Motivational and Sociocultural Factors for Native Hawaiian Students Attaining a Post-Secondary Degree

by

Kaahu M.B.C. Alo

A thesis presented to the faculty of the Department of Communication at Hawai‘i Pacific University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Communication

May 2014

©2014 Kaahu M.B.C. Alo
MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN STUDENTS

Motivational and Sociocultural Factors for Native Hawaiian Students: Attaining a Post-Secondary Degree

The thesis submitted by Kashu MBC Alo has been reviewed and approved by the Hawai'i Pacific University Department of Communication.

Serena Hashimoto, Ph.D., Thesis Advisor
Associate Professor, Department of Communication

John M. Barnum, Ph.D., Reader
Associate Professor, Department of Communication

Sandra Wu-Bott, Ph.D., Reader
Adjunct Faculty, Department of Communication

Date
5-5-14

Date
5-6-14

Date
5-7-2014
MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN STUDENTS

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................... ii

Abstract ............................................................................................................................ 2

Chapter 1: General Statement of Problem........................................................................ 3
  Organization ....................................................................................................................... 4
  Definition of Terms ........................................................................................................... 5
    Perceived factors ............................................................................................................. 5
    Impact factors ............................................................................................................... 5
  First generation college students .................................................................................... 5
  Family .............................................................................................................................. 5
  Kuleana .......................................................................................................................... 6
  Student success ............................................................................................................... 6

Method of Study ............................................................................................................... 6
  Theory ............................................................................................................................. 6
  Location of study ............................................................................................................. 6
  Professional interviews .................................................................................................. 6
  Student interviewees ........................................................................................................ 7
  Research questions ......................................................................................................... 7

Limitations ....................................................................................................................... 8

Aims of the Study ............................................................................................................. 9

Conclusion and Preview .................................................................................................. 9

Chapter 2: Literature Review .......................................................................................... 11
  Diffusion of Innovation .................................................................................................... 12
  Hawaiian Culture ............................................................................................................. 16
  Ohana ............................................................................................................................. 18
  Pre-Contact Oral Traditions .......................................................................................... 18
  Post-Contact Education ................................................................................................. 21
    Christian missionaries’ influence ................................................................................. 21
    Early Western education ............................................................................................... 21
  Western Innovation ......................................................................................................... 24
  Demise of Cultural Education ......................................................................................... 26
    Imposed assimilation ................................................................................................. 27
  Revival of Heritage ......................................................................................................... 31
  Current Educational Research ......................................................................................... 33
    Current collegiate education ......................................................................................... 33
  Motivational and Sociocultural Factors ......................................................................... 37
    Protective factors ......................................................................................................... 37
    External influences ...................................................................................................... 37
    Personal influences ..................................................................................................... 40
    Campus connections .................................................................................................... 40
    Financial influence ...................................................................................................... 42

iii
# MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN STUDENTS

Who is Native Hawaiian? ................................................................. 44
  Blood quantum ........................................................................... 44
Chapter Summary ........................................................................... 46

Chapter 3: Methodology ................................................................. 48
  Research Design ........................................................................ 49
  Participants ................................................................................ 50
  Instruments ................................................................................ 51
  Q-Sort ....................................................................................... 51
  Pilot Focus Group ....................................................................... 53
  Q-Sort Process .......................................................................... 55
  Interview Analysis ..................................................................... 56
  Ethical Considerations ................................................................ 57

Chapter 4: Findings and Results .................................................... 59
  Pilot Focus Group Findings ....................................................... 60
  Demographics Data Description ................................................. 60
  Q-Sort and Interview Findings ................................................... 61
  Results from Research Question 1 ............................................. 61
    Perceived factors ..................................................................... 61
    Impact factors ....................................................................... 62
  Motivational and Sociocultural Factors ................................. 63
    Personal pride/ambition ......................................................... 63
      Setting a new standard ......................................................... 64
      Financial freedom .............................................................. 65
      Self-worth or sense of accomplishment .............................. 65
    Kuleana/responsibility ......................................................... 66
      Kuleana to current family .................................................... 67
      Kuleana to future family ..................................................... 68
      Kuleana to community ....................................................... 68
    Family expectations ............................................................... 69
      The desire to make families proud ........................................ 70
      The need to appease ........................................................... 70
    Financial aid/scholarships ..................................................... 71
      No money, no college .......................................................... 72
      Money motivates .................................................................. 72
    Motivation from friends ........................................................ 73
    Clubs/extra-curricular ............................................................ 74
    Faculty .................................................................................. 75
    Something to do ..................................................................... 76
    Other ................................................................................... 77
    Campus job ........................................................................... 78
  Results from Research Question 2 ............................................ 79
ABSTRACT

Motivational and Sociocultural Factors for Native Hawaiian Students Attaining a Post-Secondary Degree
Kaahu M.B.C. Alo, B.A., M.A.

M.A. Communication, Hawaii Pacific University, Department of Communication
May 2014
Thesis Advisor: Dr. Serena Hashimoto

There are currently more Native Hawaiian students entering post-secondary institutions; however, the number of Native Hawaiian college graduates does not mirror the spike in enrollment. Therefore, there is a need to identify the different motivational and sociocultural factors that currently assist Native Hawaiian college student retention. The purpose of this study is to identify and assess the motivational and sociocultural factors that are utilized by Native Hawaiian college students. Fifty students from Windward Community College, Kaneohe, Hawaii, who identify themselves as being of Native Hawaiian descent, participated in a Q-Sort, as well as a personal interview. The ethnography uses both quantitative (Q-Sort) and qualitative (personal interviews) data to analyze the motivational and sociocultural factors for Native Hawaiian college students. By identifying select motivational and sociocultural factors that help the retention of Native Hawaiian college students, post-secondary learning institutions can better understand Native Hawaiian students and, therefore, can assist them in achieving their goal of graduating with a college degree.

Keywords: Native Hawaiian, community college, motivational factors, sociocultural factors
Chapter 2

Literature Review

This thesis explores the motivational and sociocultural factors of Native Hawaiians students that influence their success in attaining a bachelor’s degree from an institution of higher learning. By identifying the factors that contribute to student success, other issues that have led to high fallout rates may be exposed. According to the Native Hawaiian Student Services at the University of Hawai’i, it was discovered that while enrollment of Native Hawaiian students has increased within the past few years, the Native Hawaiian success rate has not improved, and there has even been a slight decline in a few areas (Balutski & Wright, 2013).

To effectively analyze the different motivational and sociocultural factors, this literature review is structured by themes, and the themes are structured chronologically. In some instances, relevant background information was incorporated to allow a clearer understanding of the different themes. The first section discusses the diffusion of innovation theory developed by Everett Rogers; the second section discusses the traditional culture and values of the Native Hawaiian people from pre-contact; section three focuses on the post-contact period to current day, and the last section of this literature review concentrates on the common motivational and sociocultural factors for Native Hawaiians. Through the developmental process of the current state of Hawai’i, innovation of ideas has seemingly transformed a society overnight. The diffusion of innovation theory can be applied to this transition and is applicable in such drastic change.
Diffusion of Innovation

In 1962, Everett Rogers (2003) introduced a theory in hopes of explaining the rate at which societies accept new ideas or innovations and also explaining social changes and fundamental practices of different societies. Research on the diffusions of innovation began in the 1940s as a series of scientific areas. It has become one integrated field of study, and diffusion continues to be studied by researchers of different disciplines today (Rogers, 2003).

Diffusion is a process in which innovation is communicated through a particular channel among members of a society (Rogers, 2003). Rogers taught that the communication process deals with the idea of convergence or divergence as information is exchanged between people. This particular theory refers to how parts within the diffusion process interact, how they facilitate, or hinder adoption of an innovation (Surry, 1997). Rogers classified the diffusion of innovation theory by four main elements: innovation, communication through certain channels, time, and social systems.

Rogers (2003) described innovation as an idea, a practice, or an object that is recognized as new by an individual or a group. Innovation usually refers to a technological aspect consisting of some sort of hardware or software but they are not limited to technology. According to Rogers, there are five attributes that can determine the rate of adoption: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observation.

The communication channels are the means by which messages get transmitted. Rogers (2003) stated that mass media channels are more effective in creating knowledge about an innovation; whereas, interpersonal channels are more effective in getting people
to change their ideas or attitudes about new ideas, which ultimately result in how an innovation is received.

The element of time is an important element in the diffusion process. There is an innovation-decision process that is defined as the length of time it takes to accept or reject the innovation (Rogers, 2003). This is an important part of the theory because Rogers explained the levels of acceptance and the rate patterns of the innovators: early adopters, early majority, late adopters, and the laggards. Time is important as it encompasses the rate of adoption, which is the relative speed of how a society will adopt an innovation (Rogers, 2003).

The social system is also an important element because it defines the interrelated units that are diligently working in joint problem solving to accomplish a shared objective (Rogers, 2003). Rogers taught that the social system is relative because everyone within the system will play a role, whether it is the change agents, opinion leader, or anyone else involved in the societal change.

Rogers (2003) described the major diffusion traditions as anthropology, early sociology, rural sociology, education, and general sociology. Rogers identified eight main types of diffusion research:

1. Earliness of knowing about innovation.
2. Rate of adoption of different innovation in a social system.
3. Innovativeness.
4. Opinion leadership.
6. Rate of adoption in different social systems.
7. Communication channel usage.

8. Consequences of innovation. (pp. 94-100)

Earliness of knowing about innovations refers to those members of society who obtain information early through a certain means of communication. Rogers (2003) refers to a study conducted by Mayer et al. (cited in Rogers, 2003) in 1990 relating to the 1986 Challenger explosion. The early knowers were categorized as those who were informed about the event through news media, via radio or television. On the other hand, many of the late responders got the news from the early knowers, and then turned to the various media channels to verify and obtain further information (Rogers, 2003).

Rogers (2003) described the rate of adoption of different innovations in a social system as the rate at which an innovation is adopted. People are more likely to adopt to innovations that carry little risk yet grant a more economical reward, and the adoption rates will vary depending on an individual or societal value (Rogers, 2003). Rogers illustrated innovativeness by making reference to a Colombian study where the innovators were recognized as “great cosmopolites, higher educated” (p. 123). In many instances, innovation is associated with great results.

Rogers (2003) identifies opinion leadership as those who will have influence on others within the society. Rogers also determined that the opinion leaders play a significant role in the success or failure of a program. In a study by Kelly et al. (1991), they discovered that the opinion leaders were instrumental about spreading HIV education. Kelly et al.’s opinion leaders were selected and trained to educate about HIV, and, as a result, they were able to decrease the number of infections in comparison to
other control cities. Thus, this study proved that the opinion leaders should be influential in order to generate a societal change.

Diffusion networks are networks that link people together. In many cases, people will connect or communicate with others of similar backgrounds, such as age, religion, hometown, and profession (Rogers, 2003). This network of people gives the community a sense of belonging that help people feel united and supported in a decision process.

Rate of adoption in different social systems differs from the adoption of an innovation previously mentioned, as it explores why innovations are adopted at different rates in different systems (Rogers, 2003). In a Korean study, Rogers and Kincaid (cited in Rogers, 2003), discovered that villages with higher mass media exposure had higher rates of contraceptive adoption.

Communication channel usage is what sets apart an early adopter from a late adopter. An example of this diffusion type explains how people determine where to eat lunch. For example, if two people see the same advertisement for the same restaurant, an early adopter may decide to try it. The early adopter can later update the late adopter of the value of the restaurant. The late adopter can take into consideration previous advertisements; the media channel was not as important for him or her as it was for the early adopter. In this case, the early adopter would be the communication channel used by the late adopter. Thus, this demonstrates that communication channel behavior rates may vary.

Consequences of innovation are the changes that happen as a result of an adoption or rejection of an innovation (Roger, 2003). Rogers found that people who bring change give little attention to the consequences of their actions; they usually assume that what
they bring will only result in benefiting an individual or a society. These change agents should be aware of their responsibility and the effect they may have by introducing a new innovation. Unfortunately, this is seldom done and in most instances it cannot be done.

Hawaiian Culture

Culture is constructed through various means of communication channels. Culture can have several definitions. Hofstede (1980) described culture as collective programming in the minds that differentiates one group from another and is passed down from generation, yet it is dynamic and constantly changing. Culture and communications are profoundly intertwined. Miller (2009) described culture as being conveyed through communications, and as a result culture is created by communications. Miller further explained that because culture and communications are so interdependent, culture is communication and communication is culture.

Schein (1992) introduced a model of culture that entails three levels. The first level is the physical and social environment; second level is values, and the last is assumptions. Physical and social environments are visible elements; this includes what people physically see regarding how a culture behaves and socially constructs their environment (Schein, 1992). This leads directly into the second level, which includes values and beliefs. Value is placed on artifacts or cultural practices by a society (Miller, 2009). Artifacts play an important role in the development of a society. Schien explained that artifacts are tangible, visible and/or audible; they are usually activity-based in values and assumptions. Assumptions are the views of a particular society and their perception on how the world operates (Millar, 2009). Schein explained that basic
assumptions are key to understanding a culture and this description of cultures assumptions. Schein stated:

The patterns of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adoption and internal integration, and therefore, to be taught to new members as correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to these problems. (p. 397)

Culture is adoptive, meaning that over time there will be some degree of adoptive traits or attitudes that will change perceived communication behaviors and culture (Durant & Shepherd, 2009).

In the Hawaiian culture, educational values may differ depending on the region because certain regions place greater or lesser emphasis in educating its population, usually according to their specific demands. WCC Hawaiian studies assistant professor L. Hoe (hereafter, Hoe) stated that Native Hawaiians valued knowledge, particularly about the aina (land), due to the spiritual connection between Native Hawaiians and the aina (personal communication, October 25, 2013). Kamakau (1992) explained that Hawaiians believe that their deity or gods take on many forms that include plants, animals, and landscapes. There is an ancient proverb that explains the relationship and responsibility of the Hawaiian people regarding the land. Pukui (1986) noted the proverb, “He ali‘i ka aina, he kauwa ke kanaka,” which is translated as “The land is the chief served by the people” (p. 62). Moreover, the aina provides the framework for traditional education and is incorporated and communicated throughout Hawaiian history (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). Hoe stated, “Our kupuna (elders) taught us to embrace knowledge in many different forms and showed us how to
incorporate both, to make things pono (righteous, upright, or morally proper) in our world” (personal communication, October 25, 2013). The knowledge that was taught reflected the values of Hawaiian culture in an attempt to strengthen the community. To explore the framework for Native Hawaiians’ traditional education, one must understand Hawaiian history, as it fostered the development of the Hawaiian education process.

Ohana

The family values in Hawaiian culture are very important and can take on several definitions. *Na Puke Wehewehe ‘Olelo Hawai‘i*, a Hawaiian dictionary, defines ohana as family, relative, kin group (Ohana, n.d.); therefore Hawaiians are not limited to the nuclear definition of family. Ohana is defined as a “group of both closely and distantly related people who share nearly everything, from land and food to children and status” (Beatson, 2010, p. 17). Family values are extremely important because Hawaiians rely very heavily on their relationships with each other. It is only through each other that Hawaiians can increase their spiritual powers (Meyer, 1998). By fulfilling their duties to the ohana and recognizing the accomplishments of others, Hawaiians increase their mana (spiritual power or spirituality) (Meyer, 1998). Hawaiian families were all responsible for their own, and through families, traditional practices were passed on through the generations (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013; Meyer, 1998).

Pre-Contact Oral Traditions

To help understand the Native Hawaiian history, an overview of the historical context of Hawai‘i and the value systems must first be analyzed. Traditionally, the knowledge that was taught reflected the values of Hawaiian culture in an attempt to strengthen the community. Native Hawaiians utilized storytelling, music, religion, rituals
and other types of communication as a platform for education (William-Kennedy, 2004).

Prior to Western contact, Meyer (2003) and Hoe (personal communication, October 25, 2013) believed that communication was primarily oral. The orature (oral literature) of the Hawaiian culture was taught and learned in both formal and informal settings. Oral traditions have been the main source of Hawaiian education that has provided a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the histories as they have been passed down through the generations (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013; Kamakau, 1992).

Hawaiian language professor R.K. Johnson (cited in Kana‘iaupuni, 2008) explained that there were societal expectations for Hawaiians, namely:

the composition, memorization, and recitation of chiefly mo‘okū‘auhau (genealogies), such as those composed for Kamehameha, ko‘ihonua (creation chants) like Kumulipo, and various oli, mele, hula, speeches, and storytelling, on a wide range of topics from chiefly or godly exploits to the naming of specific places (wahi pana), to the development of cultural practices. (p. 214)

The oral traditions contain some of the rich history and significant events that have never been recorded. Masse and Tuggle (1998), along with Hunt and Lipo (2006), agreed that the Polynesians most likely arrived around 800-1000 B.C. However, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact time and location because nothing was formally recorded on paper. Nevertheless, the history was documented and shared through chants, dance, and storytelling (Vansina, 1985).

Again, oral traditions are great sources of information that are sometimes overlooked or seen as fiction (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013; Swanson, 2008). In Geologist D. Swanson’s (2008) article, he emphasized the
importance of examining the ancient Hawaiian chants and stories for information about the volcanic activity. Swanson explained that the Native Hawaiian oral traditions and history of Kilauea, a Hawaiian volcano, are consistent with the geological information that scientists are beginning to decipher (2008). Swanson stated that scientists were led astray by not taking the oral history into consideration as they began to understand the volcanic formations, due to the fact that currently people are accustomed to thinking scientifically and not metaphorically.

Native Hawaiians derive from a tradition of thinkers. They were the first to successfully navigate the Pacific many years prior to Captain Cook’s so-called “discovery,” voyaging the seas to and from other islands throughout the Pacific (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). Aside from being nautical experts, Hoe explained that Hawaiians developed agricultural systems, engineered canoes, studied medicinal uses of plants, and successfully governed a thriving society.

Native Hawaiians created an educational system that provided the people with formal education and training. With the acquired knowledge, members were expected to pass on that knowledge to their posterity (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). Hoe expounded that for the commoners, much of the educational responsibilities fell upon the families to teach the genealogy, chants, and other practices that were common knowledge and other basic education necessary to everyday life. Moreover, both Kamakau (1992) and E. Sanborn (hereafter, Sanborn) (personal communication, February 4, 2014) noted that apprenticeships and trades were established where most of the teachings were done in smaller intimate groups. Hoe agreed and explained that these would be considered general education.
Hawaiians were a strong, hard-working people skilled in crafts and possessed of much learning. The Ali‘i, or royal families, had assistants known as kahu (honored attendant), whose responsibility was to carry out more specialized training (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013; Kamakau, 1992). The people of Hawai‘i were taught several disciplines, including canoe building, navigation, medicine, ecclesiastic, militia, and genealogy; all of which were intertwined with the history of the Hawaiian ancestors. According to Hoe, these were forms of higher learning institutions and could be considered equivalent to modern universities or trade schools with specialized knowledge. This oral tradition in Native Hawaiian education began diminishing after the introduction of Western culture.

Post-Contact Education

**Christian missionaries’ influence.** Western culture presented a powerful force in shifting Native Hawaiians’ oral tradition education to the contemporary educational system. The Hawaiian culture was forever changed after the arrival of Captain James Cook in 1778 (Kamakau, 1992). Because formal and informal learning was already being practiced by the Native Hawaiians, the introduction of Western education was well received.

**Early Western education.** Following the arrival of Captain Cook came a swarm of foreigners with different motives. The most notable group of newcomers to impact education was the Christian missionaries (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013; Kamakau, 1992). Kamakau (1992) and Piercy (1992) credit a young Hawaiian man named Henry Opukahaia for playing a key role in initiating the Christian movement. In 1808, Opukahaia was invited to accompany Captain Brintnall to New England. On
April 9, 1815, Opukahaia became the first Hawaiian Christian. Opukahaia insisted that Christianity would benefit Hawaiians; therefore, he traveled the eastern coast of the United States in hopes to persuade preachers to spread their gospel in Hawai’i (Piercy, 1992). Although missionaries from many different faiths came to Hawaii, Hoe believes that it was the Protestant missionaries who led the charge in domesticating the Hawaiians.

Western style of formal education was a result of the missionaries’ efforts. While the Protestants were first, they were not the only Christian group who sought to educate Hawai’i (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). Successful in their religious endeavors, formal education at the hands of the Protestants grew rapidly among the nobility. Once the nobility learned the new learning system, they sent their teachers out to educate the masses throughout the islands (Chun, 2011).

According to Hoe (personal communication, October 25, 2013), one major reason why education spread so rapidly throughout Hawai’i was due to the people’s desire to read the Bible. The churches also infiltrated the political systems where they connected with the government instead of trying to go out preaching to everyone individually (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). This is perhaps the main reason why the people of Hawai’i adopted the English language and why Western education spread quickly. Hoe notes that both the common people and the Ali’i saw that there was a shift in the value of education. After the introduction of the Western alphabet, the Native Hawaiians were among the most literate societies in the world (Donaghy, n.d.).

Although most believe that it was the missionaries who domesticated and educated the Native population of Hawaii, Chun (2011) argued that the Native Hawaiian population were already reading and writing before the arrival of the missionaries. No
matter how or when it was learned, Hawaiians recognized the value of education and the written language. During this transition period, Hawaiians witnessed the political, military, and economical shift toward Western culture, and consequently, Hawaiians were pressured to learn in order to attend to their own affairs (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013).

Christian missionaries sought to tame, what they considered, the wild uneducated indigenous population of Hawai‘i by instilling their views and values of Christianity through religious practices, education, and other Western customs (Grace & Sema, 2013). Their objectives were responsible for successfully educating the Hawaiian population in Western culture; conversely, it is also the reason for the decrease in Western educational values in the later years (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). As the Native Hawaiians began to lose their culture, it was being replaced by a new ethnocentric culture.

Not only were mission schools built, but also Hawai‘i was overrun with several agencies. These agencies enumerated the centers of trade, plantations, and military enterprises, all of which contributed in altering Native Hawaiian values and traditional way of life (Lind, 1967). With the limitless opportunities and ambitions of the foreigners came an epidemic that Hawai‘i was not prepared for, a Hawaiian culture that once thrived was now seeing an enormous decline in population as more and more foreigners came with diseases and pestilence (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). The kupuna (elders) were aware of this devastation, and newspapers reported that many decided to become literate in order to preserve the language and culture (L. Hoe, personal
communication, October 25, 2013). Native Hawaiians saw value in written language and used it as an attempt to preserve their history.

**Western Innovation**

The theoretical framework of the diffusion of innovation theory can be applied to the transformation of Hawai‘i upon the arrival of the haole (foreigners) in 1778. On Captain Cook’s first visit, there was an exchange of goods including swords, knives, metals, clothing, and mirrors from the visitors in exchange for food, mats, bark clothing, and women (Kamakau, 1992). According to Kamakau, many Native Hawaiians placed great value on the gifts offered by Cook and his men, and they were all too willing to compromise their beliefs to get their hands on the new artifacts. The introduction of foreign artifacts altered the traditional value system that was previously established.

One of the most recognizable events in Hawaiian history was the unification of the islands of Hawai‘i. While ancient Hawai‘i was in constant chaos as kings and kingdoms fought for the power to govern, one man stood above the rest, King Kamehameha. Most Hawaiians had somewhat adapted to the Western ways, resulting in both sides of war being equipped with guns and cannons, according to L. Hoe (personal communication, October 25, 2013). There was an arms race in Hawaii, where merchants knew the effect that modern weapons would have and the power that could be gained using them. Money was made and lives were lost as the new innovations hit the islands.

Rogers’ (2003) diffusion of innovation theory recognized the negative consequences of innovation: foreigners brought weapons of war that provided Hawaiians with a huge advantage over their enemies. In relation to Rogers’ theory, those who
introduced guns and other weapons were either unaware of the negative consequences and/or they assumed that the guns and cannons they brought would benefit society.

King Kamehameha was a notorious figure and early adopter of the Western lifestyle (Van Steenwyk, 2000). Kamehameha, with the assistance of his Caucasian counterparts, was able to seize and unite the Hawaiian Islands (Kamakau, 1992). His victory is highly attributed to his ability to early adapt the new ideology introduced by Westerners. Kamehameha understood that the European invasions not only brought weaponry, but also brought different war tactics and equipment. In Kamehameha’s efforts to conquer, he utilized both guns, modern weapons of warfare, and also formed relations with foreigners who would complete his mission to unite the islands under his power (Kamakau, 1992). Although Kamehameha’s victory can be attributed to his Western counterparts, much of his success was the combination of styles of Western weapons and native knowledge of the land (Van Steenwyk, 2000).

Another early adapter of the Western culture was King David Kalakaua. Kalakaua was recognized as a travelling king, as he was the first ruling monarch to circumnavigate the world (Allen, 1994). As Kalakaua was literally laying the cornerstone to his new immaculate I’olani Palace, some Westerners criticized his efforts believing it was only for his ego (Allen, 1994). To add to the criticism of the I’olani Palace, Kalakaua acquired electricity and telephones several years before the U.S Whitehouse (Monarchy, n.d.). Fixated by the Western ideology, Kalakaua’s early adoption allowed him to become an innovator, even though all the early adoptions came at a price.
Demise of Cultural Education

At one point, the Native Hawaiians had become the most literate population in the world, the society, as a whole, could be considered early adopters as they embraced the educational philosophy that accompanied the newcomers (Donaghy, n.d.). The Hawaiians’ rate of acceptance was so great that shortly after the “discovery” of Hawaii, books and newspapers were printed in Hawaiian and were circulated throughout the islands in the early 1800s (Aha Pūnana Leo, Inc., 2009).

Early adoption came at a price that the Hawaiians were unaware of and not prepared for. At first, Hawaiian public schools offered an education with instruction in the Hawaiian language; however, part of the missionaries’ objective was to change the traditional education (Chun, 2011). The missionaries introduced educational institutions that were established for non-native students, but they included Hawaiian nobility (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013).

Traditional Hawaiian beliefs were challenged as Hawaiians experienced a societal change, particularly with the cultural practices, education, and language (Hale Kuamo’o Center for Hawaiian Language, n.d.). One of the greatest changes came during the time of the illegal overthrow of the beloved Queen Liliuokalani. The overthrow was a major cultural changing event; nevertheless, Hoe (personal communication, October 25, 2013) believes that the single most significant event that affected change in the Hawaiian society was the deaths and declination of a once thriving population.

Hoe (personal communication, October 25, 2013) describes an “either or” mentality that forced the Native Hawaiians to integrate completely or not at all. Unfortunately, it was not acceptable to do both, it was simply “either or.” This form of
segregation and exclusiveness triggered a series of events that eventually led to the demise of Hawaiian culture education and also led to class-segregated educational systems. Those who spoke Hawaiian or practiced their culture became associated with low-socioeconomic status (Aha Pūnana Leo, Inc., 2009).

The world renowned Kamehameha Schools is currently recognized for their efforts in perpetuating the Hawaiian culture; however, they were among the early adopters who discontinued Native Hawaiian cultural practices and outlawed Hawaiian Language (Eyre, n.d.). Kamehameha Schools was set up as a trust for Native Hawaiian students to be educated in the Western educational system. Even while their aims were to assist Native Hawaiians, their initiative was compromised allowing all students to be part of the school (King & Roth, 2006).

The educational values of Native Hawaiians have changed throughout history, particularly after the overthrow of Queen Liliuokalani (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). This change did not derive out of thin air, but rather, that attitude toward Hawaiian language and culture goes back to the original missionaries, as well as to the “either or” ideology. Several of the early adopters were starting to see the consequences of their eagerness to adopt.

**Imposed assimilation.** By the late 1800s, most Hawaiian practices had been outlawed within the educational systems in Hawaii. Similar to that of the Native Americans located in the continental U.S., Native Hawaiians were punished for speaking their native tongue or performing cultural dances such as the hula. According to Hoe, (personal communication, October 25, 2013), the same missionaries who introduced the Western educational system in Hawai’i were the same people that placed bans on the
Hawaiian language. The Christian missionaries took over the Hawaiian government and imposed the “all or nothing” attitude. These missionaries infiltrated the political system and used their power to further their cause (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013).

The bans placed on Hawaiian language within the educational institutions appeared minimal, but the effects were great (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). In 1896, Hawaiian language had been banned throughout all schools by the Hawai`i legislation (Eyre, 2004). Although, the bans were just in the schools, it affected the Hawaiian population in general (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). The Hawaiian language was described as the heart and soul for the native Hawaiian people. When the language was taken, the traditions and culture were also taken (Hale Kuam`o Center for Hawaiian Language, n.d.). According to Hagedorn (2003), Hawaiian language proficiency appeared to be a proxy for socioeconomic status. The new political system made their expectations clear to Hawaiians who wanted to pursue a Westernized education, insinuating, “Hawaiians who want to be Hawaiian, need not apply” (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). The effect of the Hawaiian bans in schools was felt throughout all of Hawaii.

In order to convert to Christianity, Hawaiians were instructed to leave behind their akua (god), hula, and geology; all of which is intertwined with the history, and, more importantly, the identity of Native Hawaiians (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). This is an idea that would not be easily acceptable to any culture. For the most part, the Hawaiian people did not and do not want to leave behind their culture. Collectively, there was a sense of pride and knowledge among Hawaiians. Hoe
declared, “We have value. There is value in our history. There is value in our future” (personal communication, October 25, 2013).

Similar to many others, Hawaiians lands have been invaded by ethnocentric forces that imposed their culture and their religion on the native population. As a result, Hawai‘i lost a great deal of its identity, as the Christian missionaries sought to indoctrinate the people. At this point in time, the Hawaiian culture went underground; outwardly, Hawaiians would practice Western style things while, within the family, keeping the cultural ideals (Kanahele, 1982).

This was a traumatic era for Native Hawaiians because they were not able to be Hawaiian in their own land (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). To further communicate this idea, one could look into one’s own cultural identity and visualize what it would be like to have it stolen away, forcing them to adopt the traditions of the very thief. It all goes back to the idea of the “either or,” where those who chose to be Hawaiian suffered. Hoe believes that it is evident that much of the suffering has been passed down from generation to generation and has yet to cease.

Hawaiians were literally second-class citizens in Hawaii. The overall effect was that Hawaiians became marginalized within their own homelands. Following the illegal overthrow, Native Hawaiians were not allowed to vote or participate in policymaking.

Basson (2005) stated:

Only whites were eligible for complete membership in the nation, although occasionally for political purposes the boundaries of membership were expanded slightly to include non-whites who
accepted or were willing to acquiesce to the premise of white supremacy. (p. 595)

During this era, both democrats and republicans were in compliance that they did not want to provide the indigenous Hawaiian citizenry with political power (Basson, 2005). According to Basson, their goal for territorial expansion and restriction of political power was achieved, and their regulations allowed them to maintain racially defined elite status.

The new political system emphasized assimilation to the point where it was deemed the key to survival in Hawaii. Therefore, many embraced the Western cultural values and gave up their Hawaiian identity (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). After the overthrow, many Native Hawaiians tried to be good Americans by fully submerging themselves in the culture, where being Hawaiian was not popular (Kanahele, 1982). By doing so, the early adopters lost their language, their land, their lifestyle, and traditional practices, as well as their physical well being (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). Kanahele articulated that unfortunately most Native Hawaiians attempted to adopt the new innovated culture but were left feeling demoralized as if they were second-rate citizens within their homelands.

Hawaiian style of education was a big part of the value that was lost. Hawaiians were taught to participate in roles that would accommodate the incoming tourist and Western visitors. At this point, Hawaiians had given up their culture as an attempt of convergence; however, they were directed, or given limitations, as to what roles they should undertake. They were taught cooking, cleaning, and waiting tables (Chun, 2011). “Hawaiians, once masters of their honored crafts, poets and wits in their own language, gave way to generations discouraged and embarrassed in school systems designed by and
for Western culture” (Pukui, Haertig, & Lee, 1972, p. 232). Not only were white people discouraging Native Hawaiians to go to college, as a result of prejudices, but Hawaiians themselves placed a negative stigma on Western education, thereby discouraging education by indoctrinating others to believe that college was for others not Hawaiians.

Hawaiian language teacher Sanborn (personal communication, February 4, 2014) recalls a time when her high school guidance counselor at Ni’ihau said to her, “Why are you here?” Sanborn responded, “To see you; you told us to come make appointments with you” (it was a requirement that he imposed). Then the counselor said, “Why you coming to see me? You not going, do nothing!” Not only was Sanborn’s counselor unsupportive, but also her aunty pleaded with her to stay home and forget about college, not even considering the endless possibilities ahead. Sanborn broke the chain that binds so many Native Hawaiians from getting educated. Her life is a modern day model of the different possibilities; she was able to continue her education and incorporate it to Hawaiian learning (personal communication, February 4, 2014).

Revival of Heritage

One of the influential early adopters, as previously mentioned, was Kalakaua who recognized that the Hawaiian blood was dwindling. Due to this fact, Kalakaua saw the importance of preserving the Hawaiian traditions. The reality that many fail to recognize is that the spirit of the Native Hawaiians was dying (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013). Hoe explained that during the reign of Kalakaua, he pushed the motto “hooulu lahui,” which translates to “encouraging the increasing of the nation/race.” Kalakaua encouraged Native Hawaiians to hold on to the traditions, bring them back, and “celebrate who we are.” Kalakaua is well known for his love of music and dance, and is
recognized for his revival of Hawaiian orature through the art of hula, as the founder of the world renowned Merrie Monarch (Merrie Monarch Festival, n.d.). Kalakaua preserved and revived hula after it was banned; he stated, “Hula is the language of the heart, therefore the heartbeat of the Hawaiian People” (Merrie Monarch Festival, n.d.). Unfortunately, Kalakaua’s attempt to revive the culture was short lived and was met with hostility. He was forced to focus on more pressing issues that threatened to strip authority away from the Hawaiian monarchy, the Bayonet constitution (Monarchy, n.d.). This act forced Kalakaua’s limit of authority. The belittling of the Hawaiian society and culture created distrust between the Native Hawaiians and the foreigners (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013).

The government ban on the use of the Hawaiian language lasted well into the 20th century (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013; Kanahele, 1982). For nearly 70 years, the Hawaiian language was taken from the educational systems, which led to a lost identity for the rising generations. In retrospect, Hoe said, “There were 75 years of pushing against our culture; it would take at least that to push back and revive our culture” (personal communication, October 25, 2013). Although many Native Hawaiians saw the dismantling of their culture, only a handful of people attempted to revive traditions and reeducate Hawaiians. In Kanahele’s (1982) article, entitled Hawaiian Renaissance, he recalled George Mossman, the founder of Lalani Village, who tried to regenerate the public’s interest in their Hawaiian identity in the 1930s by educating through chants, language, hula, crafts, and traditional rituals.

The 1970s are known as the Hawaiian Renaissance era; it was a time for Hawaiians to rise up and begin the process of rebuilding a culture. Hawaiian music was
still associated with Hawaiian culture and education. Hawaiians began to fight for their culture and were able to lift the no Hawaiian language ban. Hawaiian language schools were born; both music and dance were rejuvenated, and the voices of Hawai‘i were being heard (Monarchy, n.d.). The rejuvenation continues slowly catching wind, as many Native Hawaiians continue to struggle in both retaining their culture and getting formally educated.

**Current Educational Research**

**Current collegiate education.** Current studies found that Native Hawaiian students are overrepresented in the special education system and underrepresented in higher education (Tano, 2007). The United States Department of Education reported that congress passed several acts that pertain directly to Native Hawaiians in recognition of their educational needs. In 1988, congress enacted House Resolution 5 (100th) to institute programs to assist Native Hawaiian education, *Title IV of Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988.* However, a ten-year update of the Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment Project by Kamehameha Schools, Bernice Pauahi Bishop Estate (1993) concluded that many of the same problems still existed, including:

(A) Educational risk factors continue to start even before birth for many Native Hawaiian children, including —

(i) late or no prenatal care;

(ii) high rates of births by Native Hawaiian women who are unmarried; and

(iii) high rates of births to teenage parents;
(B) Native Hawaiian students continue to begin their school experience lagging behind other students in terms of readiness factors such as vocabulary test scores;

(C) Native Hawaiian students continue to score below national norms on standardized education achievement tests at all grade levels;

(D) Both public and private schools continue to show a pattern of lower percentages of Native Hawaiian students in the uppermost achievement levels and in gifted and talented programs;

(E) Native Hawaiian students continue to be overrepresented among students qualifying for special education programs provided to students with learning disabilities, mild mental retardation, emotional impairment, and other such disabilities;

(F) Native Hawaiians continue to be underrepresented in institutions of higher education and among adults who have completed four or more years of college;

(G) Native Hawaiians continue to be disproportionately represented in many negative social and physical statistics indicative of special educational needs, as demonstrated by the fact that —

(i) Native Hawaiian students are more likely to be retained in grade level and to be excessively absent in secondary school;

(ii) Native Hawaiian students have the highest rates of drug and alcohol use in the State of Hawaii; and

(iii) Native Hawaiian children continue to be disproportionately victimized by child abuse and neglect.
These findings imply that a high percentage of Native Hawaiians are born into disadvantaged circumstances. Hawaiʻi’s transformation has had an adverse effect on Native Hawaiians; for example, Native Hawaiian students continue to have lower test scores, lower graduation rates, and a lower college enrollment numbers when compared to their peers in Hawaiʻi (Inglebret & Krebill-Prather, 2010). According to Tano (2007), it has been reported that Polynesian students in Hawaii perceive that social obstacles hinder their academic development, and these students are neglected and treated unfairly by instructors. Furthermore, Hagedorn (2003) said that students who began their education at a community college were much less likely to attain a bachelor’s degree.

Recent studies on Native Hawaiians from the University of Hawaiʻi show that there is a significant gap between Native Hawaiians and the white population in terms of retention and completion of a four-year degree (Balutski & Wright, 2013). This gap is consistent throughout the University of Hawaiʻi systems, which include two other universities and several community colleges. Balutski and Wright, of the Native Hawaiian Student Services, reported that there has been a steady increase of Native Hawaiians entering the higher learning institutions, yet the retention and completion levels have flat lined for the past few years. Seidman (2005) also found that although minorities were entering college at a higher rate than previously, they were also leaving at a higher rate. Seidman feared that failure to retain minority students could result in students being “turned off from the educational system never returning to benefit from educational opportunities” (p. 8).

Unfortunately, Native Hawaiians are only at the stage where some Hawaiian traditions or ideas may be permitted, but not all (L. Hoe, personal communication,
October 25, 2013). According to Hoe, Hawaiians are still in the “either or” mindset, meaning either they will be a scholar or a Hawaiian, either they will be an engineer or Hawaiian. There is a stigma that applies to minorities who attend college, being that the more educated you get, the less Native you are (Elm, 2013; L. Hoe, personal communications, October 25, 2013). WCC academic counselor, Winston Kong (cited in Beatson, 2006), stated that some Hawaiian students have long embraced values handed down for generations and some have embraced Western values. Not all minority students fully comprehend that they can do both. In an address at the Native Indian Education Association General Assembly conference, Dr. L. Elm (2013, November) stated, “We are here! But we are not here to be white!” Through much initiative, Hawaiian culture and education are slowly making their way back into society. However, according to Hoe “We are not at the point where we can say, yes, I am Hawaiian, and Hawaiian is part of my education” (personal communication, October 25, 2013). A college education can benefit both the Hawaiian culture and Western culture. Kaʻanoʻi (cited in Kanaʻiaupuni, 2008) stated:

> Hawaiians should not be afraid of Western tools or systems because it is the “self” that empowers them, not the other way around. If Hawaiian values and self-identity are intact, Hawaiians will not be intimidated by Western ideals but will be able to filter and use them for their benefit through their values. For example, a college education is a great tool to use to kū i ka nuʻi (achieve), to become naʻauao (intelligent), to become kūhaʻo (self-reliant), and to increase mana, which in turn reflects on the quality of the ʻohana and community. (p. 141)
Motivational and Sociocultural Factors

This section categorizes and discusses several factors commonly associated with college students: external influence, personal influences, campus connections, and financial influence.

**Protective factors.** Protective factors are conditions that defend against the risk factors. Emmy Werner (2008) defined protective factors as buffers that appear to make more of an impact on individuals who overcome adversity than do specific risk factors. Both Segal (1986) and Garmezy (1991) found that there is a greater interest in identifying protective factors, like the unique circumstances or situations that have altered the negative impacts of the risk factors and empower students to succeed. Understanding these factors is key to reduce the risks and boost positive behaviors.

In order to prevent the risk factors from overcoming a student’s success, the protective factors and support can be developed by neighborhoods, families, schools, peers, and individual strengths, assets, corrective interventions, coping mechanisms, and special assistance and accommodations as mentioned in *Protective Factors/Resiliency* (Werner, 2008.). An ancient proverb states, “It takes a village to raise a child.” This proverb recognizes that support from family, friends, faculty, and the community is instrumental in development and success of a college student (Guillory, 2009).

**External influence.** Native Hawaiians define themselves by their relationships with each other, their ancestors, and their land; therefore, family and community are factors that may have a great impact on one’s decision on their future goals and achievements. While in pursuit of a post-secondary education, there are several external factors that can be used to motivate or discourage students: family expectations, peer
pressure, and kuleana. Based on the historical context of Hawai‘i, along with Rogers’ diffusion of innovation theory, the value placed on a Western education is inconsistent. Many early adopters placed a higher value on Western education and have intergraded successfully in Western society. Because early adopters placed a higher value on Western education, they were better equipped to support their family and friends. The late adopters eventually understood the value of the education; however, they have a harder time transitioning due to the lack of preparation. For many students, who lack the means and support of family and friends, it is imperative to provide protective factors that will retain and graduate a higher number of Native Hawaiian students (Yamauchi, 2003).

For many, family is an important source of knowledge and can be a powerful tool or base for education (Bernard, 1992). Unfortunately, a family can also serve as a roadblock. For instance, some Native Hawaiian families discourage their children from entering Western institutions of higher learning; this is a result of the invisible “push” that kept generation after generation out of the Western educational systems. If parents feel that educational institutions never cared about them, they may be reluctant to send their children (L. Hoe, personal communications, October 25, 2013).

Aside from peer motivation and family expectations, there is something that Native Hawaiian holds dear, and that is kuleana/responsibility (Sanborn, personal communication, February 4, 2014). This responsibility often times extends past oneself or family; its obligation can encompass a community and a culture. For some students, giving back is an outcome of education and can emerge as an underlying factor for educational success. This contrasts the idea that a major objective of non-native students
is economic gain. Many students seek to improve the quality of life among their people.

In a survey conducted by Inglebret and Krebill-Prather (2010), one student said:

> It is less focused on economic success. Native students attending higher education are focused on their community or family as a whole. They are not looking at becoming a corporate employee but looking to find a way to make life better for their people. Also, when a native student fails they fail their community and family. Success for one is success for all, especially when it comes to higher education for an entire family and nation education. (p. 13)

Researchers have found that some children who grow up in poverty are still successful in their studies; they credit a high parental expectation as the contributing factor (Benard, 1992). Guillory (2009) added that several students mentioned that their objective to persist in college was because of their desire to provide their families with a better life through their education, as well as to have a positive impact within their respective communities. A student in Guillory’s and Wolverton’s (2008) study said, “Most of my cousins don’t have high school degrees… maybe I can serve as a role model or make them proud of what I have been doing and of my achievements” (p.75). Some students have fear of letting down their loved ones, which tends to be a motivational and sociocultural factor. York-Anderson and Bowman (1991) believed that one of the best predictors of post-secondary aspirations is family support. Communal or family expectations are possible retention factors; however, many students have accepted an individualist mentality (Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco, 2005). This shift in mentality
leads directly to the personal influences that continually inspire students to achieve their educational goals.

**Personal influences.** Personal influences, such as ambition or something to do, can also be one of the motivational factors for native Hawaiian students. For some, it is a sense of obligation to influence another person that is a motivational factor; for others, the responsibility and the enthusiasm lays heavily on personal expectations. Contrary to Guillory (2009) and Benard (1992), research by Dennis et al. found that family expectations were not significantly related to student’s success; however, family resources correlated with lower GPAs. They concluded that although students come from collectivist cultures, they have the ability to have both collective and individual motivations (Dennis et al.). According to Dennis et al., a family’s primary way that they influence their children to pursue a higher education is indirectly, or invisibly. Some students do not feel that there are family expectations, because they have placed the expectations on themselves. Personal motivations can be extremely challenging.

Bluestein et al. (1986) found that the students who are unclear about career goals seem to feel less involved with their education and their campus.

**Campus connection.** Being connected to the campus gives students a strong sense of belonging; Tinto (1975) argues that it is a major factor in retaining college students. Successful students suggest that the different social supports on campuses are critical in the persistence of a scholar (Guillory, 2009). In a study by Zehr (2010), it was discovered that teachers who incorporate Native Hawaiian culture-based strategies in their lessons had greater success creating a connection between the student and the curriculum. Hagedorn, Lester, Moon, and Tibbetts (2006) also noted that belonging to a
Hawaiian student organization gives students a sense of belonging and a type of family support that is important in community college. Hoe believes that schools need to do more to make the students feel comfortable. He continued, “Our students have been disconnected from schools; we need to reconnect them. Create an environment to teach Hawaiian students that you (the student) belong here” (Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013).

Westernization has been normalized in colleges; Hawaiians have been taught through the years that they needed to conform to the new system if they want to be part of it. Traditionally, schools have been set up and used to separate Hawaiians from their culture. Hoe stated, “this holds true today, but we can change it” (personal communication, October 25, 2013). Hoe stressed that Hawaiians need to understand that the “either or” stipulation is a thing of the past. Hoe proclaimed, “I choose both; our capacity is more than what is laid out…We are coming to the realization that we are not dumb Hawaiians” (Personal communications, October 25, 2013). Hurtado and Carter (1997) also explained minority students can feel a part of the campus community without accelerating, conforming, or adopting the values of the majority. The transition to college can be overwhelming for a Native Hawaiian student who is entering after multiple generations have been pushed out or excluded from this system.

Cultural responsive curriculum is very helpful in connecting students with curriculum; it is advantageous to include pedagogy that incorporates “students linguistic, culture, cognitive and affective strengths and culturally sensitive curriculum” (Inglebret and Krebill-Prather, 2010, p. 8). Students can see their culture in a positive light; this
also provides relevance of their studies providing some with a sense of belonging and pride, honor, and respect in the whole system (Inglebret & Krebill-Prather, 2010).

Teachers are perceived as the principal role in promoting educational success for Native students. Inglebret and Krebill-Prather (2010) also found that students identified Native teachers and teachers who understood a student’s culture as a significant factor to student success. Not only are teachers directly involved with the development of students but also all school personnel can affect a student in a positive fashion. Personnel and a campus support structure emerge as an important theme. Inglebret and Krebill-Prather explained that Native students appreciate cultural support and native peer groups because they provide students with a sense of identity. In addition to a culturally understanding campus, support by schoolteachers, faculty, community, as well as support from higher administration are essential because it exemplifies the need for a systematic approach regarding the success of Native students (Inglebret & Krebill-Prather, 2010).

Students can gain a sense of belonging through clubs, class settings, and other campus related events or organizations. Seidman (2005) said programs that promote student involvement in institutions are more likely to succeed. Landry (2002) found that mentoring programs help first-time students of all ethnic backgrounds; ethnic-oriented clubs are also helpful in the acculturation process of students in community colleges.

**Financial influence.** Financial influences, such as financial aid/scholarships/campus employment, play an important role in affording Native Hawaiian students with opportunities to pursue higher education degrees. An effective way in keeping a student connected to campus and supporting them financially is through
campus employment. Working on campus creates a greater sense of belonging while providing a much-needed income for students.

Aside from working on campus, there are many other financial resources/scholarships available for students to help ease the financial burden, allowing students to focus on their studies. Due to the fact that college is a costly investment, for most minorities, financial aid is a major factor that determines whether or not a person attends college (Stewart, Russell, & Wright, 1997). In a previous research done about minorities, Thomason and Thurber (1999) discovered that a large portion of federal grants for minorities was replaced by student loans. They believe that the reduction in educational funding, coupled with the rising cost of living, tuition, and other school related expenses, are making a hard decision for minorities even more difficult.

Many students are virtually unaware of the financial resources available to them, resulting in an underutilization of financial aid (McKinney & Novak, 2013). This has formed a barrier to the pursuit of degree attainment among college students. McKinney and Novak found that in the 2007-2008 school year, roughly 42 percent of eligible Pell grant recipients failed to apply for the federal aid. McKinney and Novak also reported that the students with the greatest need are generally those uninformed about the Pell grant and other aid. They further explained that students who come from higher income families or private schools are typically provided with more insight about the different resources and support that will assist in their college progression. The students enrolled in the community colleges, including minorities, first-generation, and low-income students, are those who have the most difficulty finding the needed guidance (Vargas, 2004). There are numerous hurdles in retaining minorities. Jensen (2011) found that for
Native Hawaiian students in particular, “finding ways to reduce financial, academic, cultural and social barriers are critical to college success” (p. 4).

Who is Native Hawaiian?

When inquiring about the motivational and sociocultural factors for Native Hawaiian students, there must be a fashion in which Native Hawaiians are identified. In the past, Native Hawaiians have been misrepresented or generalized into diverse heterogeneous groups consisting of Polynesians or Asians Islanders (Riley, 2013). Riley noted that Hawaiians are generally grouped together with Native Americans or categorized as Pacific Islanders. Moreover, it should be clarified that being a resident of Hawai’i is not the same as being Native Hawaiian or of Hawaiian descent. Congress defines “Native Hawaiian” as any individual who is a descendant of the aboriginal people who, prior to 1778, occupied and exercised sovereignty in the area that now constitutes the State of Hawai’i (S.J. Res. 19, 1993). In addition, something unique imposed by the United States, State of Hawai’i, and other organizations was the blood quantum rule, which quantifies the amount of Native Hawaiian blood an individual possesses in the determination of who is recognized as or has the status of a Native Hawaiian.

Blood quantum. The criteria for being considered Native Hawaiian varies depending on the different organizations and what is offered by the particular organizations. Self-selection is sometimes used to associate or disassociate a person from a certain group. Self-selection can be used in many instances; however, when recognition influences an organization to respond in a certain fashion, self-selection may not be the preferred method. Thus, major Native Hawaiian government organizations have placed a blood quantum for Native Hawaiians to be recognized in order to receive
any political or economical advantage. For instance, the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL), under the supervision of the state government, has posted the requirements for a Native Hawaiian to receive leased property (Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, n.d.). The DHHL requires that lease recipients be of Native Hawaiian descent and possess no less than one-half part of Hawaiian blood. According to the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, established in 1920, a Native Hawaiian is defined as 50 percent blood (Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, n.d.).

Unlike the state government, several other entities recognize Native Hawaiians based on simple ancestral verification. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) recognizes Native Hawaiians as anyone who can verify their Hawaiian ancestry (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, n.d.). OHA will issue an identification card after verifying indigenous Hawaiian ancestry through biological parentage.

Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop dedicated her life and her money to promote education among the Native Hawaiian population. In The Will of Bernice Pauahi Bishop (Ho‘oulu Hawaiian Data Center, n.d.), she expressed her desire for Native Hawaiians to advance their social, economic, and spiritual standings through education. Currently, Kamehameha Schools’ Ho‘oulu Hawaiian Data Center attempts to fulfill the Princess’s vision as much as the law will permit by serving Native Hawaiians students. Similar to OHA, Kamehameha verifies Hawaiian ancestry by registering with the Kamehameha Schools Ho‘oulu Hawaiian Data Center (Ho‘oulu Hawaiian Data Center, n.d.; Office of Hawaiian Affairs, n.d.). It seems appropriate to regard anyone who can trace his or her
blood to Native Hawaiian decent as Native Hawaiian. University of Hawai’i Professor Jon Osorio stated:

I am a Native Hawaiian, He Kanaka Maoli, oiwi maoli au. This is a simple enough assertion, the meaning of which is as clear as water when it springs from the rock. I belong here, not just to the land but to the other Kanaka Maoli of this aina, and they belong to me.... Our self-definition as Hawaiians has little to do with trying to gain political and economic advantage over [non-Native residents of Hawai’i]. It has everything to do with kinship. (Cited in Pope, 2011, p. 74)

Chapter Summary

Education can be subjective; for most in Hawai’i, the value of education and learning styles has shifted. During the pre-contact era, education was deemed important and passed on through oral traditions and through hands-on apprenticeships based on beliefs and experience (E. Sanborn, personal communication, February 4, 2014). Sanborn stated that Native Hawaiians were culturally educated and used real life experiences to set a standard of curriculum. After the introduction of a western education system, many Native Hawaiians were left confused and disconnected; the historical trauma has had a negative impact on the Native Hawaiians, which continues to hinder their educational progress (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013).

Throughout the transition of Hawai’i, it is evident that Native Hawaiians experienced the phenomenon known as the diffusion of innovation introduced by Rogers (1993). Many Native Hawaiians adopted to the Western lifestyle and education early, while most began to accept the values at a latter time. For many Native Hawaiians, the
need to adopt the formal education system was not encouraged (L. Hoe, personal communication, October 25, 2013; E. Sanborn, personal communication, February 4, 2014).

Although what has transpired in the past cannot be undone, it is important to recognize that there are Native Hawaiian students being educated through the Western system. For this particular population, the major factors or motivations include external influences, personal ambitions, sense of belonging on a campus, and financial assistance. Jensen (2011) found that the “present theoretical frameworks for understanding students’ retention are integrating indigenous perspectives on education and placing greater responsibility on institutions to remove systematic obstacles for college completion” (p. 4). To encourage Native Hawaiian students to pursue a better education and improve their life quality, factors that hinder this possibility needed to be investigated. A mixed research methodology was applied in this study to better understand the current motivational and sociocultural factors for today’s Native Hawaiian students.
References


Elm, L. (2013, November). *Native Indian Education Association General Assembly.* Speech presented at the Native Indian Educational Association conference from Rapid City Civic Center, Rapid City, SD.


