

Brain Gain in Fiji?

How do past emigrants' experiences shape the
education decisions and emigration plans of tertiary
students in Fiji?

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Abstract

This thesis examines the case of Fijian youths' increasing demand for higher education in order to explore the brain gain theorem. Its primary aim is to understand how past emigrants' experiences shape the education decisions and emigration intentions of tertiary students in Fiji. This is achieved through semi-structured interviews with Fijian youths as well as an examination of policy and media reports. The research questions through which these aims are achieved are: Why do Fijian students enter higher education? Do Fijian students intend to migrate, and if so, why or why not? And what are the constraints and obstacles to Fijian students' emigration intentions? The central conclusion of this thesis is that the brain gain effect is present in Fiji because half of the student-participants responded to the incentive effect, defined as the prospect of migration raising the expected returns to higher education, which is created by two distinct cultures of migration and three of the Fijian governments' initiatives. The strength of their social ties determined whether they had perfect or imperfect information about the constraints and obstacles to their emigration intentions which in turn, determined the type of brain gain effect Fijian communities may be experiencing.

In this thesis, the relationship between emigration and human capital formation is understood through the notion of the brain gain effect, defined as prospect of migration leads to a higher average level of education per individual in origin countries. Existing empirical studies have employed quantitative methods to establish the correlation between past emigration rates and current enrolment rates. The significance and novelty of this thesis lies in its adoption of qualitative case study methods in which real people were asked what they are doing and why, thus bringing us closer to a causal understanding of the relationship between higher education and emigration. In addition, by including ethnic and skill-level variables in the research design, this thesis shows that those remaining behind after upskilling may be some of Fiji's 'best and brightest.'

Key words: *brain gain effect, incentive effect, imperfect information, higher education, qualitative case study methods.*

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Table of Contents

Abstract	4
Acknowledgements	5
List of Figures	10
Acronyms	11
Glossary	12
Chapter 1: Introduction	14
The Silent Welcome	14
Research Questions	15
Importance of the Study	17
Results	18
Thesis Outline.....	19
Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework	21
The Migration-and-Development Debate.....	21
Brain Gain Effect.....	22
Brain Gain vs. Brain Drain.....	24
Summary	26
Chapter 3: Methodology	30
Case study Research Design.....	30
Study Population.....	31
Qualitative Research Methods.....	33
Data Analysis	34
Positionality.....	38
Being <i>Kaindia</i>	38
Having Personal Contacts.....	39
Having Expertise.....	40
Knowing Too Much.....	41
Reflections of the Research Process.....	42
Anonymity and Confidentiality	42
Absence of Government Officials	43
Summary	44

Chapter 4: Education Decisions	46
No Family-Migrants	46
Technical College of Fiji	46
A Job in Fiji	48
Low-Skilled Family-Migrants	50
University of the South Pacific	51
A Good Job in Fiji	55
Semi-Developed Migration Strategy	57
High-skilled Family-Migrants	60
Technical College of Fiji	60
University of the South Pacific	62
A Good Job in Fiji	65
Well-Developed Migration Strategy	67
Summary	69
Chapter 5: Emigration Intentions	71
No Emigration Intentions	71
Disincentives of Emigrating	71
Temporary Emigration Intentions	75
Short-term and Goal-oriented Motivations	75
Permanent Emigration Intentions	78
Long-term and Future-oriented Motivations	79
Summary	82
Chapter 6: Constraints and Obstacles to Emigration Intentions	85
Permanent Emigration Constraints	85
Temporary Emigration Obstacles	89
Internal Emigration Obstacles	89
External Emigration Obstacles	92
Summary	94
Chapter 7: Discussion	96
Question 1: Why do Fijian students invest in higher education?	97
Question 2: Do Fijian students intend to migrate, and if so, why/ why not?	100
Government Intervention	104

Question 3: What are the constraints and obstacles to Fijian students' emigration intentions?	106
Temporary Brain Gain Effect among the Indian Fijian Community?	110
Permanent Brain Gain Effect among the iTaukei Community?	111
Summary	115
Chapter 8: Conclusions	118
Contributions	119
Limitations and Areas for Future Research	121
References	123
Appendices	133
Appendix 1: Victoria University of Wellington	133
Appendix 1b: Ethics form	133
Appendix 1b: Participant Information Sheet	134
Appendix 1c: Participant Consent Form (students)	135
Appendix 1d: Participant Consent form (government officials)	136
Appendix 2: Fiji Islands	137
Appendix 2a: Research Permit	137
Appendix 2b: Ethics Approval from the University of the South Pacific	138
Appendix 3: Semi-structured Interview Questions	140
Appendix 3a: Fijian student-participants	140
Appendix 3b: Government Officials	141
Appendix 4: Regional Skill Demands	142
Appendix 4a: Skill Shortages in New Zealand	142
Appendix 4b: Skill Shortages in Australia	143

List of Figures

Figure 1. Study Population and Design. 31

Figure 2. The Analysis Matrix. 37

Figure 3. A Success Story from TCF. 48

Figure 4. USP Graduates' Emigration Success Stories. 55

Figure 5. The Preferred Programme List of the National Toppers Scheme..... 65

Figure 6. Analysis Matrix with Data..... 114

Acronyms

BBD Beneficial Brain Drain

FNU Fiji National University

TELS Tertiary Education Loan Scheme

TSLB Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Board

TCF Technical College of Fiji

USP University of the South Pacific

Glossary

Brain Gain	An increase in the proportion of individuals with socially optimal levels of higher education.
Brain Drain	The adverse effects of highly-skilled individuals emigrating to developed countries.
Fijian	All citizens of Fiji.
High-skilled Family-migrants	Those with higher education before emigrating.
Incentive Effect	The prospect of migration raising the expected returns to higher education.
International Higher Education Pathway	Completing higher education at an international tertiary institute.
Indian Fijian	Fijian citizens of Indian descent.
<i>Kaindia</i>	ITaukei term referring to Fijian citizens of Indian descent.
<i>Lesu Mai</i>	Return from.
Local Higher Education Pathway	Completing higher education at a Fijian institute.
Low-skilled Family-migrants	Those with only secondary qualifications or one year of tertiary education before emigrating.
Local Higher Education Pathway	Completing higher education at a Fijian Institute and migrating.
<i>ITaukei</i>	Indigenous Fijians who believe that they are the people of the land.
<i>Vanua</i>	Defines the intricate bond between people, the land, and cultural practices. It is often referred to as iTaukei people's rooting.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Silent Welcome

As we arrived on the shore of Raviravi village after a long journey involving a mixture of torrential rain, uncontrollable currents, and the uncertainty of what lies beyond the urban shores, we were surprised not to see a tide of villagers welcoming us. Amidst the slightly odd silence, all we could hear was cheering and clapping at a nearby school hall. Later that night, during our *sevusevu*, we offered raw *kava* to the chief who accepted our gift, approving our visit and taking responsibility for our research presence. He explained the clapping and cheering: the villagers had been attending their children's school prize giving, where they had boasted about their children's achievements, and discussed plans to send them to reputable secondary schools and then on to higher education on the mainland. But the most intriguing thing for us was how the villagers had, apparently, talked about how they would send their children abroad if they could.

Whereas once the traditional *sevusevu* welcoming ceremony might have brought together the community around the arrival of outsiders, in our experience of arrival in Raviravi village, it was not immigration but planned *emigration* that was in a sense the driving force behind the vibrancy of village life. Much the same could be said of many other villages around Fiji and other countries in the Pacific. What does this mean for village communities in the region? Who wins and who loses from these education and emigration decisions? Although villagers may often be enthusiastic about emigration for their individual family's sake, is it good for the community and the economy as a whole? Can such silent welcomes sustain the development of Pacific Island countries? These are the puzzles this research set out to solve.

In conventional wisdom at least from the 1970s until the early 1990s, emigration was considered a fundamental *problem* of development (Bakewell, 2009). In the pursuit of a better quality of life, high-skilled individuals participate in South to North emigration (Castles & Miller, 2009; Gibson & McKenzie, 2011a), and more recently, South to South emigration (Rokoduru, 2006). In the process of doing so, they have created

significant labour shortages in health and education sectors which placed excessive pressure on the remaining professionals thereby lowering their efficiency and hampering development prospects for origin countries (see Massey et al., 1993; De Haas, 2009 for discussion on cumulative causation theory) . Over the years, a growing body of theoretical and empirical evidence has emerged that supports the brain drain hypothesis (D. Chandra, 2005; Connell, 2006b; Naidu, Mohanty, & Sudhakar, 2014; Reddy, Mohanty, & Naidu, 2004) which has led scholars such as Bhagwati and Hamada (1974) to propose a brain drain tax whereby developed countries financially compensate origin countries for their losses.

Scholarship and policymaking since the mid-1990s, however, has been more likely to portray emigration as a *solution* to development. Research and policies now emphasise circular and return migration, diaspora engagement, and remittances as offsets to brain drain (Abella & Duncanes, 2008). Uncertainty surrounds the longevity of such benefits (Connell, 1990), and policymakers in Pacific Island countries like Fiji often still fear that they will continue losing human capital. Interestingly, some recent research even asserts that the departure of high-skilled individuals may demonstrate potential benefits of higher education¹ to those left behind (Clemens, 2013). It may encourage non-migrants to upskill, even if their emigration is ultimately unsuccessful – causing a so-called Beneficial Brain Drain (BBD). Evidence supporting this recent hypothesis is limited (Findlay & Lowell, 2001), yet it is already influencing development, education and migration policies (Di Maria & Strykowski, 2009; Stark & Wang, 2002). The starting point for this thesis, therefore, is that empirical research on the validity of the Beneficial Brain Drain claim is urgently needed – particularly in the small Pacific Island countries where fears of human capital loss remain endemic despite the recent global hype around the potential for emigration *and* development.

Research Questions

¹ Higher education and tertiary education are used interchangeably throughout this thesis. In this thesis, higher/ tertiary education is defined as post-secondary education.

In line with the above discussion, the overarching goal of this research is to examine the role of past migrants' experiences in shaping education decisions and the migration plans of tertiary students in Fiji. In doing so, I will answer the following questions, and examine each of the corresponding hypothetical answers:

Question 1: Why do Fijian students invest in higher education?

Hypothesis 1a: Fijian students enter higher education because they have seen family upskill and successfully emigrate.

Hypothesis 1b: University students invest in more education after seeing their family emigrate by doing so.

Hypothesis 1c: Indian Fijian students invest in more education after seeing their family emigrate by doing so.

Question 2: Do Fijian students intend to migrate, and if so, why/ why not?

Hypothesis 2a: Fijian students intend to migrate after upskilling because they have seen family earn higher wages by doing so.

Hypothesis 2b: Indian Fijian students intend to emigrate permanently for economic opportunities and political stability, while iTaukei students intend to emigrate temporarily for education opportunities and to improve families' standards of living.

Question 3: What are the constraints and obstacles to Fijian students' migration intentions?

Hypothesis 3a: Fijian students have imperfect information about obstacles and constraints to their emigration intentions, which may ultimately prevent them from emigrating.

Hypothesis 3b: iTaukei students have imperfect information about immigration policies.

Hypothesis 3c: Technical students have imperfect information about qualifications transferability.

Importance of the Study

This research is relevant to scholarship as it adds an empirical dimension to a largely theoretical – not to say ideological – debate over whether emigration is a problem or alternatively a solution of development. Secondly, this study is theoretically unique because it shifts the focus of migration-and-development research away from the now-standard preoccupation with diasporas, transnationalism, remittances, return migration and circulation. Instead, it examines how the prospect of emigration affects the education decisions of non-migrant Fijians. Thirdly, it is methodologically unique as it employs qualitative case study methods to move beyond the econometrics of correlation, and get closer to causal explanation – to an understanding of what actually drives social action. So far, most investigations have used quantitative methods to either establish a relationship between migration and education or measure the magnitude of the brain gain phenomenon. However, the notion of brain gain depends on assumptions about the causes of migration, and the above investigations are better at establishing correlation than causation. By employing qualitative case study methods in which real people are directly asked what they are doing and why it is possible to get closer to a causal understanding of the relationship between higher education and emigration. In this way, the thesis shows that the increasing demand for higher education in Fiji is in part an *outcome of the previous* emigration.

Additionally, this research is important for public debate. While economists have concluded that brain drain is detrimental for origin countries, especially in small island states (Beine, Docquier, & Oden-Defoort, 2011; Findlay & Lowell, 2001), policymakers maintain that an open migration policy will generate positive feedback channels which will assist in achieving the national development goals (Gamlen, 2014; Klugman, 2009). To illustrate, the Minister of Education (interview, 13/10/15) highlighted that remittances are increasingly becoming a major source of income for Fijians. Such benefits of brain drain have been included in Fiji's development and migration policies. However, there is little evidence of whether brain drain does, in fact, induce human capital formation in Fiji. It is here that more rigorous research is required for

determining whether policies are indeed supporting positive trends as they purport to, rather than perpetuating a vicious cycle of brain drain. Relatedly, this study answers an important question raised by developing countries that are experiencing excessive brain drain: who remains after emigration? By incorporating ethnic and skill-level variables in the research design, an interesting insight is gained into the characteristics of those planning to remain behind after upskilling.

This research is also of personal importance. Often it is argued that because ethnic tensions have inhibited Indian Fijians and *iTaukei* from coalescing, we Fijians “lack a sense of belonging to a place and each other as one people” (Madraiwiwi & Tubman, 2008, p. 26). The lack of nationhood has hampered development prospects for Fiji, but recent developments in creating a national identity for citizens of Fiji has reminded me of my heritage and rekindled my obligation towards Fiji. Although my student status prevents me from financially participating in Fiji’s development, it does not academically. Thus, by situating the study in Fiji, I have taken my first step in contributing to its development.

Results

The findings of this research support the argument that the brain gain effect is present in Fiji. Seeing family members and other peers emigrate, after completing their higher education from a local institute, encouraged Fijian youths to invest in higher education, especially among Indian Fijian youths who ended up at the Technical College of Fiji. Additionally, the study found that national, household and individual conditions – such as the availability and accessibility of higher education, financial constraints, and academic performance – all played important roles in determining the decision to enter higher education. Moreover, the thesis suggests that the Indian Fijian community in Fiji may be experiencing a temporary brain gain effect as Indian Fijian student-participants had a well-developed migration strategy which included solutions to overcome the potential external and internal barriers to their permanent emigration intentions. Furthermore, the thesis suggests that the *iTaukei* community in Fiji may be experiencing

a small, but permanent brain gain effect as iTaukei student-participants had a semi-developed migration strategy which only included the solution to the cognitive dissonance between their intentions of emigrating and maintaining their indigeneity. Therefore, indicating that they had imperfect information about the constraints and obstacles to their temporary emigration intentions.

Thesis Outline

The thesis divided into eight chapters. Following on from the current Introduction, Chapter Two discusses the theoretical framework that is guiding the research. It reviews the international comparative and theoretical literature on the conditions under which developing countries may experience a so-called beneficial brain gain. Chapter Three documents the research methodology of the project, explaining the use of qualitative case study research methods and discussing the ways in which my own positionality as a researcher and as a *Kaindia*² postgraduate student living in New Zealand influenced the research process. Chapter Four then examines the role of family-migrants in fashioning Fijian students' education decisions by explaining the motivations behind students' selection of their specific institute and their specific courses of study. Chapter Five examines the ways in which family-migrants shape Fijian student's migration plans by describing their intentions and motivations regarding emigration. Chapter Six explores the potential constraints and obstacles to their emigration plans. Chapter Seven brings together the findings and describes the conditions under which Fiji has experienced a brain gain effect, as well as the characteristics of those remaining behind. Chapter Eight concludes the thesis by situating the main findings in the wider migration-and-development debate and highlighting areas for further research.

² An *iTaukei* term referring to Fijians of Indian descent.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

This chapter focuses on contemporary debates concerning brain gain in origin countries. It is divided into three sections. The first section describes optimistic and pessimistic arguments about the relationship between migration and development within existing literature. The second section presents empirical investigations on the brain gain effect that lies at the heart of the beneficial brain drain hypothesis that this thesis intends to examine. The third section describes the conditions conducive for brain gain to occur. This chapter concludes by arguing that a qualitative approach is better equipped for addressing the gaps in the BBD literature as the notion of brain gain depends on assumptions about the causes of emigration.

The Migration-and-Development Debate

Education is routinely treated as the most effective means of promoting development (Rao, 2010) as it enhances individuals' decision-making power. Particularly in the Pacific, there is "a very strong grassroots support for education" (R. Chandra, 2011, p. 135; Sharrod, 1993). But education is also the means for emigration (Brown & Connell, 2004). The scholarly and policy debate about the relationship between migration and development has swung back and forth from optimism to pessimism at least since World War II (De Haas, 2010; Gamlen, 2010; Portes, 2009). Pessimists view the nexus as a 'vicious' cycle because emigration heightens inequality between developed and developing countries. In contrast, optimists view it as a 'virtuous' cycle as by engaging diasporas a win-win-win situation can be created (see Gamlen, 2014; Lodigiani, 2009 for discussion).

One of the most intellectually intriguing and influential ideas introduced in recent research and policy is that of the so-called beneficial brain drain (BBD). This theorem suggests on one hand that emigrant remittances play a role in alleviating household poverty and increasing families' ability to educate their children (Bredl, 2011; Fairbairn-

Dunlop, 1993; Va'a, 1993). On the other hand, it also stresses that return migration, driven by wage adjustments in destination countries (see Helmenstein, Prskawetz & Stark, 1997), allows former emigrants to take back new skills to their origin countries (Williams & Baláž, 2014). Though Fijian policymakers acknowledge such benefits, brain drain is still considered a challenge. But the beneficial brain drain theory does not end there.

Brain Gain Effect

In BBD theory loss of human capital is not always the end consequence of emigration. A fundamental idea of the theory is that emigration also causes a *brain gain* effect. This occurs – at least in theory – when emigration leads to a higher average level of education per individual in affected origin countries. A relatively new element of brain gain theory proposes that this may occur because the opportunity to emigrate creates incentives for non-migrants to invest in education in origin countries (Beine, Docquier, & Rapoport, 2001; Helmenstein et al., 1997; Mountford, 1997; Vidal, 1998). Put differently, the theory says that people in developing countries see their peers educate, emigrate and send back substantial remittances that elevate their socio-economic status at 'home.' In the short-term, this effect of emigration may hamper development by increasing educated unemployment and over-education (Kuhn & McAusland, 2006; Stark & Fan, 2011). But in the long-term, according to the theory, origin countries are anticipated to gain higher levels of human capital – because not all emigration intentions result in actual emigration. Therefore, the brain gain effect at the heart of the beneficial brain drain theory is only possible if the incentives to educate are large, the rate of brain drain is small, and emigration itself is uncertain (Beine et al., 2001; Helmenstein, Prskawetz, & Stark, 1998; Mountford, 1997; Vidal, 1998).

The incentive effect, defined as the prospect of emigration raising the expected returns of education, induced individuals in affected origin countries to invest in education (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012a). So far, empirical studies have used higher wages as incentives for emigrating (Byra & Stark, 2012). Since individuals are rational utility

maximisers (Wolf, 2014), they engage in skill-price comparisons before entering higher education (Stark, 2002; 2004; 2007). If the expected returns to emigration exceed the costs of acquiring education, then individuals invest in higher education. In this case, the expected return of emigration is higher wages. Only one macro-study has shown that wage differentials are positively correlated with emigration (Beine et al., 2001). Other macro-studies have used the Gross Domestic Product per capita to capture the ‘wage effect’ because it is hypothesised that origin countries lack financial capital and technology for economic growth which hinders high-skilled workers’ prospects of socio-economic advancements thereby motivating them to emigrate. Employing econometric models with different specifications, macro-studies found that the incentive effect was stronger in low-income countries due to their low emigration and enrolment rates (Beine et al., 2011; Beine, Docquier, & Rapoport, 2008; Docquier, Marchiori, & Shen, 2013; Docquier & Rapoport, 2012b).

Country-level studies, on the other hand, have employed a difference-in-difference identification strategy³ to demonstrate the role of a specific event in inducing human capital formation. Paralleling findings from the macro-studies, Shrestha (2011) found that the introduction of education as a selection criterion for joining the British Gurkha Army motivated Nepalese people, especially Gurkha men to invest in education. Similarly, Chand and Clemens (2008) discovered that mass emigration of high-skilled Indian Fijian Fijians after the 1987 coups motivated Fijians, especially Indian Fijian students, to invest in higher education to meet destination countries’ entry requirements. Batista, Lacuesta, and Vicente (2012) also found similar results in Cape Verde. However, Fiji and Cape Verde experiences high education acquisition and emigration rates which indicate that middle-income countries are also responding to the incentive effect. In contrast, the Surinamese case-study does not support the brain gain theory (Dulam & Framses, 2015). At the same time, academics argue that the incentive effect distorts human capital composition as individuals invest in skills and qualifications that

³ Difference-in-difference identification strategy is often employed in an experimental research design whereby the treatment group is exposed to high-skilled emigration and the controlled group is not. The two groups are compared to determine whether emigration induces human capital formation. The Nepalese and Fiji case-studies only compared the incentive effect between ethnic groups. The Cape Verde case study did not use such comparative variables.

enhance their probability of emigration (Di Maria & Lazarova, 2012; Di Maria & Strykowski, 2009; Lien & Wang, 2005). Gibson and McKenzie (2011b) found that 85 percent of top high-school students from Papua New Guinea and Tonga contemplated emigrating while studying which not only encouraged them to complete their education but also influenced their selection of courses.

These mixed results suggest that although higher wages are important (Mikes, 2013), it is no longer the only factor motivating emigration from developing countries (Arango, 2000). Connell (1990) and Cowling (2002) argue that internal factors also motivate Pacific Islanders' emigration, especially changes in aspirations and perceptions of what constitutes a better quality of life. This includes better employment opportunities and working conditions, higher quality of education, political certainty and environmental stability (see Castles & Miller, 2009; Cohen & Sirkeci, 2011; Solimano, 2010 for discussion). Thus, to understand whether and how individuals respond to the incentive effect, it is essential to explore the ways in which various factors interact to shape their emigration intentions.

Brain Gain vs. Brain Drain

Brain gain can only occur if the rate of human capital formation exceeds the rate of brain drain, i.e. when not everyone who up-skills follows through with their initial intention to emigrate. It is suggested that for brain gain to occur, the optimal rate of brain drain should be between 15 to 30 percent (Beine et al., 2011; Stark & Wang, 2002). However, in reality, the rate of brain drain in many Pacific nations exceed the optimal rate. OECD-UNDESA (2013, p. 3) found that “44 percent of Tongans and 31 percent of Fijians” lived in developed nations. In addition, these countries have almost achieved universal primary education as well as are experiencing an increasing demand for secondary and tertiary education (Bray, Crossely, & Packer, 2009; Bray & Martin, 2011; Shah, 2014; WorldBank, 2014). Together, these factors suggest that brain gain may already be occurring in Tonga and Fiji; however, evidence supporting this claim is scarce.

Though individuals have intentions of migrating, not everyone emigrates. Globally, only 3 percent of people migrate outside their country of birth (Castles, 2000; Munck, 2009), largely because international migration is highly selective (De Haas, 2009; Duncan, 2009; Rizvi, 2005). Imperfect knowledge about constraints such as economic capabilities (Shimada, 2013), immigration policies (N. T. Duncan & Waldorf, 2010), lack of qualifications transferability (especially from national universities in the Pacific (see Chandra, 2011; Bray et al., 2009)), and even cognitive dissonance may all reduce the probability of their emigration intentions leading to actual emigration decisions (Gardner, De Jong, Arnold, & Cariño, 1985). At the same time, although social networks are the best source of external information in the Pacific, it conveys biased information about benefits such as higher wages (Gibson, McKenzie, Rohorua, & Stillman, 2010). Therefore, to determine whether brain gain effect is possible in Fiji, we need to know not only about emigration intentions but also about emigration constraints, such as whether or not Fijian students are aware of legal procedures, whether immigration policies create selection biases, and whether other external and internal constraints may obstruct emigration plans.

Most empirical studies examining the brain gain effect primarily focus on the macro-level correlation between past emigration rates and current enrolment rates. Such studies “adopt a myopic view of expectations” whereby the empirical counterpart for the ‘prospect of migration’ is past emigration rates (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012a, p. 701). The use of emigration statistics is problematic as it is collected from embarkation and disembarkation forms which are often inaccurately completed by passengers thereby failing to capture the true extent of emigration from certain countries, and the heterogeneity in skill-level as well as emigration plans (Mohanty, 2001). Moreover, based on the assumption that primarily developed countries regulate migration by allocating immigration quota to each country, such studies use population size as a proxy variable for ‘uncertainty’ (Beine et al., 2001). By doing so, it implies that “emigration is a result of a lottery in which visas are awarded randomly, and everyone has the same probability of emigrating” (Kapur & McHale, 2005, p. 75). In reality, emigration is highly selective as it requires both financial and human capital. Therefore, not everyone has the same probability of emigrating. These studies also disregard the

role of internal constraints imposed by origin governments (e.g. a restrictive emigration policy or the practice of bonding (Di Maria & Stryszowski, 2009; Kaitani et al., 2011)) in enhancing the uncertainty of emigration. Moreover, such studies provide a simplistic definition of brain gain as their research designs are inadequate in capturing the “heterogeneity in individual responses and identifying the channels through which these positive effects work” (Batista et al., 2012, p. 33). Furthermore, country-level qualitative studies examining the determinants of emigration largely employ retrospective data, i.e. post-emigration data, which highlight the role of trigger factors, including specific events, rather than various socio-economic factors that shape individuals’ emigration plans. Therefore, to determine whether Fiji is indeed experiencing the brain gain effect, we also need to gather data on how potential emigrants justify their emigration plans and strategies they employ of overcoming the uncertainties to their emigration plans.

Summary

In summary, although the beneficial brain drain hypothesis itself is highly innovative and intriguing, empirical evidence supporting it remains quite limited. Hence it is often assumed that Pacific nations will continue losing human capital through emigration. Nonetheless, universalisation of primary education, increasing demand for higher education and imperfect knowledge about emigration constraints and obstacles suggest that the Pacific could, in fact, be experiencing brain gain. This research sets out to examine the extent to which that is or is not the case.

In order to do so, we need to ask why individuals are investing in HE, do they intend to migrate, and if so, why or why not, and what are the constraints and obstacles to their migration intentions? Behind the research questions lie eight propositions about migration and education in the Pacific. Firstly, there are strong theoretical reasons for supposing that emigration success stories have a positive impact on non-migrants’ education decisions (Kanbur & Rapoport, 2005; Stark, 2005). However, there is not enough empirical evidence to support the above claim to the extent that would be

required to result in beneficial brain drain effect. It is therefore hypothesised that Fijian students enter higher education after seeing their family upskill and emigrated.

Secondly, it is proposed that Fijian students intend to migrate because they have observed past emigrants earn higher wages by doing so. Theoretical and macro-level studies primarily used higher wages to test the incentive effect which has led the studies to conclude that low-income countries are main ‘winners’ of brain drain. However, country-level studies have demonstrated that emigration success stories also shape individuals’ emigration plans. At the same time, qualitative studies from the Pacific shows that higher wages complexly interact with other socio-economic factors in motivating individuals to emigrate. As a result of these conflicting evidence, the above hypothesis will be used to examine the extent to which higher wages and other motivations inform Fijian students’ migration intentions.

Thirdly, it is hypothesised that Fijian students have imperfect information about the constraints and obstacles to their migration intentions, which may impede a planned migration from actually occurring. It is widely accepted that social networks convey information regarding job availability abroad (Gibson et al., 2010). However, it is unclear whether people are aware of the external and internal constraints that may inhibit their migration. Since the possibility of brain gain depends on the uncertainty of emigration, this study examines whether Fijian students are aware of emigration constraints and obstacles.

Lastly, Fijian students’ incentives to educate, their emigration intentions, and their awareness of migration constraints and obstacles are determined by their skill-level and ethnicity. Stark (2004) argued that due to their economic capabilities, low-skilled and high-skilled individuals respond differently to the incentives to educate. Hence, it is hypothesised that university students invest in more education after seeing their family emigrated by doing so. In addition, Chand and Clemens (2008) found that a significant proportion of Indian Fijian students entered higher education after observing their family upskill and successfully emigrate. It is then, hypothesised that Indian Fijian students invest in more education after seeing their family by doing so. Moreover, acknowledging that immigration policies create selection biases, Voigt-Graf (2008a) and

Mohanty (2006) found that Indian Fijians and iTaukei individuals have different migration patterns. It is hypothesised that Indian Fijian students intend to emigrate permanently for economic opportunities and political stability, while iTaukei students intend to emigrate temporarily for education opportunities and to improve families' standards of living. It is also hypothesised that technical students have imperfect information about qualifications transferability, and iTaukei students have imperfect information about immigration policies. By examining the above claims, this study will obtain a deeper understanding of how Fijian students' ethnicity and skill-level fashion their education decisions and migration plans. The following chapter discusses the methods employed to address the above gaps.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The previous chapter identified that evidence supporting the brain gain theory is scarce. The few empirical studies that are available focus on quantitatively establishing a relationship between emigration and education or measuring the magnitude of the brain gain effect. However, because the notion of brain gain depends on assumptions about the causes of emigration it is crucial for us to understand how students interpret the experiences of past emigrants and how these interpretations shape their education decisions and emigration plans, if at all. This chapter then, argues that qualitative case study methods are best equipped in obtaining such information. The chapter is divided into five sections: the case study research design, qualitative research methods, data analysis, researcher positionality, and reflections of the research process.

Case study Research Design

This study employed a single case study research design, defined as a “strategy that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within the real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Cousins, 2005; Yin, 1994, p. 13; 2013, p. 34). The case study research was suitable for this study for multiple reasons. It enabled a holistic understanding of the phenomenon; and a naturalistic method of data collection where the methods are “ontologically, epistemologically and methodologically different” (Jarvensivu & Tornroos, 2010, p. 102). It was also useful for examining an undeveloped theory where there is “little understanding of how and why processes occur” (Broadbent, Darke, & Shanks, 1998, p. 34) or the “existing knowledge is flawed” (Gerring, 2004, p. 34). The existing literature mentions that previous high-skilled emigration induces non-migrants to invest in education with the intention of emigration. However, empirical investigations do not convincingly demonstrate this because they rely on quantitative methods that are apt for capturing correlation but not at studying causation, in the sense that they are unable to

observe the factors that actually motivate migration. The thesis bridges this gap by employing qualitative methods in order to examine how these motivations and decisions are formed – asking would-be migrants what they are doing and why.

Study Population

Figure 1. Study Population and Design.



Since one of the main objective of the thesis is to determine whether or not the brain gain effect is present in Fiji, the case study is Fiji Islands. An increasing number of observations is an important principle in qualitative research designs which is why 61 participants were recruited (King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994). The sample consisted of 58 student-participants who were selected through purposive sampling (see Berg, 2009; Elam, Lewis & Ritchie, 2013). They were undergraduate students (enrolled in 100 level courses), over the age of 18, enrolled at the University of the South Pacific (USP) and Technical College of Fiji (TCF), and belonged to Indian Fijian and iTaukei ethnic

groups⁴ (see figure 1). Post-secondary students were selected because, in a previous study, Chand and Clemens (2008) found that past emigrations influenced education behaviour amongst this group. Skill-level and ethnicity were selected as variables because it examined hypotheses 1b, 1c, 2b, 3b, and 3c.

Additionally, snowball sampling was used to select four academics who had published articles on Fiji's brain drain issue, as well as the Minister of Education and Minister of Immigration. However, only one academic was interviewed: the others were unavailable. Participants were recruited using research flyers, brief class presentations, and with the assistance of the University of the South Pacific and Technical College of Fiji academic staff. Further, two USP students aided in recruiting student-participants: only one recruiter participated in the study. His involvement did not generate selection biases, shape the research in any way or affect interviews with the other students. The student recruiters were not paid, but I recommended them to local researchers as potential research assistants. All communication with local authorities, academic staff and participants were conducted through face-to-face meetings, email, and telephone.

The 'brain gain effect' was examined by dividing student-participants into two groups: a control group and a treatment group. The treatment group contained students with high-skilled family-migrants, i.e. those with higher education who successfully emigrated after completing their education in Fiji. Initially, I aimed to recruit students without family-migrants for the controlled group. However, due to Fiji's open emigration policy, almost all Fijian students approached for the study had family-migrants. Hence, the controlled group consists of students with low-skilled family-migrants, i.e. those who have either secondary qualifications or one year of tertiary education before they emigrated, and without family-migrants. Recognising that iTaukei communities have a broad definition of 'family' as it includes their extended kin members, measures were employed to ensure that they understood 'family' as immediate aunts, uncles, and

⁴ The thesis uses the term 'Fijian' to refer to students who are citizens of Fiji. The term 'Indian Fijian' refers to the descents of indentured labourers who continued to live in Fiji after the indenture system had been abolished and now, consider Fiji their homeland. While the term 'iTaukei' means the attributes of the land owners, it refers to indigenous Fijians in the thesis. The above terms are largely employed to identify the similarities and differences between ethnic groups.

cousins. This entailed obtaining information on their family-migrants' qualifications, the frequency of communication with family-migrants, and details of their conversations. Originally, the groups consisted of five students from each institute. However, since an increasing number observation is important for qualitative studies and examining hypotheses, I included more students. Hence, the number of participants differed in each group (see figure1).

Qualitative Research Methods

The main method of data collection was interviewing. The interviews were semi-structured, consisting of both open and close-ended questions (Brewer, 2000). Semi-structured interviews maintained the focus of the research; allowed me to probe participants' answers as well as explain or reword questions that they did not understand. All the questions were pilot-tested with student colleagues, and where it was necessary, the local colloquial language was used during the interviews (Berg, 2009; Creswell, 2014). The interview questions are attached to the appendices. Apart from three instances involving Indian Fijian students- two attending USP and one attending TCF (further discussed in the Reflections of Research Process Section), all interviews were audio recorded, and the recordings will be stored for five years in a secure environment (Noor, 2008). Although I had planned to conduct individual interviews, for practical and logistical reasons (e.g. participant availability) some interviews consisted of multiple participants. One interview had three participants, and five interviews had two participants. However, these were not focus groups: all participants were asked the same set of questions, and they each provided individual answers. Even though the Education Act of 1978 and Immigration Act of 2008 were obtained and reviewed, it was not triangulated with the interviews as it was still being reviewed by the Solicitor General, and any changes to these acts may have affected the key arguments of the thesis. Hence, policy and media reports, as well as direct observations were employed to supplement the interviews. Direct observations involved conversing with locals (including taxi drivers, market vendors, sales assistants, lecturers and students who were

not part of the study) as well as actively listening to their frustrations and concerns. By doing so, I was able to gain a richer understanding of the socio-political and economic climate in which Fijian students decided to enter higher education and develop their emigration intentions.

Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed word for word. Interviews conducted in Hindi or the local colloquial language was translated into English (by me). Initially, I did not intend to modify participants' statements; however, some sentences were paraphrased to enhance clarity. The interview transcripts were reorganised and analysed using the QRS NVivo software. This took place as follows.

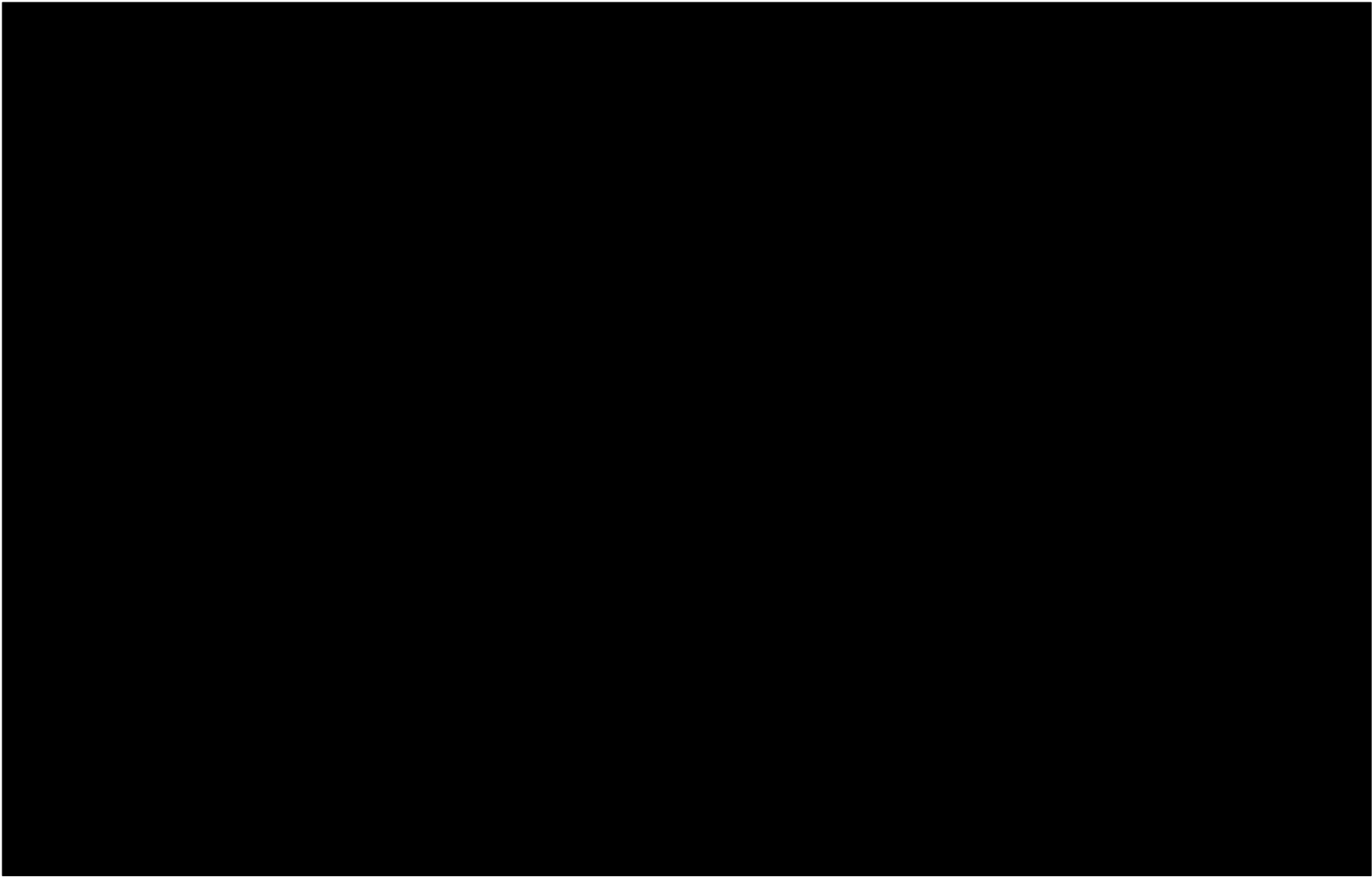
Firstly, interview transcripts were reorganised using research questions (why do Fijian students enter higher education? Do Fijian students intend to migrate? Why or why not?) and subheadings (the importance of education; the incentive effect; intentions of migrating; imperfect information; and demographics). Secondly, participants were assigned characteristic codes which included their ethnicity, institute, study program, type of migration and the type of family-migrant they knew (high-skilled, low-skilled or no family-migrants)⁵ (Tuckett, 2005). Thirdly, using literature and a few randomly selected transcripts, specific themes, and patterns were identified (Ward, House, & Hamer, 2009). These themes were used to develop codes which were entered as Nvivo 'nodes.' Nodes function as containers for storing thematically similar evidence. Following the reorganisation and categorisation of the evidence, a thematic analysis was conducted. Thematic analysis was deemed appropriate for this research because its flexibility complements the study's research design. It provides a "rich and detailed, yet complex, account of the data" (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013, p. 400). Thus,

⁵ Although student-participants were divided into treatment and controlled groups, in the Findings Chapters they were divided into three groups: high-skilled, low-skilled and without family-migrant. This is because the former two groups' experiences shaped Fijian students' education decisions in interesting and unexpected ways. Those in the latter group also had interesting results.

enabling us to identify various factors influencing Fijian students' education and migration decisions. Further, as shown in figure 2, an analysis matrix was developed to identify the ethnic and skill-level composition of Fijian graduates that may remain behind after upskilling. Student-participants were allocated to quadrants of the matrix according to their migration intentions before entering and after completing higher education. Quadrants were labelled as follows: 1. Brain Gain, 2. Brain Drain, 3. Brain Drain, and 4. Not Relevant.

The identified themes were triangulated with policy and media reports as well as field notes which produced a converging line of inquiry. The triangulated evidence was used for explanation-building (Gerring, 2007), whereby the main concepts and patterns were matched with the hypotheses. Where the evidence matched the predicted outcomes, I inferred that it provided support for brain gain theory. Where it did not, the evidence was used to explain what was happening and why. It is important to note that the viewpoints discussed in the thesis does not represent all of Indian Fijian, iTaukei and student population. The modifications made to the theory are specific to ethnic and skill-levels groups who participated in this study. While some explanations from the thesis may be relevant to other Pacific Island countries with similar migration and education patterns, it is not applicable to all settings.

Figure 2. The Analysis Matrix.



Positionality

Several aspects of my positionality affected data collection and analysis. Chacko (2004, p. 52) refers to positionality as “aspects of our identity such as race, gender, caste and sexuality that are markers of relational positions in society.” Certain aspects of our identity categorise us as either an insider or outsider. However, very rarely do we fit into the insider/outsider dichotomy because our identities are situational and hence, we tend to occupy an in-between space (Bourke, 2014; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Hamdan, 2009; Kusow, 2003; Perryman, 2011).

Being a *Kaindia* and having personal contacts as well as experience within Fiji’s education system categorised me as an insider. Being an insider was helpful as I had greater access to information and events; I avoided lengthy processes involved in attaining research approvals; and I easily communicated with locals at a personal level (Leigh, 2014). However, I was also aware that my insider position could prevent me from maintaining a value-neutral position and critically examining the evidence. Hence, I noted my thoughts on the project (as well as on the research progress, frustrations, and local stories) in a journal which was kept separately from the information shared by the participants. Despite being cautious of ways in which my positionality could affect the research, I came across various predicaments involving power imbalances. Some of these are discussed below.

Being *Kaindia*

Even though my lineage is from India, I was born and raised in Fiji and therefore consider myself a Fijian. This exposure to a practised Indian Fijian culture and an observed iTaukei culture provided me the cultural understanding essential to conduct the current study. My ethnicity and nationality worked in various ways to present and eliminate challenges on the research field.

My Indian Fijian ethnicity played a dual role. To my surprise, it categorised me as an insider among iTaukei students and an outsider among Indian Fijian students. From the interviews, it was apparent that students’ willingness to provide detailed

responses was directly related to how they recognised me. ITaukei students were more expressive and forthcoming with opinions because they recognised me as a fellow Fijian thereby overshadowing the fact that I belonged to a different ethnic community. In contrast, Indian Fijian students were guarded and hence, hesitated to elaborate their answers. They saw me primarily as a researcher from overseas which may be because of the Victoria University of Wellington header used for information sheets and consent forms and the presence of an audio recorder. It was only by relating my experiences as a USP student and my sibling's decision to pursue a technical education that I was able to obtain detailed information from Indian Fijian students. This reinforces the idea that our positionality is situational whereby different people recognise us by different aspects of our identity.

Further surprising me, my Fijian nationality created communication issues in two ways. Firstly, student-participants assumed that I understood their viewpoints and hence, provided incomplete responses by using phrases such as 'you know' and 'do you get what I mean' (Reflection Journal, 08/11/15). To a certain degree I did, but I did not want to misinterpret them. Accordingly, using key terms from their responses, I formulated probing questions (e.g. what do you mean by a 'good job'?) which allowed me to obtain detailed explanations of their education decisions and emigration plans. Secondly, they sought approval of their responses by either using terms such as 'eh' and 'na' or directly asking whether they provided good information and correct answers. To overcome this issue, I consistently nodded as a form of encouragement while they were answering the questions and explained that their insights were interesting as it enhanced my awareness of issues related to my project that I had not considered earlier.

Having Personal Contacts

Having personal contacts in the research field was helpful in expediting approvals, obtaining contact details of government stakeholders, and knowing the protocols of conducting research in Fiji. However, beyond that, it created several challenges, especially in our home environment. Since the Director of Technical College of Fiji was an immediate family member, our conversations about the institute and its

students had to be regulated by a third person. By doing so, it allowed both of us to avoid potential conflicts of interest. In one occasion, I observed a discussion about students' plans after graduation. Despite being encouraged to take part in the discussion and assured that the information I share would remain within the confines of our home, I chose not to opine on the matter as it would be breaching participant confidentiality (Guthrie, 2010). Likewise, in the hope of obtaining information about the institute not accessible to the public, I asked several questions which remained unanswered because I was informed that Directors are not permitted to speak to the media and researchers about the institutes or organisations (Reflection Journal, 15/10/15).

Having Expertise

As anticipated, my expertise categorised me as an outsider (May & Perry, 2011). Despite pilot-testing the interview questions with student colleagues and adopting local terms for technical jargons, students from Technical College of Fiji experienced difficulties in understanding the questions (Reflection Journal, 02/11/15). The situation was further compounded by their persistence to communicate in English even when they were not entirely comfortable or proficient in the language. To overcome this issue, I practised speaking the local language with the student-recruiters which aided in explaining the questions and repeated their responses back to the students thereby ensuring that my interpretation was correct, and where it was not, they corrected me.

A Western Understanding of Research Ethics

In preparation for the field-research, I extensively reviewed the literature on ethical research practices. However, since examples demonstrating ethical practices were from Western micro settings, it was inapplicable in Fiji. Particularly, two recommendations of carrying out an ethical research clashed with Fijian cultural norms and expectations. Firstly, Gregory (2003) stressed that participants should be contacted and informed about the study before the interviews to ensure that they

understand what is required of them and the repercussions of their involvement in the study. But, due to practical and logical reasons as well as students' request, the interviews were conducted immediately after being given essential information about the research. Secondly, Farrimond (2013, p. 67) argued that as an insider, "their [participants] knowledge and trust of you, makes it harder for them to say no to participating, particularly if you ask them directly." Keeping this in mind, I initially used research posters to recruit students. However, due to limited expression of interest and based on the assurance given by local researchers that "it is part of the Fijian culture" (J. Mudaliar, interview, 18/10/15), I chose to directly approach Fijian students (Reflection Journal, 01/11/15).

Knowing Too Much

Being an insider grants me access to local stories and secrets. Though over-exaggerated and bias, such information depicts realities of Fiji which often remain unpublished due to the stringent regulation of publication rights and the fear of being identified. Yet, being exposed to such information was burdensome. Before conducting the interviews, I possessed information on the internal dynamics of the Fijian education system which may have shaped students' education decisions. I was concerned that sharing such information may expose my participants to harm and hence, it was withheld from them. At the same time, my insider positionality demanded by loyalty whilst documenting the findings. Farrimond (2013, p. 67) noted that "insider data can be ethically more problematic to use given the pre-existing relationships and associations, especially if your conclusions are controversial." In particular, my nationality forbade me to document criticisms as it may have portrayed Fiji in a negative light. Yet, I chose to do, especially if it was shared by Fijian students because this research aims to *document their interpretations and experiences*. I made sure that they were unidentifiable by anonymising their identity. Further, policy and media reports, as well as literature, was used to support their claims.

Reflections of the Research Process

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Prior to entering the field, permission to conduct this research was obtained from gatekeepers in New Zealand and Fiji, including the Victoria University of Wellington's Ethics Committee, Ministry of Education, Technical College of Fiji and the University of the South Pacific (Creswell, 2014). In line with the ethical guidelines, participants were not harmed, and Fijian protocols were observed. Also, as mentioned in consent forms, student-participants were given a choice to be referred to as 'participant,' their name or title. Surprisingly, very few students asked to remain unidentified. Those that did were assigned labels such as participant1, participant2, participant3 and so on. Others insisted that I either use their names in the study or left the decision to me because my insider positionality reassured students that I would not misuse their information. In the end, I decided to label students' opinions using their first names. In this way, I presented an accurate account of students' education and emigration intentions while avoiding the risk of completely revealing their identity. The decision to use names created power imbalances, but I judged this an acceptable outcome in the circumstances. Public figures, on the other hand, were given a choice of being addressed by their name or title. They too insisted that I use their names in the study.

Data Accessibility

As mentioned earlier, Indian Fijian students were conscious of the audio recorder and were reluctant to be recorded because they could not place the Marsden Project researchers' names to faces.⁶ It was stressed that they did not know who will use their information and how (Reflection Journal, 04/11/15). Subsequently, I was confronted with a dilemma regarding data accessibility. Since the Marsden Project

⁶ The Marsden Project on Education, Migration and Development in the Pacific. The principal investigators are Dr. Alan Gamlen, my supervisor, Prof. John Overton and Prof. Warwick Murray. Information sheets mentioned that these researchers will have access to the data.

partially funded this study, which students were aware of prior to their interviews, and I wanted to “avoid losing data as everything cannot be written down” (Noor, 2008, p. 1604), the interviews had to be recorded. This required negotiation between myself and the Indian Fijian students. Ultimately, we agreed to record the interviews on the condition that the recordings will only be accessible to me. The Marsden Project researchers were allowed to access the interview transcripts. The student-participants were all happy with this arrangement.

Absence of Government Officials

To holistically understand the brain gain phenomenon in Fiji, government stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Immigration were also included in this research. With the assistance of personal contacts, approaching and interviewing the Minister of Education and the Minister of Immigration were not difficult. Even though both provided a wealth of information about Fiji’s reforms, culture as well as education and migration patterns, it was not sufficient to answer my research questions. I needed to interview officials who were directly involved in implementing certain programmes and policies. They were the Directors of Immigration, and Technical College of Fiji, the Vice Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific, as well as the Operations Manager of the Tertiary Education Loans Scheme (TELS). Contacting the former two was difficult as my research was conducted during the festive season whereas the latter was not permitted to be interviewed because ‘TELS is a recent initiative with several loopholes that need to be addressed before they comment on its success or failure’ (Reflection Journal, 30/10/15). Consequently, though biased, media reports were used to include their ‘voice’ in the study. In contrast, as alluded to earlier in the section, the Director of Technical College of Fiji is an immediate family member and interviewing him may have created a potential conflict of interest. Instead, the institute’s administrative and academic staff assisted with student recruitments and in attaining crucial information about the institute.

Summary

In summary, this chapter showed that qualitative case study methods are better equipped for establishing a causal relationship between emigration and education as well as for determining whether a brain gain effect is present in Fiji. It does so by dividing the Fijian students into two groups: one, is the treatment group which contains those with high-skilled family-migrants while the other, is the controlled group which comprises those without family-migrants and low-skilled family-migrants. These two groups were used to compare the role of family-migrants in shaping Fijian students' education decisions and emigration plans. Also, ethnic and skill-level variables were employed to address hypothesis 1b, 1c, 2b, 3b, and 3c. Additionally, while semi-structured interviews were the main method of retrieving information on Fijian students' education decisions and emigration plans, direct observations and policy as well as media reports were used as case study background. The evidence was organised using the QRS Nvivo software, analysed thematically and triangulated to produce a converging line of inquiry. Moreover, the positionality section explained how being a *Kaindia*, having personal contacts, expertise and a western understanding of research ethics, and knowing too much created and mitigated several challenges that emerged during data collection and analysis. Furthermore, the last section presented some reflections on the overall research process. The next chapter examines Fijian students' education decisions by discussing their motivations for enrolling at specific institutes and then, entering higher education.

Chapter 4: Education Decisions

The previous chapter demonstrated that qualitative case study methods are better equipped at determining and examining the brain gain effect in Fiji. This chapter examines Fijian students' education decisions by discussing their motivations for entering higher education. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section describes the education decisions of students without family-migrants. The second section explains the education decisions of students with low-skilled family-migrants, i.e. those with only secondary education or one year of tertiary education before they emigrated. The third section illustrates the education decisions of students with high-skilled family-migrants, i.e. those with tertiary education before the emigrated. The chapter concludes by arguing that while not exclusively, Fijian students with family-migrants entered higher education because they planned to emigrate.

No Family-Migrants

While a fifth of Fijian students did not have family-migrants, a higher proportion of them were iTaukei and attended Technical College of Fiji (TCF). These students had a local career strategy as they primarily invested in skills pertinent to the Fijian labour market. They were first generation students entering higher education and had low socio-economic status. This section describes iTaukei students' motivations for enrolling at TCF and then, for entering higher education.

Technical College of Fiji

The colonial origins of the Fijian education system and the observation that well-paid jobs are only obtainable through certain qualifications has privileged academic education in Fiji (Puamau, 2001). However, an implication of this has been a skill-imbalance whereby graduates largely have skills that are not needed by local industries. As a consequence, there are significant shortages in the trade sector, especially in the Tourism and Hospitality industry (Mudaliar, 2013). To address this

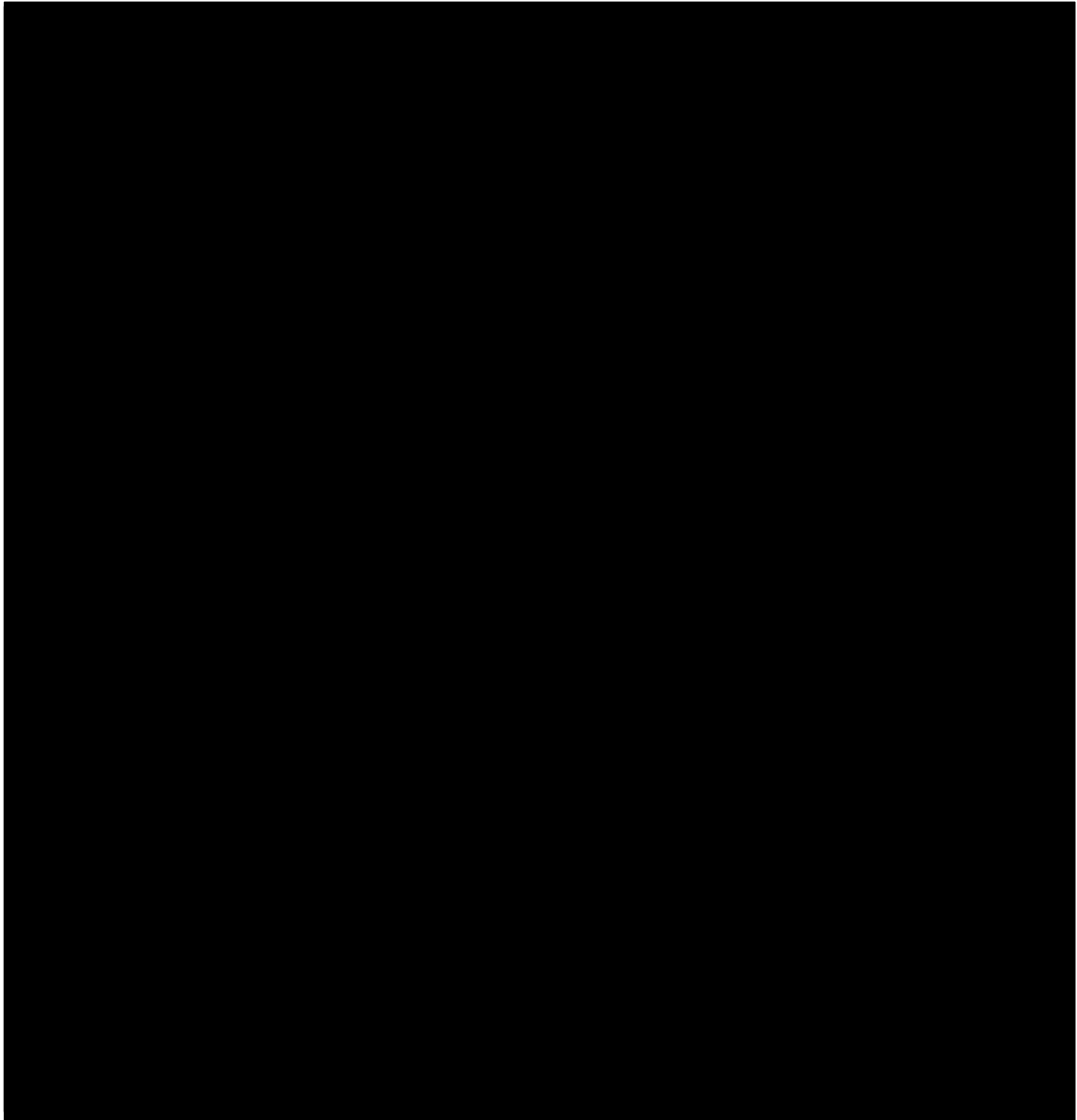
issue, Fijian policymakers implemented certain education initiatives that correct the incentives of entering higher education and investing in technical skills. This entailed establishing TCF and offering financial incentives.

Recognising that the demand for technical education is low among Fijian youths, policymakers approached students from 'low-privileged' backgrounds to invest in technical skills. A significant proportion of them tends to be iTaukei students who dropped out of school at an early age because they underperformed in their annual exams and could not afford to study further. For example, Vaseva (interview, 17/11/15) explained that:

"I came to TCF because I come from a very poor background. My aunt brought me up, right up to form seven. Then she told me to look for a job because she couldn't afford to send me to university. The government didn't provide a school for people like me because I didn't have good grades back then. Only those that have good grades are sponsored by the government to go to university. I wanted to go to Advanced Teaching, but my aunt told me not to go because I would be wasting a lot of money and creating a big burden for her."

Fiji uses annual exams to assess students' academic achievement, potential success in higher education, and whether they are eligible for financial assistance given by the government. The latter includes scholarships, student loans and living allowances which cover travel and accommodation costs. However, as evident from the above example, these iTaukei student-participants had difficulty in obtaining the cut-off mark which may be due to an array of factors such as "financial problems, family pressures, lack of parental guidance and support, violence in schools, school admission policies, peer pressure," CCF (2007, p. 71) and the lack of resources, especially in semi-rural and rural schools (Tavola, 1992). Perhaps, the increasing number of unskilled and unemployed youths posed a challenge for Fiji's economic growth which encouraged, Fijian policymakers to remove the 'marks criterion' for students attending TCF that applied for student loans and living allowances.

Figure 3. A Success Story from TCF.



A Job in Fiji

Several factors encouraged iTaukei student-participants attending TCF to enter higher education. First, is iTaukei parents' insistence for them to enter higher education. In iTaukei households, decisions are made collectively, but the degree to which family members participate in the decision-making processes depends on seniority, age, and experience (Ravuvu, 1983). In this group, most of the iTaukei

student-participants' parents decided that they would enter higher education. For example, Luke (interview, 14/10/15) said that *"my parents decided that I should come to TCF. My father and mother discussed it and sent me here."* However, some parents simply voiced their aspirations of seeing their children attain tertiary qualifications. Ruci (interview, 17/11/15) stated that *"my mum has big dreams for me. I never wanted to be anything in life. She made me realise the importance of tertiary education... like she has only gone up to form three, and she hasn't gone far in life."* These students' parents had low levels of education. Until recently, there were no insistent demands for higher levels of education from the iTaukei community (Mangubhai, 1984). The Deed of Cession ensured that as long as they had political hegemony, iTaukei rights and interests will be protected and their lifestyle will be maintained (Lal, 2008). However, the paramountcy of iTaukei interests primarily benefitted urban elites: while not all, the majority of rural iTaukei people remained in semi-subsistence agriculture and continued to lack opportunities for economic, educational and professional development (Ratuva, 2015) which pushed them further into poverty. It is possible that the education behaviour of Indian Fijians presented a way out of poverty. Their attainment of tertiary education and then, entry into prestigious jobs such as Medicine, Law, and Engineering, as well as socio-economic success showed iTaukei parents that their children could access similar opportunities if they invest in higher education (Premdas, 1995).

Second, is to secure a job in Fiji. For instance, Anisa (interview, 18/11/15) mentioned that *"if I get a certificate, then I can work in Fiji."* These iTaukei students were aware that Fijian employers only recruit workers without tertiary qualifications if they are recommended by reliable employees, friends or relatives. Vaseva (interview, 17/11/15) said that *"if you have friends and family working already in the company, then you can easily get a job. But, I don't have the backdoor option, so I might not be able to get the job without a certificate."* Additionally, since these iTaukei students have incomplete secondary qualifications, they lack basic technological skills that are essential for formal employment. Luke (interview, 14/10/15) revealed that *"I saw that all the work requires us to know how to use the computer. I have come here to increase my knowledge of how to use a computer so that I can do my work."* Moreover, Fijian employers require potential employees to have tertiary qualifications. Vaseva (interview, 17/11/15) explained that *"the*

lecturer told me that if you don't have a certificate, how will the bosses know that you have finished the course? What evidence do you have to show that you know how to do this and that?" This suggests that employers use tertiary qualifications to evaluate whether applicants possess skills that are appropriate for carrying out the job efficiently. Furthermore, these iTaukei students seemed fairly confident about finding employment immediately after graduation. Filomena (interview, 16/10/15) mentioned that *"after my attachment, I can get a job at the same company."* Perhaps, they observed peers being offered fulltime employment after completing their work attachments (see figure 3) or TCF staff assured them that there are vast employment opportunities in Fiji for graduates with technical skills.

Last, is to achieve rapid socio-economic success. Ruci (interview, 17/11/15) elucidated that:

"If I go to work in a restaurant or big organisation after finishing from only high school, I will start as a cleaner. It will take time for me to grow inside the organisation. I see tertiary education as a short-cut. Fijians (iTaukei people) think that if you work patiently for years, then you get there. However, with tertiary education, you be patient for a little bit, then you get to be where you want to be."

It appears that their decision to enter higher education was motivated by their low socio-economic status. They knew that individuals with tertiary qualifications held higher positions and received higher pay. It may be that by investing in higher education, these students sought to improve their socio-economic status among the wider iTaukei community and their family's standard of living.

In sum, iTaukei student-participants without family-migrants enrolled at TCF due to their low marks and socio-economic status. They entered higher education not only because their parents' aspired for them to do so, but also to secure a job in Fiji and to achieve rapid socio-economic success.

Low-Skilled Family-Migrants

Although third of Fijian student-participants had low-skilled family-migrants, i.e. those that either had secondary qualifications or with one year of tertiary education before emigrating, a significant proportion of them were iTaukei and attended the University of the South Pacific (USP). While their qualifications are regionally recognised, they primarily employed a local career strategy as they invested in skills pertinent to the Fijian labour market. They were not first generation students entering higher education as their siblings or parents had tertiary qualifications, and had high socio-economic status. This section describes their motivations for enrolling at USP and then, for entering higher education.

University of the South Pacific

As Fiji approached independence, the demand for high-skilled Fijians as well as higher education increased which ultimately, led to the establishment of USP. Baba (1991, p. 51) notes that because the main founders of USP were colonial powers, its “principal purpose or function, form and context resembled metropolitan universities.” Hence, alongside the wider Fijian education system, it has been criticised for offering a Western-based curriculum that accentuates an abstract form of learning and ‘embrained’ knowledge that focuses on conceptual skills and cognitive abilities (Puamau, 2001; Williams & Baláz, 2014). While true, USP also offers programmes that are embedded in the Pacific context (Crocombe & Crocombe, 1994). The main reason for doing so is that USP is a regional institute that is administered by twelve Pacific Island countries and hence, has to provide skills pertinent to the Pacific labour market.

However, iTaukei student-participants attending USP adopted a local career strategy. Totivi (interview, 29/10/15) mentioned that *“they told me there wasn’t a lot of jobs available for people studying Land Management. They also said that it was just recognised in Australia and other Pacific countries.”* It seems that their informants had imperfect information about the recognition of USP education as only certain qualifications have been regionally accredited. These iTaukei students’ qualifications are largely embedded in the Fijian context and applying such knowledge to other settings may be difficult. Therefore, as a result of their imperfect information about

the recognition of USP education and by entering certain fields of study, iTaukei students restricted their employment opportunities to Fiji.

A general perception among Fijian students involved in this study was that USP offered a better quality of education compared to national tertiary institutes. Totivi (interview, 29/10/15) stated that *“I guess when somebody hears USP, it’s oh better education than Fiji National University (FNU).”*⁷ This perception may be due to two reasons. Firstly, as an established institute with strong financial partnerships, USP has the economic means to provide facilities, services, and human resources for students to complete their education. For example, Participant 6 (interview, 30/10/15) mentioned that *“I just thought that USP offered better facilities to learn.”* Secondly, even though FNU’s programmes comprise a theoretical component, these student-participants continued to perceive FNU as a technical institute. As alluded to earlier, there is little demand for technical education as student-participants still believed that a well-paid job is only obtainable through academic qualifications.

Relatedly, some iTaukei student-participants also believed that USP offers shorter programmes compared to national tertiary institutes. Philous (interview, 4/11/15) said that:

“The learning process at FNU is slow. Like, we graduated last year from form seven. I’m here doing my Bachelors, but my friends at FNU are doing their diploma. At FNU, you go through diploma for three years and degree fourth. I just want to study fast and move on with my life.”

The length of degree programmes is determined by the structure of the programmes being offered by each institute. Since FNU offers technology, medical, nursing and naval programmes, students are required to complete workplace attachments. Conversely, USP offers programmes that focuses more on theory, the programmes include practical tasks, the main aim of such tasks are to assess whether students can apply theories to real life context. Hence, it may take students longer to complete

⁷ Fiji National University (FNU) is a national institute. It was established in 2010. It was formed through the amalgamation of higher education institutions that largely accommodated for the needs and aspirations of Fiji. It includes institutes such as Fiji School of Medicine (FSM), School of Nursing, Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT), Fiji College of Agriculture, and Training, and Productivity Authority of Fiji.

FNU qualifications compared to that from USP. In addition, students' intentions of 'studying fast' may be motivated by either family obligations or plans of emigrating.

USP education is explicitly and aggressively marketed as regional. Students are told that USP education is a ticket to regional travel, and a lot of effort has gone into securing the recognition of its qualifications to make this possible. Philous (interview, 4/11/15) said that *"USP is Pacific-wide. So I thought it would be good for my studies. In the future, if I want to go somewhere, I know that my qualifications will be recognised worldwide."* Not all USP qualifications are recognised worldwide as even though undergraduate students may be able to pursue postgraduate studies at Indian, British, Australian, Canadian and New Zealand universities, it does not ensure long-term migration as it depends on the points system (discussed further in Chapter 6 and 7). Nevertheless, USP authorities have made sure that its qualifications are accredited by Australia and New Zealand which may be a result of a large and growing Fijian diaspora in these countries. For example, in 2013, the Association of MBAs approved its Masters of Business Administration programme for three years, and in 2015, the Australian Computer Society accredited its Bachelor of Software Engineering as well as Bachelor of Net-Centric Computing programmes (USP, 2013, 2015). Such information is not only advertised in the USP prospectus which students use to select their area of study, but also through television advertisements, banners, and during open days (Lingam & Lingam, 2014). The perception that USP is internationally recognised is further strengthened by its graduates' emigration success stories (see figure 4). Totivi (interview, 29/10/15) explained that:

"I believe USP's qualifications are recognised because what I've read so far, the success stories, there are a lot of USP graduates that have migrated successfully and are now holding down really good jobs. I guess they are recognised, but not necessarily worldwide."

The emigration success stories not only affirm that USP education is accredited by Australia and New Zealand as well as their employers but also demonstrate that USP graduates worked in Fiji before emigrating.

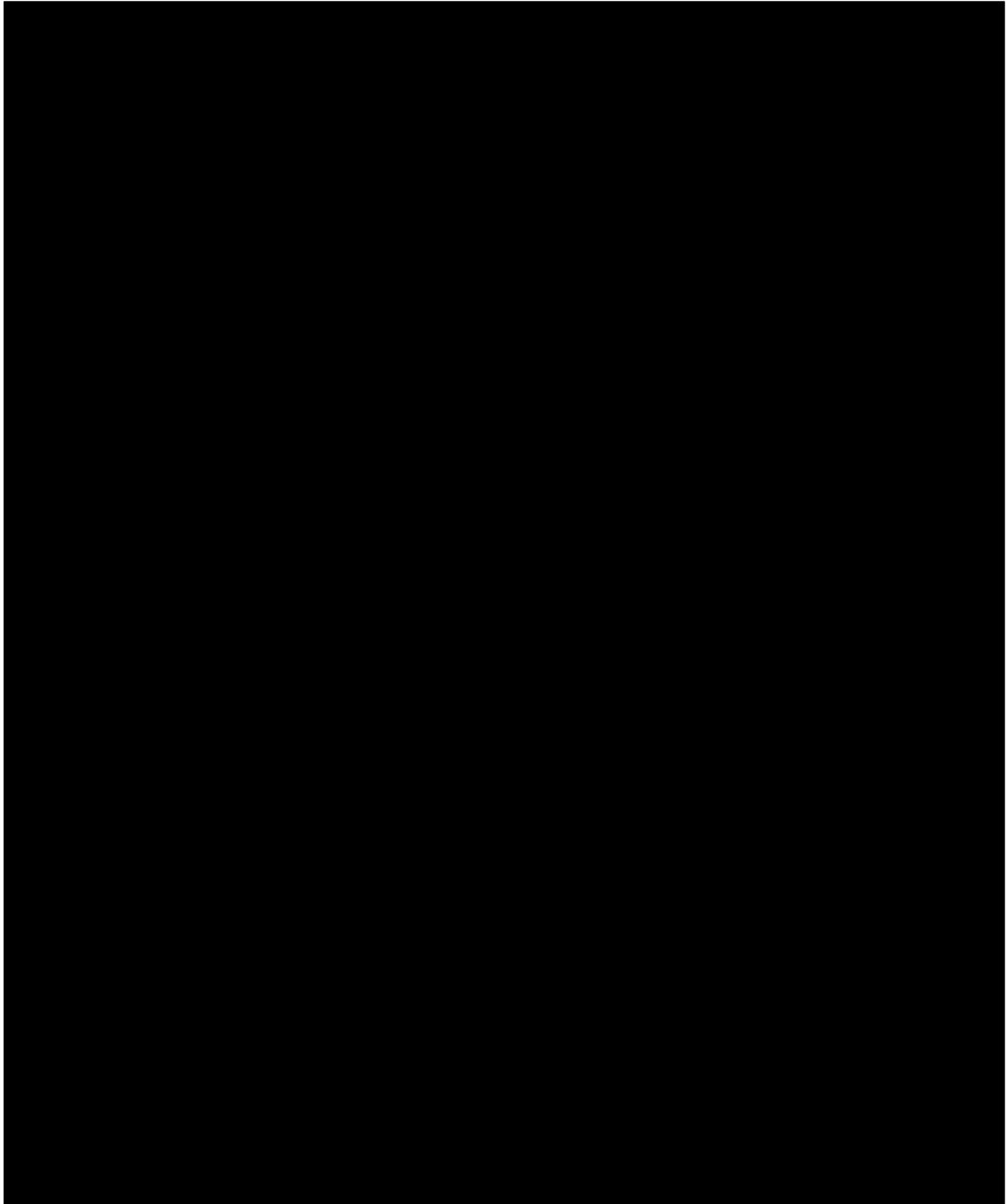
In contrast to the Technical College of Fiji, universities use secondary school marks to determine students' entry into degree programmes which in turn, informs whether

they are eligible for financial assistance. Participant 2 (interview, 02/11/15) revealed that her entry into USP was influenced by her inability to receive a student loan at FNU:

“USP was my last option. I was supposed to go to FNU. I got through nursing school but my high school mark was below 250; it was 245. I wanted them to provide me with a student loan, but they said that I didn’t qualify. They said you have no choice: you can go private for one year, we will examine your grades and then, you can reapply for a student loan. So I thought since my mum and dad don’t have proper jobs, I’ll just go to USP.”

Students have to score a minimum of 250 marks to enrol in degree programmes and receive a student loan. USP is the only institute that allows students who score lower than the cut-off mark to enrol in fulltime foundation programmes and receive financial assistance. This may be due to two reasons. Firstly, it may be an attempt to remove USP’s label as an elitist institute. Secondly, USP may be trying to ‘level the playing field’ whereby iTaukei students with slightly lower marks are given an opportunity to obtain education from an academic institute. Relatedly, USP may be registering these students into programmes that have low enrolment rates, but high demand in the Fijian labour market. Whatever may be the reason for allowing students with low scores to enrol in foundation programmes and receive financial assistance, it is evident that its low entry requirements encouraged a small proportion of iTaukei students in this study to enter USP.

Figure 4. USP Graduates' Emigration Success Stories.



A Good Job in Fiji

A number of factors motivated iTaukei students attending USP to enter higher education. First, is a silent expectation. Totivi (interview, 29/10/15) said that “*quite*

honestly, every single person in my family have gone to university. They have all graduated. I'm the only one left. I guess it just felt like it was my turn, you know."

Perhaps, parents told the eldest child that they have to enter higher education, and others were expected to follow.

Second, is tertiary qualifications are a prerequisite for entering the domestic workforce. Joeli (interview, 21/10/15) stated that *"I want to get a tertiary education because a lot of work in Fiji requires you to have a black and white degree."* This is because it serves as a substitute for work experience. Totivi (interview, 29/10/15) explained that *"I don't think it should be difficult for somebody to get a job without a tertiary education. I have a couple of friends who work in accounting firms, and they don't have qualifications, but they do have work experience."* Since a significant proportion of Fijian students do not work while studying, they lack work experience after graduation. Hence, employers use their tertiary qualifications to evaluate whether they possess skills relevant for the job.

Last, is to secure a 'good job.' Totivi (interview, 29/10/15) stated that *"you can't do much with a high school certificate or diploma. Employers do not take high school passes for good jobs, and I would like to have a good job."* Here, a 'good job' refers to one that offers a high salary and social status. Interestingly, iTaukei students were mainly concerned with the former as they were expected to find jobs immediately after graduation and support their families. Lavenia (interview, 02/11/15) revealed that:

"With a Fijian [iTaukei] family comes an expectation. The first thing you do after graduation is to get a job. At some stage, you're supposed to be the one providing for your family. I have a brother, and I want to provide for his high school fees. His still in primary school and my daddy is nearing retirement. So before he hits retirement, I want to get a job so that I can provide for my family, especially my younger siblings."

Such expectations are grounded in the iTaukei culture whereby the benefits of collective decisions and investments are shared among the immediate family as well as extended kin. Since these students are the middle child, they had dual responsibilities. As one of the youngest members of the family, they had to "provide the labour necessary for the upkeep of the family head and the family as a whole"

(Ravuvu, 1983, p. 8). Conversely, as one of the eldest siblings, they were responsible for the welfare of younger family members (ibid.). In both instances, iTaukei students have to work and earn sufficient income to support their families.

Relatedly, a good job ensures that they can meet the high cost of living in Fiji. Philous (interview, 4/11/15) mentioned that *“we need to get a tertiary education so that we can get better jobs because life in Fiji is expensive.”* The high cost of living is a result of two factors: one, is increasing dependence on imported goods while the other, is the taxation of basic entities. On the one hand, Fijians increasingly aspire to possess imported goods such as clothes, gadgets, and vehicles because it demonstrates their wealth and status. On the other hand, while policymakers hope that taxing basic entities would encourage Fijians to bulk-buy thereby allowing them to accumulate savings (Sayed-Khayium, 2015) (Sayed-Khayium, 2015), in reality, it may have raised the cost of living in Fiji and pushed families with minimum income to the brink of poverty. This has created more demand for ‘good jobs.’

Semi-Developed Migration Strategy

At the same time, while not exclusively, iTaukei student-participants attending USP had a semi-developed migration strategy whereby they perceived tertiary education as a means to emigrate. Errol (interview, 03/11/15) said that *“if you actually have a high level of tertiary education you will be able to do so many things. Apart from working, you’ll be able to travel the world.”* Low-skilled family-migrants and peer migrants have put in some effort to ensure that these students can follow through with their emigration intentions. Internationally qualified low-skilled family-migrants introduced iTaukei student-participants the ‘international higher education pathway,’ which is referred to as attaining tertiary qualifications from an international institute. In this context, it entails completing one year of tertiary education at a local institute, securing an international scholarship offered by the church and then, completing their study abroad. For example, Errol (interview, 03/11/15) explained that:

“I have brothers and sisters who have gone through USP but furthered their studies overseas. My older brother played rugby for the Brigham University

of Hawaii and then, got a scholarship to move from Hawaii to the mainland [United States of America]. While playing rugby, he was able to finish his degree in Business Management and ended up working for a hotel there. I'm hoping for the same opportunity: to receive a scholarship and opportunities in the mainland."

The international higher education pathway is well-established and reliable as its existence dates back to the early 1960s (Firth, 2006; Lee, 2009): when the demand for higher education was relatively less, and Fiji only had one tertiary institute that employed discriminatory admission policies. Fijian students continue to use this pathway because there is an increasing number of international scholarships available for them to study abroad, and Fijian policymakers have yet to meet the growing demand for internationally accredited higher education (Bhandari & Blumenthal, 2011; Bray & Martin, 2011). In addition, low-skilled family-migrants showed that international qualifications not only increase their probability of securing a 'good job' in Fiji but also abroad, as foreign employers are more likely to recognise it. While they did not actively shape iTaukei students' education decisions, internationally qualified low-skilled family-migrants showed them an alternative higher education pathway.

In contrast, friend-migrants introduced them to the 'local higher education pathway,' which refers to as attaining tertiary qualifications from a Fijian institute. Totivi (interview, 29/10/15) described his entry into USP:

"I have a friend in New Zealand and we communicate once in a while. I guess seeing him complete his education and migrate did affect my decision to come here because I was considering not coming to USP. Maybe just getting a regular job in a factory or something. But when he said that he was going to NZ, it struck me: oh he's going places, I should too."

While relatively new, the local higher education pathway is well-established and secure because it has been carved by three decades of excessive high-skilled Indian Fijian emigration (Mohanty, 2006). High-skilled Fijians continue to use this pathway because USP qualifications are regionally accredited, i.e. by Australia and New Zealand (Prasad, 2009), family networks tend to generate a 'pull effect' which reinforces their emigration aspirations, and opportunities for professional and socio-

economic growth is limited in Fiji (Moulds, Oman, & Usher, 2009). Evidently, friend-migrants influenced iTaukei students' education decisions in two ways. Firstly, their success- in this case, it is their ability to emigrate- induced iTaukei students to make lifestyle comparisons thereby strengthening their emigration aspirations. Secondly, they showed that USP qualifications are the next best thing or even equivalent to international education as it also creates opportunities for emigrating.

Additionally, students with strong emigration intentions used international job vacancies to align their qualifications with international labour market demands. Lavenia (interview, 02/11/15) explained her decision to study Mathematics and Physics:

"I see many job opportunities advertise in the paper and online. They need like a Bachelors of this and that which only USP can provide. If you want to migrate and work abroad, and if there is a demand for certain skills, then we are going to get the qualifications giving us those skills. So yeah, I came to university so that I can get an internationally recognised qualification so that I can get a job overseas."

Low-skilled family-migrants only demonstrated international qualifications increase their probability of securing employment in Fiji and abroad. Likewise, friend-migrants showed that local qualifications also offer emigration opportunities. However, they have not shared nay information about the demands of the international labour market. Hence, iTaukei students used international job vacancies to align their skills with international skill shortages. By doing so, not only did they increase their probability of emigrating, but also of securing employment abroad.

In sum, iTaukei students with low-skilled family-migrants enrolled at USP because it offers high quality and international education, shorter programmes, and it has lower requirements for entering foundation programmes and therefore, for receiving financial assistance. Their main motivations for entering higher education are to secure a good job through which they can fulfil family expectations and meet the high cost of living in Fiji, and to emigrate. It is worth highlighting that low-skilled family-migrants and friend-migrants played a demonstrative role whereby they showed that international qualifications increase their probability of working abroad

and USP education also creates emigration opportunities. This suggests that while not exclusively, iTaukei student-participants attending USP have a twofold plan which includes working in Fiji and emigrating. The exact direction of this plan will be discussed in the Discussion and Conclusion chapter.

High-skilled Family-Migrants

While half of the study population had high-skilled family-migrants, i.e. those that obtained tertiary education before emigration, most of them were Indian Fijian. An equal proportion of them attended the Technical College of Fiji (TCF) and the University of the South Pacific (USP). These students had a regional career strategy as they primarily invested in skills relevant to the Pacific labour market, including Australia and New Zealand. The majority of them were not first generation students entering higher education. While their socio-economic status is unclear, from their relatively small household sizes and their parents' level of education, it can be deduced that these students either have low or middle socio-economic status. This section discusses Indian Fijian students' motivations for enrolling at TCF and USP and then, for entering higher education.

Technical College of Fiji

The Technical College of Fiji (TCF) carries the 'low privileged' banner, depicting the characteristics of its student clientele: low secondary school marks and low socio-economic status. Similar to iTaukei students attending TCF, Indian Fijian students underperformed in their annual exams. Kartika (interview, 18/11/15) mentioned that *"I didn't want to go to school because the exams were a bit hard. I was always failing my exams."* While they may have also been unaccustomed to a rote form of learning which is emphasised by the Fijian education system, evidence suggests that their inability to pass annual exams were due to the removal of scaling. Scaling is a process where "scores are converted to common scale which adjusts students' results in various subjects for the purpose of aggregation, ranking, and

selection for entry to universities or other tertiary institutions, and scholarship awards” (Ministry of Education, 2014). Sahil (interview, 14/10/15) explained that:

“I did form seven, and my mark was on the borderline. USP didn’t enrol me. They said that I had to do foundation again. FNU told me the same thing. I heard about this institute and the courses offered here and decided to come here. My lecturers said that after completing my certificate here, I could go to FNU.”

Scaling was removed from annual exams because Fijian policymakers presumed that raw marks provided an accurate account of students’ academic capabilities, and it would improve the quality of students entering higher education as well as the workforce (Ministry of Education, 2014). In reality, however, it lowered Indian Fijian students’ probability of attending a tertiary institute of their choice and entering their desired field of study. For instance, Participant 3 (interview, 15/10/15) stated that *“I wanted to complete form seven and then, go somewhere that provided me with a good certificate like FNU or USP. But my mark was not good, so I came here.”* As it is apparent, the removal of scaling induced Indian Fijian students to change their education plans by enrolling in Certificate programmes, instead of Degree programmes.

Relatedly, they lacked the economic means to privately fund higher education at a tertiary institute of their choice. Sonal (interview, 17/11/15) revealed that:

“At that time, we didn’t have enough cash, and my mother didn’t have a provident fund to send me to higher [education] institutes like FNU or the University of Fiji. My mother brought me here, and I got enrolled here. Then I was able to apply for the loan scheme, Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (TELS), and started my training here.”

Fijian students need to score a minimum of 250 marks in their annual exams to access financial assistance offered by the government. However, policymakers recognised that poverty coerces students to abandon their education plans which in turn, diminishes their means of meeting the ‘marks condition’ and perpetuates elitism in higher education (CCF, 2007). The Minister of Education (interview, 14/10/15) explained that *“previously, children of wealthy families were guaranteed access to universities while children from poor families were struggling to gain*

admissions.” Hence, students attending TCF were exempted from the ‘marks condition.’ However, not all Indian Fijian students attending TCF are from low socio-economic backgrounds. Participant 1 (interview, 17/11/15) stated that “*my parents could have afforded the fees at the other institute, but because this was under the government, I came here.*” It, therefore, holds true that student loans and living allowances provide strong incentives for students to continue their education (TSLB, 2016).

Interestingly, the close proximity of TCF campuses further served as an incentive for female Indian Fijian students to pursue higher education. Sheetal (interview, 18/11/15) said that “*I was under 18 when I enrolled here. So at that time, my parents didn’t let me go far to study. They didn’t want me to travel far and live alone. This was nearby, so I came here.*” Travelling in public transports is considered unsafe because bus accidents and rape incidents tend to occur frequently, especially in Western parts of Fiji. At the time of this study, TCF had established eleven campuses across the nation which were primarily situated in small townships or near squatter settlements (Reflection Journal, 14/12/15). Such strategic location of TCF campuses ensured that students’ fearing the above incidences had access to higher education without having to travel far.

University of the South Pacific

Several factors encouraged Indian Fijian student-participants to enrol at USP. The first is that an increasing number of scholarships are offered to students from low and middle socio-economic backgrounds to pursue tertiary education at the institute of their choice. For instance, Uwais (interview, 22/10/15) said that “*I got a scholarship to study. So I came to USP.*” A significant proportion of Indian Fijian student-participants attending USP received either the National Toppers Scheme or Multi-Ethnic Affairs Scholarships. Previously, these scholarships were awarded using a ‘racially discriminatory criterion’ whereby “non-indigenous Fijians were only eligible for a tertiary scholarship if their parents’ annual income did not exceed FJD\$10,000 whereas iTaukei Fijians had no income limit or mean test” (CCF, 2007, p. 75). However, it soon became apparent that rather than ‘levelling the playing field’ between iTaukei and Indian Fijians (Ratuva, 2014), these scholarships

benefitted iTaukei elites and perpetuated 'racial elitism' in higher education (Reddy & Prasad, 2002). Hence, this criterion was abandoned (Ratuva, 2015). Nevertheless, traces of it are still apparent as Indian Fijian students were awarded scholarships on the basis of a means test and academic performance whereas iTaukei scholarships primarily use the latter.

Relatedly, the preferred programmes list for National Toppers Scheme dictated the field of study some Indian student-participants entered. Kunal (interview, 16/10/15) explained that *"I wanted to study Commerce instead of Teacher Education. But when I applied for this scholarship, they asked me to choose my programme from the preferred programme list."* Figure 5, shows that the largest number of scholarships are awarded to qualifications providing skills that are in demand by the Fijian labour market. But, these skills are also in demand by the international labour market which suggests that high-skilled Fijians may continue to emigrate.

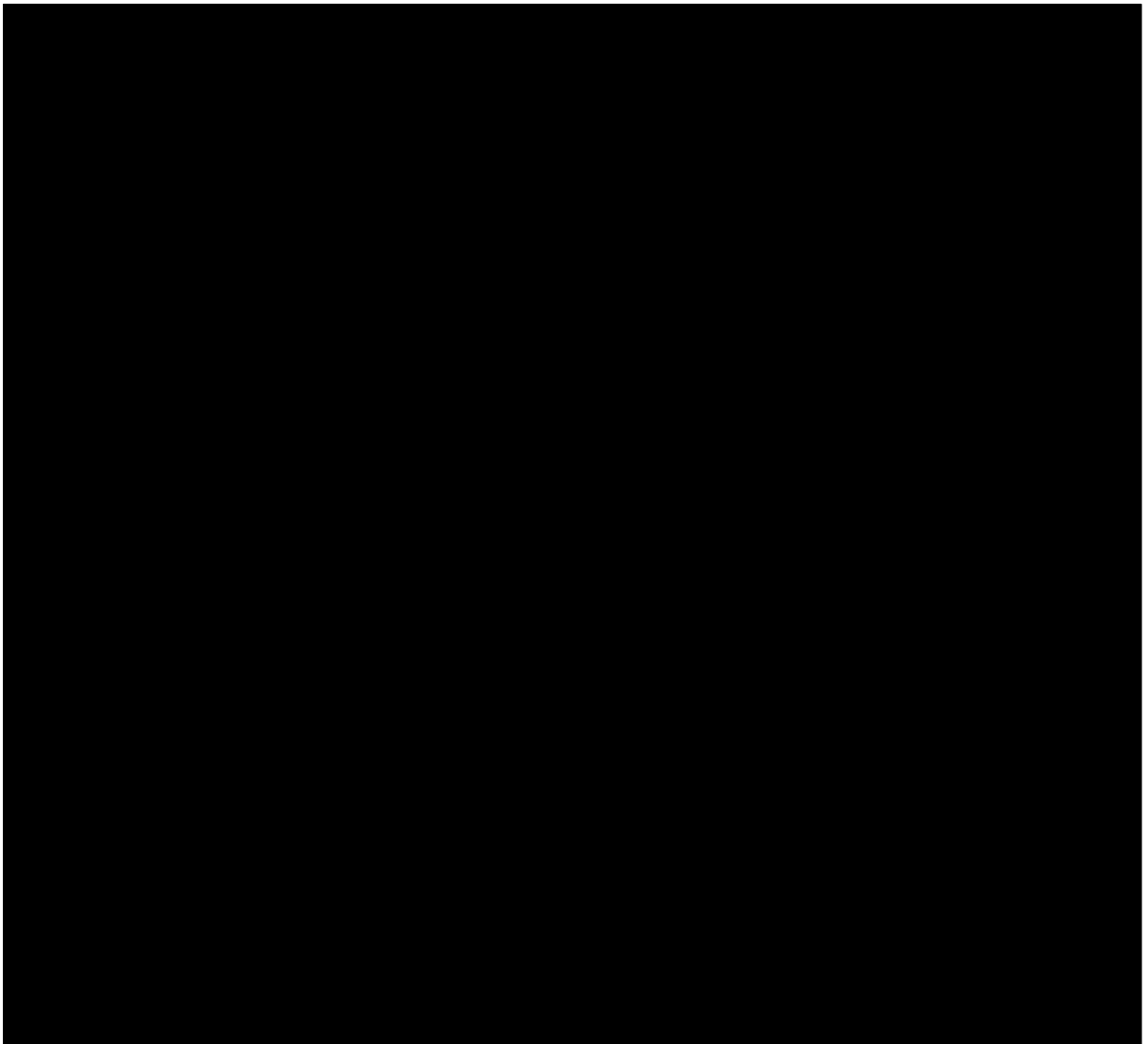
USP education is portrayed as the ticket to the domestic workforce. Naina (interview, 14/12/15) stated that *"my parents wanted me to come to USP because they saw some of my cousins get really good jobs after graduating from here."* It is to the credit of Indian Fijian parents that their children have equal access to education and employment opportunities in Fiji (Naidu, 2004). Parents without tertiary qualifications stress the importance of academic education and the English vernacular because it allowed them to escape manual labour, and now, it enables them to enter well-paid jobs (Baba, 1991; Mayer, 1963). For instance, Firaz (interview, 22/10/15) mentioned that *"my parents are working in small firms because they don't have a degree. They want me to work in a big firm that's why they told me to come here."*

At the same time, USP education is perceived as high quality and regional. Abra'ar (interview, 14/12/15) explained that *"USP's foundation department outweighed to that of Fiji National University (FNU) because the facilities and resources it provides us. FNU is newly established, so it doesn't have the facilities to care for foundation students. Also, USP is recognised in Australia and employers know that the standard is high."* Evidently, students recognise that USP offers facilities, services and human resources for completing their qualifications. In addition, the accreditation of certain programmes by Australia and New Zealand, and graduates'

emigration success stories strengthen the image of USP education as regional. Together these factors demonstrate that USP education enhances Fijian students' probability of securing a well-paid job in Fiji and emigrating in the future.

The benefits of USP education discussed above overshadows the education provided by other tertiary institutes. Naina (interview, 14/12/15) said that *“FNU did not offer what I wanted to study [which is] Teacher Education. Because some of the courses were not available, I came to USP.”* In reality, all Fijian tertiary institutes offer similar courses, especially if there is a domestic demand for it. The reason behind this duplication is partially a result of past admission policies whereby Indian Fijian students were denied entry into courses beyond the quota limit which ultimately, led to the establishment of tertiary institutes catering for their education needs. It is also due to Fiji's coup culture by which the exodus of Fijian professionals, especially teachers, doctors and nurses, created significant labour shortages (Mohanty, 2006; Reddy et al., 2004). It may be that duplication of courses was anticipated to generate a higher output of graduates with skills needed by the Fijian labour market. However, because Indian Fijian students are biased towards USP education, they may have inaccurately opined that other tertiary institutes did not offer courses of their choice.

Figure 5. The Preferred Programme List of the National Toppers Scheme.



Source: TSLB (2016).

A 'Good' Job in Fiji

Several factors encouraged Indian Fijian students to enter higher education. First, is that it appears to be a norm. Participant 10 (interview, 20/10/15) said that *“for us, it has become a norm to come to tertiary. After form seven, we have to come here. We can’t go anywhere else.”* Perhaps, the high rate of tertiary education attainment among the Indian Fijian community has presented it as a “culturally validated avenue of escaping the uncertain political and economic situation of which Indian Fijians tend to be the prime victims” (Lal, 1992, p. 83), and a means for securing their future. If this is true, then it would offer an explanation as to why Indian Fijian

students attending TCF had intentions of pursuing further education. For example, Shalvin (interview, 15/10/15) mentioned that *“after this, I want to complete my certificate three and four. I want to go to FNU.”*

Second, is to secure a job in Fiji. Zubel (interview, 16/10/15) said that *“It doesn’t matter where I get my education from, as long as I have a certificate, I know that I can get a job.”* TCF students were confident about securing a job in Fiji because they had seen their peers being offered fulltime positions after completing their work attachments. Conversely, USP students saw that relatives found employment easily after graduating from USP. Abra’ar (interview, 14/12/15) explained that *“my cousin brother completed a degree in Electronical Engineering from USP. Now, he is a senior engineer at Fiji Electricity Authority.”* Additionally, despite having imperfect information about the needs of local industries, they were aware of the job opportunities available in their field of study. For instance, Participant 12 (interview, 14/12/15) stated that *“I know that I will get a job with my degree. There is a high demand for Information Technology and jobs are advertised for it every week.”*

Third, is for income. Participant 1 (interview, 17/11/15) explained that *“companies pay us different rates. If we don’t have a certificate, then they will pay us little. If we have a certificate, then they will pay us high wages.”* Since ability is not directly measurable, employers use qualifications to assess potential employees’ skill-level which in turn, determines their annual income. Employees with tertiary qualifications receive higher incomes because they privately invested in skills and knowledge relevant to the job which enhances companies’ efficiency and profits.

Last, is to support their family financially. Participant 13 (interview, 28/10/15) revealed that *“since I am from a farming background, there is a lot of pressure on me to do well at university and improve my family’s standard of living.”* Similar to iTaukei households, Indian Fijian children are expected to share their incomes with family members, but not with the wider community. Households experiencing budget constraints invest their financial resources on the child with the greatest potential for succeeding in higher education and securing a well-paid job. In turn, these children tend to financially support their family by paying for grocery and utility bills and funding younger siblings’ education.

Well-Developed Migration Strategy

At the same time, while not exclusively, Indian Fijian students had a well-developed migration strategy whereby they perceived tertiary education as a means to emigrate. For example, Shalvin (interview, 15/10/15) mentioned that *“tertiary education is important to me because this is one of the ways of migrating overseas.”* High-skilled family-migrants and returnees have put in a considerable amount of effort to ensure that Indian Fijian students can follow through with their emigration plans. They introduced Indian Fijian students to the local higher education pathway, i.e. attain tertiary qualifications from a Fijian institute. Participant 11 (interview, 17/11/15) explained that:

“Seeing my cousin get the same certificate from FNU and then, a job at Asco Motors in Vanuatu inspired me to come here. It made me realise that it doesn’t matter where I get my education, a certificate will allow me to go through the same opportunities. I might be able to migrate as well, but only for a job.”

The local higher education pathway was interpreted as the most reliable and established means of successfully emigrating as family-migrants demonstrated that local qualifications are recognised by Fiji’s traditional and new immigration countries.

Additionally, they motivated Indian Fijian students attending USP to enrol in programmes that address the skills shortages in potential destination countries which were either Australia or New Zealand. Participant 13 (interview, 28/10/15) revealed that *“my relatives living in Australia inspired me to come to USP because they studied here. But, they pressured me to study Accounting and Information Systems. They told me that there is a lot of job opportunities in these fields in Australia.”* In doing so, high-skilled family-migrants aligned these students’ qualifications with the regional labour market demands which in turn, strengthened their emigration intentions as well as potentially enhanced their probability of emigrating and finding employment abroad.

Conversely, they told Indian Fijian students attending TCF to enrol in the minimum qualifications required for emigrating. Shalvin (interview, 15/10/15) said that *“my*

aunts living in NZ told me to get only a trade certificate so that I can easily migrate.” Perhaps, family-migrants were aware that foreign employers do not recognise Fijian tertiary qualifications and hence, motivated them to study further after emigrating. Navin (interview, 16/10/15) elucidated that *“my uncle studied at USP and then, studied further abroad. I saw the way he was studying, and it made me come to TCF. I came here for the purpose that maybe I can migrate, get more education and a job overseas as well.”* This tertiary education acquisition behaviour seems to suggest that local tertiary qualifications may suffice for emigrating, but not for securing employment in potential destination countries. The latter is only possible by investing in more education after emigrating.

Even though Indian Fijian students attending TCF intended to pursue international tertiary qualifications, they also sought the assistance of returnees for selecting their programmes. Navin (interview, 16/10/15) said that his lecturer who had returned from New Zealand told him that *“if you take certain courses, you will be able to find jobs in Fiji and overseas. He said that there is a demand for chefs in NZ, that’s why I’m studying Cookery.”* Such information allowed these students to rationally select their area of study which in turn, ensures that they have planned for their probable emigration as well as stay in Fiji.

In sum, Indian Fijian student-participants enrolled at TCF because of their low-privileged background and close proximity to the institute. The others enrolled at USP because they were biased towards USP education. It was seen as international, high quality and a ticket to the domestic workforce. This explains why they had imperfect information about the programmes offered by other institutes, and why they chose to study at USP even though their scholarships permitted them to study at any institute. These students’ main motivations for entering higher education were that it might be a norm to attain tertiary qualifications, to secure a well-paid job through which they can financially support their family, and to emigrate. It is worth highlighting that high-skilled family-migrants and returnees put in a significant amount of effort in ensuring that Indian Fijian students follow through with their emigration plans. This entails demonstrating the most secure and reliable pathway of emigrating, assisting with the selection of programmes which ultimately led to students forming a regional career strategy, and motivating them to invest in international education after emigrating. This suggests that while not all, Indian

Fijian students also have a twofold plan that entails working Fiji and emigrating. The exact direction of this plan will be discussed in the Discussion and Conclusion chapter.

Summary

In summary, all Fijian student-participants entered higher education to secure a well-paid job in Fiji. At the same time, half of them entered higher education after seeing their family upskill and emigrate. This indicates that these students have a twofold plan which entails working in Fiji and emigrating, but the exact direction of this plan is not yet clear. Additionally, they employed different education pathways. The majority of them adopted the local education pathway whereby family-migrants and peers demonstrated that Fijian qualifications are accredited by Fiji's traditional and new immigration countries. However, a small proportion of iTaukei students employed the international higher education pathway because low-skilled family-migrants demonstrated that international qualifications tend to increase their likelihood of finding a job abroad. Moreover, student-participants had different career strategies. Since iTaukei students' family-migrants and peers were not actively engaged in shaping their education decision, they had a local career strategy. Indian Fijian students had a regional career strategy as high-skilled family-migrants and returnees aligned their programmes with skill demands of the Pacific labour market, including Australia and New Zealand. Furthermore, Indian Fijian students attending the Technical College of Fiji planned to pursue higher levels of tertiary education. The following chapter examines Fijian students' emigration intentions by discussing their main motivations for emigrating.

Chapter 5: Emigration Intentions

The previous chapter showed that while all Fijian student-participants entered higher education to secure a well-paid job in Fiji, half of them also did so after seeing their family upskill and emigrate. This chapter examines Fijian students' emigration intentions by discussing their motives for emigrating. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section describes disincentives for emigrating. The second section explains temporary emigration intentions, i.e. students who plan to return to Fiji. The third section discusses permanent emigration intentions, i.e. students who plan to settle down in Pacific Rim countries permanently. The chapter concludes by arguing that Fijian students had large incentives to emigrate.

No Emigration Intentions

While a fifth of Fijian students did not intend to emigrate, a significant proportion of them were iTaukei and attended the Technical College of Fiji (TCF). However, it is worth commenting on those enrolled at the University of the South Pacific (USP) as they had different reasons for not emigrating. These students had a local career strategy as they invested in qualifications that strictly addressed the Fijian skill shortages. The socio-economic status and family-migrant group differed between skill-levels. Students enrolled at USP had high socio-economic status and high-skilled family-migrants whereas those that attended TCF had low socio-economic status and did not have family-migrants. This section discusses iTaukei students' disincentives for emigrating, some of which tend not to apply to Fijians of other ethnic backgrounds.

Disincentives of Emigrating

A number of specific factors discouraged iTaukei student-participants in this group from emigrating. First, is the iTaukei indigeneity. Ruci (interview, 17/11/15) mentioned that *"I don't want to migrate because Fiji is my homeland."* Central to the iTaukei indigeneity is *vanua*, a holistic concept describing the intricate bond between land, people and cultural systems (Batibasaqa, Overton, & Horsley, 1999). It includes various "institutions established for the sake of achieving harmony,

solidarity, and prosperity within a particular context” (Ravuvu, 1983, p. 70). The land is not merely a means of survival, but also a manifestation of the iTaukei community’s identity which was established through communal ownership of land, and maintained by fulfilling kinship obligations. Although the latter primarily includes economic contributions (Ravuvu, 1992), kinship obligations extend beyond that as it also relies on social contributions such as a shared responsibility for rearing and disciplining iTaukei children. This collective sense of identity serves as a safety net both locally and internationally (Ravuvu, 1971). It appears that TCF students in this group were aware of the repercussions of alienating themselves from their *vanua*, one of which is limited or no access to the communal safety net. However, since most of them did not have family-migrants, they had imperfect information on how iTaukei emigrants maintained their *vanua* while living abroad. Hence, they may have assumed that emigration requires complete detachment from their *vanua* which prevented them from developing emigration intentions.

Second, is imperfect information about the lifestyle in Pacific rim countries. Participant 8 (interview, 02/11/15) said that *“it’s just that I haven’t been to other places. So I don’t know. But, I think it is easier living in Fiji.”* Due to infrequent communication with family-migrants, iTaukei students had imperfect information about the opportunities, standards of living and lifestyles available in destination countries. Hence, they maintained a bias and perhaps inaccurate perception about life in Fiji.

Third, is seeing family-migrants not use their qualifications after emigrating. Ivy (interview, 22/10/15) revealed that:

“Some of my family has emigrated to the United States of America. But they haven’t made use of their degree. They might get a degree in politics over here, but when they go overseas, they go into caregiving. Well seeing them do that [complete their education, emigrate and not use their qualifications], I wanted to get my education and stay in Fiji.”

Prasad (2009) argued that most of the tertiary qualifications offered by Fijian institutes are accredited by Australia and New Zealand, and yet, high-skilled Fijians tend to enter low-skilled occupations in these countries. Freitas, Levatino, and Pecoud (2012) stated that this is primarily due to foreign employers not recognising

their skills and experiences as well as personal characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, and religion. While true, from examining the education decisions of iTaukei students involved in this research, it seems that iTaukei emigrants tend to employ a local career strategy whereby they invest in qualifications that are embedded in the Fijian context which in turn, restricts their prospects of high-skilled employment to Fiji. Seeing relatives enter jobs that do not complement their qualifications and skills may have demonstrated to these students that employment opportunities in destination countries are not as vast as it is made out to be, thereby diminishing any aspirations they had of emigrating.

Fourth, is that they have strong nationalistic obligations. Ivy (interview, 22/10/15) explained that:

“If we want our country to develop, we have to be the ones here to develop it. Seeing them do that makes you feel bad, especially if they get scholarships from the government. They’re supposed to stay back and help the country. You can send money, but you could do a whole lot more if you are here. Do you know how the money will be used? You can’t just throw money at it. If you are here, then you can be part of the development.”

Even though students acknowledged that remittances to some extent, contributes to Fiji’s development, it was considered as insufficient. Instead, they stressed that education subsidies such as scholarships and loans ought to be compensated by graduates’ service to the country. Immediate emigration after graduation raised several moral questions such as whether emigration is right or wrong, and what are their responsibilities towards Fiji? This indicates that as opposed to the optimistic arguments surrounding the migration-and-development debate (Bakewell, 2008), some iTaukei students still perceive emigration as an act of disloyalty and the abandonment of homeland.

Last, is the certainty of finding employment in Fiji. These students’ awareness of employment opportunities was linked to their motivations for working in Fiji which differed between skill-levels. On the one hand, students enrolled at USP aspired to improve the institutions that bring about development and hence, had perfect information on domestic labour shortages. Ivy (interview, 22/10/15) explained that:

“Previously, I wanted to study law. But, when I looked at the job market, I realised there were already a lot of lawyers in Fiji. So I decided to move into education. With my Bachelors in Education, I can help improve the Fijian education system. Because I’ve been through it, and it still needs a lot of improvement. I mean, some teachers don’t even have proper qualifications.”

Political instabilities have triggered mass emigration of high-skilled professionals, especially of medical personnel and teachers (Reddy et al., 2004), which has sustained due to limited opportunities for professional growth, low remunerations, and harsh working conditions (Moulds et al., 2009). As a result, the education and health institutions have continued to deteriorate which has created a high demand for graduates with such skills. Hence, students were certain that they could find a job domestically in their field of study.

On the other hand, those attending TCF aspired to be role models for iTaukei youths and hence, were aware of the prospects of establishing businesses in Fiji. Ruci (interview, 17/11/15) revealed that:

“I want to start my own business so that I can set an example for other Fijians [iTaukei]; to show them that staying at home or being in the cassava field are not their only options. They too can start a business after studying.”

An iTaukei person owning a business demonstrates to youths that they can also access similar opportunities by investing in higher education. In the whole, this indicates a wider shift in iTaukei students’ perceptions about what constitutes a better quality of life. Once individuals obtain tertiary qualifications, semi-subsistence agriculture is no longer seen as an acceptable form of employment. Previously, iTaukei people primarily worked to maintain social ties and sustain a living (Veitayaki, 2002), but now, iTaukei youths aspire to secure white-collar jobs so that they too can access socio-economic opportunities enjoyed by Fijians from other ethnic backgrounds (Connell, 2003).

At the same time, there are various initiatives taken up by policymakers to create employment opportunities in Fiji which have assured iTaukei students that they will be able to find jobs after graduation. The first is encouraging the Fijian Diaspora to either return or invest in Fiji. To do so, Fijian policymakers employed various strategies such as advertising the prospects of investment in Fiji (Simmons, 2016),

offering multiple citizenships (FijianGovernment, 2013), and allowing them to vote in the national elections. There is some evidence of investments: Mr. Khan, an Indian Fijian who had emigrated in the wake of 1987 coups, “recently invested in a chain of business ventures which included a supermarket, an events centre, and the Relax Resort” (Devi, 2015). As of yet, he has recruited 60 Fijian employees, and the expansion of his business is anticipated to create more employment opportunities. The second is expanding Fiji’s Tourism industry which involved the construction of Kings Highway- a new scenic route that provides tourists with an exotic and untouched view of Fiji’s natural landscape (Reflection Journal, 12/11/15). It also entailed a largescale renovation of Nadi international airport which now, offers various accommodation and facilities for transit passengers. This also created employment opportunities for local graduates.

In sum, several factors discourage indigenous Fijians from emigrating. These include their indigeneity, nationalistic obligations, seeing family-migrants not use their qualifications, imperfect information about destination countries, and the certainty of securing employment in Fiji. The former three factors tend not to apply to Fijians from other ethnic backgrounds.

Temporary Emigration Intentions

A third of Fijian students planned to emigrate temporarily, but most of them were iTaukei. An equal proportion of them attended the Technical College of Fiji (TCF) and the University of the South Pacific (USP). These students had a local career strategy because they enrolled in programmes that are largely relevant to the Fijian labour market. Their socio-economic status differed between skill-levels. While TCF students had a low socio-economic status, USP students had a high socio-economic status. They were evenly distributed among family-migrant groups. This section discusses iTaukei students’ short-term and goal-oriented motivations informing their temporary emigration intentions.

Short-term and Goal-oriented Motivations

Numerous short-term and goal-oriented factors encourage iTaukei student-participants in this group to emigrate. First, is to enhance their socio-economic status in Fiji. Domenika (interview, 17/11/15) revealed that *“when some of my aunties come to Fiji for Christmas, I see the way they look and spend money, and think man, what if I put myself in their place eh. That’s when I want to migrate.”* iTaukei students enrolled at TCF felt relatively deprived after seeing their family-migrants’ enhanced socio-economic status in Fiji. Relative deprivation is a feeling that arises when “individuals engage in interpersonal comparisons within their reference group” (Stark, 1991, p. 24). Here, the reference group is family-migrants. Although they may occupy less prestigious jobs in destination countries, family-migrants’ appearance and enhanced consumption in Fiji gave off an impression of wealth and status which in turn, encouraged iTaukei students to consider emigrating (Rao, 2010).

Second, is to support their family financially. Vaseva (interview, 17/11/15) explained that *“the main reason I want to migrate is to support my family. I have four sisters that stay at home, and a brother-in-law. He is the only one breadwinner in the family. I just want to do something that will allow me to help my family.”* Unlike Fijians from other ethnic groups, iTaukei households can sustain their living through semi-subsistence agriculture and cash cropping. But, because there are many iTaukei living on Viti Levu who are landless and live in informal settlements, they cannot participate in agriculture. Additionally, village communities can no longer rely on traditional cash crops such as taro, cassava, kava and yams to generate income because they are vulnerable to climate-induced disasters. Moreover, educated youths are reluctant to work on farms which indicate a shift in perceptions regarding what constitutes a better quality of life (Connell, 1990). To diversify their family income, iTaukei student-participants who were attending TCF in this group planned to emigrate and send remittances. In doing so, they hope to provide their family with a reliable source of income (Massey et al., 1993).

Third is international tertiary education. Aminiasi (interview, 14/09/15) mentioned that *“I want to migrate for more education because developed countries know more about the computer.”* The purpose of attaining international tertiary education has shifted from administering the nation to accessing the higher socio-economic returns offered by Fijian and foreign employers. For instance, the Minister of Immigration

(interview, 26/11/15) said that *“these days, high positions are held by people with international qualifications.”* Perhaps this education behaviour showed iTaukei students that as long as they employ the international higher education pathway, i.e. obtain qualifications from international institutes, they can also access similar opportunities.

Relatedly, the family-migrant group determined if iTaukei students had strategies for successfully emigrating and whether their return to Fiji will be temporary or permanent. Students without family-migrants only aspired to attain an international education and were adamant that they would return to Fiji. Participant 14 (interview, 28/10/15) said that *“I want to go to Australia for further education, but I want to work in Fiji.”* In contrast, student-participants with internationally qualified low-skilled family-migrants were aware that an international religious scholarship would create an opportunity for them to migrate. Errol (interview, 03/11/15) revealed that:

“We start off in Fiji, and if there are better education opportunities elsewhere, we just go. My siblings applied for the scholarships offered by our church- the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints (LDS)- and were able to go to BYU. Whatever opportunity that comes through the church, we just take it so that we can get a better education. But, I’m also hoping to receive the same opportunities as my brother, i.e. receive a scholarship and then, opportunities in the mainland.”

Despite having access to numerous government scholarships, some iTaukei student-participants relied on those offered by their church, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (LDS). The church is an indigenised institution that is responsible for the iTaukei community’s prosperity. The LDS church fulfils this responsibility by offering its members scholarships to study abroad, specifically at Birmingham Young University in Hawaii. In doing so, the LDS church encourages iTaukei youths to invest in more education thereby providing them access to both the domestic and international labour markets. In addition, it may be that these iTaukei student-participants were more willing to apply for LDS scholarships because they are less likely to encounter competition from other ethnic groups who tend to outperform them academically. Thus, the evidence shows that seeing relatives successfully emigrate through international religious scholarships encouraged

iTaukei student-participants to employ the same emigration strategy. But, it appears that they are indecisive about their plans of returning to Fiji. Perhaps, international tertiary education is merely an excuse for exploring the lifestyle, services, and amenities potential destination countries have to offer, after which iTaukei students make a decision on whether their return to Fiji is temporary or permanent.

Last, is to escape their life in Fiji. Totivi (interview, 29/10/15) revealed that *“there is nothing left for us here. Because I broke off from some very dark stuff, I feel if I stay in the country, I’ll get dragged back into it and the community talks, you know.”* The iTaukei community is bound in a complex web of social networks which disseminates information on the successes, failures, and misdeeds of its members. However, if it does not concern immediate relatives, iTaukei emigrants are less likely to engage in discussions on such matters as interfering in other peoples’ private lives is seen as unacceptable in destination countries. In addition, iTaukei emigrants’ social networks serve different purposes which include enhancing iTaukei solidarity in a foreign country and keeping them connected to their homeland (Scott, 2003). Hence, emigration is perceived as a means of escaping the social stigma attached to their previous deeds.

In sum, a significant proportion of iTaukei student-participants seemed to have temporary emigration intentions which were motivated by short-term and goal-oriented factors such as enhancing their socio-economic status in Fiji, financially supporting their family in Fiji, and attaining an international tertiary education. The last factor, escaping their life in Fiji seemed to be a long-term motivation.

Permanent Emigration Intentions

Over half of the Fijian students involved in this study had permanent emigration intentions, but most of them were Indian Fijian. An equal proportion of them attended the University of the South Pacific (USP) and Technical College of Fiji (TCF). These students had a regional career strategy as they specialised in skills in demand by the Pacific region, including Australia and New Zealand. Their socio-economic status differed by skill-levels. While TCF students had a low socio-economic status, USP students had middle socio-economic status. They primarily

had high-skilled family-migrants. This section discusses Indian Fijian students' long-term and future-oriented motivations informing their permanent emigration intentions.

Long-term and Future-oriented Motivations

A number of long-term and future-oriented factors motivate Indian Fijian Fijians to emigrate. First, is employment opportunities. Firaz (interview, 22/10/15) mentioned that *“there are more job opportunities for us over there.”* Most students planning to emigrate for employment opportunities attended USP. Their search for job opportunities was triggered by graduate unemployment⁸ in Fiji. Recent media reports show that the rate of unemployment in Fiji has decreased from 9 to 7 percent (FijiNationalUniversity, 2016), but statistics collected by the National Employment Centre demonstrate that it remains stubbornly high. As of May 2015, “1259 graduates majoring in Information Technology, 978 majoring in Accounting, and 609 in Computer Sciences were registered at the National Employment Centre” (FijiSun, 2014). The high rate of graduate unemployment is in part an outcome of skills-mismatch whereby students invest in skills that are not needed by Fijian industries. Participant 13 (interview, 28/10/15) explained that *“there are limited opportunities in Fiji for people like me who study Information Technology and Accounting. I think Fiji is extremely behind in Information Technology. My aunts told me that there is a lot of job opportunities for me overseas.”* The evidence shows that two factors are responsible for the skill-mismatch in Fiji: one is Fiji's phase of development, and the other is the distortionary effects of migration on skill composition.

On the one hand, despite being classified as an upper-middle income country by the World Bank, Fiji is still at the 'imitation' phase of development. This phase requires scientific skills to adopt and adapt available technologies to the Fijian context (Di Maria & Strykowski, 2009). At the same time, policymakers have put in a lot effort to expand the Fijian Tourism industry thereby creating a high demand for trade and technical skills. However, as a result of USP student-participants' bias towards

⁸ Graduate unemployment refers to high-skilled individuals' inability to secure a job.

academic education and the difficulty in acquiring scientific skills, they tend to possess general skills⁹ which are largely beneficial for countries in the ‘innovation’ phase of development. On the other hand, the prospect of migration distorts skill composition (Di Maria & Lazarova, 2012). Family-migrants told students about the vast employment opportunities available in destination countries for graduates with a particular set of skills. This information provided them with an insight to the global skill shortages and hence, they invested in general skills. However, students may have lowered their probability of finding a job in Fiji because those that require general skills are limited and highly competitive.

The graduate unemployment is also a result of some Fijian employers’ use of the ‘recommendation’ criterion for recruitment, instead of the merit-based criterion. Naina (interview, 14/12/15) revealed that *“over here, even if we have degrees, we cannot get jobs. If our family members work in the company, then we get a job.”* The recommendation criterion is based on mutual understanding between the employer and employee who has recommended a family member for a job vacancy. By recruiting their relative, the former does a favour on the latter which is reciprocated through a return favour or their loyalty. Perhaps, some employers continue to use the recommendation criterion because it is a cost-effective strategy as they do not have to pay recommended graduates higher than the minimum wage due to their lack of work experience. However, in turn, graduates with the most appropriate skills for carrying out the job may experience several difficulties in finding employment thereby inducing them to look elsewhere.

Second, is higher wages. Students that planned to emigrate for higher wages attended TCF. Sonal (interview, 17/11/15) explained that *“junior tradespeople get less pay in Fiji. My sister told me that NZ gives more pay for our type of job.”* Participant 3 (interview, 15/10/15) pointed out the difference in wages: *“here our rate is like \$2.00 to \$3.00 per hour. There, it is like \$25 to \$30 per hour.”* Relatedly, evidence indicates that Indian Fijian students attending TCF wanted to support their parents financially through remittances. Sofia (interview, 18/11/15) said that *“my parents are not rich and I have a lot of brothers. They are really struggling. I want to migrate so that I can help them out. But, only until I have taken them over to the*

⁹ General skills refer to managerial, financial, political and legal skills.

other side because my brothers will be working by then.” Unlike iTaukei people, most Indian Fijians cannot own land in Fiji and hence, have to rely on precarious and low-paid jobs to sustain a living. These include working as casual labour and repairmen, taxi-drivers, market vendors, and self-made beauticians. The prosperity of such jobs depend on clientele needs and weather seasons and therefore, are unreliable sources of income. To diversify their sources of family income, Indian Fijian students attending TCF intend to emigrate and send back remittances. By doing so, they hope not only to alleviate household budget constraints but also provide a stable flow of family income. However, these students only plan to send remittances until their parents have successfully joined them abroad.

Perhaps, the rising cost of living in Fiji also influences their emigration for higher wages. In 2016, while the value added tax decreased to 9 percent, policymakers applied it to basic entities such as rice, cooking oil, fish, flour, powdered milk, kerosene and prescription drugs (Roberts, 2015; Sayed-Khayium, 2015). In doing so, policymakers hoped that Fijians would start bulk-buying which in turn, was presumed to enable them to accumulate savings. In reality, taxing basic entities only benefit the elites as most Fijians are either living below or on the verge of the poverty line. Although Fijians receive a minimum wage of FJ\$2.00 per hour (FijianGovernment, 2014), it may not be sufficient to meet the rising cost of basic entities in Fiji thereby encouraging Indian Fijian students attending TCF to emigrate for higher wages.

Third is to join family-migrants. Shalvin (interview, 15/10/15) mentioned that *“my family is calling me over to NZ.”* Family bonds, especially with immediate family members, tend to strengthen across time and space which in turn, generates a ‘pull effect.’ The information shared by family-migrants on what destination countries have to offer serve as strong economic incentives for considering emigration. For instance, Soheb (interview, 18/11/15) revealed that *“my brother told me that if I have a certificate and want to migrate, then there is work for me in NZ. He said that they would arrange a job for me before I go there.”* It seems that that family-migrants want their relatives to emigrate. Perhaps, family-migrants’ are seeking cheap labour for their businesses or they may genuinely be concerned about their relatives’ future in Fiji.

Last, is to follow through with their parents' emigration intentions. Adrien (interview, 14/12/15) revealed that *"they want to migrate to NZ. But, they said that it is hard for them to migrate now because I'm studying. They said I'd have to migrate first and then, call them over."* Although parents' motivations for aspiring to emigrate is not evident from the above statement, a large body of literature attributes it to political instability, economic insecurity and the lack of personal safety (Kumar, 2004; Naidu, 2004; Premdas, 1995). It is possible that the time lag between forming emigration aspirations and accumulating essential resources prevented Indian Fijian parents from emigrating. Hence, they may have developed a two-step family emigration plan. This entails their children's emigration through the skilled migration category followed by their emigration through family reunification schemes.

In sum, a significant proportion of Indian Fijian student-participants had permanent emigration intentions which were motivated by long-term and future-oriented factors such as employment opportunities, higher wages and financially supporting their family in Fiji, joining family-migrants and following through with their parents' emigration intentions.

Summary

In summary, Fijian students in this study had strong incentives for emigrating. The findings show that skill-level and ethnic groups influence their intentions and motivations for emigrating. Student-participants attending the Technical College of Fiji planned to emigrate primarily for higher wages as migrant peers showed that by sending remittances, they too can enhance their socio-economic status in Fiji, support their family financially and meet the rising cost of living in Fiji. Those enrolled at the University of the South Pacific planned to emigrate for a better quality which entails attaining international tertiary education, escaping their life in Fiji, accessing better employment opportunities, joining their family-migrants, and following through with their parents' emigration intentions.

Additionally, the evidence indicates that a small proportion of iTaukei student-participants were discouraged from emigrating. Those without migrant peers were

unaware of how iTaukei emigrants maintained their indigeneity while living abroad. It was presumed that emigration entailed completely detaching from their *vanua*. Conversely, those with high-skilled migrant peers had strong nationalistic obligations, observed a brain waste among the iTaukei diasporic community, and maintained a bias perception of a relatively easy life in Fiji which is due to infrequent communication with migrant peers. Also, iTaukei student-participants not intending to emigrate were confident about finding employment in Fiji because not only were they assured by Fijian policymakers, but their qualifications were also aligned with the demands of Fijian labour market.

Moreover, a significant proportion of iTaukei students in this study had temporary emigration intentions because they observed both family and iTaukei migrants maintain their indigeneity while living abroad by sending remittances and returning to work in Fiji. In contrast, Indian Fijian students had permanent emigration intentions because they seemed to be following a culture of migration whereby family-migrants shared information about economic opportunities available in potential destination countries which generated a pull effect thereby inducing them to consider emigrating. The next chapter examines the potential constraints and obstacles to Fijian students' emigration intentions.

Chapter 6: Anticipated Constraints and Obstacles to Emigration Intentions

The previous chapter demonstrated that Fijian students had large incentives than disincentives to emigrate. This chapter examines the constraints and obstacles to Fijian students' emigration intentions. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section describes the permanent constraints to iTaukei student-participants' emigration plans. The second section explains the temporary obstacles to Indian Fijian student-participants' emigration intentions. The chapter concludes by arguing that Fijian students in this study were aware that their actual emigration is highly uncertain.

Permanent Emigration Constraints

A third of iTaukei student-participants in this study were aware of internal, but potentially permanent constraints to their emigration plans. An equal proportion of them attended the Technical College of Fiji (TCF) and the University of the South Pacific (USP). These students had a local career strategy because they enrolled in programmes that are largely relevant to the Fijian labour market. Their socio-economic status differed between skill-levels. While TCF students had a low socio-economic status, USP students had a high socio-economic status. They were evenly distributed among family-migrant groups.

There are two main emigration obstacles related to their indigeneity. On the one hand, the notion of '*lesu mai*'¹⁰ encourages iTaukei students to return to Fiji. Errol (interview, 03/11/15) explained that "*I will come back to Fiji because the church I belong to, we believe in coming back and giving back to our community. You know there is no other way. You never forget where you left off and where you started.*" Although it is a by-product of colonialism, the iTaukei community has "adapted Christianity to meet their political, social and cultural needs to the point where it has become indigenised, and part and parcel of their society" (Ryle, 2005; Srebrnik, 2002, p. 191). The church is one institution that ensures social harmony, solidarity,

¹⁰ Literally translates to return from.

and prosperity among the iTaukei kin (Ravuvu, 1983). It does so by teaching and reminding iTaukei people the importance of living the iTaukei way of life which involves fulfilling kinship obligations (Ravuvu, 1971). In this context, the church does not stop iTaukei students from emigrating. Instead, the church stresses that they ‘return to their beginnings’ to fulfil social obligations towards the iTaukei kin. Perhaps, remittances are perceived as insufficient for fulfilling obligations as it primarily satisfies economic obligations towards immediate family members and the church. Hence, iTaukei student-participants are eager to return to Fiji. In fact, there is some evidence of iTaukei professionals returning to Fiji. Errol (interview, 3/11/15) described his brother’s return to Fiji: *“because we believe in coming back and helping our community, my brother returned to Fiji last year. He is a permanent resident of USA, but he sold his house and came back here with his family. He works as a facilities manager at our church.”* Therefore, for these iTaukei students’ emigration is not an act of disloyalty or abandonment, but one that gives them an opportunity to adequately fulfil kinship obligations by sending remittances and then, returning to serve the iTaukei community.

On the other hand, a small proportion of iTaukei student-participants believed that iTaukei emigrants do not practice the principle of ‘care and share,’ at least not to the extent that non-migrants do in Fiji. Penaia (interview, 17/11/5) said that *“when you die over there, other people bury you. But, in Fiji, your relatives help you to organise [the funeral]. They keep caring about you.”* The principle of care and share is “expressed through kinship ties as it binds people together in reciprocal dependence” (Ravuvu, 1988, p. 9). It is the main determinant for allocating and distributing land resources, goods, and services, to which blood kin members have the greatest claim. Here, iTaukei student-participants saw emigrants’ lack of involvement in important social events such as funerals and weddings which implied that they chose not to maintain kinship ties. However, non-migrants rarely recognise that once iTaukei people emigrate, they have two sets of obligations to satisfy: one, is towards their immediate kin in Fiji while the other, is towards their kin that they became aware of in destination countries (Hulkenberg, 2015). At the same time, iTaukei emigrants are often bound by budget constraints because not only is the cost of living high in destination countries, but they also tend to enter low-paid jobs. Thus, iTaukei emigrants’ financial situation coerces them to either reprioritise and

perhaps, even ignore their obligations towards each other (ibid.). While this neglect of kinship ties in a foreign country seemed to have had a negative impact on their perception of the ‘life in destination countries,’ it did not deter iTaukei student-participants from emigrating.

A number of potential constraints may induce iTaukei people to either defer their emigration plans for an extended period or completely abandon them. First, is their family members. The majority of iTaukei student-participants in this group perceived their family members as potential barriers to their emigration plans attended USP. On the one hand, iTaukei people have obligations towards their family members who have not and intend not to emigrate. Totivi (interview, 29/10/15) mentioned that *“if my grandmother’s alive, she’s never going to let me out of her sight.”* Although grandparents are the nadir of their power, they remain heads of households and influential decision-makers (Ravuvu, 1971). Hence, they may delay iTaukei students’ departure date. Similarly, Philous (interview, 04/11/15) revealed that *“my parents are separated, that’s why my brother is so close to me. I will only migrate if he gets married.”* In households where parents are often absent, older siblings adopt a parental role whereby they are responsible for the upbringing and welfare of younger siblings. Despite having little decision-making power, younger siblings may also defer iTaukei students’ emigration intentions.

On the other hand, illegal family-migrants enhance the uncertainty of successful emigration. Errol (interview, 03/11/15) explained that *“if you have family living overseas who have incomplete or no proper paper work, things start to get fishy, especially if you are going over as a single person. Some people going to Hawaii don’t go to school. They run away to the USA and work with their family.”* Recent literature recognises that Fijian emigration is becoming more skilled (Mohanty, 2006; Rokoduru, 2006), and yet, iTaukei people continue to employ illegal emigration pathways which include either overstaying their visas or failing to meet their visa conditions (Scott, 2003). This may be due to the economic situation back at home, low levels of tertiary education, and imperfect information about reliable and secure emigration pathways. Whatever may be the reason, illegal family-migrants pose a significant challenge to iTaukei students’ emigration plans. If students have relatives living illegally in potential destination countries, it may raise immigration officials’ doubts about their motives for emigrating which in turn, may

prolong the process of getting travel visas and even, discourage students from emigrating.

Second, is the Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (TELS) or student loans. Initially, student-participants misinterpreted TELS as scholarships. Participant 16 (interview, 10/11/15) mentioned that *“when it was first released, I thought it was a scholarship. But, it’s actually a loan that I have to pay back.”* They presumed that the letter ‘S’ was an abbreviation for the term ‘scholarship’ which insinuates that pioneering TELS students may have signed bond forms under the false impression that they will be receiving scholarships, thereby raising doubts on the Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Board’s marketing strategies. However, interviews with other students indicate that TELS is no longer misinterpreted as scholarships.

Relatedly, student loan bonds serve as a significant barrier to iTaukei students’ emigration plans as they cannot leave the country without repaying their loans. Penaia (interview, 17/11/15) said that *“if I don’t pay back my loan, they will stop me from migrating.”* How soon these students repay their loans depend on how quickly they secure a job in Fiji which differs between skill-levels. Students attending USP are more likely to invest a significant amount of time in securing employment because high-skilled jobs are limited in Fiji. For example, Participant 16 (interview, 10/11/15) raised the question: *“how are we going to pay back our loans because jobs are so limited in Fiji?”* In contrast, students enrolled at TCF are less likely to encounter competition for jobs as currently, there is a high demand for trade and technical skills by local industries. In both cases, iTaukei students may have to defer their emigration intentions until their loans are paid off.

Third, is a lack of English proficiency. Participant observations showed that iTaukei students attending TCF were not proficient in English because most of them spoke in their native languages or the local colloquial language which comprise of Hindi, iTaukei and English (Reflection Journal, 15/10/15). Since TCF primarily focuses on augmenting students’ skillset for probable employment, its staff does not assess students’ ability to communicate in English. As potential temporary emigrants, iTaukei students attending TCF may be expected to sit language proficiency exams. Those unable to pass the exam may not receive work or student visas thereby

inducing them to either employ illegal emigration pathways or completely abandon their emigration plans.

Last, is criminal records. Joseph (interview, 17/11/15) defensively stated that “*I haven’t done anything wrong, illegal or something that is not right. I’m clear from the police so I should be able to migrate.*” iTaukei students presumed that criminals could not emigrate. To a certain degree, this is true, but their ability to emigrate depends on the substantiality of their crime and duration of imprisonment. Those imprisoned for less than 12 months may encounter fewer emigration obstacles. Despite having imperfect information about how criminal convictions affect emigration, iTaukei students were cautious of not participating in illegal activities.

In sum, a significant proportion of iTaukei student-participants appeared to have several internal, but potentially permanent constraints to their emigration plans. While the iTaukei indigeneity- captured by the concept of ‘*lesu mai*’ and principle of ‘share and care’- may encourage them to return to Fiji, factors such as illegal family-migrants, student loan bonds, lack of English proficiency and criminal records may induce them to either defer or completely abandon their emigration plans.

Temporary Emigration Obstacles

Over half of the Indian Fijian students involved in this study identified both internal and external, but potentially temporary obstacles to their emigration intentions. An equal proportion of them attended the University of the South Pacific (USP) and Technical College of Fiji (TCF). These students had a regional career strategy as they specialised in skills that are in demand by Australia and New Zealand. Their socio-economic status differed by skill-levels. While TCF students had a low socio-economic status, USP students had middle socio-economic status. They primarily had high-skilled family-migrants.

Internal Emigration Obstacles

The evidence demonstrated four potential internal obstacles to Indian Fijian student-participants’ emigration intentions. First, is scholarship and loan bonds. Apart from

those on private scholarships, awardees cannot leave the country without fulfilling their scholarship bond conditions which require them to serve Fiji for the duration of their study, times by an interest rate of 1.5 years. Participant 13 (interview, 28/10/15) explained that *“I received the National Toppers award, so I will have to work in Fiji for the number of years I have studied X by 1.5 years. After that, I can migrate.”* Likewise, students on the Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (TELS), the majority of whom attended TCF, cannot leave the country without paying it back. Sofia (interview, 18/11/15) mentioned that *“I’ve taken \$3000 from the government for my fees here. I won’t be able to go abroad if I don’t pay it back.”* Additionally, these students were aware of the amount that will be deducted from their salary for loan repayments. Participant 1 (interview, 17/11/15) mentioned that *“I think, they cut like 15 to 20 percent from our salary.”* The Tertiary Scholarship and Loan Board (TSLB) deducts 20 percent per annum from borrowers’ salary and applies an interest rate to it which depends on their parents’ combined income. The TSLB (2016) noted that:

“For students from families with income between \$25,000 and \$50,000, the interest rate is 0.5 percent. For students from families with income between \$50,000 and \$100,000, the interest rate is 1 percent. Those from families with income over \$100,000, the interest rate is 2 percent.”

However, since most of the student-participants with loans are from poor backgrounds, they may not have to pay any interest. Moreover, they had an estimate of how long they might have to work in Fiji before emigrating, Sahil (interview, 14/10/15) said that *“because I’m on TELS I have a three-year bond. I’ll have work for three years in Fiji to clear it off and then, work another three years so that I can pay for my fare to New Zealand.”* While this suggests that Indian Fijian students stay in Fiji may be temporary, the date of their actual emigration depends on how soon they find employment and their household financial conditions. Students attending TCF seemed confident about easily securing a job in Fiji after graduation. For instance, Zubel (interview, 16/10/15) said that *“the tourism industry is very strong here. I think it is growing. That’s why there is a lot of jobs for us here.”* Furthermore, they had information on the extreme repercussions of not meeting the bond requirements. Sofia (interview, 18/11/15) stated that *“if we don’t pay back our loans, they will come and get us.”* Overall, Indian Fijian student-participants had a

high awareness of how scholarship and loan bonds may affect their emigration which suggests that they may have incorporated this obstacle into their emigration plans.

Second, is financial obligations. Participant 13 (interview, 28/10/15) revealed that *“the only thing stopping me is my sister because she is still in secondary school. I will have to pay for her [tertiary] education.”* In Indian Fijian households, the eldest child is responsible for their younger siblings’ welfare which in this case, is funding their tertiary education. However, this form of financial obligation may not be an obstacle for their emigration as the Fijian government offers several education grants for students to pursue higher education. Relatedly, Indian Fijian students attending TCF recognised budget constraints as a potential obstacle to their emigration intentions. Zubel (interview, 16/10/15) mentioned that *“I need to have some money in my pocket before I can migrate.”* As a consequence of studying under TELS and their low socio-economic status, they cannot afford to emigrate immediately after graduation. However, as shown earlier, they plan to pay off their loans, fulfil financial obligations and accumulate funds for their emigration within six years of graduating.

Third, is aged parents. The majority of students who perceived aged parents as a potential obstacle to their emigration plans attended TCF. Participant 1 (interview, 17/11/15) explained that *“my father doesn’t want to migrate. One of my uncles asked us to come over to NZ, but he was like no, I don’t want to go. His got a farm here, and I’ve got a grannie at home. So, I can’t just leave him in Fiji.”* Parents who are well-established in Fiji are reluctant to emigrate which creates uncertainties for their children’s emigration. It is customary for Fijians to take care of their parents at old age for two reasons. On the one hand, it is seen as a religious act whereby parents’ blessings are expected to translate into good karma. On the other hand, a social stigma is attached to admitting them in rest-homes as it is not a common practice in Fiji. Interestingly, Indian Fijian students attending TCF devised a migration strategy which involves emigrating individually, sending remittances to support their parents financially and then, search for opportunities through which their parents can join them abroad. Sofia (interview, 18/11/15) said that *“I want to migrate so that I can send some money over, and then take my parents over to the other side.”* It seems that these students were aware that their parents would not be able to emigrate because Sheetal (interview, 18/11/15) had mentioned that *“my parents are too old,*

that's why I think they won't be able to migrate with me." This suggests that aged parents may be incorporated in these student-participants' emigration plans.

Last, is a 'good job' in Fiji. Only one student attending TCF perceived a good job in Fiji as a potential constraint to his emigration plans. Shalvin (interview, 15/10/15) mentioned that *"if I get a good job in Fiji, then I might not migrate."* In this context, a good job largely entails higher wages. TCF student-participants have a greater probability of securing a good job in Fiji because they possess skills that are in demand by the Fijian Tourism industry. In addition, TCF student-participants are less likely to encounter competition for such jobs as they are pioneering students entering the workforce with technical and trade certification. However, the perception of what constitutes a good job is susceptible to change as evidence from previous studies have shown that graduates also tend to emigrate because of harsh working conditions and lack of professional growth (Moulds et al., 2009). Therefore, there is little assurance that TCF graduates will remain in Fiji because of a good job.

External Emigration Obstacles

The findings demonstrated two external obstacles to Indian Fijian student-participants' emigration intentions. First, is a lack of qualifications transferability. Abra'ar (interview, 14/12/15) explained that *"my cousin studied accounting at USP and he was able to migrate easily. He's working for an accounting firm in Australia. But, it really depends on your faculty. Like the MBA programme is recognised by Australia, but if you're studying medicine or engineering, you'll have to sit three tests."* USP education is aggressively marketed as 'regional' whereby students are told that it is a ticket to regional travel and a lot effort has gone into securing its recognition, especially by Australia and New Zealand. As indicated by evidence, relatives who have successfully emigrated after graduating from USP strengthen its regional image. However, USP graduates do not always find employment in destination countries. Kunal C. (interview, 16/10/15) revealed that *"my sister studied lab technology at USP and she was able to migrate. But, she couldn't find a job because Australian companies didn't recognise it. She had to study again."* Perhaps, these graduates did not plan to emigrate and hence, invested in skills irrelevant to the foreign labour market. Nevertheless, it shows that not all local qualifications are

recognised by potential destination countries which creates uncertainties for students' emigration plans.

In contrast, although TCF education is accredited by Australia and New Zealand, it is not marketed as regional. It is only upon question when students are informed that TCF education is a ticket to regional travel (e.g. Australia and New Zealand).

Shalvin (interview, 15/10/15) said that *"I think TCF certificates are recognised in NZ. My cousin has a certificate in bakery from here, and he is migrating to NZ in January. But, I don't really know."* Although TCF was established to meet the local industries' needs, the domestic labour market does not have the capacity to absorb the growing influx of TCF graduates. The threat of heightening graduate unemployment led policymakers to secure a regional accreditation for TCF education which was possible by using NZQA guidelines as the foundation for its programme structure. In doing so, they created prospects of foreign employment for the anticipated oversupply of TCF graduates. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that most of the student-participants attending TCF were unsure about the recognition of their qualifications.

Second, is the long working hours in Pacific rim countries tend to reduce family time. Sheetal (interview, 18/11/15) stated that *"they told me it's a good place and they enjoy living there, but the work is hard. When the wife goes to work, the husband stays at home, and then, the wife comes home, the husband goes to work. They have no family time."* Since the cost of living is high in destination countries, Fijian immigrants have to work longer hours to sustain a living. However, as a consequence, they have less time to spend with their family members. While this information formed a negative impression of the life in potential destination countries, it did not induce Indian Fijian students enrolled at TCF to abandon their emigration plans. Instead, they modified their emigration plans by including a short visit before deciding whether they want to settle down in Fiji or abroad. Participant 3 (interview, 15/10/15) explained that *"I will first work in Fiji, then go overseas and see what the place is like. If it's good, then I'll work there. If overseas is better than Fiji, then I will stay there permanently."*

In sum, a significant proportion of Indian Fijian student-participants had internal and external, but potentially temporary obstacles to their emigration intentions. The

former includes scholarship and loan bonds, financial obligations, budget constraints, aged parents and a ‘good job’ in Fiji, while the latter includes lack of qualifications transferability, and the work as well as family life in destination countries. Additionally, the findings indicate that Indian Fijian students’ devised strategies for overcoming the internal and to some extent, external obstacles to their emigration plans.

Summary

In summary, Fijian students were aware that their actual emigration is highly uncertain. The findings demonstrate that their awareness of emigration constraints and obstacles differed between ethnic groups. ITaukei student-participants were primarily aware of internal, but potentially permanent constraints to their emigration plans. While the iTaukei indigeneity- encapsulated by the concept of *lesu mai* and the principle of care and share- encouraged them to return to Fiji, factors such as student loan bonds, family members, the lack of English proficiency and criminal records may induce them to either defer or completely abandon their emigration plans. ITaukei students had not devised strategies for overcoming these obstacles as they had imperfect information about it.

In contrast, Indian Fijian student-participants were aware of both external and internal, but potentially temporary obstacles to their emigration intentions. However, they had devised strategies to overcome the external obstacles by aligning their qualifications with the skill shortages in Australia and New Zealand (discussed in the Education Decisions Chapter), and temporarily visiting or working in destination countries before deciding whether they emigrate. The strategies of overcoming internal obstacles include forming expected timelines to fulfil their scholarship and loan bond requirements as well as to relieve budget constraints and planning for their parents’ temporary stay in Fiji and emigration. A ‘good job’ in Fiji seemed to be a positive permanent emigration constraint. The next chapter examines the role of past emigrants’ experiences in shaping the education decisions and emigration plans of tertiary students in Fiji.

Chapter 7: Discussion

The previous chapter showed that Fijian students involved in this study were aware that their actual emigration is highly uncertain. This chapter examines the role of past emigrants' experiences in shaping education decisions and emigration plans of tertiary students in Fiji. In doing so, it answers three leading questions of this study and addresses each of the hypothetical corresponding answers:

Question 1: Why do Fijian students invest in higher education?

Hypothesis 1a: Fijian students enter higher education because they have seen family upskill and successfully emigrate.

Hypothesis 1b: University students invest in more education after seeing their family emigrate by doing so.

Hypothesis 1c: Indian Fijian students invest in more education after seeing their family emigrate by doing so.

Question 2: Do Fijian students intend to migrate, and if so, why/ why not?

Hypothesis 2a: Fijian students intend to migrate after upskilling because they have seen family earn higher wages by doing so.

Hypothesis 2b: Indian Fijian students intend to emigrate permanently for economic opportunities and political stability, while iTaukei students intend to emigrate temporarily for education opportunities and to improve families' standards of living.

Question 3: What are the constraints and obstacles to Fijian students' migration intentions?

Hypothesis 3a: Fijian students have imperfect information about obstacles and constraints to their emigration intentions, which may ultimately prevent them from emigrating.

Hypothesis 3b: iTaukei students have imperfect information about immigration policies.

Hypothesis 3c: Technical students have imperfect information about qualifications transferability.

Question 1: Why do Fijian students invest in higher education?

The study found that Fijian student-participants entered higher education for two reasons. First, is to secure a well-paid job in Fiji. Even though one can join the domestic workforce without any tertiary qualification, Fijian student-participants believed that such qualifications are required for professional and trades positions. This is because employers use it for determining whether applicants have the skills for carrying out the job efficiently and their annual income. Their motives underlying their intention of securing a good job were to achieve socio-economic success, fulfil household expectations and support their families financially. Additionally, deciding to enter higher education seemed to be a norm for Indian Fijian student-participants as the high rate of tertiary education attainment among their community presented tertiary education as a culturally validated means for securing their future in Fiji or abroad (Lal, 1992). Conversely, the decision to enter higher education seemed to be a silent expectation for a small proportion of iTaukei student-participants as their parents expected to follow in their siblings' footsteps.

Second, is to emigrate. Helmenstein et al. (1997, 1998) claim that the prospect of migration induces individuals in affected origin countries to invest in higher education. To put it simply, they say that "seeing people migrate and benefit economically makes others keener on studying and enhancing their skills in order to migrate themselves" (Kaitani et al., 2011, p. 46). Lending support to their claim and to hypothesis 1a, half of the Fijian students in this study decided to enter higher education after seeing their family upskill and emigrate. This suggests that the brain gain effect is present in Fiji. The brain gain effect occurs when emigration leads to a higher average level of education per individual in affected origin countries (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012a).

Before discussing the ways in which this effect of migration informed Fijian student-participants' education decisions, the section will comment on the two findings from this study that are inconsistent with the hypothesis. First, besides family-migrants,

other migrant peers such as friends, previous graduates, and returnees also influenced Fijian student-participants' education decisions.¹¹ Their involvement was particularly evident among iTaukei students with low-skilled family-migrants who did not invest in further education after emigrating, and Indian Fijian students who received little information about employment prospects in potential destination countries from high-skilled family-migrants. Second, even though they had migrant-peers, a third of Fijian student-participants did not consider migration before deciding to enter higher education. This may be due to a number of reasons such as infrequent communication with migrant peers, socio-economic class, and the disincentives of emigrating (these factors are discussed in the second and third section).

Migrant peers shaped Fijian student-participants' education decisions in a number of unexpected ways which differed between skill-levels and ethnic groups. Lending support to hypothesis 1b, a higher proportion of university students in this study decided to enter higher education after seeing their peers upskill and emigrate (Stark, 2004; Stark & Wang, 2002). Not only did the institute tell them that the education from the University of the South Pacific (USP) is accredited by Australian and New Zealand agencies but they also saw peers migrate successful after graduating from USP, thus affirming that USP education is a ticket to regional travel. However, two findings from this study are inconsistent with the hypothesis. First, despite being shown that USP education may be the next best thing or even equivalent to an international education, a small proportion of iTaukei students opted for what the thesis refers to as an 'international higher education pathway' which is defined as attaining tertiary qualifications from an international institute. Migrant peers showed that international qualifications may increase their probability of finding employment in Fiji and abroad. Second, slightly more than a fifth of technical student-participants also entered higher education after seeing peers upskill and emigrate. Stark and Wang (2002) argue that due to their limited economic capabilities, low-skilled individuals will only invest in the minimum level of education needed for probable employment in destination countries. But, Indian

¹¹ Since the chapter has established that other migrant peers were also influential in shaping Fijian students' education decisions and emigration plans, from here onwards, the remaining hypotheses will examine the role of migrant peers.

Fijian student-participants planned to pursue higher levels of tertiary education at USP or FNU after completing their certificate at TCF.

Additionally, lending support to hypothesis 1c, a higher proportion of Indian Fijian students in the study entered higher education after seeing their peers upskill and emigrate (Chand & Clemens, 2008). They had a well-developed migration plan which involves employing certain education pathway and career strategy. First, these Indian Fijian students opted for what the thesis refers to as a ‘local higher education pathway’ which is defined as attaining tertiary qualifications from a local institute. Although Indian Fijian migrant peers had a Bachelor’s degree from USP, they demonstrated that local qualifications are recognised by their traditional and new immigration countries. Second, they were encouraged to adopt a ‘regional career strategy’ which is defined as investing in skills that are pertinent to the Australian and New Zealand labour markets (see appendices). In doing so, both migrant peers and Indian Fijian student-participants hoped to not only increase their probability of migrating but also of securing employment in potential destination countries.

The prospect of migration distorted Indian Fijian student-participants’ human capital accumulation (Di Maria & Lazarova, 2012; Docquier & Rapoport, 2012a). The findings from this study show that the information shared by migrant peers about job prospects were used to align their qualifications with the skill shortages experienced in Australia and New Zealand. But, only Indian Fijian student-participants attending USP that invested in general skills may be vulnerable experience difficulties in finding employment in Fiji. Since Fiji is currently in the ‘imitation’ stage of development which requires scientific, technical and trade skills for adopting and adapting available to the local context (Di Maria & Strykowski, 2009), there is little demand and limited jobs for those with general skills.

Two findings from this study are surprising. First, a small proportion of Indian Fijian student-participants attending TCF observed peers with technical qualifications, but from different tertiary institutes, secure a job that offered them opportunities to emigrate. This demonstrated that technical skills are also in demand by Pacific rim countries and migration may not be biased towards academic education as they had imagined. Second, Indian Fijian migrant peers told Indian Fijian student-participants attending TCF that “foreign credentials are not recognised by employers in

destination countries- even when those very qualifications are the basis for entry under a skills-based screening system” (Bredl, 2011; Kapur & McHale, 2005, p. 75). Hence, they planned only to attain the minimum level of tertiary education required for emigration and then, invest in skills that are directly aligned to the labour demands of potential destination countries.

Nevertheless, one finding from this study undermines hypothesis 1c. While not to the same degree as Indian Fijian student-participants, iTaukei student-participants also entered higher education after seeing their peers upskill and emigrate. They had a semi-migration strategy which entailed employing a local higher education pathway, and a ‘local career strategy’ which is defined as investing in skills pertinent to primarily the Fijian labour market. iTaukei student-participants had limited contact with skilled migrants. Hence, they had to rely on information about foreign labour markets that was either published in the newspaper or USP’s alumni newsletter. Although the former would have advertised the type of skills needed for specific jobs in potential destination countries, the latter does not always reveal its graduate-migrants’ areas of specialisation. The constraints to their emigration intentions also affected their career strategy (discussed in the third section).

So far, the thesis has established that a brain gain effect is present in Fiji as half of the Fijian students involved in this study entered higher education after seeing their peers upskill and emigrate. In addition, the brain gain effect is predominantly evident among the Indian Fijian population, and students attending the USP. These findings are in accord with Chand and Clemens’ (2008) study in which they showed that the mass exodus of Indian Fijian professionals during the 1987 coups encouraged primarily Indian Fijian students to enter USP. However, the findings from this study also indicate that a significant proportion of Indian Fijian students enrolled at TCF decided to enter higher education as an emulation of the example set by high-skilled family-migrants because they had large incentives for doing so (see figure 6).

Question 2: Do Fijian students intend to migrate, and if so, why/ why not?

The study found that Fijian students had disincentives and incentives to emigrate. A small group of primarily iTaukei student-participants was discouraged from

emigrating due to a number of reasons which were dependent on whether they had migrant peers and whether the frequency of their communication. iTaukei student-participants without migrant peers were unsure of how iTaukei emigrants maintained their indigeneity while living abroad. In contrast, iTaukei student-participants who did not communicate with migrant peers were unaware of the opportunities and standards of living available abroad; consequently, forming a bias perception about the life in Fiji. Conversely, iTaukei student-participants who frequently communicated with migrant peers heard about the brain waste among the iTaukei diasporic communities which indicated that job prospects for high-skilled immigrants are not as vast as migrants purport it to be thereby diminishing their emigration intentions. At the same time, their nationalistic obligations strengthened after seeing peers emigrate without paying service to Fiji. Moreover, iTaukei student-participants without emigration intentions were certain of finding a decent employment in Fiji because their qualifications were aligned with domestic skill shortages.

Nevertheless, the incentives to migrate were larger than the disincentives, thus indicating that Fijian students in this study responded to a strong ‘incentive effect.’ The incentive effect is defined as the prospect of emigration raising the expected returns to higher education (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012a). So far, empirical studies have employed higher wages to test the incentive effect through which they showed that it was stronger in low-income countries (Beine et al., 2011; Beine et al., 2001, 2008). Likewise, lending support to hypothesis 2a, a third of Fijian student-participants who attended TCF and had *low socio-economic status* planned to emigrate because they saw peers earn higher wages by doing so. They perceived emigration as a risk diversification whereby migrant peers demonstrated that by engaging in labour mobility, they can also send remittances to financially support their families (Massey et al., 1993).

The underlying motives for technical students’ intentions to send remittances differed between ethnic groups. Connell (2003, p. 23; 2010) claims that Pacific policymakers have only recently started to recognise that their nations are experiencing ‘poverty of opportunities’ which refers to “individuals not having access to or the means of acquiring essential knowledge, services, and facilities.” The findings support his claim as iTaukei student-participants attending TCF were

primarily concerned with relative deprivation. Although iTaukei households can sustain their livelihoods through semi-subsistence agriculture and cash cropping, iTaukei student-participants' possible reluctance to engage in agricultural work coupled with the observation of migrant peers' enhanced wealth and status motivation them to engage in interpersonal comparisons and consider the possibility of emigration (Stark, 1991; Stark & Taylor, 1991). Conversely, their Indian Fijian counterparts were primarily concerned with 'absolute deprivation' (Voigt-Graf, 2003). Their parents' unstable jobs, large families and the rising cost of living in Fiji may have pushed them further into poverty. The information shared by migrant peers about the prospects of earning higher wages in potential destination countries presented emigration as a solution to their absolute poverty.

One finding from this study is inconsistent with hypothesis 2a: a higher proportion of Fijian students in this study, most of whom were enrolled at the University of the South Pacific (USP) intended to emigrate for a better quality of life. This entails attaining an international tertiary education, escaping their life in Fiji, accessing better employment opportunities, fulfilling parents' emigration intentions and reuniting with family-migrants. USP students' search for a better quality of life is motivated by two factors: one, is Fiji's inability to meet their aspirations while the other, is the culture of migration. On the one hand, Fiji lacks the economic means to meet USP student-participants' aspiration of securing 'well-paid white collar jobs' (Connell, 1990). Although Fijian policymakers offer financial incentives for students to invest in tertiary education, the domestic labour market lacks the capacity to absorb the growing influx of USP graduates because white collar jobs are limited and highly competitive. Additionally, because Fijian employers still use the recommendation criteria for recruitment, graduates without employee or employer connections have a lower probability of securing employment in Fiji. Moreover, the culture of pursuing academic education for well-paid jobs encouraged these student-participants to invest in USP education (Baba, 1991), but half of them specialised in skills that are not in demand by local industries. Therefore, due to Fijian policymakers' inability to meet their aspirations of securing well-paid white collar jobs in Fiji, USP student-participants considered migration.

On the other hand, USP student-participants were reinforcing a culture of migration because they planned to work in Fiji as well as migrate at some point in their lives

(Connell, 2008, 2014). The findings suggest that they had either “mythologised or had forgotten the earlier generations’ motivations for emigrating” (De Haas, 2009, p. 40). Previously, the pursuit of international education was motivated by the lack of tertiary institutes in Fiji (Mayer, 1963), but now, it is driven by peers enjoying the socio-economic benefits of international qualifications in Fiji as well as abroad. Similarly, earlier Indian Fijians’ emigration was motivated by an array of interrelated factors such as racial discrimination, limited economic opportunities, lack of professional growth, and most importantly, a bleak and uncertain future in Fiji (Kumar, 2004; Reddy et al., 2004). Today, however, it is driven by the mere fact that their family members are living in Pacific rim countries. Therefore, USP student-participants’ plan to emigrate appears to be a “norm rather than an exception” (Connell, 2003; De Haas, 2009, p. 39).

Migrant peers shaped Fijian students’ emigration plans in several ways which differed between ethnic and skill-level groups. Lending support to hypothesis 2b, a significant proportion of Indian Fijian student-participants intended to emigrate permanently for economic opportunities (Kaitani et al., 2011; Voigt-Graf, 2008b), but not for political stability. As alluded to earlier, migrant peers portrayed emigration as a solution to absolute poverty by showing that Indian Fijian student-participants enrolled at TCF can also support their parents financially through remittances. Conversely, migrant peers portrayed emigration as a solution to graduate unemployment by sharing information about job prospects in potential destination countries which assured Indian Fijian student-participants enrolled at USP that if not in Fiji, they can find employment abroad. One finding from this study is inconsistent with the hypothesis which is that the majority of Indian Fijian student-participants aspired to join their family residing abroad. This indicates that a culture of migration is also evident among the Indian Fijian community in Fiji whereby it is expected that the accumulation of human capital is followed by temporary employment in Fiji and then, emigration. Therefore, migration may be ‘inevitable’ for many Indian Fijian youths (Connell, 2010, p. 121).

Lending further support to hypothesis 2b, the majority of iTaukei students in this study intended to emigrate temporarily to improve their families’ standard of living and for education opportunities (Mohanty, 2006; Voigt-Graf, 2008a). iTaukei migrants displayed their wealth and status which not only enhanced the feeling of

relative deprivation but also demonstrated that potential destination countries offer opportunities through which iTaukei student-participants attending TCF can improve their families' standard of living in Fiji. Although families were not involved in shaping these student-participants' emigration plans, they are most likely to welcome it as the remittances are expected to alleviate economic hardship as well as elevate their socio-economic status among the iTaukei community (Stanix & Connell, 1995). Conversely, iTaukei migrants reinforced a culture of migration among a small proportion of iTaukei student-participants attending USP which is structurally different to that observed among Indian Fijian student-participants. This culture of migration entails a year of tertiary education at a local institute followed by emigration through an international religious scholarship and then, returning to work in Fiji. Therefore, the migration and return migration may also be inevitable for a small proportion of iTaukei student-participants attending USP.

Government Intervention

The incentive effect would not have operated without the Fijian government's intervention. In particular, three initiatives created the conditions that enabled Fijian student-participants to respond to the incentive effect. First, is maintaining an open emigration policy. Stark and Wang (2002) argue that a restrictive emigration policy may not be a bad idea as curbing high-skilled individuals' mobility may generate brain gain as not everyone who has upskilled will follow through with their emigration intentions. However, the suggestion of adopting a restrictive emigration policy contradicts with one of the conditions essential for creating the incentive effect: a small brain drain (Beine et al., 2011; Docquier, 2014). As shown throughout the thesis, underlying brain drain is cultures of emigration whereby Fijian students imitate the education behaviour of skilled emigrants in the hope that they would be able to emigrate in the future. To reinforce the cultures of migration, it is crucial for Fijian students to continue observing 'emigration success stories.' But, a restrictive emigration policy does the exact opposite whereby Fijians who are unsuccessful in emigrating may circulate 'emigration failure stories' among youths which in turn, would discourage them from investing in tertiary education. Therefore, the open emigration policy encourages Fijian professionals to migrate which has generated and sustained the incentive effect in Fiji.

Second, is not employing a ‘marks’ criterion for admitting students into the Technical College of Fiji (TCF). The evidence indicates that the Indian Fijian migratory culture sets an expectation that completion of tertiary education is followed by temporary employment in Fiji and then, migration. Student-participants who obtained the cut-off marks for entering higher education imitated this migratory culture by entering an institute that is recognised by potential destination countries and aligning their qualifications with foreign labour market demands. Previously, students unable to obtain the cut-off marks could not enter higher education, but by not using the marks criterion for admitting them into TCF, Fijian policymakers allowed slightly more than a fifth of student-participants to respond to the incentive effect.

Third, is introducing education subsidies such as scholarships, student loans, and living allowances. Stark and Wang (2002, p. 30) claim that “the presence of migration can substitute for the provision of education subsidies as a means of bringing about the formation of a socially preferred level of human capital.” However, evidence indicates that both migration and education subsidies encouraged Fijian student-participants to invest in higher education. Previously, higher education was a privilege enjoyed by wealthy households (Minister of Education, interview, 13/10/15). But, the increasing dropout rates demonstrated that the main reason Fijian youths do not proceed to higher levels of education is because they lack the financial means to do so (CCF, 2007). By subsidising education, Fijian policymakers not only removed elitism from higher education but also alleviated the liquidity constraints on higher education (Di Maria & Stryszowski, 2009; Docquier & Rapoport, 2012a), thus allowing almost a third of the Fijian student-participants from poor households to respond to the incentive effect.

So far, the thesis has established that half of the Fijian students involved in this research responded to the incentive effect as they had large incentives than disincentives to emigrate. In addition, the incentive effect was stronger among the Indian Fijian population and students attending USP due to the cultures of migration. However, evidence also indicates that a higher proportion of Indian Fijian students enrolled at TCF were responding to the incentive effect (see figure 6). Moreover, the incentive effect would not have operated without government intervention.

Question 3: What are the constraints and obstacles to Fijian students' emigration intentions?

The study found that the uncertainty to Fijian students' emigration intentions is greater than the rate of brain drain from Fiji. Mountford (1997) claims that if migration is not a certainty, then a small brain drain can have beneficial effects on the productivity of affected origin countries by increasing their human capital stock. The suggested optimal rate of brain drain for inducing human capital formation is between 15 to 30 percent (Beine et al., 2011; Docquier, 2014). A study conducted by OECD-UNDESA (2013) found that in 2010, 31 percent of Fijian professionals lived in developed countries. These professionals are primarily made up of teachers, doctors, engineers, accountants and architect (Reddy et al., 2004) who emigrated to Pacific rim countries under the 'skilled migration category' (Chand & Clemens, 2008). Previous empirical studies paralleled Fawcett's (1985) argument, that external constraints reduce individual's decision-making power thereby resulting in non-actualisation of migration, by showing that imperfect information about immigration quotas and the points system enhances the uncertainty of actual migration (Beine et al., 2001; De Haas, 2009; Docquier & Rapoport, 2012a, 2012b; Duncan, 2009).

Likewise, lending support to hypothesis 3a, a significant proportion of Fijian student-participants had imperfect information about 'external' constraints and obstacles to their emigration intentions. Cohen and Sirkeci (2011, p. 33) claim that "potential emigrants learn from other migrant households about the challenges they may encounter as movers," but evidence indicates that only Indian Fijian student-participants had information about potential external obstacles to their emigration plans. First, while not perfect, they had information about skill shortages in potential destination countries which allowed them to devise a 'regional career strategy,' i.e. align their qualifications with the skill shortages experienced by Fiji, Australia, and New Zealand.

Second, Indian Fijian student-participants attending the University of the South Pacific (USP) knew that although USP education is marketed as regional, only certain USP qualifications ensure entry into potential destination countries. In order

for them to gain a visa through the ‘skilled migration category,’ they would need to have tertiary qualifications comparable to Australia and New Zealand’s Bachelor’s degree (NZImmigration, 2016). Consequently, they replicated migrant peers’ education behaviour by enrolling in the same degree programme and specialising in the same areas. By doing so, Indian Fijian student-participants attending USP increased their opportunities of emigrating as if they are unable to meet the requirements of the skilled migration category, then they may be able to migrate through the worker schemes (Kapur & McHale, 2005).

Third, those attending the Technical College of Fiji (TCF) were told that migrant peers had little time for their family because they had to work long hours to meet the high cost of living in potential destination countries. Therefore, such information created a negative impression of life abroad. To see whether this is indeed the case, they planned to temporarily visit or work in potential destination countries after which they may decide to either settle down abroad permanently or return to Fiji.

Indian Fijian student-participants’ awareness of potential external obstacles to their emigration intentions is in part an outcome of their strong social ties. In the context of internal migration, Giuliatti, Wahba, and Zenou (2014) found that while weak and strong social ties are crucial for deciding to migrate, the latter tends to provide more reliable and accurate information about metropolitan centres compared to the former.¹² As a result of the Indian Fijian ‘skilled migratory culture,’ almost every Indian Fijian household in Fiji has a skilled family member residing in Pacific rim countries (Mohanty, 2006; Voigt-Graf, 2003; Voigt-Graf, 2008b). The findings indicate that despite infrequently maintaining indirect and infrequent contact with family-migrants,¹³ Indian Fijian students in this study had strong social ties, thus granting them greater access to cultural capital (e.g. “information, knowledge about potential destination countries, capabilities for organising travel, finding work and

¹² The authors determined the strength of social ties by identifying potential emigrants’ dyad group (e.g. did their family, friends, work and school colleagues or community members migrate). Potential emigrants who belonged to the close dyad group were classified as having strong social ties. In contrast, potential emigrants who belonged to the distant dyad group were classified as having weak social ties. This thesis uses the same classifications to determine the strength of Fijian students’ social ties.

¹³ It is not essential for Indian students to maintain direct and frequent contact with family-migrants in order to access cultural capital. As shown in Chapter 4, Indian parents also have emigration intentions and hence, are heavily involved in conveying messages about potential destination countries, devising strategies to overcome external impediments to their children’s emigration plans which also includes fashioning their education decisions.

adapting to a new environment” (Castles & Miller, 2009, p. 28)) compared to their iTaukei counterparts.

Additionally, moderately undermining hypothesis 3b, iTaukei student-participants that planned to emigrate, were aware of immigration policies, specifically that they are biased towards high-skilled individuals. Seeing peers successfully emigrate after upskilling showed that local tertiary qualifications meet the entry requirements set by the points- a screening device employed by destination countries to assess whether potential emigrants possess skills (e.g. education, experience, and national language) beneficial for their long-term economic growth (Kapur & McHale, 2005). However, iTaukei student-participants’ presumed that everyone with tertiary qualifications has an equal probability of emigrating. For instance, Participant 6 (interview, 30/11/15) mentioned that *“I think it is easy for all us to migrate because our qualifications are recognised by overseas countries.”* As discussed through the thesis, despite securing accreditation regionally, local tertiary education does not ensure entry into potential destination countries. In addition, although tertiary education is weighed heavily in the points system, other characteristics such as age, health and family members also determine individuals’ emigration (NZImmigration, 2016). Furthermore, individuals need to have financial resources to migrate (Castles, 2000; Findlay & Lowell, 2001). While budget constraints did not appear to be an issue for the majority of iTaukei students attending USP, it was reinforced for those on student loans as their emigration is curbed by the bond agreements (discussed further below).

ITaukei student-participants’ imperfect information about external constraints to their emigration intentions is in part an outcome of their weak social ties. The iTaukei community does not have a well-established ‘skilled migratory culture;’ that is, while there is an upsurge of iTaukei care-givers, security workers, rugby union and league players, and trades people migrating to Pacific island and Pacific rim countries in recent years (Mohanty, 2006; Scott, 2003; Voigt-Graf, 2008a), not all of them are well-educated and many are from rural areas. As a consequence, majority of the iTaukei student-participants relied on weak social ties¹⁴ for information about foreign labour markets and the challenges they might encounter while migrating; but,

¹⁴ As shown in the Chapter 4 and 5, weak social ties included those with church members, friends, returnees and previous graduates. Besides the latter with whom they had no contact, iTaukei students maintained infrequent contact with these migrants.

because it was inaccurate information, they could only devise a semi-migration strategy. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that a small proportion of iTaukei student-participants planned to engage a migratory culture that entails emigrating for international education and then, returning to work in Fiji. These student-participants were better informed about the international education strategy because their immediate family members had previously utilised it.

Moreover, lending support to hypothesis 3c, technical students had imperfect information about qualifications transferability. Indian Fijian student-participants were uncertain whether potential destination countries and foreign employers would recognise their tertiary qualifications. As a result of the Indian Fijian migratory culture, Indian Fijian migrant peers primarily invested in degree programmes from USP and hence, could not provide information about the transferability of TCF education. In addition, despite securing regional accreditation for TCF education, at the time of this research, Fijian policymakers marketed it as a ticket to the domestic workforce due to shortages in trained workers for the growing Tourism industry. To increase their probability of emigrating, Indian Fijian student-participants attending TCF intended to follow the Indian Fijian migratory culture by pursuing higher levels of tertiary education at USP or FNU after completing their certificates at TCF. Conversely, participant observations demonstrated these iTaukei student-participants lacked English proficiency. To emigrate, individuals have to either sit an English test or provide evidence that they are proficient in the language (Lien & Wang, 2005; NZImmigration, 2016). Since iTaukei student-participants enrolled at TCF had weak social ties, they did not know the importance of language skills for migration, thus lowering their probability to meet the 'English Language' criterion of the points systems. This suggests two things: first, the Indian Fijian migratory culture creates selection biases by encouraging Indian Fijian students to invest in USP qualifications that have the highest probability of meeting potential destination countries' entry requirements. Second, the strength of social ties coupled with migrant peers' level of education and tertiary institute affect their ability to disseminate information about the transferability of Fijian qualifications accurately.

Besides having imperfect information about external emigration barriers, Fijian student-participants identified several internal constraints and obstacles that further enhances the uncertainty of them following through with their emigration intentions.

However, whether they have temporary obstacles and permanent constraints differed between ethnic groups, and to a lesser extent, between skill-levels. The ‘type of impediments’ to their emigration intentions indicates the ‘type of brain gain effect’ the ethnic communities may be experiencing.

Temporary Brain Gain Effect among the Indian Fijian Community?

Indian Fijian student-participants primarily identified temporary internal obstacles to their emigration intentions which suggest that the Indian Fijian community in Fiji may be experiencing a ‘temporary brain gain effect.’ Their main concern was scholarships and student loan bonds as it reinforced budget constraints. Kaitani and colleagues (2011) claim that the ‘practice of bonding’ effectively retained high-skilled Fijians who were on overseas scholarships and hence, should be continued. However, the results of this study indicate that the practice of bonding may increase the rate of graduate unemployment in Fiji. Stark and Fan (2007, p. 3) argue that “graduates reservation wage in the domestic labour market increases their probability of working abroad.” Graduates unable to secure employment abroad are less likely to immerse themselves in the domestic workforces. Instead, they enter unemployment to make repeated attempts at securing employment in potential destination countries. The findings show that while not exclusively, Indian Fijian student-participants attending USP who invested in general skills are more likely to be unemployed in Fiji. But, they cannot merely ‘engage’ in unemployment as the Indian Fijian migratory culture expects them to enter the domestic workforce to relieve budget constraints which in this thesis, are reinforced by scholarship and student loan bonds, fulfil financial obligations and accumulate funds for their migration. Thus, they may temporarily enter domestic jobs that do not complement their qualifications. In contrast, graduate unemployment is not an issue for those attending TCF as currently, their skills are in demand by local as well as regional industries. Nevertheless, Indian Fijian students in this study developed a timeline for when they expected to alleviate budget constraints by fulfilling their bond agreements and financial obligations. This suggests that they may only defer their migration plans temporarily thereby negating the long-term brain gain effect.

Interestingly, despite not knowing much about the points system, Indian Fijian student-participants attending TCF recognised that their parents were less likely to

migrate due to their old age. Gardner et al. (1985) found that high-skilled Filipinos did not follow through with their emigration intentions because they wanted to live near their immediate family. However, the findings indicate that Indian Fijian student-participants enrolled at TCF had strong emigration intentions and hence, they devised a migration strategy which included their aged parents. This strategy entails migrating individually, sending remittances to support their aged parents financially, and searching for opportunities through which their aged parents can join them abroad. Thus, aged parents may also nullify the long-term brain gain effect.

Contrarily, one Indian Fijian student-participant attending TCF who saw a good job in Fiji as a permanent constraint to their emigration intentions was confronted with cognitive dissonance. On the one hand, migrant peers informed him potential destination countries offer higher wages through which he can financially support his parents as well as meet the high cost of living in Fiji. On the other hand, policymakers assured him that he would be able to secure a good job in Fiji after upskilling (Mudaliar, 2013). Therefore, as long as the current reforms create employment opportunities for graduates to maintain a decent quality of life in Fiji, policymakers may be able to countermand the brain drain effect that is so prominent among the Indian Fijian community.

Permanent Brain Gain Effect among the iTaukei Community?

ITaukei student-participants primarily identified permanent constraints to their emigration intentions which suggest that the iTaukei community may be experiencing a small, but potentially ‘permanent brain gain effect.’ As shown in figure 6, only one iTaukei student in this study completely abandoned her emigration plans because she had strong nationalistic obligations. In contrast, the majority of the iTaukei student-participants experienced cognitive dissonance between their motivations for emigrating and their indigeneity. However, migrant peers demonstrated that by sending remittances and returning to work in Fiji,¹⁵ they could

¹⁵ Scott (2003, p. 192) argues that iTaukei migrants are “beseeched by family members to come home and fulfil particular roles as well as responsibilities within their families and clans.” However, evidence from this study show that family members were not involved in creating the return effect. This could be because Fijian student-participants have yet to migrate, or they may not have discussed their emigration plans with family members.

maintain their indigeneity while living abroad and hence, these iTaukei student-participants formed temporary emigration intentions.

Nevertheless, there appears to be a higher level of uncertainty to iTaukei student-participants' emigration plans due to a number of reasons. First, they had asymmetrical information about their student loan bonds. iTaukei student-participants with student loans knew that they would not be able to migrate without fulfilling their bond obligations, i.e. repaying their borrowings and that job prospects differ for USP and TCF graduates in Fiji. The majority of them lacked information about the amount of their student loan, whether interest is applied will be applied to it, the amount that will be deducted annually from their salary for repayments and the repercussions for leaving the country without meeting their bond conditions. Consequently, iTaukei student-participants with student loans did not know when they may be able to migrate.

Second, often scholars studying the emigration patterns of Pacific people argue that the decision to migrate is made collectively whereby migrants are in an implicit social contract with their family members staying behind in origin countries (Barcham, Scheyvens, & Overton, 2009; Connell, 2006a; Connell & Brown, 1995). But the evidence indicates that old and young family members may induce iTaukei student-participants attending USP to defer their emigration plans for an extended period. Since the majority of iTaukei student-participants attending USP belonged to a high socio-economic class, their families did not expect them to supply remittances and hence, did not seem to encourage their migration.

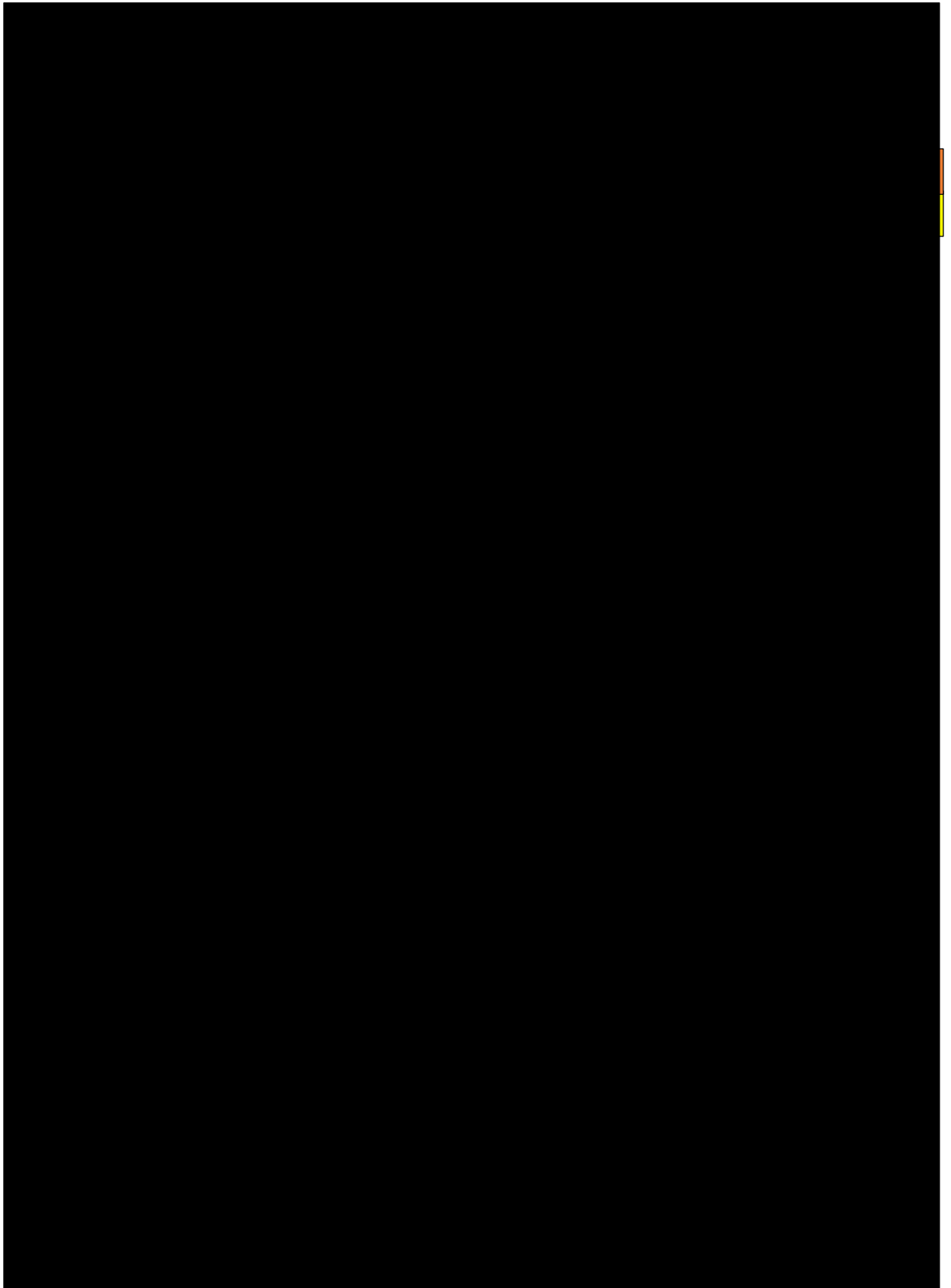
Last, although a significant body of literature stresses the role of migrant peers in establishing a chain migration and providing new immigrants assistance in finding employment as well as accommodation (Castles, 2000; Castles & Miller, 2009; Scott, 2003), the findings from this study show that migrant peers may serve as a barrier to iTaukei student-participants' emigration intentions by simply maintaining an illegal (or undocumented) status. It is possible that illegal migrant peers may prolong the process of obtaining essential travel documents thereby inducing them to abandon their emigration plans completely.

Internal constraints such as imperfect information about student loan bonds, old and young family members as well as illegal migrant peers may induce iTaukei student-

participants to defer their emigration plans for a long period. Additionally, because the criteria for obtaining visas through the skilled migration and worker categories change in response to the political and economic situation in potential destination countries, iTaukei student-participants' decision to defer their emigration plans may further lower their probability of emigrating in the future and eventually induce them to abandon it. Therefore, such high level of uncertainty to iTaukei student-participants' emigration intentions may generate a small, but long-term brain gain effect among the iTaukei community.

So far, the thesis has established that the uncertainty to Fijian student-participants' emigration intentions is high. Since Indian Fijian students have strong social ties, they were able to devise a well-developed migration strategy which incorporated solutions to overcome both external and internal barriers to their emigration intentions. Hence, the thesis suggests that the Indian Fijian community may be experiencing a temporary brain gain effect. In contrast, since iTaukei students have weak social ties, they were only able to devise a semi-migration strategy which included information about immigration policies being bias towards high-skilled individuals. Besides that, they had imperfect information about external and internal constraints to their emigration intentions. Consequently, the thesis suggests that the iTaukei community may be experiencing a small, but potentially permanent brain gain effect.

Figure 6. Analysis Matrix with Data.



Summary

In summary, the brain gain effect is present in Fiji. Seeing family and peers emigrate after completing their higher education at a local institute encouraged Fijian youths to invest in higher education, especially Indian Fijian students who ended up at the Technical College of Fiji (TCF) (see figure 6). However, the emigration strategies differed between ethnic groups and to a lesser extent, between skill-levels. Since Indian Fijian youths had strong social ties (e.g. high-skilled family-migrants and returnees), they had a well-developed migration strategy which included the local higher education pathway and a regional career strategy. In contrast, iTaukei youths who ended up at the University of the South Pacific had a semi-migration strategy which entailed a local career strategy. Their education pathway depended on the strength of their social ties. While a small proportion of iTaukei students that had strong social ties (e.g. internationally qualified low-skilled family-migrants) adopted the international higher education pathway, those with weak social ties (e.g. previous USP graduates) employed the local higher education pathway.

The three essential conditions for generating the brain gain effect are present in Fiji. First, there is a strong incentive effect as Fijian student-participants' incentives to emigrate were larger than the incentives. While technical youths intended to emigrate primarily for higher wages, university youths planned to emigrate for a better quality of life which included attaining international education, escaping their life in Fiji, accessing better employment opportunities, fulfilling parents' emigration intentions and joining their family abroad. Additionally, two cultures of migration are apparent among Fijian youths. The Indian Fijian migratory culture expected Indian Fijian youths to complete their tertiary education at a local institute, work in Fiji for a short period, and then emigrate. Conversely, the elitist iTaukei migratory culture expected iTaukei youths belonging to a high socio-economic class to emigrate by securing an international religious scholarship and then, return to work in Fiji. Moreover, the incentive effect would not have operated without the Fijian government's intervention. Although Fijian policymakers were unaware of this effect of migration, their decision to maintain an open emigration policy created the small brain drain effect that is essential for the circulation of emigration success stories and sustainability of the migratory cultures; to introduce education subsidies

alleviated the budget constraints to education investments; and to employ a no marks criterion for admission into the Technical College of Fiji enabled students who underperformed in their annual exams to respond to the incentive effect.

Second, the Fijian brain drain is small enough to induce human capital formation in Fiji. The characteristics of previous emigrants demonstrate that international migration is highly selective as immigration countries tend only to grant entry visas to those with a Bachelor's degree that is comparable to theirs, skills that are anticipated to contribute to their long-term economic growth, and financial resources. Third, the uncertainty to Fijian youths' emigration intentions is high. The majority of the students in this study had imperfect information about the constraints and obstacles to their emigration intentions. Since Indian Fijian student-participants have strong social ties, they were able to devise a well-developed migration strategy that included solutions to overcome both external and internal impediments to their permanent emigration intentions. Hence, the thesis suggests that a temporary brain gain effect may be present among the Indian Fijian community. Conversely, since most iTaukei student-participants have weak social ties with whom they maintained infrequent or no communication, they could only devise a semi-migration strategy which included attaining higher education and maintaining the iTaukei indigeneity while living abroad by sending remittances and then, returning to work in Fiji. Besides this, they had asymmetrical information about both external and internal constraints to their emigration intentions. Given the higher degree of uncertainty to iTaukei student-participants' emigration, the thesis suggests that the iTaukei community may be experiencing a small, but permanent brain gain effect. The next chapter concludes this thesis by situating the main findings in the wider migration-and-development debate and highlighting areas for further research.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

The previous chapter showed that past emigrants' experiences shaped the education decisions and emigration plans of tertiary students in Fiji in a number of ways which differed between ethnic groups and skill-levels. The central conclusion of this thesis is that the brain gain effect is present in Fiji because half of the student-participants responded to an incentive effect that was created by two cultures of migration and three of the Fijian government's initiatives. Since, these student-participants had asymmetrical information about the uncertainties to their emigration intentions, they may remain behind and contribute to development in Fiji. The brain gain effect was significant among Indian Fijian students who ended up at the Technical College of Fiji. This chapter discusses the wider significance of these inferences and points out avenues for future research.

In conventional wisdom, emigration was considered as problem of development (Bakewell, 2009). It was argued that emigration depleted the stock of human capital in developing countries which in turn, significantly lowered their development prospects (Reddy et al., 2004). Some scholars went as far as advocating for developed countries to financially compensate these nations for their losses (Bhagwati & Hamada, 1974). However, the recent optimism portrays emigration as a solution to development. Scholarship and policymaking emphasise the notion of beneficial brain drain which postulates that emigration causes a brain gain effect, i.e. a higher average level of education per individual in affected origin countries. This thesis focused on a relatively new element of the brain theory that proposes the opportunity of emigration creates significant incentives for youths to invest in higher education in affected origin countries.

This thesis used qualitative case study methods to move beyond the econometrics of correlation, and get closer to a causal explanation beyond a relatively new social action evident in Fiji: the brain gain effect. Previous empirical studies employed quantitative methods to determine the relationship between past emigration and current enrolment rates, and measure the magnitude of this brain gain effect. But, the notion of brain gain depends on assumptions about the causes of emigration, and the above investigations are better establishing correlation than causation. This thesis used qualitative case study methods to ask Fijian youths what they were doing and

why. In doing so, this thesis established that the increasing demand for higher education in Fiji is partially an outcome of a migratory culture.

Moreover, the beneficial brain drain literature stresses the importance of migrants' agency in producing the conditions favourable for development in origin countries (Castles, 2009), but overshadows the fact that certain government interventions may be essential for these conditions to operate and stimulate development. This thesis demonstrated that migrants' agency worked in concurrence with three initiatives implemented by the Fijian to produce the incentive effect. Despite being oblivious to this effect of migration, the Fijian government's decision to maintain an open emigration policy created a small brain drain effect through which emigration success stories circulated among Fijian youths, to subsidise higher education alleviated the liquidity constraints to education investments, and not to have a marks criterion for admitting students into the Technical College of Fiji allowed youths who underperformed in annual exams to respond to the incentive effect.

Furthermore, Solimano (2010) argues that international migration is highly selective as only those with financial and human capital can successfully emigrate. Hence, Naidu and colleagues (2014) are concerned that emigration may strip Fiji and other Pacific nations of their 'best and brightest. However, the 'quality' of graduates are measured using their academic performance in annual examinations and the rank of their tertiary institute which has led scholars to prematurely infer that largely 'low quality graduates' will remain behind after upskilling (Kapur & McHale, 2005). This thesis showed that Fijian youths that may stay behind temporarily due to their scholarship and student loan bonds has strong intentions of investing in higher levels of tertiary education after completing their certificates at the Technical College of Fiji. Although temporary, this suggests that some of the 'best and brightest' may engage in building institutions that are crucial for development in Fiji.

Contributions

This thesis makes two sets of contributions to the literature on migration, education and development; one, is empirical while the other, is more conceptual. On the one hand, it adds an empirical dimension to a largely theoretical debate on whether

emigration is a problem or solution to development. The thesis presents new empirical data describing a relatively novel social action that is evident in Fiji. Almost 60 tertiary students with different skill-levels and from different ethnic groups, two key policymakers- the Minister of Education and the Minister of Immigration, representatives of the Fijian Higher Education Commission and the Immigration Department, careers counsellors and teaching staff participated in the research. It also involved detailed field notes and the examination of policy and media reports. The thesis presents significant evidence from this rich body of qualitative research.

Such extensive dataset sheds light into a small and largely bias literature on the causes and patterns of Fijian emigration. Although recent research acknowledges that emigration from Fiji is becoming more skilled (Mohanty, 2006), much of the literature continues to associate Indian Fijians with high-skilled migration and iTaukei people with undocumented or illegal migration (Schubert, 2009; Scott, 2003). Such simplistic associations overshadow the emigration of low-skilled Indian Fijians and iTaukei professionals. By interviewing Fijian youths, this thesis found that the education decisions of Indian Fijian students attending TCF were influenced by the Indian Fijian migratory culture. Additionally, because most of the iTaukei students attending USP did not have the means to emulate the elitist iTaukei migratory culture, they adopted that emigration channel shown by the Indian Fijian migratory culture which entails upskilling, temporarily working in Fiji and then, emigrating.

On the other hand, the thesis proposed that two types of brain gain effect may be present in Fiji. Previous macro-studies show that although emigration induces human capital formation in affected origin countries, there are more countries losing than winning (Beine et al., 2011; Beine et al., 2008). It is argued that youths who upskill in response to the incentive effect tend to follow through with their emigration intentions, thus negating the brain gain effect. Despite including a proxy variable for emigration uncertainty such as an immigration quota or the points system in their models (Beine et al., 2001), these studies pay little attention to how different types of uncertainties shape tertiary students' emigration plans. The thesis found that strong social ties granted Indian Fijian students greater access to cultural capital through which they were able to devise a well-developed migration strategy that included

solutions for overcoming the potential external and internal obstacles to their permanent emigration intentions. Hence, this thesis proposed that the Indian Fijian community in Fiji may be experiencing a temporary brain gain effect. Conversely, most of iTaukei students could only devise a semi-developed migration strategy because they had imperfect information about potential barriers to their temporary emigration intentions. Given the high level of uncertainty to their emigration, this thesis proposed that the iTaukei community may be experiencing a small, but permanent brain gain effect. It is crucial to know the type of brain gain effect present in origin countries (or communities) because it has several implications for development and policymaking such as deciding whether origin countries would need to implement initiatives for correcting the incentives to invest in certain types of higher education, and whether they would need to devise a development policy strictly for individuals planning to stay in origin countries for a short period.

Limitations and Areas for Future Research

A crucial limitation of this research that needs to be considered is the focus on emigration intentions. While emigration intentions demonstrate that Fijian students have devised strategies to increase their probability of migrating and solutions to overcome their emigration barriers, their actual migration seems to be uncertain. Unlike other empirical investigations, this research could not determine whether the brain gain effect is detrimental or beneficial for development in Fiji. Thus, one area for future research is to ask whether or not Fijian youths follow through with their emigration plans. This would involve following up with the same Fijian youths at a later date, in some kind of a longitudinal study.

Additionally, a limitation of qualitative research is that sample size does not tend to represent the focus group. Since this thesis only adopted two comparative variables (skill-level and ethnic group), the findings cannot be generalised to the wider tertiary student population in Fiji. Therefore, another area for future research is to ask how does the skill composition of those staying behind after upskilling change once variables such as gender, tertiary institute and skill composition are included in the

study. This would involve interviewing students from Fiji's National University and the University of Fiji.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Victoria University of Wellington

Appendix 1b: Ethics Approval



Phone 0-4-463 5480
Email susan.corbett@vuw.ac.nz

MEMORANDUM

TO	Lakshmin Mudaliar
COPY TO	Alan Gamlen
FROM	AProf Susan Corbett, Convener, Human Ethics Committee
DATE	16 September 2015
PAGES	1
SUBJECT	Ethics Approval: 22300 Brain Gain with a Brain Drain: How do past migrants' experiences determine Fijian students' migration plans?

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Standing Committee of the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved from the above date and this approval continues until 12 July 2018. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Kind regards



Susan Corbett
Convener, Victoria University Human Ethics Committee

Appendix 1b: Participant Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet

Project Title: Brain Gain with a Brain Drain- (How) does past emigration shape the education and migration decisions of people remaining in Fiji.

Researcher: Lakshmin Mudaliar, School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Bula and Namaste, I, Lakshmin Mudaliar, am a Masters student in Human Geography at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. As part of my Master's degree, I am undertaking a research project that focuses on the role of past migrants' experiences in shaping the education and migration decisions of first-year USP and TCF students in Suva, Fiji. It will examine two core elements: (1) why do Fijian students invest in higher education; and (2) whether Fijian students intend to emigrate after completing their tertiary education. My research has been approved by Victoria University of Wellington's Human Ethics Committee.

For this project, I invite your participation in an individual interview. Your participation is voluntary and the interview should not take longer than 45 minutes. During the interview, with your permission, your responses will be audio-recorded, and written-up at a later date. If at any point during the interview you do not wish to answer a question, you have the right to refuse. You may also request the tape-recorder to be turned off, or withdraw from the interview altogether without having to give reasons. You will have two weeks, starting from when the interview was conducted, to withdraw from the research and information that you shared will not be used.

The information you share with me will be kept confidential; unless I am given the permission to use your name or title. All data will be stored indefinitely in password-protected electronic files which will only be accessible to me and my supervisor, Dr. Alan Gamlen. You may request a summary or recording of your interview and this will be either emailed or posted to you upon completion of the project. The final thesis will be submitted for marking to the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences on 12/07/2016. The findings will be available at VUW library and there is a possibility that it will be submitted for publication in scholarly journals.

Should you have any questions regarding my project, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor at:

Researcher: lakshmin.mudaliar@vuw.ac.nz or +642102559385

Supervisor: Alan.Gamlen@vuw.ac.nz or +6444636117

Vinaka Vaka Levu and Dhanyavaad.

Appendix 1c: Participant Consent Form (Fijian student-participants)



Interview Consent Form (Students)

Project Title: Brain Gain with a Brain Drain- (How) Do past emigrants' experiences shape the education and migration decisions of people remaining in Fiji.

Researcher: Lakshmin Mudaliar, School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Bula and Namaste, you have been requested to participate in a research conducted by Lakshmin Mudaliar. The study focuses on the role of past migrants' experiences in shaping education and migration decisions of first-year USP and TCF students in Suva, Fiji. The findings will be used in Lakshmin's Master's thesis as well as for later publications.

Personal Declaration

1. I am over the age of 18.
2. I have read the information sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.
3. I understand that I can withdraw from this project without giving reasons by emailing or calling Lakshmin by 2/02/2016. I understand that if I withdraw from the study, any information I provide will be destroyed and will not be used in the analysis.
4. I understand that any information I provide will be kept confidential, that the published results will not use my name, and that no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me, unless I give permission to do so.

Please indicate (by ticking the boxes below) which of the following apply:

- ☐ I agree to this interview being audio recorded
- ☐ I give permission for my opinions to be recognised by (circle one):
- My name/ My title/ listed as a 'participant'
- ☐ I wish to have a summary/recording of my interview provided to me after the research

Name of participant: _____

Email address: _____

Address: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Vinaka and Dhanyavaad.

Appendix 1d: Participant Consent Form (Government Officials)



Interview Consent Form (Government Officials)

Project Title: Brain Gain with a Brain Drain- (How) Do past emigrants' experiences shape the education and migration decisions of people remaining in Fiji.

Researcher: Lakshmin Mudaliar, School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Bula and Namaste, you have been requested to participate in a research conducted by Lakshmin Mudaliar. The study focuses on the role of past migrants' experiences in shaping education and migration decisions of first-year USP and TCF students in Suva, Fiji. The findings will be used in Lakshmin's Master's thesis as well as for later publications.

Personal Declaration

1. I have read the information sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.
2. I understand that I can withdraw from this project without giving reasons by emailing or calling Lakshmin by 2/02/2016. I understand that if I withdraw from the study, any information I provide will be destroyed and will not be used in the analysis.
3. I understand that I will be able to review my interview transcript before it is analysed.
4. I understand that any information I provide will be kept confidential, that the published results will not use my name, and that no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me, unless I give permission to do so.

Please indicate (by ticking the boxes below) which of the following apply:

- ☐ I agree to this interview being audio recorded
- ☐ I give permission for my opinions to be recognised by (circle one):
My name/ My title
- ☐ I wish to have a summary/recording of my interview provided to me upon completion of the project

Name of participant: _____

Email address: _____

Address: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Vinaka and Dhanyavaad.

Appendix 2: Fiji Islands

Appendix 2a: Research Permit



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, HERITAGE & ARTS

Quality Education for Change, Peace and Progress



Resident Address: Marela House, 19 Thurston Street, Suva, Fiji.

Ph: (679) 3314477

Postal Address: Private Mail Bag, Government Buildings, Suva, Fiji.

Fax: (679) 3303511

Our Reference: RA 36/15

Date: 29th September 2015

Ms Lakshmin Aashnum Mudaliar
Victoria University of Wellington
New Zealand.

Re: **Official Approval to Conduct Research in Fiji**

Dear Ms Mudaliar

We are pleased to inform you that the approval for the request to conduct research in Fiji has been granted on the topic: **"Brain gain in Fiji: (How) Do past emigrants' experiences shape the education and migration decisions of remaining Fijians?"**

The approval is granted for October – December 2015 as specified in your request.

It is also noted that in this research, you will be working closely with the Ministry of Education who would be assisting you with facilitating your research. Please liaise with the relevant personnel and organizations with regards to the logistics and the conduct of your research and be further advised that the Government of Fiji's legislations, procedures, policies and protocols must be unreservedly adhered to.

As a condition for the research approval, a copy of the final research report must be submitted to the Ministry of Education (MoE) through this office upon completion, before the commencement of any publication. Only after the MoE Research & Ethics Council has endorsed the report, shall you be allowed to do any publication of the report. The report will be reserved in the MoE Research Library and will be availed for reference by Senior Ministry and Government officials.

Moreover, it is important to note that the Ministry of Education reserves a right to publish the final report or an edited summary of it.

We further wish you success in your research project.



.....
Parmeshwar Mohan (Mr)

for **Permanent Secretary for Education, Heritage & Arts.**

cc. MoE Research File

Appendix 2b: Ethics Approval from the University of the South Pacific



The University of the South Pacific
Private Mail Bag, Laucala Campus
Suva, Fiji

Ph: (679) 323 2397
Fax: (679) 323 1504
Email: research@usp.ac.fj
www.research.usp.fj

Our Ref: Ms. Lakshmin Aashnum Mudaliar/2015/

To: Ms. Lakshmin Mudaliar
School of Geography, Environment & Earth Sciences
Victoria University of Wellington
Kelburn Campus

Date: 8th October 2015

Re: Human Ethics Application

Dear Ms. Lakshmin

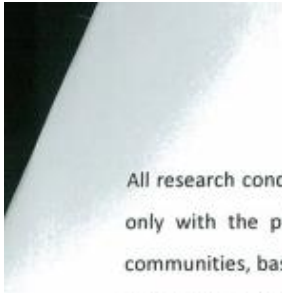
The human ethics application for the following research project has been approved by the University Research Office.

Title: Brain gain in Fiji? (How) Do past emigrants' experiences shape education and migration plans for remaining Fijians?

Principal Researcher: Lakshmin Mudaliar

School: Geography, Environment & Earth Sciences

The ethical values and principles apply to all University activities, to all its staff and student researchers including those visiting for short periods, and to any research agreements or partnerships that the University establishes. The University's human ethics will be compliant with the laws of individual University member states, particularly in relation to privacy, confidentiality, ownership, intellectual property requirements, research permit requirements and human rights.



All research conducted by persons affiliated with the University of the South Pacific will be carried out only with the prior, free, and informed consent of all persons concerned, whether individuals or communities, based on adequate information. The consent may be withdrawn by a particular individual or community at any time for any reason without disadvantage or prejudice.

Where research involving human subjects/participants is proposed by a researcher at the University of the South Pacific, agreement must be obtained from a fraction of those subjects or their spokespersons in advance of the proposal being submitted to the University Research Ethics Committee, who will require written evidence of such an agreement. Where appropriate, this must be translated into a language that is readily comprehended by potential participants. The rights of participants must be emphasized, their questions all satisfactorily answered.

Please note that it is the researcher's responsibility to submit relevant application forms for Research permit purposes. These must be submitted as annexes with the first progress report form. Also, be reminded that progress reports are expected at end of six-month period throughout the duration of the project.

Congratulations and all the best for your research project!



Professor Derrick Armstrong

A/g Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and International

The University of the South Pacific

Laucala Campus, Suva.

Fiji Islands.

Appendix 3: Semi-structured Interview Questions

Appendix 3a: Fijian student-participants

Introduction: Name, where you grew up, which primary and secondary school did you go to?

1. How did you decide to enrol at USP/TCF?
2. What programme are you enrolled in here (USP/TCF)? Why may have chosen to enrol in this programme?
3. Why is tertiary education important to you?

Incentive Effect

1. Has an immediate (brother/ sister/ mother/ father) completed a tertiary education in Fiji? (who)
2. What have they done afterwards?
3. Have they migrated or thought of it?
4. Has your brother/sister/mother/ father emigrated after completing his/her tertiary education in Fiji?
 - Probe: When, where, why
 - Probe: did this affect your decision to enrol at USP/TCF?
 - Probe: Do you think you will able to get a job in Fiji after finishing university? Why or why not?

Intentions of Migrating

1. What do you think you will do after completing your education? OR What did you want to do when you first enrolled at USP/TCF? What do you want are you ambitions now?
2. Do you think you will migrate?
 - Probe: Where, have you been to these countries before, why
 - Probe: (if intending to migrate) what kind of plans have you made for your migration?
 - Probe: (if intending to stay) why do you want to stay in Fiji?
3. Overall, what do you think about well-educated Fijians migrating abroad?

Imperfect Information

1. Do you think you will be able to successfully migrate?
2. What do you think will stop you from migrating?
3. Do you know anything about the processes involved in getting visas, migration restrictions and how tertiary qualifications are assessed abroad?
4. If you do plan to migrate permanently, do you think you will come back to Fiji?

Demographics: gender, age, race, number of siblings and parents' level of education (determines socio-economic status).

Other probes: you mentioned this... can you tell me more; what do you think about this; how do you feel about this....

End: (turn-off the recorder) would you like share anything else with me? Do you have any questions? Can I include this (something said) in my project?

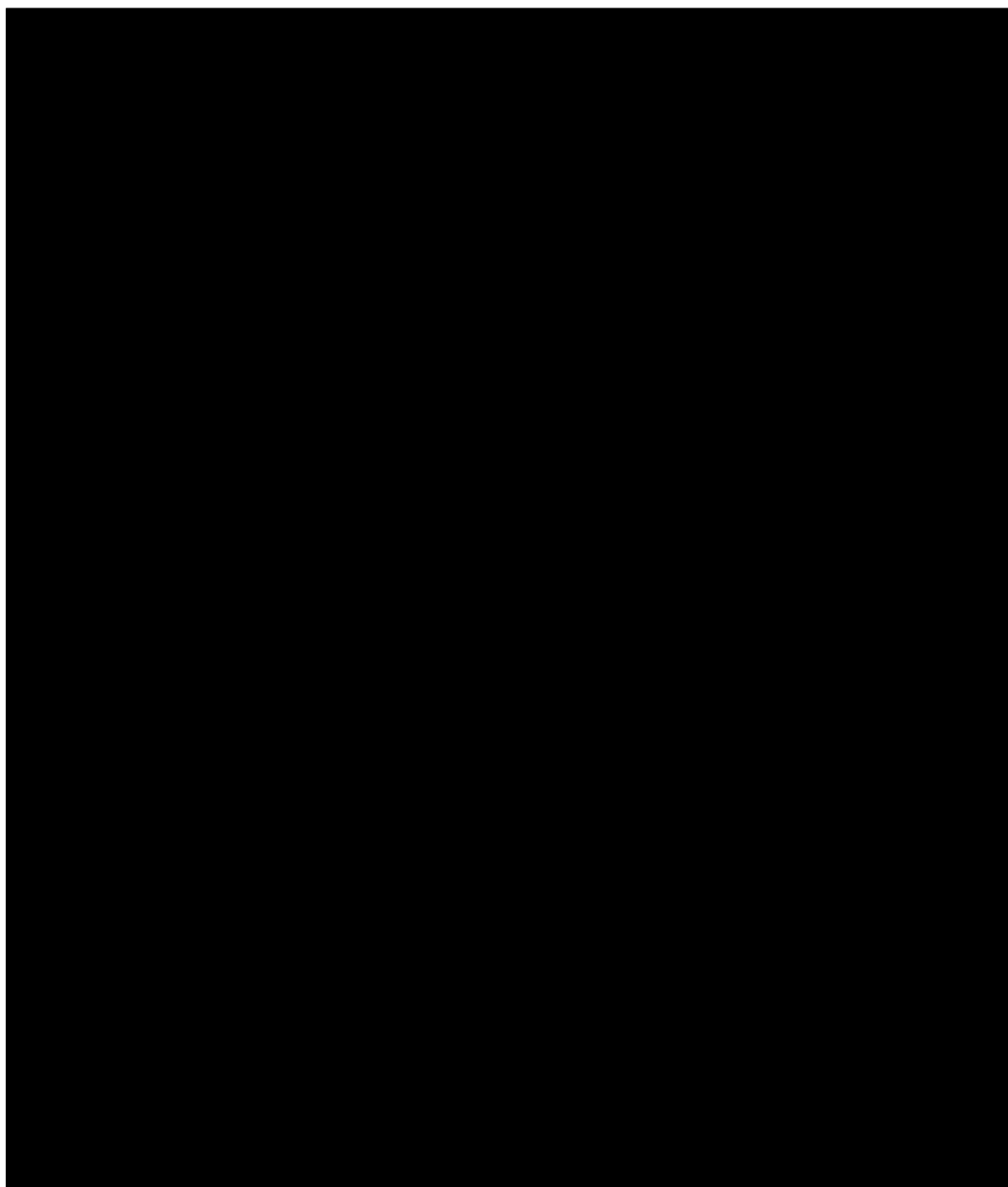
Appendix 3b: Government Officials

Introduce the topic: brain gain

1. What do you believe is the relationship between education and migration? Do you think migration can have beneficial effects for Fiji?
2. How has this phenomenon developed over the years?
3. How, do you think TELS has increased the availability and accessibility of tertiary education?
 - Probe: Do you think it has had a significant impact on enrolment rates?
 - Probe: How do you think it contributes to the idea of brain gain?
4. What (migration/ education) policies have been implemented to address brain drain/ enhance brain gain?
 - Probe: Do you think they have had a significant impact?
5. How do you think emigrants and their success stories encourage Fijian students to enrol in higher education?
6. What factors do you think encourage young Fijians to migrate? What factors do you think encourages them to stay in Fiji?
7. Do you think education from certain institutes- e.g. USP, TCF, UniFiji & FNU- affect Fijians' migration decisions?
 - Probe: How?
 - Probe: Do you think education provided by each institute is valued differently?
8. Overall, what is your opinion on this issue?

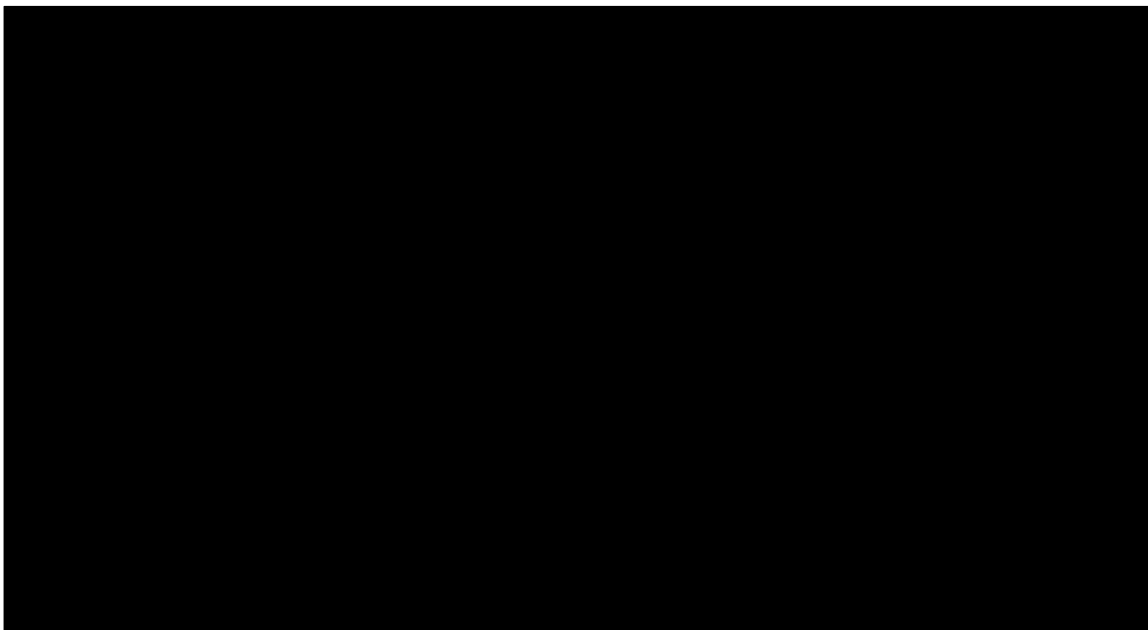
Appendix 4: Regional Skill Demands

Appendix 4a: Skill Shortages in New Zealand



Source: New Zealand Now (2016).

Appendix 4b: Skill Shortages in Australia



Source: Australian Government, Department of Employment (2016).