

**CULTURE-BASED  
EDUCATION**

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# Ho'omau i nā 'Ōpio

Field-Test Findings of the nā 'Ōpio: Youth Development and Asset Survey

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## Overview

The Ho'omau i nā 'Ōpio ('Ōpio) project is a collaborative study that seeks to identify the contributing factors of positive development among Native Hawaiian and local youth.

## Background

Much of the research about Native Hawaiian youth has been based on a deficits model highlighting shortcomings of the Hawaiian population. Recognizing the importance of a culturally appropriate and strengths-based learning environment as a route to academic success, Kamehameha Schools partnered with several Hawaiian culture-based charter schools and Search Institute to develop a custom survey to better understand and support the development of Native Hawaiian youth (Tibbetts, Kahakalau, & Johnson, 2007). The final survey allows users to identify a variety of student assets, examine the contributions of the schools and programs to student assets, and identify opportunities to further strengthen student assets.

The development of the 'Ōpio survey included:

1. Retaining selected scales and items from Search Institute to facilitate external benchmarking of results.
2. Improving the internal consistency of the measures to support measuring change over time.
3. Introducing scales that specifically reflect Hawaiian cultural perspectives on positive youth development.

## The Survey

The final 'Ōpio survey is comprised of the Hawaiian Cultural Connectedness scale (HCC), modified Search Institute (SI) assets scales, and the modified Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale.

## Hawaiian Cultural Connectedness Scale

Hawaiian-focused schools and programs play a critical role in fostering a positive attachment to Hawaiian culture. The Hawaiian Culture Connectedness scale includes the following subscales:

Figure 1. Hawaiian Cultural Connectedness Subscales	
Construct	This construct indicates:
<i>Connection to 'āina</i>	The extent to which the 'āina (land) is a part of a person's self-identity. Individuals respond to questions about their feelings, attitudes, and behavior toward the 'āina.
<i>Cultural values &amp; attachment</i>	Cultural affiliation and the internalization of Hawaiian values such as: aloha (compassion), kuleana (responsibility), lōkahi (harmony), and mālama 'āina (stewardship).
<i>Connection to 'ohana</i>	Quality family relationships. Individuals respond to questions about joint family activities as well as the level of care, guidance, and support they give and receive from extended family networks.
<i>Cultural knowledge &amp; practice</i>	Familiarity and active participation in cultural practices such as chanting, native healing, ho'okupu (making offerings), studying genealogy, and lo'i kalo (taro farming).
<i>Cultural issues engagement</i>	Awareness and engagement with socio-political issues: sovereignty, native gathering rights, protection of wahi pana (cultural sites), and Hawaiian language revitalization.
<i>Hawaiian language</i>	Fluency in Hawaiian language. Individuals self-assess their ability to speak and understand Hawaiian, along with how well they are able to enact cultural protocol in Hawaiian.

### Search Institute Derived Scales

The second part of the survey is comprised of the SI scales described in Figure 2. These scales were selected because they reflect the ways schools most directly impact students’ development (Starkman, Scales, & Roberts, 2006). The exception is the modified spirituality scale which was included because spirituality is an important aspect of a Hawaiian worldview. Many of these scales were modified slightly from their original forms with edits for increased clarity for the target population. In addition, the response scales were expanded to enhance internal consistency and sensitivity to change over time.

### Modified Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is widely used to measure the global self-esteem, or self-worth and self-acceptance, of adolescents. The scale is comprised of a balance of positively and negatively stated items about self-worth. In the ‘Ōpio survey, two items were eliminated from the full ten-item scale based on scale reliability from the pilot test (Scales, 2008). These changes are consistent with recommendations for modifications based on other research with indigenous and minority groups (e.g., Miyamoto et al., 2001; Schmitt & Allik, 2005).

**Figure 2. Search Institute Derived Scales**

Construct	This Construct Indicates:
<i>Achievement motivation</i>	The student is motivated to do well in school.
<i>Active learning</i>	The students’ preparedness with schoolwork and how hard they work in school.
<i>Bonding to school</i>	The student cares about his/her school.
<i>Caring school climate</i>	Relationships with teachers and peers at school provide a caring, encouraging environment.
<i>Environmental stewardship</i>	How often the student participates in an activity to protect the environment and natural resources.
<i>Frequency of volunteerism</i>	How often a student volunteers to help other people or the community.
<i>High expectations</i>	Both parents and teachers encourage that the students do their best at school.
<i>Parent involvement in schooling</i>	How often an adult is involved in the students’ schoolwork and school activities.
<i>Positive orientation to schoolwork</i>	The students’ positive feelings toward school and schoolwork.
<i>Prosocial values</i>	High levels of social awareness. Students responded to questions dealing with socially oriented values, such as helping others, keeping their family’s cultures and traditions alive, and protecting the environment.
<i>Quality of youth programs</i>	The youth programs provide opportunities to learn skills like teamwork, leadership, conflict management, and decision-making. The student has opportunities to build warm and trusting relationships with peers and/or adults.
<i>School engagement</i>	The student is actively involved in learning.
<i>Service to others</i>	How often the student serves in the community.
<i>Spiritual development</i>	The student’s faith in a higher power and the influence of spiritual beliefs in guiding the behavior of the participating student.
<i>Youth programs</i>	The student participates in at least three hours of youth programs a week, including extra curricular activities like teams sports, school-sponsored clubs and groups, or organizations outside of school.

Figure 3. Findings from the nā ‘Ōpio:  
Youth Development & Assets Field-Test Survey

% of students experiencing asset			
	Middle School <sup>1</sup>	High School <sup>1</sup>	Search Institute Benchmarks <sup>2</sup>
Construct	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12	Grades 6-12
<b>Hawaiian Cultural Connectedness Scale</b>			
Hawaiian language	39	41	n/a <sup>3</sup>
Connection to the ‘āina	72	60	n/a
Connection to ‘ohana	66	51	n/a
Hawaiian values and attachment	68	54	n/a
Engagement in Hawaiian issues	49	53	n/a
Engagement in Hawaiian practices	49	55	n/a
<b>Search Institute Derived Scales</b>			
<b>About My School</b>			
Caring school climate	45	34	29
Bonding to school	51	35	52
High expectations	77	66	48
<b>About Me in School</b>			
Achievement motivation	89	81	65
School engagement	45	22	55
Active learning	68	48	n/a
Positive orientation to school work	39	16	n/a
<b>About My Family</b>			
Parent involvement in schooling	50	30	29
<b>About My Beliefs &amp; Values</b>			
Spiritual development	55	44	n/a
Service to others	33	23	48
Frequency of volunteerism	57	52	n/a
Environmental stewardship	79	73	n/a
Prosocial values	76	60	50
<b>About My Activities</b>			
Participation in youth programs	85	84	57
Quality of youth programs	50	48	n/a
<b>Modified Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale</b>			
<b>About Me</b>			
Self-esteem	59	53	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,874</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>150,000</b>

1. Students are compared in this manner (Middle & High) to ensure consistency among reporting to the major educational groups that participated in the survey: EES (n=1002), KS campuses (n=1219) and Hawaiian-focused charters (n=464) & Kula Kaiapuni (n=171).
2. The Search Institute Benchmarks includes nearly 150,000 6th–12th graders from more than 200 continental U.S. communities who completed the Attitudes & Behavior survey in calendar year 2003. Benchmarks are provided only where Search Institute analysis indicated changes to wording and to response scales resulted in no substantive changes to the results, i.e., that reference to the benchmark data continues to be appropriate.
3. Not applicable, no benchmark data available.

## Survey Validity and Reliability

Validity is increasingly understood to exist, not as an intrinsic trait of a measurement tool, rather as existing when there is strong congruence between the measurement tool or method, the context in which it is used, and the purpose for which it is used (i.e., the intended inferences).

Intended Contexts for the ‘Ōpio Survey:

- Middle and high school age youth in Hawai‘i (particularly, but not exclusively, Native Hawaiians)
- Particularly, but not exclusively, Hawaiian culture-based programs

Intended Purposes for the ‘Ōpio Survey:

- To create a profile of Hawaiian cultural connectedness school engagement, and self esteem
- To assess the impact of programs or services on youth development (with appropriate controls and repeated measurements)
- To support research on healthy youth development

The claims regarding validity are grounded in research and indigenous knowledge bases for the constructs and items included in the survey. The claims are further substantiated by the results of statistical analyses of the field-test responses.

The field-test results show the survey has strong reliability using conventional statistics and standards for internal consistency. Evidence of consistency across time will be gathered and made available as the survey is used over the next three years.

Highlights of Findings from the Field-Test:

- The analyses of the field-test results confirmed that the Search Institute assets and HCC are distinct yet related attributes—either set is beneficial on its own and experiencing them together is significantly beneficial.
- Youth who are enrolled in culturally based programs and services show higher levels of connectedness to Hawaiian culture and higher levels of many of the Search Institute derived assets than did other youth in the field-test or youth in the Search Institute benchmark database.
- In the field-test, the HCC and Search Institute assets explained 20–50% of developmental outcomes. Students with more assets tend to have higher self-esteem, stronger prosocial values, and are more actively engaged in service to others and environmental stewardship.

Please note that the HCC Scale of the ‘Ōpio survey is not a judgment on whether a person is Hawaiian or “more Hawaiian” than another. The scale does not capture the rich complexities of Hawaiian culture and individual cultural identity.

For more information about the survey, the validity and reliability evidence or to inquire about using the survey, contact the Research and Evaluation Division at Kamehameha Schools via email to [spire@ksbe.edu](mailto:spire@ksbe.edu) or by calling (808) 523-6211.

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*A‘ohe hana nui ke alu ‘ia!*  
(No task is too big when done together)

## References

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