90.9 58.0 18 77.7 61.1  
 Accounting 11 100.0 55.8 18 100.0 68.6  
 Economics Studies 11 100.0 59.5 10 100.0 72.7  
 Home Economics 9 11.1 47.0 18 72.2 60.6  
 Fijian Language 11 90.9 55.7 N/A  
 Hindi Language N/A 8 87.5 56.3

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**School D: Form 6**

Table 95: Results of the Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examinations at School D by Ethnicity, 2004 (Boys)

Subject Ethnic Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

English 8 25.0 44.3 14 42.8 46.3  
 Mathematics 8 12.5 41.8 14 42.8 48.7  
 Biology 6 16.6 42.5 4 25.0 45.7  
 Chemistry 7 14.2 44.2 6 16.6 48.6  
 Accounting 1 0.0 41.0 5 60.0 53.6  
 Geography 4 0.0 38.7 3 0.0 46.0  
 Economics 1 100.0 53.0 7 57.1 53.8  
 Physics 2 0.0 42.0 4 0.0 45.5  
 Computer Studies 1 0.0 44.0 4 25.0 45.5  
 Clothing & Textiles 1 100.0 58.0 1 0.0 48.0  
 Technical Drawing 1 0.0 35.0 4 50.0 50.5

Table 96: Results of the Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) Examinations at School D by Ethnicity, 2004 (Girls)

Subject Ethnic Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

English 6 16.6 40.8 12 58.3 60.4  
 Mathematics 6 0.0 39.0 12 66.6 61.6  
 Biology 5 20.0 41.2 4 50.0 50.7  
 Chemistry 5 0.0 42.6 4 25.0 51.2  
 Accounting 1 0.0 34.0 9 88.8 56.8  
 Geography 2 50.0 47.5 1 100.0 75.0  
 Economics 1 0.0 39.0 9 88.8 63.3  
 Physics N/A 1 100.0 75.0  
 Computer Studies N/A 8 62.5 49.0  
 Clothing & Textiles 4 0.0 37.2 3 0.0 43.0

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**School D: Form 4**

Table 97: Results of the Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC) Examinations at School D by Ethnicity, 2004 (Boys)

Subject Ethnic Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Male)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

English 6 33.3 49.6 14 71.4 60.6

Mathematics 6 33.3 45.6 14 85.7 64.0

Basic Science 6 33.3 51.0 14 78.5 61.3

Social Science 6 16.6 44.3 14 85.7 59.4

Accounting 6 50.0 48.8 14 78.5 59.0

Economics Studies N/A 10 80.0 57.3

Home Economics 2 50.0 56.0 N/A

Wood Work 4 25.0 48.0 3 100.0 54.6

Technical Drawing N/A 11 100.0 67.3

Fijian Language 6 50.0 55.1 N/A

Hindi Language N/A 4 100.0 58.2

Table 98: Results of the Fiji Junior Certificate (FJC) Examinations at School D by Ethnicity, 2004 (Girls)

Subject Ethnic Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

Indo-Fijians

(Female)

No. Sat. % Pass Mean

English 7 100.0 60.1 11 72.7 65.4

Mathematics 7 57.1 51.4 11 72.7 60.2

Basic Science 7 100.0 57.1 11 63.6 59.8

Social Science 7 85.7 58.5 11 63.6 60.1

Accounting 7 85.7 56.4 11 90.9 66.4

Economics Studies 1 100.0 59.0 6 66.6 64.6

Home Economics 7 100.0 58.4 11 72.7 64.0

Wood Work N/A N/A

Technical Drawing N/A N/A

Fijian Language 6 83.3 59.0 N/A

Hindi Language N/A 5 80.0 63.0

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## **APPENDIX SEVEN**

### **Parental Education**

#### **School A: Form 7**

Table 99: Seventh Form Father's Education Background at School A by Ethnicity (Number)

Father Primary Education

Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7/F1, C8/F2

Ethnic Fijians (N=12) 1 2

Indo-Fijians (N=19) 1 1 2

Father Secondary Education

Form 1/C7, F 2/C8, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7

Ethnic Fijians (N=12) 2 4 3  
 Indo-Fijians (N=19) 1 1 5 5 1  
 Father Tertiary Education  
 USP, FIT, Fulton, T-College, Private  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=12)  
 Indo-Fijians (N=19) 1 1

Table 100: Seventh Form Mother's Education Background at School A by Ethnicity (Number)

Mother Primary Education  
 Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7/F1, C8/F2  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=12) 1  
 Indo-Fijians (N=19) 1 5  
 Mother Secondary Education  
 Form 1/C7, F 2/C8, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=12) 1 1 5 3  
 Indo-Fijians (N=19) 1 3 5 1  
 Mother Tertiary Education  
 USP, FIT, Fulton, T-College, Private  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=12) 1  
 Indo-Fijians (N=19) 1 2  
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**School A: Form 6**

Table 101: Sixth Form Father's Education Background at School A by Ethnicity (Number)

Father Primary Education  
 Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7/F1, C8/F2  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=15) 1 2  
 Indo-Fijians (N=15) 3  
 Father Secondary Education  
 Form 1/C7, F 2/C8, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=15) 3 2 4 2  
 Indo-Fijians (N=15) 2 5 3  
 Father Tertiary Education  
 USP, FIT, Fulton, T-College, Private  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=15) 1  
 Indo-Fijians (N=15) 2

Table 102: Sixth Form Mother's Education Background at School A by Ethnicity (Number)

Father Primary Education  
 Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7/F1, C8/F2  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=15)  
 Indo-Fijians (N=15) 1 1  
 Father Secondary Education  
 Form 1/C7, F 2/C8, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=15) 5 9 1  
 Indo-Fijians (N=15) 6 1 5  
 Father Tertiary Education  
 USP, FIT, Fulton, T-College, Private  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=15)

Indo-Fijians (N=15) 1

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**School A: Form 4**

Table 103: Fourth Form Father's Education Background at School A by Ethnicity

(Number)

Father Primary Education

Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7/F1, C8/F2

Ethnic Fijians (N=10)

Indo-Fijians (N=12) 3

Father Secondary Education

Form 1/C7, F 2/C8, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7

Ethnic Fijians (N=10) 3 2 5

Indo-Fijians (N=12) 3 3 3

Father Tertiary Education

USP, FIT, Fulton, T-College, Private

Ethnic Fijians (N=10)

Indo-Fijians (N=12)

Table 104: Fourth Form Mother's Education Background at School A by Ethnicity

(Number)

Father Primary Education

Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7/F1, C8/F2

Ethnic Fijians (N=10)

Indo-Fijians (N=12) 1 1

Father Secondary Education

Form 1/C7, F 2/C8, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7

Ethnic Fijians (N=10) 3 2 5

Indo-Fijians (N=12) 1 1 5 3

Father Tertiary Education

USP, FIT, Fulton, T-College, Private

Ethnic Fijians (N=10)

Indo-Fijians (N=12)

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**School B: Form 7**

Table 105: Seventh Form Father's Education Background at School B by Ethnicity

(Number)

Father Primary Education

Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7/F1, C8/F2

Ethnic Fijians (N=12)

Indo-Fijians (N=22) 1 3

Father Secondary Education

Form 1/C7, F 2/C8, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7

Ethnic Fijians (N=12) 1 2

Indo-Fijians (N=22) 1 6 3 4 1

Father Tertiary Education

USP, FIT, Fulton, T-College, Private

Ethnic Fijians (N=12) 1 1

Indo-Fijians (N=22)

**Notes:**

- 7 ethnic Fijian students did not answer how far their fathers went in education.
- 3 Indo-Fijian students did not answer how far their fathers went in education.

Table 106: Seventh Form Mother's Education Background at School B by Ethnicity (Number)

Mother Primary Education  
 Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7/F1, C8/F2  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=12)  
 Indo-Fijians (N=22) 3 2  
 Mother Secondary Education  
 Form 1/C7, F 2/C8, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=12) 3  
 Indo-Fijians (N=22) 7 3 4  
 Mother Tertiary Education  
 USP, FIT, Fulton, T-College, Private  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=12) 1  
 Indo-Fijians (N=22)

**Notes:**

- 8 ethnic Fijian students did not answer how far their mothers went in education.
- 3 Indo-Fijian students did not answer how far their mothers went in education.

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**School B: Form 6**

Table 107: Sixth Form Father's Education Background at School B by Ethnicity (Number)

Father Primary Education  
 Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7/F1, C8/F2  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=22) 1 2 3  
 Indo-Fijians (N=10) 1 1  
 Father Secondary Education  
 Form 1/C7, F 2/C8, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=22) 1 3 5 3  
 Indo-Fijians (N=10) 2 4 1 1  
 Father Tertiary Education  
 USP, FIT, Fulton, T-College, Private  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=22) 1  
 Indo-Fijians (N=10)

**Notes:**

- 3 ethnic Fijian students did not answer how far their fathers went in education.

Table 108: Sixth Form Mother's Education Background at School B by Ethnicity (Number)

Mother Primary Education  
 Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7/F1, C8/F2  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=22) 1 4  
 Indo-Fijians (N=10) 1  
 Mother Secondary Education  
 Form 1/C7, F 2/C8, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=22) 4 2 7  
 Indo-Fijians (N=10) 3 2 2 1 1  
 Mother Tertiary Education  
 USP, FIT, Fulton, T-College, Private  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=22)  
 Indo-Fijians (N=10)

**Notes:**

- 3 ethnic Fijian students did not answer how far their mothers went in education.
- 1 ethnic Fijian mother never went to school.

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**School B: Form 4**

Table 109: Fourth Form Father's Education Background at School B by Ethnicity (Number)

Father Primary Education  
 Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7/F1, C8/F2  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=9) 1 1  
 Indo-Fijians (N=29) 2 2 4  
 Father Secondary Education  
 Form 1/C7, F 2/C8, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=9)  
 Indo-Fijians (N=29) 3 1 2 6 5  
 Father Tertiary Education  
 USP, FIT, Fulton, T-College, Private  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=9) 1 1  
 Indo-Fijians (N=29) 2

**Notes:**

- 5 ethnic Fijian students did not answer how far their fathers went in education.
- 2 Indo-Fijian students did not answer how far their fathers went in education.

Table 110: Fourth Form Mother's Education Background at School B by Ethnicity (Number)

Mother Primary Education  
 Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7/F1, C8/F2  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=9) 1  
 Indo-Fijians (N=29) 3  
 Mother Secondary Education  
 Form 1/C7, F 2/C8, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=9) 1 4  
 Indo-Fijians (N=29) 2 8 7 3 2  
 Mother Tertiary Education  
 USP, FIT, Fulton, T-College, Private  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=9) N/A  
 Indo-Fijians (N=29) 1

**Notes:**

- 3 ethnic Fijian students did not answer how far their mothers went in education.
- 3 Indo-Fijian students did not answer how far their mothers went in education

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**School C: Form 6**

Table 111: Sixth Form Father's Education Background at School C by Ethnicity (Number)

Father Primary Education  
 Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=18) 3  
 Indo-Fijians (N=22) 2 2 2  
 Father Secondary Education  
 Form 1, F 2, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=18) 1 3 4 1 4 1  
 Indo-Fijians (N=22) 3 7 2 2  
 Father Tertiary Education

U.S.P./F.I.T./Fulton/Teachers' College

Ethnic Fijians (N=18) 1

Indo-Fijians (N=22) 1

**Notes:**

- 1 Indo-Fijian student did not answer how far her/his father went in education.

Table 112: Sixth Form Mother's Education Background at School C by Ethnicity  
(Number)

Mother Primary Education

Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8

Ethnic Fijians (N=18) 1 2

Indo-Fijians (N=22) 1 2

Mother Secondary Education

Form 1, F 2, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7

Ethnic Fijians (N=18) 1 4 3 4

Indo-Fijians (N=22) 2 6 4 4

Mother Tertiary Education

U.S.P./F.I.T./Fulton/Teachers' College

Ethnic Fijians (N=18) 1 1 1

Indo-Fijians (N=22)

**Notes:**

- 3 Indo-Fijian students did not answer how far their mothers went in education.

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**School C: Form 4**

Table 113: Fourth Form Father's Education Background at School C by Ethnicity  
(Number)

Father Primary Education

Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8

Ethnic Fijians (N=15) 6

Indo-Fijians (N=18) 1 2

Father Secondary Education

Form 1, F 2, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7

Ethnic Fijians (N=15) 1 1 4 3

Indo-Fijians (N=18) 1 11 1 2

Father Tertiary Education

Ethnic Fijians (N=15) N/A

Indo-Fijians (N=18) N/A

Table 114: Fourth Form Mother's Education Background at School C by Ethnicity  
(Number)

Mother Primary Education

Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8

Ethnic Fijians (N=15) 1

Indo-Fijians (N=18) 5

Mother Secondary Education

Form 1, F 2, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7

Ethnic Fijians (N=15) 1 2 2 7 2

Indo-Fijians (N=18) 2 4 6 1

Mother Tertiary Education

Ethnic Fijians (N=15) N/A

Indo-Fijians (N=18) N/A

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**School D: Form 6**

Table 115: Sixth Form Father's Education Background at School D by Ethnicity  
(Number)

Father Primary Education  
Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8  
Ethnic Fijians (N=6) 1  
Indo-Fijians (N=10)  
Father Secondary Education  
Form 1, F 2, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7  
Ethnic Fijians (N=6) 1 2 2  
Indo-Fijians (N=10) 2 3 3 1  
Father Tertiary Education  
Ethnic Fijians (N=6)  
Indo-Fijians (N=10)

**Notes:**

- 1 Indo-Fijian student did not answer how far her/his father went in education.

Table 116: Sixth Form Mother's Education Background at School D by Ethnicity  
(Number)

Mother Primary Education  
Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8  
Ethnic Fijians (N=6)  
Indo-Fijians (N=10) 2  
Mother Secondary Education  
Form 1, F 2, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7  
Ethnic Fijians (N=6) 1 2 1 2  
Indo-Fijians (N=10) 3 2 2 1  
Mother Tertiary Education  
Ethnic Fijians (N=6)  
Indo-Fijians (N=10)  
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**School D: Form 4**

Table 117: Fourth Form Father's Education Background at School D by Ethnicity  
(Number)

Father Primary Education  
Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8  
Ethnic Fijians (N=13) 1 2 2  
Indo-Fijians (N=20) 3 1 1  
Father Secondary Education  
Form 1, F 2, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7  
Ethnic Fijians (N=13) 6 2  
Indo-Fijians (N=20) 1 4 3 5 1  
Father Tertiary Education  
F.I.T.  
Ethnic Fijians (N=13)  
Indo-Fijians (N=20) 1

Table 118: Fourth Form Mother's Education Background at School D by Ethnicity  
(Number)

Mother Primary Education  
Class 1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8

Ethnic Fijians (N=13)  
 Indo-Fijians (N=20) 1 1 1 2  
 Mother Secondary Education  
 Form 1, F 2, F 3, F 4, F 5, F 6, F 7  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=13) 7 6  
 Indo-Fijians (N=20) 2 3 3 3 2  
 Mother Tertiary Education  
 F.I.T.  
 Ethnic Fijians (N=13)  
 Indo-Fijians (N=20) 1

**Notes:**

- 1 Indo-Fijian mother never attended school.

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## APPENDIX EIGHT

### Parental Occupation

#### School A: Form 7

Table 119: Seventh Form Parents' Occupation Background at School A by Ethnicity (Number)

Occupation Ethnic Fijians

Father Mother  
 (N=12) (N=12)

Indo-Fijians  
 Father Mother  
 (N=19) (N=19)

Vegetable Farmer 6

Sugar Cane Farmer 9

Teacher 1 1

Business Man/Woman 1

Church Minister/Pastor 1

Office Clerk 1

Taxi Driver 2

Carpenter 2

Tailor 1

Chef 1

Tourism Industry 1 1 1

Private Company Worker 1

Sigatoka Research

Station Worker

1

Public Water Department

(P.W.D.) Worker

2

House Wife

(Domestic Duties)

10 16

More than One Job

No Answer 1 2

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**School A: Form 6**Table 120: Sixth Form Parents' Occupation Background at School A by Ethnicity  
(Number)

Occupation Ethnic Fijians	
Father Mother	
(N=15) (N=15)	
Indo-Fijians	
Father Mother	
(N=15) (N=15)	
Vegetable Farmer	7 1
Sugar Cane Farmer	5
Teacher	1 1
Police Officer	2
Business Man/Woman	4 1
Factory Worker	2 1
Technician	1
Electrician	1 2
Chef	1
Tourism Industry	5 5
Private Company Worker	2
House Wife	
(Domestic Duties)	
	8 12
More than One Job	1 *
No Answer	

**Notes:**

- \* denotes farming.

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**School A: Form 4**Table 121: Fourth Form Parents' Occupation Background at School A by Ethnicity  
(Number)

Occupation Ethnic Fijians	
Father Mother	
(N=10) (N=10)	
Indo-Fijians	
Father Mother	
(N=12) (N=12)	
Vegetable Farmer	6
Sugar Cane Farmer	4 3
Army	1
Police Officer	1 1
Shop Keeper/Cashier	1
Chef	1
Bus Driver	1
Taxi Driver	1
Engineer	1
Electrician	1
Technician	1
Tourism Industry	2 1

Tailor 1  
House Wife  
(Domestic Duties)  
9 8  
More than One Job 3 \*No Answer 2 1

**Notes:**

- \* denotes farming.

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**School B: Form 7**

Table 122: Seventh Form Parents' Occupation Background at School B by Ethnicity  
(Number)

Occupation Ethnic Fijians

Father Mother  
(N=12) (N=12)

Indo-Fijians  
Father Mother  
(N=22) (N=22)

Vegetable Farmer 2  
Sugar Cane Farmer 6 1  
Fisherman 1

Teacher 1

Factory Worker 1

Shop Keeper/Cashier 1

Carpenter 3

Electrician 1

Tourism Industry 1 2 3 1

Private Company Worker 1

Fiji Sugar Co-Operation  
(F.S.C.) Worker

2

House Wife  
(Domestic Duties)  
2 15

More than One Job 4 \*

No Answer 3 3 2 4

**Notes:**

- \* denotes 2 Farmers, 1 Fisherman & 1 Driver.

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**School B: Form 6**

Table 123: Sixth Form Parents' Occupation Background at School B by Ethnicity  
(Number)

Occupation Ethnic Fijians

Father Mother  
(N=22) (N=22)

Indo-Fijians  
Father Mother  
(N=10) (N=10)

Vegetable Farmer 8

Sugar Cane Farmer 2

Church Minister 1  
 Business Man/Woman 1 1  
 Shop Keeper/Cashier 1 1  
 Taxi/Crane/Car Driver 2 2  
 Mechanics 2  
 Tourism Industry 1 4 1  
 Private Company Worker 1 1  
 Army 1  
 Police Officer 2  
 Wedding Co-Ordinator 1  
 Rugby Development  
 Union Worker  
 1  
 Baby Sitter 1  
 Fiji Sugar Co-Operation  
 (F.S.C.) Worker  
 1  
 House Wife  
 (Domestic Duties)  
 13 6  
 More than One Job 3 \* 1\*\*  
 Not Sure  
 No Answer 4 2 1 2

**Notes:**

- \* 1 denotes 1 Fisherman & 2 Farmers.
- \*\* denotes 1 Mechanics.

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**School B: Form 4**

Table 124: Fourth Form Parents' Occupation Background at School B by Ethnicity  
(Number)

Occupation Ethnic Fijians  
 Father Mother  
 (N=9) (N=9)  
 Indo-Fijians  
 Father Mother  
 (N=29) (N=29)  
 Sugar Cane Farmer 6  
 Teacher 1  
 Business Man/Woman 1 2  
 Factory Worker 1 1  
 Fisherman 1  
 Carpenter 2  
 Shop Keeper/Cashier 5  
 Taxi/Crane/Car Driver 1 6  
 Electrician 1  
 Tourism Industry 4 1 3 1  
 Private Company Worker 1 1  
 Fiji Sugar Co-Operation  
 (F.S.C.) Worker

3  
 Land & Transport  
 Authority (L.T.A.) Worker  
 1  
 House Wife  
 (Domestic Duties)  
 3 17  
 Retired 1  
 More than One Job 1\* 6\*\*  
 Not Sure 1 1 1  
 No Answer 2 3 2 2

**Notes:**

- \* denotes Farmer
- \*\* denotes 1 Carrier Driver, 1 Van Driver, 1 Farmer, 1 Fisherman & 2 Carpenters

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**School C: Form 6**

Table 125: Sixth Form Parents' Occupation Background at School C by Ethnicity  
 (Number)

Occupation Ethnic Fijians  
 Father Mother  
 (N=18) (N=18)  
 Indo-Fijians  
 Father Mother  
 (N=22) (N=22)  
 Vegetable Farmer 4  
 Sugar Cane Farmer 10  
 Fisherman 1  
 Teacher 2 2  
 Church Minister/Pastor 1  
 Factory Worker 1  
 Tailor 1  
 Shop Keeper/Cashier 1 1  
 Taxi Driver 1  
 Carpenter 1 2  
 Tourism Industry 2 3 2  
 Private Company Worker 2  
 Land & Transport  
 Authority (L.T.A.) Worker  
 1  
 Fiji Sugar Co-Operation  
 (F.S.C.) Worker  
 1  
 Public Water Department  
 (P.W.D.) Worker  
 1 1  
 Provincial Council Clerk 1  
 Baby Sitter 1  
 House Wife  
 (Domestic Duties)

11 16

More than One Job 3 \*

No Answer 2 4 1

**Notes:**

- \* denotes 1 Taxi Driver, 1 Factory Worker & 1 Doing Logging.

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**School C: Form 4**

Table 126: Fourth Form Parents' Occupation Background at School C by Ethnicity  
(Number)

Occupation Ethnic Fijians

Father Mother

(N=15) (N=15)

Indo-Fijians

Father Mother

(N=18) (N=18)

Vegetable Farmer 6

Sugar Cane Farmer 13

Woodcutter 1

Hunter 1

USP 1 \*

Police Officer 1

Business Man/Woman 1

Church Minister/Pastor 1

Factory Worker 1

Shop Keeper/Cashier 1 1

Taxi Driver 1

Electrician 1

Mechanics 1

Tourism Industry 1

House Wife

(Domestic Duties)

15 16

More than One Job 5 \*\* 9\*\*\*

No Answer 2 1

**Notes:**

- \* denotes working at the USP Cafeteria.
- \*\* denotes 3 Fishermen, 1 Hotel Security & 1 Church Pastor.
- \*\*\* denotes 1 Farmer, 4 Carpenters, 3 Fishermen & 1 Mechanics.

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**School D: Form 6**

Table 127: Sixth Form Parents' Occupation Background at School D by Ethnicity  
(Number)

Occupation Ethnic Fijians

Father Mother

(N=6) (N=6)

Indo-Fijians

Father Mother

(N=10) (N=10)

Vegetable Farmer 4 1

Sugar Cane Farmer 3 2

Shop Keeper/Cashier 1  
 Taxi Driver 1  
 Carpenter 1 2  
 Tourism Industry 1 1 1  
 Sigatoka Research Station  
 Worker  
 1  
 House Wife  
 (Domestic Duties)  
 3 6  
 More than One Job  
 No Answer 2 1

**School D: Form 4**

Table 128: Fourth Form Parents' Occupation Background at School D by Ethnicity (Number)

Occupation Ethnic Fijians

Father Mother  
(N=13) (N=13)

Indo-Fijians  
Father Mother  
(N=20) (N=20)

Vegetable Farmer 9 3

Sugar Cane Farmer 8 4

Teacher 1

Air Hostess 1

Tailor 1

Factory Worker 1 1

Shop Keeper/Cashier 1 1 2

Truck Driver 1

Bus Driver 1

Taxi Driver 1 1

Carpenter 1

Chef 1

Tourism Industry 1 2 1 1

Public Water Department  
(P.W.D.) Worker

1

House Wife  
(Domestic Duties)

6 12

More than One Job

No Answer 2

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## **APPENDIX NINE**

**Students' Perceptions of Ethnic Differences in  
Attitudes towards Formal Education**

**School A: Form 7 Students**

Table 129: Ethnic Fijian Seventh-Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Students'

Attitudes towards Studies, School A

Male Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=5)

Female Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=7)

Are typical Indo-Fijian

Students either "Hard

Working", "Serious",

"Focused" or

"Concentrating" on

Studies?

- "Yes" - 3 (60%)

- "No Answers" - 2

(40%)

- "Yes" - 6 (85.7%)

- "No Answers" - 1

(14.2%)

Table 130: Indo-Fijian Seventh-Formers' Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Students'

Attitudes towards Studies, School A

Male Indo-Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=8)

Female Indo-Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=11)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian

Students either "Hard

Working", "Serious",

"Focused" or

"Concentrating" on

Studies?

- "Yes" - 4 (50%)

- "No" - 4 (50%)

- "Yes" - 3 (27.2%)

- "No" - 6 (54.5%)

- "No Answers" - 2

(18.1%)

Table 131: Ethnic Fijian Seventh-Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Parents'

Attitudes towards Children's Formal Education, School A

Male Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=5)

Female Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=7)

Are typical Indo-Fijian

Parents Strict about their

Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 3 (60%)

- "No Answers" - 2  
(40%)

- "Yes" – 6 (85.7%)

- "No" – 1 (14.2%)

Are typical Indo-Fijian

Parents Relaxed about  
their Children's Studies?

- "No" – 2 (40%)

- "No Answers" – 3  
(60%)

- "No" – 7 (100%)

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Table 132: Indo-Fijian Seventh-Formers' Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Parents'  
Attitudes towards Children's Formal Education, School A

Male Indo-Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=8)

Female Indo-Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=11)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian

Parents Strict about their  
Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 5 (62.5%)

- "No" – 3 (37.5%)

- "Yes" – 5 (45.4%)

- "No" – 6 (45.4%)

- "No Answers" - 1  
(9%)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian

Parents Relaxed about  
their Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 4 (50%)

- "No" – 3 (37.5%)

- "No Answers" – 1  
(12.5%)

- "Yes" – 6 (54.5%)

- "No" – 3 (27.2%)

- "No Answers" – 2  
(18.1%)

**School A: Form 6 Students**

Table 133: Ethnic Fijian Sixth-Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Students'  
Attitudes towards Studies, School A

Male Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=6)

Female Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=9)

Are typical Indo-Fijian

Students either "Hard

Working", "Serious",

"Focused" or

"Concentrating" on

Studies?

- "Yes" – 5 (83.3%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(16.6%)

- "Yes" – 9 (100%)

Table 134: Indo-Fijian Sixth-Formers' Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Students'

Attitudes towards Studies, School A

Male Indo-Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=5)

Female Indo-Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=10)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian

Students either "Hard

Working", "Serious",

"Focused" or

"Concentrating" on

Studies?

- "Yes" – 4 (80%)

- "No" – 1 (20%)

- "Yes" – 5 (50%)

- "No" – 5 (50%)

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Table 135: Ethnic Fijian Sixth-Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Parents'

Attitudes towards Children's Formal Education, School A

Male Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=6)

Female Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=9)

Are typical Indo-Fijian

Parents Strict about their

Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 5 (83.3%)

- "No" – 1 (16.6%)

- "Yes" – 9 (100%)

Are typical Indo-Fijian

Parents Relaxed about

their Children's Studies?

- "No" – 4 (66.6%)

- “No Answers” – 2  
(33.3%)

- “Yes” – 1 (11.1%)

- “No” – 8 (88.8%)

Table 136: Indo-Fijian Sixth-Formers’ Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Parents’ Attitudes towards Children’s Formal Education, School A

Male Indo-Fijian

Students’ Perceptions

(N=5)

Female Indo-Fijian

Students’ Perceptions

(N=10)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian Parents Strict about their Children’s Studies?

- “Yes” – 3 (60%)

- “No” – 2 (40%)

- “Yes” – 4 (40%)

- “No” – 6 (60%)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian Parents Relaxed about their Children’s Studies?

- “Yes” – 2 (40%)

- “No” – 3 (60%)

- “Yes” – 6 (60%)

- “No” – 4 (40%)

#### **School A: Form 4 Students**

Table 137: Ethnic Fijian Fourth-Formers’ Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Students’ Attitudes towards Studies, School A

Male Ethnic Fijian

Students’ Perceptions

(N=7)

Female Ethnic Fijian

Students’ Perceptions

(N=3)

Are typical Indo-Fijian Students either “Hard Working”, “Serious”, “Focused” or “Concentrating” on Studies?

- “Yes” – 7 (100%)

- “Yes” – 3 (100%)

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Table 138: Indo-Fijian Fourth-Formers’ Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Students’ Attitudes towards Studies, School A

Male Indo-Fijian

Students’ Perceptions

(N=6)

Female Indo-Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=6)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian  
Students either "Hard  
Working", "Serious",  
"Focused" or  
"Concentrating" on  
Studies?

- "Yes" – 1 (17%)
- "No" – 5 (83%)
- "Yes" – 2 (33%)
- "No" – 4 (67%)

Table 139: Ethnic Fijian Fourth-Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Parents'  
Attitudes towards Children's Formal Education, School A

Male Ethnic Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=7)

Female Ethnic Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=3)

Are typical Indo-Fijian  
Parents Strict about their  
Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 7 (100%)
- "Yes" – 3 (100%)

Are typical Indo-Fijian  
Parents Relaxed about  
their Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 0 (0%)
- "No" – 7 (100%)
- "Yes" – 0 (0%)
- "No" – 3 (100%)

Table 140: Indo-Fijian Fourth-Formers' Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Parents'  
Attitudes towards Children's Formal Education, School A

Male Indo-Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=6)

Female Indo-Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=6)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian  
Parents Strict about their  
Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 3 (50%)
- "No" – 3 (50%)
- "Yes" – 1 (16%)
- "No" – 5 (84%)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian

Parents Relaxed about  
their Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 1 (16%)
- "No" – 5 (84%)
- "Yes" – 4 (67%)
- "No" – 2 (33%)

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**School B: Form 7 Students**

Table 141: Ethnic Fijian Seventh-Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Students'  
Attitudes towards Studies, School B

Male Ethnic Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=3)

Female Ethnic Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=9)

Are typical Indo-Fijian  
Students either "Hard  
Working", "Serious",  
"Focused" or  
"Concentrating" on  
Studies?

- "Yes" – 3 (100%)
- "Yes" – 8 (88.8%)
- "No Answers" – 1  
(11.1%)

Table 142: Indo-Fijian Seventh-Formers' Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Students'  
Attitudes towards Studies, School B

Male Indo-Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=10)

Female Indo-Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=12)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian  
Students either "Hard  
Working", "Serious",  
"Focused" or  
"Concentrating" on  
Studies?

- "No Answers" – 10  
(100%)
- "No" – 11 (91.6%)
- "No Answers" – 1  
(8.3%)

Table 143: Ethnic Fijian-Seventh Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Parents'  
Attitudes towards Children's Formal Education, School B

Male Ethnic Fijian  
Students' Perceptions

(N=3)

Female Ethnic Fijian  
Students' Perceptions

(N=9)

Are typical Indo-Fijian  
Parents Strict about their  
Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 3 (100%)

- "Yes" – 8 (88.8%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(11.1%)

Are typical Indo-Fijian  
Parents Relaxed about  
their Children's Studies?

- "No" – 3 (100%)

- "No" – 8 (88.8%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(11.1%)

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Table 144: Indo-Fijian Seventh-Formers' Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Parents'  
Attitudes towards Children's Formal Education, School B

Male Indo-Fijian  
Students' Perceptions

(N=10)

Female Indo-Fijian  
Students' Perception

(N=12)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian  
Parents Strict about their  
Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 1 (10%)

- "No" – 9 (90%)

- "Yes" – 3 (25%)

- "No" – 7 (58.5%)

- "No Answers" – 2

(16.6%)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian  
Parents Relaxed about  
their Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 8 (80%)

- "No" – 1 (10%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(10%)

- "Yes" – 9 (75%)

- "No" – 2 (16.6%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(8.3%)

**School B: Form 6 Students**

Table 145: Ethnic Fijian Sixth-Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Students'

Attitudes towards Studies, School B

Male Ethnic Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=5)

Female Ethnic Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=17)

Are typical Indo-Fijian  
Students either "Hard  
Working", "Serious",  
"Focused" or  
"Concentrating" on  
Studies?

- "Yes" – 5 (100%)
- "Yes" – 16 (94.1%)
- "No Answers" – 1  
(5.8%)

Table 146: Indo-Fijian Sixth-Formers' Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Students'  
Attitudes towards Studies, School B

Male Indo-Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=2)

Female Indo-Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=8)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian  
Students either "Hard  
Working", "Serious",  
"Focused" or  
"Concentrating" on  
Studies?

- "Yes" – 1 (50%)
- "No Answers" – 1  
(50%)

- "Yes" – 1 (12.5%)
- "No" – 6 (75%)
- "No Answers" – 1  
(12.5%)

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Table 147: Ethnic Fijian Sixth-Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Parents'  
Attitudes towards Children's Formal Education, School B

Male Ethnic Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=5)

Female Ethnic-Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=17)

Are typical Indo-Fijian  
Parents Strict about their

Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 5 (100%)
- "Yes" – 16 (94.1%)
- "No Answers" – 1 (5.8%)

Are typical Indo-Fijian Parents Relaxed about their Children's Studies?

- "No" – 5 (100%)
- "No" – 16 (94.1%)
- "No Answers" – 1 (5.8%)

Table 148: Indo-Fijian Sixth-Formers' Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Parents' Attitudes towards Children's Formal Education, School B

Male Indo-Fijian Students' Perceptions (N=2)

Female Indo-Fijian Students' Perceptions (N=8)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian Parents Strict about their Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 2 (100%)
- "Yes" – 2 (25%)
- "No" – 6 (75%)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian Parents Relaxed about their Children's Studies?

- "No" – 2 (100%)
- "Yes" – 4 (50%)
- "No" – 4 (50%)

**School B: Form 4 Students**

Table 149: Ethnic Fijian Fourth-Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Students' Attitudes towards Studies, School B

Male Ethnic Fijian Students' Perceptions (N=6)

Female Ethnic Fijian Students' Perceptions (N=3)

Are typical Indo-Fijian Students either "Hard Working", "Serious", "Focused" or "Concentrating" on Studies?

- "Yes" – 3 (50%)
- "No Answers" – 3

(50%)

- "Yes" – 2 (66.6%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(33.3%)

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Table 150: Indo-Fijian Fourth-Formers' Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Students' Attitudes towards Studies, School B

Male Indo-Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=13)

Female Indo-Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=16)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian

Students either "Hard

Working", "Serious",

"Focused" or

"Concentrating" on

Studies?

- "Yes" – 1 (7.6%)

- "No" – 11 (84.6%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(7.6%)

- "No" – 15 (93.7%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(6%)

Table 151: Ethnic Fijian Fourth-Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Parents' Attitudes towards Children's Formal Education, School B

Male Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=6)

Female Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=3)

Are typical Indo-Fijian

Parents Strict about their

Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 3 (50%)

- "No Answers" – 3

(50%)

- "Yes" – 2 (66.6%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(33.3%)

Are typical Indo-Fijian

Parents Relaxed about

their Children's Studies?

- "No" – 3 (50%)

- "No Answers" – 3

(50%)

- "No" – 2 (66.6%)

- "No Answers" – 1  
(33.3%)

Table 152: Indo-Fijian Fourth-Formers' Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Parents' Attitudes towards Children's Formal Education, School B

Male Indo-Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=13)

Female Indo-Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=16)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian  
Parents Strict about their  
Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 3 (23%)

- "No" – 8 (61.5%)

- "No Answers" – 2  
(15.3%)

- "No" – 15 (93.7%)

- "No Answers" – 1  
(6.25%)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian  
Parents Relaxed about  
Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 7 (53.8%)

- "No" – 4 (30.7%)

- "No Answers" – 2  
(15.3%)

- "Yes" – 15 (93.7%)

- "No Answers" – 1  
(6.25%)

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### **School C: Form 6 Students**

Table 153: Ethnic Fijian Sixth-Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Students' Attitudes towards Studies, School C

Male Ethnic Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=8)

Female Ethnic Fijian  
Students' Perceptions  
(N=10)

Are typical Indo-Fijian  
Students either "Hard  
Working", "Serious",  
"Focused" or  
"Concentrating" on  
Studies?

- "Yes" – 7 (87.5%)

- "No" – 1 (12.5%)

- “Yes” – 8 (80%)
- “No Answers” – 2 (20%)

Table 154: Indo-Fijian Sixth-Formers’ Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Students’ Attitudes towards Studies, School C

Male Indo-Fijian Students’ Perceptions (N=8)

Female Indo-Fijian Students’ Perceptions (N=14)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian Students either “Hard Working”, “Serious”, “Focused” or “Concentrating” on Studies?

- “Yes” – 5 (62.5%)
- “No” – 2 (25.0%)
- “No Answers” – 1 (12.5%)
- “Yes” – 3 (21%)
- “No” – 10 (72%)
- “No Answers” - 1 (7%)

Table 155: Ethnic Fijian Sixth-Formers’ Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Parents’ Attitudes towards Children’s Formal Education, School C

Male Ethnic Fijian Students’ Perceptions (N=8)

Female Ethnic Fijian Students’ Perceptions (N=10)

Are typical Indo-Fijian Parents Strict about their Children’s Studies?

- “Yes” – 8 (100%)
- “No” – 0 (0%)
- “Yes” – 10 (100%)
- “No” - 0 (0%)

Are typical Indo-Fijian Parents Relaxed about their Children’s Studies?

- “Yes” – 0 (0%)
- “No” – 8 (100%)
- “Yes” – 0 (0%)
- “No” – 10 (100%)

Table 156: Indo-Fijian Sixth-Formers’ Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Parents’

Attitudes towards Children's Formal Education, School C

Male Indo-Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=8)

Female Indo-Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=14)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian

Parents Strict about their

Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 2 (25.0%)

- "No" – 5 (62.5%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(12.5%)

- "Yes" – 8 (57%)

- "No" – 6 (43%)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian

Parents Relaxed about

their Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 2 (25.0%)

- "No" – 5 (62.5%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(12.5%)

- "Yes" – 9 (64%)

- "No" – 4 (28%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(8%)

**School C: Form 4 Students**

Table 157: Ethnic Fijian Fourth-Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Students'

Attitudes towards Studies, School C

Male Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=10)

Female Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=5)

Are typical Indo-Fijian

Students either "Hard

Working", "Serious",

"Focused" or

"Concentrating" on

Studies?

- "Yes" – 7 (70%)

- "No" – 0 (0%)

- "No Answers" – 3

(30%)

- "Yes" – 4 (80%)

- "No" – 0 (0%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(20%)

Table 158: Indo-Fijian Fourth-Formers' Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Students' Attitudes towards Studies, School C

Male Indo-Fijian Students' Perceptions (N=4)

Female Indo-Fijian Students' Perceptions (N=14)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian Students either "Hard Working", "Serious", "Focused" or "Concentrating" on Studies?

- "Yes" – 0 (0%)

- "No" – 0 (0%)

- "No Answers" – 4 (100%)

- "Yes" – 3 (21%)

- "No" – 10 (71%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(8%)

279

Table 159: Ethnic Fijian Fourth-Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Parents' Attitudes towards Children' Formal Education, School C

Male Ethnic Fijian Students' Perceptions (N=14)

Female Ethnic Fijian Students' Perceptions (N=5)

Are typical Indo-Fijian Parents Strict about their Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 7 (70%)

- "No" – 1 (10%)

- "No Answers" – 2

(20%)

- "Yes" – 4 (80%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(20%)

Are typical Indo-Fijian Parents Relaxed about their Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 1 (10%)

- "No" – 7 (70%)

- "No Answers" – 2

(20%)

- “Yes” – 0 (0%)
- “No” – 4 (80%)
- “No Answers” – 1 (20%)

Table 160: Indo-Fijian Fourth Formers’ Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Parents’ Attitudes towards Children’s Formal Education, School C

Male Indo-Fijian Students’ Perceptions (N=4)

Female Indo-Fijian Students’ Perceptions (N=14)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian Parents Strict about their Children’s Studies?

- “Yes” – 1 (25%)
- “No” – 3 (75%)
- “Yes” – 0 (0%)
- “No” – 13 (92%)
- “No Answers” – 1 (8%)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian Parents Relaxed about Children’s Studies?

- “Yes” – 2 (50%)
- “No” – 1 (25%)
- “No Answers” – 1 (25%)
- “Yes” – 9 (64%)
- “No” – 4 (28%)
- “No Answers” – 1 (8%)

**School D: Form 6 Students**

Table 161: Ethnic Fijian Sixth-Formers’ Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Students’ Attitudes towards Studies, School D

Male Ethnic Fijian Students’ Perceptions (N=0)

Female Ethnic Fijian Students’ Perceptions (N=6)

Are typical Indo-Fijian Students either “Hard Working”, “Serious”, “Focused” or “Concentrating” on Studies?

N/A

- “Yes” – 5 (83.3%)

- “No” – 0 (0%)
- “No Answers” – 1  
(16.6%)

280  
Table 162: Indo-Fijian Sixth-Formers’ Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Students’ Attitudes towards Studies, School D

Male Indo-Fijian  
Students’ Perceptions  
(N=4)

Female Indo-Fijian  
Students’ Perceptions  
(N=6)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian  
Students either “Hard  
Working”, “Serious”,  
“Focused” or  
“Concentrating” on  
Studies?

- “Yes” – 1 (25%)
- “No” – 2 (50%)
- “No Answers” – 1  
(25%)
- “Yes” – 1 (17%)
- “No” – 5 (83%)

Table 163: Ethnic Fijian Sixth-Formers’ Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Parents’ Attitudes towards Children’s Formal Education, School D

Male Ethnic Fijian  
Students’ Perceptions  
(N=0)

Female Ethnic Fijian  
Students’ Perceptions  
(N=6)

Are typical Indo-Fijian  
Parents Strict about their  
Children’s Studies?

N/A

- “Yes” – 5 (83.3%)
- “No” – 0 (0%)
- “No Answers” – 1  
(16.6%)

Are typical Indo-Fijian  
Parents Relaxed about  
their Children’s Studies?

N/A

- “Yes” – 0 (0%)
- “No” – 4 (66.6%)
- “No Answers” – 2  
(33.3%)

Table 164: Indo-Fijian Sixth-Formers’ Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Parents’

Attitudes towards Children's Formal Education, School D

Male Indo-Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=4)

Female Indo-Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=6)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian

Parents Strict about their

Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 1 (25%)

- "No" – 2 (50%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(25%)

- "Yes" – 1 (17%)

- "No" – 5 (83%)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian

Parents Relaxed about

their Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 2 (50%)

- "No" – 1 (25%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(25%)

- "Yes" – 4 (33%)

- "No" – 2 (67%)

281

**School D: Form 4 Students**

Table 165: Ethnic Fijian Fourth-Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Students'

Attitudes towards Studies, School D

Male Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=6)

Female Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=7)

Are typical Indo-Fijian

Students either "Hard

Working", "Serious",

"Focused" or

"Concentrating" on

Studies?

- "Yes" – 6 (100%)

- "Yes" – 2 (29%)

- "No" – 0 (0%)

- "No Answers" – 5

(71%)

Table 166: Indo-Fijian Fourth-Formers' Perceptions of Ethnic Fijian Students'

Attitudes towards Studies, School D

Male Indo-Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=12)

Female Indo-Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=8)

Are typical Ethnic Fijian

Students either "Hard

Working", "Serious",

"Focused" or

"Concentrating" on

Studies?

- "Yes" – 9 (75%)

- "No" – 2 (16%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(9%)

- "Yes" – 6 (75%)

- "No" – 1 (12.5%)

- "No Answers" – 1

(12.5%)

Table 167: Ethnic Fijian Fourth-Formers' Perceptions of Indo-Fijian Parents'

Attitudes towards Children's Formal Education, School D

Male Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=6)

Female Ethnic Fijian

Students' Perceptions

(N=7)

Are typical Indo-Fijian

Parents Strict about their

Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 6 (100%)

- "No" – 0 (0%)

- "Yes" – 2 (28%)

- "No Answers" – 5

(72%)

Are typical Indo-Fijian

Parents Relaxed about

their Children's Studies?

- "Yes" – 0 (0%)

- "No" – 6 (100%)

- "Yes" – 0 (0%)

- "No" – 2 (28%)

- "No Answers" – 5

(72%)