



Ho'ākea 'Ikena*

Educational Attainment among Native Hawaiians

Executive Summary

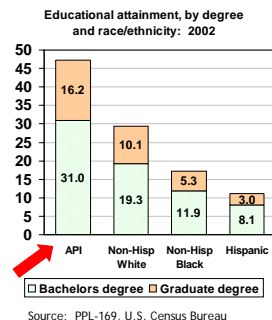
Statistics related to educational attainment can lead to considerable confusion, especially when the statistics differ across sources. A case in point is the recent data product released by the Census Bureau regarding college completion among Hawaiians.

Example: CPS (Current Population Survey)

Considerations

- Sample size ?
- Detailed race ?
- Multiple race ?
- Geography ?

What is the correct level of Hawaiian educational attainment?



Source: PPL-169, U.S. Census Bureau

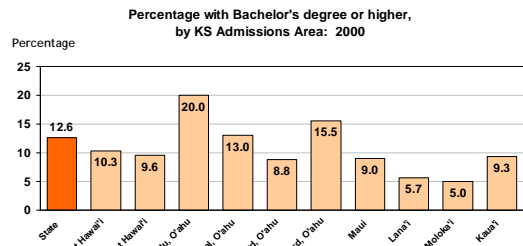
The Census product above (PPL-169) has four characteristics that limit statistical interpretation:

- The **small sample size** introduces a large margin of error.
- No **detailed race** (Native Hawaiian) is reported. Instead, Hawaiians are lumped in the "Asian and Pacific Islander" category.
- Survey respondents were permitted to report **one race only**, potentially obscuring many Hawaiians who are of multiple races.
- The small sample size disallows state-level statistics and **geographic detail** for Hawai'i.

Other large-scale national surveys have similar limitations. Few can offer the level of detail (race and geography) that result in reliable statistics.

Aloha Counts—Census 2000 special tabulations for Native Hawaiians at the high-school complex level—shed light on the true educational attainment of the state's Native Hawaiian population. As measured by the completion of a bachelor's degree, one finds that large differences in educational achievement exist across the state.

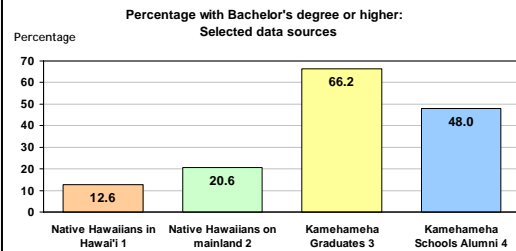
Aloha Counts



Source: Aloha Counts, Kamehameha Schools.

- **One in five** adults in the **Honolulu** Admissions District has earned a college degree.
- In the Kohala (West Hawai'i) high-school complex, 3.1 percent of adults have a bachelor's degree compared to **29.3** percent in the **Kaiser** (Honolulu, O'ahu) high-school complex (not shown in graph).

KS & National Statistics Compared



[1] Aloha Counts, Kamehameha Schools.
[2] Census 2000, Summary File 4, based on 40 states and the District of Columbia.
[3] High School and Beyond Study, Kamehameha Schools.
[4] Kamehameha Schools Alumni Survey.

Other sources, which vary by geographic detail and KS affiliation, also play an important role in highlighting important differences.

- Census 2000's Summary File 4 (SF4) shows that 20.6 percent of Hawaiians residing on the mainland had a bachelor's degree compared to 12.6 percent of those living in Hawai'i.
- The KS High School and Beyond Study suggests that two-thirds of recent KS graduates have completed college, while the KS Alumni Survey reports that nearly half (48.0 percent) had earned a bachelor's degree or higher.

* Ho'ākea 'Ikena means "to broaden knowledge."

Overview

How does one obtain the most precise data on educational attainment among Native Hawaiians? For researchers and policy makers, the difficulty of finding, understanding, and using U.S. Census data is an ongoing challenge.

For example, the U.S. Census Bureau recently announced the release of “Educational Attainment in the United States: March 2001 and March 2002” (PPL-169). This new data table package provides a multitude of statistics on education in our country, including great disparities in educational attainment among various ethnic groups. The statistics from the press release have been bandied about in the national press and have caused some people to voice concerns over educational deficiencies among certain populations. However, others are left scratching their heads and wondering, “Where do these numbers come from and what they mean to me?”

This report is an effort to a) offer important points to consider when interpreting new statistics, b) place the recent Census Bureau product in context, c) describe how *Aloha Counts* offers an alternative measure to help us better understand the current state of educational attainment among Native Hawaiians, and d) discuss both the implications of these statistics and some “next steps” in our continuing efforts to monitor and gauge the Hawaiian educational experience.

Interpreting Statistics

When encountering new statistics related to the Native Hawaiian population, it is essential to consider four important features of the data on which the statistics are based: 1) sample size; 2) detailed race categories; 3) multiple-race reporting; and 4) geographic detail.

Sample size refers to the number of individuals who participated in the survey or census on which the data are based. For national surveys, it is imperative that a large number of respondents be fielded in order to include a sufficient number of Native Hawaiians. Only then can statistical inferences be made. Specifically, we should ask: “Is the sample size of this survey sufficient for us to develop reasonable statistics about the Native Hawaiian population?”

Many surveys ask or report only aggregated race/ethnic groups, such as “Asian or Pacific Islander.” Given the mammoth diversity of Asians and Pacific Islanders, one is hard-pressed to draw conclusions about the Native Hawaiian population within this group. Therefore, we seek **detailed race categories** that separate “Native Hawaiian” from other race/ethnic groups.

Similarly, it is important that the surveys permit respondents to report more than one race. Because only one-third of all Hawaiians are of a single race, **multiple-race reporting** allows researchers to develop statistics that refer to *all* Native Hawaiians.

Finally, because roughly 40 percent of the Native Hawaiian population live outside of the state of Hawai‘i, data must offer sufficient **geographic detail** to sustain comparisons between different regions of the country, as well as within the state.

PPL-169 in a Nutshell

The data presented in the new Census Bureau table package come from the March Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly national survey administered to roughly 60,000 households each year.¹ Some of the findings from the 2002 survey are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Educational attainment in the United States among the population 25 years and older, by broad ethnic group: 2002

| Ethnic group | % with a high school diploma or higher | % with a bachelor's degree or higher | % with a graduate or professional degree |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Non-Hispanic White | 88.7 | 29.4 | 10.1 |
| Non-Hispanic Black | 79.2 | 17.2 | 5.3 |
| Asian and Pacific Islander | 87.4 | 47.2 | 16.2 |
| Hispanic | 57.0 | 11.1 | 3.0 |

Source: PPL-169, U.S. Census Bureau
Data: March 2002 Current Population Survey

¹ The U.S. Census Bureau produces many reports based on data *other than* the decennial population and housing censuses, such as the Current Population Survey, the American Community Survey, and the Economic Census of the United States.

When we consider high school completion, the statistics show that nearly 90 percent of Non-Hispanic Whites and Asians and Pacific Islanders hold a high school diploma (or the equivalent), compared to 79 percent of Non-Hispanic Blacks and 57 percent of Hispanics. Completion rates at the college level show a noticeable shift, with nearly half of all Asians and Pacific Islanders holding a bachelor’s degree, compared with 29 percent of Non-Hispanic Whites, 17 percent of Non-Hispanic Blacks and 11 percent of Hispanics. This trend persists at the graduate and professional degree level as well: 16 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders, 10 percent of Non-Hispanic Whites, five percent of Non-Hispanic Blacks and three percent of Hispanics.

These statistics would suggest that Native Hawaiians—who are included in the broad “Asians and Pacific Islanders” category—fare well with respect to educational outcomes. Unfortunately, the statistics above can be misleading. Consider the following: (a) the CPS limits respondents to only one response for the race question, which may obscure from recognition the vast numbers of Native Hawaiians of multiple ethnic and racial backgrounds; (b) the CPS combines all Asians and Pacific Islanders into a single group, effectively masking the profound differences viewed among the races that constitute it, such as Japanese, Filipinos, Native Hawaiians and Asian Indians; and (c) the survey design of the CPS, which randomly samples roughly 60,000 households each year, does not lend itself to reliable estimates of small

populations or estimates at the state level. Consequently, when examining educational attainment among Native Hawaiians, we must look to other data sources for a more complete story.

Other Sources

Fortunately, alternative data exist. Presently, Census 2000 provides state-level data for select racial and ethnic groups in its product Summary File 3 (SF3). These data tables circumvent two of the three limitations of the CPS listed above by separating Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders from the many Asian races and by providing data at both the national, state and substate levels. Table 2 presents the percentage of individuals, ages 25 and older, who have acquired a bachelor’s degree or higher, using Census 2000 data and more detailed race categories.

These data tell a different story than those presented earlier. In Table 2, the statistics show that, when viewed separately from Asians, the percentage of Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders who complete college is among the lowest of all race/ethnic groups (14 percent), second only to Hispanics (10 percent). When we focus only on the state of Hawai’i, Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders occupy the lowest rank among those who have obtained a bachelor’s degree (12 percent), displacing Hispanics (13 percent).

Table 2 also shows the percentage of individuals possessing bachelor’s degrees on the mainland, by each racial/ethnic group. Native Hawaiians and

Table 2. Educational attainment among the population 25 years and older, by race and geography: 2000

| Race/Ethnicity | United States | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|------------|------|------------------|-----------------------------|------|------------------|-----------------------------|------|
| | Total | Bachelor’s | | Continental U.S. | | | State of Hawai’i | | |
| | | | | Total | Bachelor’s degree or higher | | Total | Bachelor’s degree or higher | |
| | | Number | Pct. | | Number | Pct. | | Number | Pct. |
| Non-Hispanic White (alone)* | 133,786,263 | 36,060,622 | 27.0 | 133,579,443 | 35,983,410 | 26.9 | 206,820 | 77,212 | 37.3 |
| Black or African American (alone)* | 19,858,095 | 2,831,269 | 14.3 | 19,845,976 | 2,828,724 | 14.3 | 12,119 | 2,545 | 21.0 |
| Asian (alone)* | 6,640,671 | 2,925,743 | 44.1 | 6,261,985 | 2,825,061 | 45.1 | 378,686 | 100,682 | 26.6 |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders (alone)* | 206,675 | 28,498 | 13.8 | 144,745 | 21,197 | 14.6 | 61,930 | 7,301 | 11.8 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 18,270,377 | 1,908,039 | 10.4 | 18,229,426 | 1,902,579 | 10.4 | 40,951 | 5,460 | 13.3 |

Source: Census 2000, SF3, Tables P148B-1

* “Alone” refers to individuals who replied to the Census 2000 race question with a single response. That is, individuals who reported multiple races are not included in the statistics presented here.

Other Pacific Islanders who reside in the continental United States are over 20 percent more likely than those in the state of Hawai'i to have completed college. Further, the percentage of Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders to do so (14.6 percent) exceeds that of both African Americans (14.3 percent)² and Hispanics (10 percent) on the mainland.

Although the data from SF3 provide greater clarity, they, too, are limited by the adherence to single-race reporting and “lumping” together Native Hawaiians with “Other Pacific Islanders.” Given that the majority of Native Hawaiians reported more than one race in Census 2000, the SF3 data fall short of a complete picture. Further, these data should be distinct from those of Pacific Islanders, in general. Kamehameha Schools’ PASE team developed *Aloha Counts: Census 2000 Special Tabulations for Native Hawaiians* to address these shortcomings.

Aloha Counts

Aloha Counts provides general demographic, social, economic and housing characteristics for the Native Hawaiian population for the state and by high-school complex geographic levels. These tabulations were compiled by PASE through a

Table 3. Educational attainment in the state of Hawai'i among the Native Hawaiian population,* ages 25 and older: 2000

| | Number | Pct. |
|---|----------------|--------------|
| Total | 121,375 | 100.0 |
| Less than 9th grade | 4,155 | 3.4 |
| 9th to 12th grade, no diploma | 14,035 | 11.6 |
| High school graduate (includes equivalency) | 52,400 | 43.2 |
| Some college, no degree | 27,125 | 22.3 |
| Associate degree | 8,350 | 6.9 |
| Bachelor's degree | 11,410 | 9.4 |
| Graduate or professional degree | 3,905 | 3.2 |
| High school graduate or higher | 103,185 | 85.0 |
| Bachelor's degree or higher | 15,315 | 12.6 |

Source: Aloha Counts: Census 2000 special tabulations for Native Hawaiians, The Kamehameha Schools.

* A Native Hawaiian is defined as any individual who reported “Native Hawaiian” on the Census 2000 form, whether alone or as one of multiple other races listed.

² The difference between the percentage of Native-Hawaiian bachelor's degree holders and African-American bachelor's degree holders is statistically significant.

special contract with the U.S. Census Bureau. Aloha Counts offers the most precise estimate of educational attainment among the entire Native Hawaiian population in Hawai'i. These are reflected in Table 3.

Aloha Counts should be viewed alongside additional data sources that contribute to continued examination of these issues. For example, the release of the Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF4)—which provides detailed social, economic and demographic data for specific race groups (both alone and in combination with other races)—will alleviate some obstacles to comparisons across ethnic groups. Also, the Census 2000 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) file permits more nuanced analyses of educational outcomes among various populations between Hawai'i as well as the continental United States. In addition, Kamehameha Schools’ annual Hawaiian Community Survey (HCS), conducted by PASE, provides current information regarding the educational achievement, expectations, and obstacles of the state’s Native Hawaiian population.

The Economics of Education

These statistics provide a snapshot of the potential perpetuation of economic disadvantage among Native Hawaiians in years to come. Educational attainment is certainly not the only measure of “success,” but studies show that the higher the education, the greater the economic returns. For example, 69 percent of Native Hawaiians with college degrees are employed full-time, compared to only 55 percent for those with a high school diploma, and 30 percent for those with less than a high school education (based on HCS findings).

Furthermore, higher levels of education usually result in higher income. Native Hawaiians who graduated from college have a median income of \$43,000, compared to \$17,500 for high school graduates and \$11,000 for those without a high school diploma (Census 2000 Supplementary Survey).

The outcomes presented here shed light on the educational and economic well-being of Native Hawaiians today. However one defines success, the overall well-being of individuals, communities and the Hawaiian population is directly related to educational attainment and the acquisition of knowledge. For questions regarding this report, please contact Nolan Malone, Research Scientist, at (808) 534-3849 or nomalone@ksbe.edu.

by Nolan Malone