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Factors Related to High School Dropout Rates Among Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific
Islander Youths in Salt Lake and Utah Counties in Utah

‘Afa Kehaati Palu

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Clifford T. Mayes
Steven J. Hite
Scott E. Ferrin
Julie M. Hite
E. Vance Randall

Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations

Brigham Young University

July 2014

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ABSTRACT

Factors Related to High School Dropout Rates Among Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Youths in Salt Lake and Utah Counties in Utah

‘Afa Kehaati Palu

Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations, BYU

Doctor of Philosophy

Researchers across the globe have studied high school dropouts for decades and have identified various factors related to high school dropout rates. These factors have been found to be related to dropout rates among specific ethnic groups, including White, Asian, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Hispanic or Latino Origin high school students. However, the factors related to dropout rates among Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander high school students in the U.S. mainland have not been studied. This study was completed to better understand the factors related to dropout rates among Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander high school dropouts. The sample for this study was 13 males and 4 females that dropped out of high schools located in the Salt Lake and Utah counties in Utah. A qualitative analysis of the interview data indicated that peer-, personal-, family-, culture-, and school-related factors were associated with dropout rates among the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander high school dropouts in these two counties. The implications of these findings are explored.

Keywords: Pacific Islanders, dropout, peer, personal, family, culture, school

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CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION

Brief History of Education and Dropout Factors

The education of our children is paramount and the most ideal outcome of education for all students is to graduate from high school. As such, all educators should be willing to help our children do well in school and graduate together with their peers as alluded to in the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954 347 U.S. 483(1954). However, because our students are increasingly multicultural and multilingual, our teachers, counselors, principals and other educators do not fully understand the factors that are related to their dropout rates. Educators are facing an uphill battle that cannot be won if they do not know the factors related to dropout rates. But, factors related to dropout rates among students from the Native American and Alaska Natives, Latino and Hispanic Origin, Asian, White, and Black and African American are found in the dropouts literature (Brandt, 1992; Chavez, Belkin, Hornback, & Adams, 1991; Rumberger, 1983, 1987; Ranzulli & Park, 2000; Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulos, Ritter, & Dornbusch, 1990; Sambonsugi, 2011). However, the factors related to dropout rates among Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander students in the U.S. have not been adequately explored. But, some of the factors that were found to be related to dropout rates in Tonga was from a NHOPI high school dropout study (Tatafu, 1997), and risks and protective factors for dropping out of high school were found among NHOPI students in California that were still in high school (Vakalahi, 2009). Additionally, there are no studies of the factors related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students from dropouts in the U.S. mainland. Therefore, this study will use qualitative methodology to evaluate the factors related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school dropout students in Salt Lake and Utah counties in Utah.

Nature of Dropouts

Dropouts from high school have been studied in the U.S. and elsewhere for decades. However, a number of definitions for dropouts have been used in various studies, and from states and federal reports in the U.S., but, there is no standard definition or consensus of what a dropout is.

Factors related to high school dropout rates among White, Asian, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Hispanic or Latino Origin high school students in the U.S. have been known for decades (Brandt, 1992; Chavez et al., 1991; Ranzulli & Park, 2000; Rumberger, 1983, 1987; Rumberger et al., 1990; Sambonsugi, 2011). The factors responsible for dropping out of high school are categorized into school-related, peer-related, personal-related, family-related, and culture-related factors (Tatafu, 1997; Vakalahi, 2009). I also found another factor from those studies that was related to high school dropout rates in the U.S. which is world-related factors.

The lack of consensus on a definition for dropout is aggravated by those who think that using the dropout label is humiliating, and, therefore, wish to adopt the more politically-correct label early school leavers. I am in favor of using the term dropout since it has been used for decades and is the predominant descriptor used in the educational literature. However, in the absence of a standard definition, I will use the definition that represents the current situation in the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (NHOPI) community. The applicable definition for this study is the Stillwell (2010) definition from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Common Core Data (CCD) which defined dropout as follows:

A student who was enrolled at any time during the previous school year who is not enrolled at the beginning of the current school year and who has not successfully

completed school. Students who have transferred to another school, died, moved to another country, or who are out of school due to illness are not considered dropouts. (Stillwell, 2010 p. 1)

For the purposes of this study, I will use this definition because it is clear, focused and explicitly describes high school dropouts in the NHOPI communities. Concomitantly, I will use *dropouts* to describe all those who drop out of schools, including those in elementary school, junior high school, high school or college when they dropped out.

The U.S. Department of Education has reported three types of rates for high school dropouts (McMillen, Kaufman, & Whitener, 1993). They are event dropout, status dropout, and cohort dropout rates. Event dropout rate refers to the percentage of students who drop out of high school each year. High school dropout rates are the students who were enrolled in October, but the following year they have not completed high school and are not enrolled in school. Status dropout rates refer to the percentage of 16 to 24 year olds who are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school credential. Cohort dropout rate measures what happens to a single group or cohort of students over a period of time. Since this study looks at the factors responsible for the dropout rates among NHOPI students, I will use the cohort dropout rates. Additionally, since the study is exclusively in Utah, I will also adopt the Utah State Office of Education definition of cohort dropout rate (“Utah State”, 2010). The cohort dropout rate simply involves the percentage from a three-year cohort who receives a diploma divided by the number of graduates plus dropouts in the cohort. Students who transferred out of the public education system are excluded from the computation of the cohort dropout rate.

The country of origin refers to where the students were born and not where their parents were born since the country of origin for the parents may be different from that of their children which is the case for majority of the students that participated in this study.

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander refers to a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoan, Tonga, or other Pacific Islands. It also includes people who indicated their races(s) as “Pacific Islander” or reported entries such as “Native Hawaiian,” “Guamanian or Chamorro,” “Samoan,” “Tongan,” and “Other Pacific Islander” or provided detailed Pacific Islander responses as outlined in the Statistical Policy Directive No. 15 published by the Office of Management and Budget (Revisions to the Standard, 1997).

Conceptual Framework

This study seeks to uncover and explore the factors related to the dropout rates among NHOPI students in the U.S. We also seek to expand on the conceptual framework identified by Vakalahi (2009) in her study concerning risk and protective factors for dropouts among Pacific Islander students in California and that of Tatafu (1997) from Tonga. Table 1 aligns the factors from the two studies. Vakalahi’s study was initiated by the high school students and their parents in the NHOPI community who were concerned with their students’ achievements and how to prevent NHOPI students dropping out of high school. However, the study was not done on any high school dropouts nor did she interviewed any dropouts at all, rather, the study was done on students who were still in high school and some of their parents in a focus group setting.

Vakalahi (2009) postulated that the structuration theory used by Dear & Moos (1994) provides the framework since it emphasizes the connections and interactions between students and systems such as schools and communities, and empowerment education theory (Freire, 1993). Structuration theory focuses on the understanding of human agency and social

institutions but the structure is both the medium and outcome of action. Therefore, the interactions between the students, schools, families, communities and other educational-related structures are important for the achievements of the students (Tatafu, 1997). Concomitantly, Vakalahi (2009) also integrated the concepts of risk for high school dropouts, and protective factors for academic achievements. She found that “family relationships and dynamics, parental expectations, community and cultural duality, commitment to school, and peer relations” (Table 1) serve as sources of risk for high school dropouts and also protection for educational achievements among the NHOPI students in California.

This study is framed with a conceptual framework grounded in the findings of both Vakalahi (2009) and Tatafu (1997) (see Figure 1) to investigate the factors related to high school dropouts among NHOPI students in Salt Lake and Utah counties in the State of Utah.

The five factors identified and depicted in the conceptual framework (see Figure 1) represent simple linear relationship to high school dropout and do not indicate any interactions between each factor. However, the reality of the factors related to NHOPI dropouts is far more complex than this simplistic, starting model. This study will examine these factors and potential interactions and provide any modifications found to this model after the results of the study are obtained.

Additionally, we may also uncover that some of these factors contributes more heavily to NHOPI dropouts than the other factors. Further, we may also uncover factors not listed in this model that might be of great importance to NHOPI dropouts. Therefore, the factors that are strongly related to dropouts will be represented by a thicker, bolded line while the other factors that are not strongly related to NHOPI dropouts will be represented by a thinner, un-bolded line.

Table 1

Factors Related to Dropouts in Tonga, Risks and Protective Factors for Dropouts among NHOPI Students in the U.S

Factor	Found in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)	Found in the US (Vakalahi, 2009)
School-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School buildings generally not in good conditions • Shortage of class room facilities • Shortage of trained teachers • Shortage of qualified teachers • Shortage of instructional materials • Instructional materials were generally poor in quality • Fairly often the administration did not work well with staff • In general, teachers' salaries could not cater to their needs • Lack of incentives for teachers to work hard • Education department was not effective in its policies • Little help from school for "intellectually slow" students • Corporal punishment was used fairly regularly at school • Teachers and students were rarely given opportunities to celebrate anything • Emphasis was mainly on passing exams, and little attention given to other activities • Curriculum catered mostly to academically bright students • Good teachers were heavily concentrated in the higher classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and administrators perceptions of NHOPI students as "trouble makers" and "dumb" • Extra-curriculum activities • Create a school schedule that fits family needs and abilities • Provide help with standardize test strategies and test taking skills • Study halls and additional help and resources for homework • Teach time management skills • Provide Pacific Islander tutors from the surrounding universities • Workshops on the importance of staying in school • Seek out athletic opportunities • Provide students with access to tutoring, incentive, and mentoring programs • Provide complete information on admission, financial aid and graduation from university • Snacks during study halls • Special help in English, math, history, computer, and languages • Develop a career path from high school to college graduation and employment

Note. School-Related factors not necessarily in the order of importance. Data adapted from Tatafu (1997) & Vakalahi (2009).

Table 1 (continued)

Factors Related to Dropouts in Tonga, Risks and Protective Factors for Dropouts among NHOPI Students in the U.S

Factor	Found in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)	Found in the US (Vakalahi, 2009)
Personal-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of being a failure • Not taking school seriously • Not studying at home • Not understanding what is being taught • Not attending school daily • Involved in bad peer groups • Not doing homework • Disobeying school rules • Trouble making at school • Not paying attention in class • Lack of student cooperation with staff • Lack of cooperation from fellow students • Not sharing difficulties with others (teachers or students) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual and bicultural • No working during school • Being shy about asking for help in class for fear of being labeled “dumb” • Teasing students who do their homework (negative peer pressure) • Involvement with delinquent peers • Positive relationships with others • Involvements in high school extracurricular activities • Pride in being NHOPI

Table 1 (continued)

Factors Related to Dropouts in Tonga, Risks and Protective Factors for Dropouts Among NHOPI Students in the U.S.

Factor	Found in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)	Found in the US (Vakalahi, 2009)
Teacher-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of teachers dissatisfied with school administration • Teachers were unwilling to do voluntary work for the school • Teachers frequently come late to school • Classes not very well supervised when teachers were absent • Teachers were unwilling to help out during their free time • Teaching classes of more than 40 students were difficult • Teachers' teaching styles were the same in all situations • Most teachers were unwilling to take part in staff development programs • Some teachers come unprepared to classes • Church-related schools recruitment of teachers that accepted church's philosophy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from teachers • Caring teachers • Caring school counselors • Parent-teacher partnership in checking homework daily • Teachers perception of NHOPI as "trouble makers" and "dumb" • Teachers' racism against NHOPI students

Table 1 (continued)

Factors Related to Dropouts in Tonga, Risks and Protective Factors for Dropouts among NHOPI Students in the U.S.

Factor	Found in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)	Found in the US (Vakalahi, 2009)
Family-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to discipline their students • Failure to pay school fees • Lack of parental encouragement • Lack of facilities for students to do their study at home • Failure to meet school demands • One parent is absent from home • Demand for domestic work • Lack of parental push to stay at home • Conflicts between parent and school • Family dislocation (separation) • Inability of parents to help with homework • Family crises (death) • Over spending on particular events (church collection) • Spending money on less important things (drinking) • Spending money on funerals and weddings which could have been used for their children's' education • Intergenerational families in one household 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational home with number of people ranging from 5 to 14, including grandchildren, in-laws, spouses, children, siblings, cousins, nieces and nephews, and parents • Low family income \$0-\$40,000 • English and other Pacific Islander language spoken at the home • Parents education 6 grade to college completion • Parents type of work which does not allow them time with their children: juvenile probation officer, care giving and nursing, construction, airport, taxi driving • Parents expecting high achievements in school, church activity and citizenship • Discipline: long lectures, losing privileges, physical punishment • Mom: Overbearing, enforce rules, administer rewards for school achievements • Parents can't help with homework because they don't understand English • Parents working many jobs • Less resources to help students • Parenting style: "my way or the highway" • Support from family members • Parents being there for their students • More parental involvement • Family dynamics: dad was born in the islands and is very strict. • Dad most powerful • Mom most involved • Provide internet access • Provide a Pacific Islander role model

Table 1 (continued)

Factors Related to Dropouts in Tonga, Risks and Protective Factors for Dropouts among NHOPI Students in the U.S.

Categories	Found in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)	Found in the US (Vakalahi, 2009)
Culture-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church emphasis and not school • Nobility have the most resources and poor people support them leaving less resources for their children's' education • Extended family uses the resources • Economy-taking care of others before their children • Slavery to what others might say • Preferred treatment of girls over boys • Outdoing one another in generosity • Obsession with academic success • Lack of prioritization of needs • Over spending in weddings, funerals, church collections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress from struggling to function in dual cultures yet living in traditional NHOPI environment • Too much time for practicing customs and traditions: love, respect, reciprocity, obligations to the community, cultural dances, ceremonies, speaking the native tongue • Tutoring by members of NHOPI • Good role model from the NHOPI community who has higher education and identified to have positive influences on students achievements • Eating traditional foods • Speaking the native tongues • Strict adherence to parental directives • Traditional ways for celebrating birthdays • Church activities • Family prayer • Take pride in being NHOPI • Cultural and community demands on NHOPI families were overwhelming their families' times and resources so NHOPI students do not want to live according to NHOPI way

Note. List of School-related factors not necessarily in the order of importance. Data adapted from Tatafu (1997) & Vakalahi (2009)

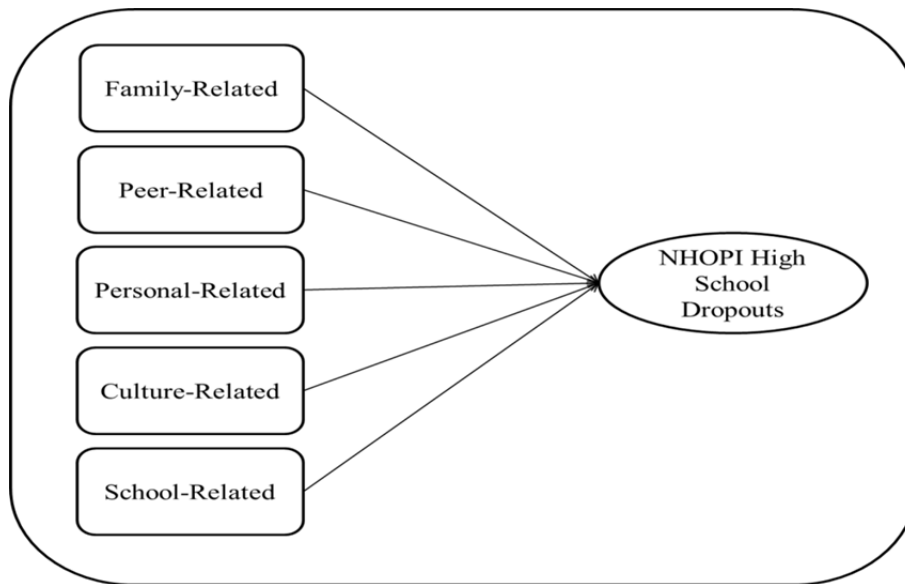


Figure 1. Initial conceptual framework for factors related to NHOPI high school dropouts. This figure illustrates the 5 major factors that influence the decisions of the students to drop out of high school (grounded in Vakalahi (2009) and Tatafu (1997)).

Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islander High School Dropout Studies

The number of Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders (NHOPI) is about 0.1% of the total U.S. population, according to the 2000 U.S. census. However, the NHOPI population in the 2010 U.S. census made up about 0.2% of the total population of the U.S. (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). The NHOPI population in 2010 had increased by 35.4% since 2000.

The increased NHOPI population also means a greater numbers of dropouts. Even so, the average freshman NHOPI graduation rate was highest in the 2007-2008 school years, at 91.4% (Stillwell, 2010). Interestingly, dropout rates during the same years, at 2.4%, were lower among Asian and NHOPI students than any other race or ethnicity (Stillwell, 2010). While this may appear to be a cause of celebration, the author would like to caution that this perceived decline is not rooted in academic reality. The inclusion of NHOPI with the Asian student academic achievements has clearly (and probably dramatically) skewed the data to obscure the hidden, true

NHOPI academic performance. It is highly probable that the educational achievements of NHOPI students are nowhere near the reported numbers for freshman graduation rates and high school dropout rates. This is based on facts presented on two studies. One of the studies was conducted in Tonga from high school dropouts (Tatafu, 1997), and the other was conducted on students who were still in high school in the U.S. (Vakalahi, 2009). The analyses of the data from these two studies indicated that the factors related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school dropouts in Tonga and the five risk and protective factors for dropping out of high school among NHOPI students in the U.S. were categorized into the same five factor categories: family-related, peer-related, personal-related, culture-related, and school-related factors.

CHAPTER 2—REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Rationale for Identification of Factors Related to NHOPI High School Dropouts

A brief review of high school dropout studies from the Hispanic or Latino Origin, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (NHOPI) students is crucial to this study. This is because studies on high school dropouts of ethnic minority students focus on two categories. First is the identification of factors or variables responsible for dropouts. The second focuses on dropout prevention strategies and programs (Sambonsugi, 2011). Therefore, this study fits within the first category of dropout studies which involve identification of factors responsible for NHOPI students' dropouts. In fact, the brief reviews of high school dropout studies will help put this qualitative study into proper perspective. Later, results of this study will be useful for comparing with other ethnic minority high school dropout studies in order to determine if the factors identified are exclusive to NHOPI students or, if there are areas of overlap between NHOPI dropout causes and those of other ethnic minority groups. However, the results of this study may or may not capture all the causes of dropping out of high schools among NHOPI students. In fact, it is highly probable that the results of this study will be a basis for further follow-up studies that could capture all the factors responsible for NHOPI high school dropouts in the U.S. Therefore, the identification of all factors responsible for high school dropouts will help in the designing and administration of culturally-appropriate remedies to ameliorate this silent epidemic among the NHOPI communities.

Black or African American High School Dropouts

Blacks or African Americans were 12.3% of the U.S. population in the 2000 census while they made up about 12.6% in the 2010 census (Humes et al., 2010). That is a population

increase of 0.3% in just 10 years. Even though the population of Black or African Americans in the U.S. increased by a small margin in the 2010 census, and their graduation rate has increased significantly over the last 30 years, their educational achievements still lag behind their White counterparts (Davis, Ajzen, Saunders, & Williams, 2002).

In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau statistics showed that 79% Black or African Americans aged 25 and older were high school graduates, which is double the percentage reported in 1970 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Interestingly, the high school dropout rates for Black or African Americans ages 16-19 years old living in cities is twice as high as those in suburbs (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2000). However, the lack of high school diplomas is more severe for the Black or African Americans than the White students (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) because the dropout rate is much higher among Black or African Americans than for White students.

There is an ocean of high school dropout studies on Black or African American students in the U.S which clearly identify their risk factors. Some factors are more influential than others, but all contribute to the dropout problem. Table 2 summarizes the factors contributing to high school dropout rates of ethnic minority students in the U.S., including those identified for the Black or African American students (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006).

The national dropout rate in 2007 for Black or African American students was 8.4%, compared to 5.3% for White students. However, the national dropout rates for Asian and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and Hispanic or Latino Origin students were 6.1% and 21.4%, respectively (Cataldi, Laird, & Kewal-Ramani, 2009). But, the dropout rate for Black or African Americans has fallen by more than a half since 1972, from 21.3% to 8.4%. During the

Table 2

Factors Responsible for High School Dropouts in the U.S.

Categories	Factors Related to High School Dropout in the U.S.	
School-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of connection from the parents to the school • School is boring • School or classes not interesting • Poorly prepared by their earlier schools • Teachers don't care • Teachers don't help them enough with homework • Trouble with the teachers • Dislike for school and teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowded classes • Curriculum not connected to life goals • Remedial & vocational tracking discourage students • Encourage students to do well seen as put down of Navajo in general • Embarrassing students in front of class • Not expecting more from the students
Family-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had to get a job to support the family • Stay home to care for a family member • Low parental involvements • Low social economic status (SES) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less parental support • Divorced parents • Home problems • No parental support
Personal-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant academic challenges • Feeling unmotivated or uninspired to work hard • Becoming a parent • Failing in school • Absenteeism • Repeating a grade • Too much freedom and not enough rules • Skipping classes • Disruptive behavior • Juvenile delinquency • Learning disabilities • Speaking native language other than English • Poor study behavior & habits • Low self esteem • Race and ethnicity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeating more than one grade • Becoming pregnant • Did not like school • Could not get along with teachers • Could not keep up with school work • Got married • Change school and did not like the new school • Trouble with reading and math • Did not feel part of the school • Substance abuse • Bad attitude • Don't trust teachers • Difficulty with reading
Peer-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults are angry with them • Peers are judgmental • Seen as loners • Dropouts • Dopers • Spend more time with peers than parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air heads • Reject and ridicule them when they try to do good in school • Seen as dangerous and rebellious • Resented being put into the reservations
Culture-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial and economic relations difficulty in the community and school • Home child-rearing patterns of non-interference and early childhood • Cultural integrity and resistance • Older teaches hold traditional views of Indians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier to successful learning in school • Students feel embarrassed for being praised publically for doing good • Need to develop more culturally sensitive framework for teaching & learning
World-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight of real world events 	

Note. List of factors, not necessarily in order of importance, responsible for high school dropouts in the U.S. Data adapted from Bridgeland et al (2006) & Rumberger (1987).

same time, White high school dropout rates declined from 12.3% to 5.3%. The decline in high school dropout rates for Black or African Americans in 2007 is good news, including an 88.8% completion rate in the same year. Further, the standard completion rate for Black or African American students also trended upwards from where it was in 1980s to where it is in the 2007 (Cataldi et al., 2009). Even though this is good news, the number of high school dropout events was 4.5% among Black or African American students, accounting for 19.3% of total dropouts in the U.S. That is, there were about 74,000 Black or African American students that dropped out of high school in 2007 alone (Cataldi et al., 2009). A dropout of one Black or African American student is one too many and we should be willing to continuously evaluate all factors and players in the education process, from the family organization (which the dropout student is a part of) to the school organization and up to school policy, so that we can see where we need to improve.

Hispanic or Latino Origin High School Dropouts

Even though Hispanic or Latino Origin is not listed as a major race in the U.S. Census Bureau statistics, it is listed as a minimum of two ethnicities. Regardless of how the U.S. Census Bureau and the OMB defined the races of these two ethnicities, their educational problems remain the same. Interestingly, more than half of the growth in the total U.S. population between the years 2000 and 2010 was from the Hispanic or Latino Origin population. In fact, in 2010, there were 50.5 million Hispanic or Latino Origin individuals in the U.S., comprising about 16% of the total population. Further, between 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic or Latino Origin population grew by 43%, increasing from 35.3 million in 2000 to about 13% of the total population in 2010, which is 50.5 million (Humes et al., 2011; Taylor, Lopez, Kochhar, Fry, Livingston, Motel, Passel, Velasco, & Seaborn, 2011).

The increase in the Hispanic or Latino Origin population also increases the attention that is paid to their educational achievements, particularly to their annual rates of high school graduation and dropouts. Concomitantly, the increase in the Hispanic or Latino Origin population also increases the number of students for whom English language is not their primary but secondary language of communication, known as L2. Perhaps the attention paid to this demographic's educational achievement, and its high school dropout rates, is based mostly on political reasons given their increasing visibility in the voting population, since the dropout rates for Hispanic or Latino Origin were not known before 1978 (Rumberger, 1987). The concerns for their educational achievements must not be treated lightly because they will have a tsunami-effect on our nation's economic health, especially in the tax burden required to continue funding ever expanding social programs. McNeal (2011b) stated that "dropping out is another contemporary topic of interest from a scholarly and public policy perspective. Dropping out is associated with various social and economic costs for the individual and society as a whole" (p. 306).

The average freshmen graduation rate for Hispanic or Latino Origin students was 63.4% in 2007-2008, which was a little higher than the 61.5% for Black or African American student graduation rate. However, the dropout rate for Hispanic or Latino Origin students was 6.0% in the same school year (Stillwell, 2010). The dropout rates for Hispanic or Latino Origin students have improved significantly as evidenced by the 6.0% dropout rates in the school year 2007-2008 (Stillwell, 2010, Table 1, p.15) as compared to the dropout rates in 1978, 1980, 1982 and 1984 as shown in Figure 2 (Rumberger, 1987).

Despite these educational successes in the Hispanic or Latino Origin population, high school dropout rates among their students remain a persistent problem. In fact, Hispanic or

Latino Origin students are more than five times more likely to drop out of high school (27.4%) than their White counterparts (Wilson, 2010). There is an array of reasons for this increased risk among the Hispanic or Latino Origin students which are not confined to middle-class bias of schools, lack of congruence between the student's home and the school environment, and language barriers. In 1990, the National Defense Fund estimated that 40% of Hispanic or Latino

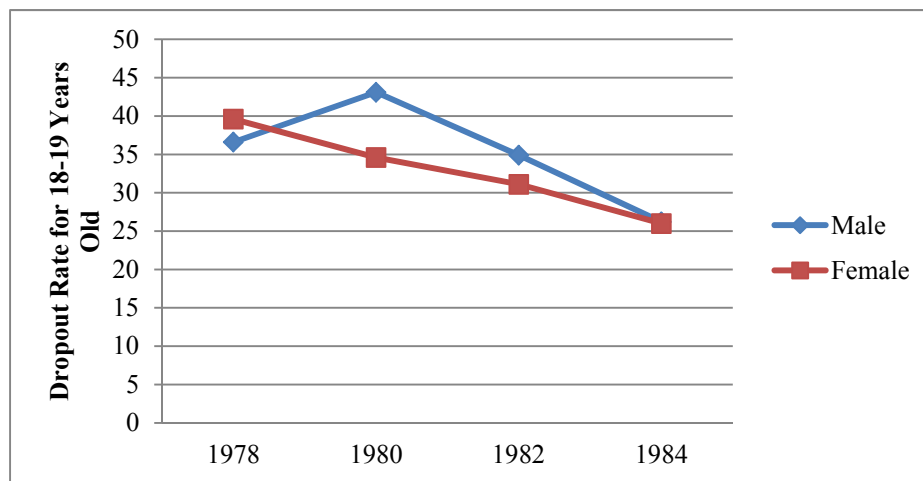


Figure 2. Hispanic or Latino Origin dropout rates. High school dropout rates among Hispanic or Latino Origin males and females from 1978-1984. Data adapted from Rumberger (1987).

Origin youth will leave school before graduation as compared to just 24% of Black or African American students and 14% of non-Hispanic Caucasians (Wampler, Munsch, & Adams, 2002). In addition to the graduation rates, the factors responsible for Hispanic students dropping out of high school are listed in Table 2.

American Indian and Alaska Natives High School Dropouts

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the American Indian and Alaska Native population made up about 0.9% of the total U.S. population in 2000. Their total population increased from 2,475,956 in the year 2000 to 2,932,248 in the year 2010, but only comprised 0.9% of the total population. Even though their percentage of the total U.S. population remained the same, their

population increase was 18.4%. Their percentage of their total population remains the same because the populations of other ethnicities have increased as well (Humes et al., 2011).

As the American Indian and Alaska Native population increases, so may the number of high school dropouts. The National Center for Education Statistics (1989) reported that American Indian and Alaska Native students have a dropout rate of 35.5%, twice the national average and also the highest in any ethnic groups in the U.S. in that year (Reyhner, 1992). The dropout rates for the American Indian and Alaska Native students were significantly reduced, however, to 7.3% in the school year 2007 to 2008 (Stillwell, 2010, p. 15). That is to say, only about 13,003 students dropped out of high school in this period. Perhaps the reduction in the dropout rates is partially attributable to much attention being paid to this group of dropouts by educational stake holders. But the fact remains that over 13,000 students did drop out of high school. This number of dropouts, and any other number of dropouts was, is, and should not be acceptable to any educators.

The factors responsible for high school dropouts in the U.S. are listed in Table 2, which includes some of the factors responsible for the American Indian and Alaska Native high school dropouts. But there might be other factors, perhaps not yet discovered, that might be exclusive to American Indian and Alaska Native dropouts. So far the factors responsible for high school dropouts have also been discovered in other ethnic high school dropout studies. Since the factors responsible for dropping out are similar, the main task right now should be focusing on remedial programs to rescue those who have already quit high school and those at risk of doing so. Further, we should also focus on much younger generations so that they will avoid the pitfalls that the older generation high school dropouts faced. American Indian and Alaska Native dropouts should not be ignored or swept under the rug because they do not make up a larger

portion of the U.S. population. We should make sure that they have educational experiences that acknowledge and nurture every aspect of their lives: their physical, emotional, social, cognitive, ethical, spiritual and cultural as well. This will motivate, encourage, and empower them to raise their own expectations for academic achievements (Mayes, Cutri, Rogers, & Montero, 2007).

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander High School Dropouts

The number of Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders (NHOPI) is about 0.1% of the total U.S. population, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. However, the NHOPI population in the 2010 U.S. census made up about 0.2% of the total population of the U.S. (Humes et al., 2011). The NHOPI population in 2010 had increased by 35.4% since 2000.

The increased NHOPI population also means a greater numbers of dropouts. Even so, the average freshman NHOPI graduation rate was highest in the 2007-2008 school years, at 91.4% (Stillwell, 2010). Interestingly, dropout rates during the same years, at 2.4%, were lower among Asian and NHOPI students than any other race or ethnicity (Stillwell, 2010). While this may appear to be a cause of celebration, the author would like to caution that this perceived decline is not rooted in academic reality. The inclusion of NHOPI with the Asian student academic achievements has clearly (and probably dramatically) skewed the data to obscure the hidden, true NHOPI academic performance. It is highly probable that the educational achievements of NHOPI students are nowhere near the reported numbers for freshman graduation rates and high school dropout rates. This is based on facts presented on two studies. One of the studies was conducted in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997) from high school dropouts, and the other was conducted with students who were still in high school in the U.S (Vakalahi, 2009). These studies will be reviewed separately to illuminate the gravity of the high school dropout problem among Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander students. This review will also draw attention to this

educational problem that has existed for decades here in the U.S. but has not been dealt with properly. This is because Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander student educational achievements have been in the “shadow” of Asian student educational performance--a group, which has been labeled “the model minority” (Kao, 1995). These two studies justify the author’s proposed study among Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander high school dropouts in the U.S. This study aims at getting a more realistic perspective on the factors responsible for dropouts among NHOPI. In this way, we may also learn what must be done to mitigate high school dropout rates among NHOPI.

High school dropouts study in Tonga. The Kingdom of Tonga has a land area of 747 square kilometers and is situated to the southeast of the Fiji Islands in the South Pacific. The majority of its population is living on the main islands of Tongatapu, Vava‘u, Ha‘apai, ‘Eua and the Niua (Niua Fo‘ou & Niua Toputapu). About 64% of its population lives on the main island of Tongatapu.

The education of students in Tonga is conducted by the Tongan government, the Free Wesleyan Church, Catholic Church, Later Day Saints Church, Tokaikolo Church, Church of England, Seventh Day Adventist Church and a private school known as ‘Atenisi. Both the primary and the secondary schools are run by the government and the churches listed above.

Tongan Ministry of Education statistics for 1993 showed that student enrollment rates for ages 12-18 were 77% and 80% for males and females, respectively. However, the high school dropout rate was estimated to be about 35% in 1991, which increased to 39% in 1992 (Tatafu, Booth, & Wilson, 1997). These were similar to the dropout rates for males and females of Hispanic or Latino Origin students during 1978 to 1984 as reported by Rumberger (1987). However, the factors responsible for high school dropouts in Tonga have not been examined

until recently. This dissertation will add to this as-yet very scant data bases. Tatafu identified several factors responsible for high school dropouts in Tonga, and his study involved interviewing dropout students, their parents, teachers and school administrators. Additionally, Tatafu followed a cohort of students for two years. Table 3 lists the factors responsible for the high school dropouts in Tonga that Tatafu found. These factors were compiled into different categories and are listed as such.

Factors identified as facilities and resources, administration, teachers, students, and parents-related factors. Several factors in Tables 3 might be exclusively applied to high school dropouts in Tonga and not in the U.S., but there is no way of knowing unless we do additional studies, such as the present one, here to find out if the same factors contribute to dropping out by Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander students in the U.S.

It is clear that the categorization of the factors responsible for Tongan high school dropouts into five different categories allows us to see the major players involved. The resulting categories allow us to view and, therefore, assess high school dropouts as the result of failure by different organizations. This will be helpful to educators and stakeholders who are seeking for resources to mitigate organizational failures. In this manner, we will be able to attack the high school dropout problem from an organizational perspective and use organizational theories, allowing us to chisel out this decade's old educational dilemma. A brief review of the organizational theories associated with education, in connection with high school dropouts among Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander students, will be reviewed later through the organizational lens.

Table 3

Factors Related to High School Dropouts in Tonga

Categories	School Facilities and Resources	School Administration Factors
School-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School buildings generally not in good condition • Shortage of trained teachers • Shortage of instructional materials • Instructional materials were generally poor in quality • The emphasis was mainly on passing exams, and little attention given on other activities • The curriculum catered mostly to academically bright students • The “good” teachers were heavily concentrated in the higher classes • Some teachers come unprepared to classes • Teaching classes of more than 40 students were difficult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairly often the administration did not work well with staff • Lack of incentives for teachers to work hard • There was little help from school for “intellectually slow” students • Corporal punishment was used fairly regularly at school • Teachers and students were rarely given opportunities to celebrate anything • A number of teachers were dissatisfied with school administration • Teachers were unwilling to do voluntary work for the school • Teachers were unwilling to help out during their free time • Teachers’ teaching styles were the same in all situations
Family-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to discipline their children • Failure to pay school fees • Lack of parental encouragement • Lack of facility for students to do their study at home • Failure to meet school demands • One parent is absent from home • Spending money on less important things (drinking) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of parent push to stay at home • Conflict between parents and school • Family dislocation (separation) • Inability of parents to help with the homework • Family crises (death) • Over spending on particular events (church collection) • Father live in foreign lands to make money
Personal-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of being a failure • Not taking study seriously • Not studying at home • Not understanding what is being taught • Not attending school daily • Involved in bad peer groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disobeying school rules • Trouble making at school • Not paying attention in class • Lack of student cooperation with staff • Lack of cooperation from fellow students • Not sharing difficulties with others (teachers or students)
Peer-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reluctant to be involved in cropping and other “dirty” works • Social approval of peers • Associated with friends that already drop out of school • Involved in bad peer group of dropouts said that they were influenced by their dropout friends 	

Note. Factors identified by Tatafu to be responsible for high school dropouts in Tonga were categorized into five major factors identified by the conceptual framework for this study. Data adapted from Tatafu (1997).

NHOPI high school risks and protective measures study in the U.S. There are two studies of Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander educational successes that we can rely upon while laying the foundation for knowledge as well as new studies to learn the exact nature of our educational successes in the U.S. Recently Vakalahi (2009) reported results of a community action plan study designed to assist NHOPI students and their parents effectively navigate the educational system in the U.S. Specifically, she discusses the perspective of 14 NHOPI students, grades 10 through 12, and 9 of their parents (ages 39 to 60), regarding family, culture and community, school and peer-based risks and protective measures for academic achievement (see Tables 4 & 5). Vakalahi also explored various educational and community programs to prevent high school dropouts (see Tables 6 & 7) (Vakalahi, 2009). Again, Vakalahi is acknowledging that high school dropouts exist among NHOPI students, even though the national rate for this group is essentially unknown. Further, she also explored student perspectives on what can be done to prevent high school dropouts through open-ended, semi-structured interview questions.

Vakalahi (2009) also found, from these open-ended and semi-structured interview questions, what she considered “risk” and “protective” factors that influenced high school achievements and dropouts. These factors are worthy of being listed (Tables 8) as her findings provide important background information for the current study. This is especially true since this study focus on Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander students in Utah.

We can infer from the Vakalahi study that parent social capital and student demographics greatly influence student educational, social, and citizenship status. Vakalahi’s findings allow us to focus the “educational” microscope on the major and minor factors that influence NHOPI

Table 4

Parents' Demographics that Participated in the Study

Parents' Demographics	
Family Income	\$0-\$40,000
Immigration Status	U.S. Citizens except 1 family
Type of Home	Intergenerational with number of people ranging from 5 to 14, including grandchildren, in-laws, spouses, children, siblings, cousins, nieces and nephews, and parents
Linguistics	English & Other Pacific Islander language
Student Culture	Bilingual & bicultural
Parental Education Level	6 th grade to college completion
Parents' Type of Employment	Juvenile probation, care giving and nursing, construction, airport, taxi driving
Student Employment	None

Note. List of parents' demographics not necessarily in order of importance. Data adapted from Vakalahi (2009).

students to drop out of school. Analysis of these factors may also identify factors that will become more influential to the next class of dropouts.

Parental and student demographics (Table 4) may be divided into five different categories. First, is the low income category. Parents within this group earn only enough income to meet basic financial obligations. These families do not have enough surplus income to afford private tutors, and other educational opportunities that might be helpful to their students' educational success. Educational social capital is the second category, which also trends with income status. Hence, the parents' educational successes also serve as contributing factors to their students' success. Parental educational success serves as a contributing factor to student success. English language fluency in the home, where culture may be distinct from the U.S. majority, may be a contributing factor to student success. Vakalahi found that NHOPI homes

Table 5

The Experiences of the Students Participating in the Risks and Protective Measures Study

	Students' Experiences
Influential Factors on Educational Achievements	Family practices; dynamics; parents expecting high achievements in school, church activity and citizenship
Discipline of Students	Long lectures from parents; losing privileges and physical punishment
Most Powerful Person in the Family	Mom: the effective problem solver; enforcer of the rules; administers rewards for school achievements; overbearing and overprotective
Parents' Social Capital	Most parents can't help with homework because they don't understand English; little resources to help; many parents work many jobs to make ends meet
Students' Expectation for Achievement	Parents being there for them; support from family, friends, teachers, regulations in the athletic programs, freedom to express themselves
Protective Factors for School Achievements	Positive relationships and involvement in sports; pride in being Pacific Islander American; peer group discussion of attending college
Risk Factors for School Achievements	Parenting style "is my way or the highway" and demands of culture and community overwhelming families time and resources; teachers and administrators perceptions of Pacific Islander students as "trouble makers" and "dumb"; being shy about asking for help in class for fear of being labeled "dumb"; teasing those students who go home to do homework; involvement with delinquent peers
Cultural Duality	Struggles to function in dual cultures are a major daily stressor that negatively influences experiences in the school system
Peer Group Influence	Strong since their peers consists mostly of siblings and cousins. Decisions on activities for the day were always made as a group

Note. List not necessarily in order of importance. Data adapted from Vakalahi (2009).

were bicultural and bilingual, with both English and a NHOPI languages being spoken.

Therefore, the ability of students to shift from L1 to L2 successfully might also be contributing to educational success. Lastly, multiple jobs worked by parents is another significant category.

Parents working two jobs had decreased ability to monitor and/or help their student's educational

Table 6

Parents' Experiences in the Risks and Protective Measures for Dropouts

Parents' Experiences	
Family-Related	Parents discussed spending more time monitoring student progress, praying, and looking for help for their students; sacrifice for their students; keeping a large intergenerational household peaceful and supportive; high stress from work and caring for families leading to mom yelling and getting mad; good children make parents happy; family gets together for prayer in the morning and evening; parents expect their students to get "A's"; student failure leads to a talk and if not solved, a punishment is followed, but it is also the last resort; parents identified Dad as the most powerful, but mom is the most involved; Dad described as strict, firm, born and raised in the islands and asks for something only once.
Positive Influence on Achievements	Caring teachers; school counselors; older siblings; prayer; church activities; practicing customs and traditions such as love, respect, reciprocity, obligations to the community, cultural dances, ceremonies, speaking the native tongue; parent-teacher partnership in checking homework daily, preparing students to pass high school exit, and tutoring and role modeling by members of PI community who earned higher education degrees and also identified as positive influences on student achievements.
Cultural-Related	Parents acknowledge the reality of the conflict between home and school cultures.
Peer-Related	Students involved with mixture of good and bad students. Hanging out a lot of time at home, church, shopping center, and the park.

Note. List not necessarily in order of importance. Data adapted from Vakalahi (2009).

achievements. However, students in families that had one parent at home when their students were home seem to have better educational success than those in families where both parents work. These factors are not exclusive to NHOPI students, but have also been identified in Black and African American, Native American and Alaska Native, and Hispanics and Latino Origin students' educational struggles (Brandt, 1992; Davis et al., 2002; Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000; Rumberger, 1987, 1983; Wong, Lai, Nagasawa, & Lin, 1988). These factors appear to be common influencers among ethnic minority groups. Student and parental experience in the home, school, and community contribute to student success (Tables 8). First, the parental educational expectations and positive relationships with their students were identified as positive

Table 7

Parents' and Students' Perspectives on How to Prevent High School Dropouts

Parents' and Students' Preventative Measures for High School Dropout	
School-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a school day schedule that fits family's needs and abilities • Provide help with standardize test strategies and test taking skills • Study halls, additional help and resources for homework • Time management skills • Pacific Islander tutors from the surrounding universities • Workshops on importance of staying in school • Athletic opportunities • Provide students with access to tutoring, incentive programs, and mentoring programs • Snacks during study halls • Help particularly needed for English, math, history, computer, and languages • Developing a career path
Family-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific Islander role model • Internet access at home

Note. List not necessarily in order of importance. Data adapted from Vakalahi (2009).

contributing factors to educational success. Second, students identified the types of discipline that they received if their educational achievements declined, especially those utilized by their mothers. Third, low educational achievement of parents negatively affected student educational success. In fact, the inabilities of some of the parents to speak English prevented them from helping their students with their homework, thereby negatively affecting their students' success. Fourth, parental teaching methods may also negatively influence student performance. Specifically, the parenting style of "my way or the highway" identified by students is counterproductive to their educational success. Additionally, teachers' and administrators' perceptions of NHOPI students as "dumb" also negatively affect the students' educational success. Concomitantly, the cultural duality of these students seems to foster constant stress in

their lives that impairs academic performance. Finally, the nature of the peer group interaction affects student success. Positive or negative peer group influence significantly steers academic performance. This is interesting because of the nature of the homes NHOPI students live in. There is more than one family living under one roof. Therefore, the peers are often the student's own siblings, cousins, and/or other relatives.

Perhaps one of the most intriguing findings from Vakalahi's work was the identification of preventative measures, that may ameliorate high school dropout rates among NHOPI students (see Tables 6 & 7). Specifically, the author identified at least 13 preventative measures that will be helpful in working towards solutions to prevent dropping out of school. First, students identified that one of the ways to prevent high school dropouts is to create a school day schedule that fits the family's needs and abilities. While this suggestion applies to Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander students, it is not possible for a public school. However, this might be helpful to a U.S. charter school that specifically targets this demographic. But even in a charter school, with a schedule that fits family needs and abilities for NHOPI students, it still may not be feasible since family needs and abilities differ.

Second, NHOPI tutors, helping with standardized tests and test-taking skills, will positively affect student educational achievements. Third, time management skills and workshops on the importance of staying in school, as well as developing a career path, will positively influence NHOPI academic success. Fourth, the identification of athletic opportunities as a positive measure to prevent high school dropouts among the NHOPI students is crucial to their academic success. This is one of the factors that seems to be predominant among this demographic. However, no studies have been published to substantiate this factor. Thus, more studies of the preventative measures among NHOPI students are warranted. Further,

access to tutoring, incentive programs and student mentoring were identified as a protective measure against dropping out.

Fifth, the ability to access the internet was identified as protective factor. Sixth, students identified that having snacks during study halls is important to their educational success. This is, perhaps, a factor that extends from the student's culture, since the majority of their cultural activities are associated with food. Additionally, the amount of food served during lunch may not be considered enough by NHOPI students. Increasing the size of lunch may be an innovative way to reduce NHOPI dropout rates. This may be even more effective than study hall snacks. Even so, a snack during study hall could also motivate these students to participate in study halls. The food factor identified in the student interviews may actually indicate a lack of adequate nutrition in the home, a situation that undoubtedly exists among low-income, and multiple families sharing one dwelling.

Finally, providing complete information to NHOPI students about admission, financial aid and university graduation requirements is also a dropout preventive measure. This is crucial to NHOPI student success as their parents do not typically earn enough to pay for their college education. Further, there are limited numbers of college graduates in their communities. Thus, there are not enough mentors and examples for them to pattern their pursuits of academic achievements on, and to draw upon their educational experiences so that they can achieve success as well. This preventative measure, as well as information on collegiate athletic opportunities, is very effective in preventing NHOPI students from dropping out. The success of these measures is perhaps suggested by the increasing number of NHOPI athletes in the NFL and in several Rugby clubs around the world.

In addition to the studies by Tatafu and Vakalahi, data in a report by the University of California Asian American and Pacific Islander Policy Initiative and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (CrossCurrents, 2007) show that “Pacific Islanders have fallen behind in terms of higher educational attainment, and also show that the projected trends show that this problem will continue” (CrossCurrents, 2007, p. 12). There were eight major findings from the report which showed clearly that the educational achievements of Asian and NHOPI students are not the same. First, the single-race NHOPI is only about half as likely as non-Hispanic Whites to have at least a bachelor’s degree (15% versus 30%) among adults 25 years and older. This gap is even wider when compared to Asians, where 49% have earned a bachelor’s or more advanced degree. Again, this figure verifies the contention that previously published educational achievements for Asian and Pacific Islanders do not represent the true educational achievements of NHOPI. Second, NHOPI levels of higher educational attainment, which is 15%, are similar to African Americans, in which 17% have at least a bachelor’s degree or higher. Third, Native Hawaiians and Guamanians, have the highest level of educational attainment among NHOPI, where about 16% and 14%, respectively, have earned at least a bachelor’s degree. Fourth, NHOPI students in Hawaii have lower educational attainment compared to NHOPI students in the other 49 states. Fifth, Tongans, Samoans, and Fijians have the lowest percentages of people with a college degree. Sixth, it was estimated that only about 29% of NHOPI students, ages 18-24, are enrolling in colleges and universities, which is comparable to Black and African Americans. This is much lower than enrollment rates for non-Hispanic Whites (39%) and Asians (57%). Seventh, NHOPI younger cohorts have higher levels of educational attainment than older cohorts. Lastly, public schools have failed to adequately prepare NHOPI students for high school and college. The lack of culturally-appropriate programs was identified as

contributing factors to lower educational achievements. Further, a hostile educational environment was also identified as a contributing factor to social alienation and the high dropout rate among the NHOPI students.

This study will first identify the factors related to NHOPI students' dropout rate in the Salt Lake and Utah counties in Utah. In doing so, it will contribute to the small but growing data base on NHOPI student achievements and to the general dropout studies in the U.S. while also offering an even more significant contribution to the very meager research base that now exists.

This research will focus on the factors that contribute to the dropouts of students from other ethnicities that have already been established in the literature. Second, this study will compare these factors to the existing literature and frameworks that have been identified in other dropout studies.

Framing the Research Questions

A review of the literature on how school-related, family-related, personal-related, peer-related, and culture-related factors influenced the student's decision to drop out of school informs this study's data collection and analysis. Hence, each factor will be reviewed separately to frame the research questions in this study.

First factor is the effects of school-related factors on the student's decision to drop out of school are well-known. Wehlage, Rutter, & Turnbaugh (1987) argued that this factor was known to contribute to dropping out of schools and there is a need to study school-related variables associated with the student's decision to drop out of school. Furthermore, he also argued that small size or student/teacher ratio, more autonomy, teacher's culture and belief in the success of at-risk students and collegiality, and experiential learning in curriculum have effect on the students who drop out of school. A few years later, Guryan (2004) found that desegregation

policy contributed to declines in black high school dropout rates while the rate for Whites did not change. Additionally, Lee and Burkam (2003) found that there was a relationship between school's curriculum and size, and dropout behavior. Further, they concluded that schools that offer mainly academic courses and a few nonacademic courses, have lower dropout rates, but schools that enrolled fewer than 1,500 students was influential in students staying in school. Therefore, we can conclude from these studies that school-related factors are related to dropout's rates in the U.S. Concomitantly, Tatafu (1997) showed that school-related factor also contributes to dropouts in Tonga but whether school-related factor relates to NHOPI dropouts in the U.S. is not known. Hence, it is crucial for this study to explore what aspects of school-related factors are related to NHOPI dropouts in the U.S.

Second factor is the effects of family-related factors on the student's decision to drop out of school. Tesseneer and Tesseneer (1958) reviewed 20 dropout studies and identified one aspect of family-related factors that has been looked at over the years is the socioeconomic status of the family. Likewise, Steinberg, Blinde, and Chan (1984) also reviewed 12 additional dropout studies and concluded that socioeconomic status of the family is one of the most significant factors that has consistently been shown to be related to dropouts (Steinberg et al., 1984). Interestingly, Rumberger (1983, 1987) also concluded that socioeconomic status of the family was the primary contributing factor in high school dropouts which supports the previous conclusions drawn by Tesseneer and Tesseneer (1958) and Steinberg and colleagues (1984). Therefore, it is crucial for this study to also explore whether family-related factors of the family are related to NHOPI students dropping out of high schools.

Third factor is the effects of personal-related factors on the decisions of the students to drop out of schools. This factor identified personal characteristics of the student which include

the social and academic backgrounds, and academic-related behaviors of the student who drops out of school. First, the social background of the student includes the student's race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, family structure, and inner-city residence. Second, the academic background of the student includes the student's ability, test scores, and grade-repeating history in the school. Finally, the student's engagement with the school, school grades, course completions and failures, truancy, and school disciplinary actions that he/she encounters. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that this study also explores whether personal-related factors are related to NHOPI students dropping out of high schools.

Fourth factor is the effect of peer-related factors on the decisions of the students to drop out of schools. By focusing on this factor, we will be able to evaluate whether the friendship networks among high school students have any effect on the decisions of the students to drop out of schools. This is especially important in the case of students who are at risk of dropping out. In fact, Giordano, Cernkovich, and Pugh (1986) concluded that students who are at risk of dropping out from school may be especially susceptible to the influence of their peers. However, Kuperminc, Blatt, Shahar, Henrich, and Leadbetter (2004) suggested that the role of peers in the process of school completion and dropout may vary among racial and ethnic groups. Further, Fryer and Torelli (2005) showed that nonimmigrant Latino and African American students are more likely to be exposed to an oppositional peer culture that discourages the adoption of attitudes and behaviors that promote academic achievement and attainment since school success is perceived to be "white" and therefore reprehensible (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Whether these attitudes and behaviors concerning oppositional peer culture in promoting academic achievements and attainments are related to NHOPI student's dropout is not known. But, we do know from Tatafu (1997) that peer-related factors contributed to dropouts in Tonga as well, and

we also know from Vakalahi's study that peer influence is a risk factor for dropping out of schools among NHOPI students since a lot of the families are living together under one roof and student's peers are most likely their cousins and siblings. However, to what extent and what kinds of peer-related factors are related to NHOPI students' dropouts in the U.S. are not yet known. Hence, this study is crucial in identifying what kinds of peer-related factors that are related to NHOPI dropout students.

Finally, the last factor that also affects the student's decisions to drop out of schools is culture-related. This is an important factor since majority of the dropouts in the U.S. is from culturally and linguistic minorities. Chavez, Belkin, Hornback, and Adams (1991) reported that the Bureau of Indian Affairs Report (1988) showed that some of the reasons for dropping out are culturally irrelevant curriculum and cultural conflicts between the home and school. This cultural conflict indicates that the "outside beliefs" impinge on the culture of the family of the minority students leading to "culture shock," which ultimately contributes to students dropping out of schools. Like the Native American and Alaska Natives dropouts, the conflict between home culture and school culture has also been cited as a cause of dropping out in general, and has been studied in the Hispanic and Latino Origin dropout students (Chavez et al., 1991). Donna Dehyle (1992) is also in agreement with Chavez and colleagues (1991) position on the effects of culture on dropouts. She posited that culturally specific factors affecting dropouts in Native Americans and Alaska Natives dropouts are racial and economic relations in the community and school, home child-rearing patterns of non-interference and early childhood and cultural integrity and resistance. The influences of culture-related factors on dropouts espoused by these researchers are in agreement with Cummins's view of cultural integrity. In fact,

Cummins suggested that school failure is less likely to occur among minority groups that have a strong, culturally intact identity (Cummins, 1986).

Even though culture-related factors have been identified as a cause for dropouts in the U.S. from the studies reported by Cummins (1986), Dehyl (1992), and Chavez and colleagues (1991), culture-related factors of students were not identified as a cause for dropouts in the NHOPI study in Tonga by Tatafu (1997). Tatafu study makes sense since the teachers and students are from the same culture and so the culture-related factors are not an issue. However, in the Vakalahi (2009) study of the risk factors for NHOPI dropping out of schools in the U.S., culture-related factors were identified as a major daily stressor that negatively influenced the experiences of NHOPI students in the school system. Therefore, the identification of culture-related factors as a risk factor for dropping out of school is crucial if we want to raise the educational achievements of NHOPI students in the U.S. But, more importantly, to prevent NHOPI students from dropping out of schools, we must identify those culture-related factors that NHOPI students face in the U.S. Hence, NHOPI culture-related factors in Vakalahi study make sense of the fact that the NHOPI students are in a different environment from their native lands, and teachers and the languages used in the classrooms are also different from their native or parents' culture. Whether culture-related factors, and to what extent, the culture-related factors are related to NHOPI students dropping out of schools in the U.S. are not known. Therefore, this study is critical in identifying what culture-related factors are related to dropouts among the NHOPI students in the U.S. Once the culture-related factors are identified in this study, it will be easier for policy makers, educators, religious leaders, parents and students to remedy the situations. As such, we will be able to reduce the number of NHOPI students dropping out of schools and also prevent future students from dropping out as well.

The list of factors responsible for high school dropouts summarized here are from dropout studies in the U.S. and the list is by no means exhaustive. Additionally, Tatafu's dropout study (1997) is from Tonga but Vakalahi's study (2009) is about risk and protective factors related to NHOPI student dropouts in the U.S. Interestingly, the author is not aware of any NHOPI dropout studies in the U.S. However, the factors summarized in Table 8 reflect the spectrum of factors, though the list is not exhausted, that are related to dropouts from students in the U.S., the NHOPI students in Tonga, and the risk and protective factors relating to NHOPI dropouts in the U.S.

Table 8

Factors Related to Dropouts in the U.S., Tonga, and Risk Factors for Dropouts Among NHOPI Students in the U.S.

Categories	Factors related to dropouts in the US	Factors related to dropouts in Tonga (Tatafu)	Factors identified as protective measures and risk factors for dropouts in the NHOPI study in the US (Vakalahi)
School-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of connection from the parents to the school • School is boring • School or classes not interesting • Poorly prepared by their earlier schools • Overcrowded classes • Curriculum not connected to life goals • Remedial & vocational tracking • Social economic climate of the school influence achievements of minorities • School climate • Remedial educational track restrict the opportunity of those placed in the lower tracks • School curriculum not taking into account the language minority students • Structural characteristics of school-public vs. private • School size • School resources • School policies and practices • Student/teacher ratio • High stakes testing policy • Expenditure per student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School buildings generally not in good conditions • Shortage of class room facilities • Shortage of trained teachers • Shortage of qualified teachers • Shortage of instructional materials • Instructional materials were generally poor in quality • Fairly often the administration did not work well with staff • In general, teachers' salaries could not cater to their needs • Lack of incentives for teachers to work hard • Education department was not effective in its policies • Little help from school for "intellectually slow" students • Corporal punishment was used fairly regularly at school • Teachers and students were rarely given opportunities to celebrate anything • Emphasis was mainly on passing exams, and little attention given to other activities • Curriculum catered mostly to academically bright students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and administrators perceptions of NHOPI students as "trouble makers" and "dumb" • Extra-curriculum activities • Create a school schedule that fits family needs and abilities • Provide help with standardize test strategies and test taking skills • Study halls and additional help and resources for homework • Teach time management skills • Provide Pacific Islander tutors from the surrounding universities • Workshops on the importance of staying in school • Seek out athletic opportunities • Provide students with access to tutoring, incentive, and mentoring programs • Provide complete information on admission, financial aid and graduation from university • Snacks during study halls • Special help in English, math, history, computer, and languages • Develop a career path

Note. List of school-related factors not necessarily in the order of importance. Data adapted from Bridgeland et al (2006), Rumberger (1987), Tatafu (1997) & Vakalahi (2009).

Table 8 (continued)

Factors Related to Dropouts in the U.S., Tonga, and Risk Factors for Dropouts Among NHOPI Students in the U.S.

Categories	Factors related to dropout in the US	Factors related to dropout in Tonga (Tatafu)	Factors identified as protective measures and risk factors for dropout in the NHOPI in the US (Vakalahi)
Personal-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant academic challenges • Feeling unmotivated or uninspired to work hard • Becoming a parent • Failing in school • Absenteeism • Repeating a grade • Too much freedom and not enough rules • Skipping classes • Disruptive behavior • Juvenile delinquency • Learning disabilities • Speak native language other than English • Poor study behavior & habits • Low self esteem • Repeating more than one grade • Becoming pregnant • Did not like school • Could not get along with teachers • Could not keep up with school work • Got married • Change school and did not like the new school • Trouble with reading and math • Did not feel part of the school • Substance abuse • Bad attitude • Don't trust teachers • Difficulty with reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of being a failure • Not taking school seriously • Not studying at home • Not understanding what is being taught • Not attending school daily • Involved in bad peer groups • Not doing homework • Disobeying school rules • Trouble making at school • Not paying attention in class • Lack of student cooperation with staff • Lack of cooperation from fellow students • Not sharing difficulties with others (teachers or students) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual and bicultural • No student is working • Being shy about asking for help in class for fear of being labeled "dumb" • Teasing students who do homework (negative peer pressure) • Involvement with delinquent peers • Positive relationships with others • Involvements in sports • Pride in being NHOPI

Table 8 (continued)

Factors Related to Dropouts in the U.S., Tonga, and Risk Factors for Dropouts Among NHOPI Students in the U.S.

Categories	Factors related to dropout in the US	Factors related to dropout in Tonga (Tatafu)	Factors identified as protective measures and risk factors for dropout in the NHOPI in the US (Vakalahi)
Teacher-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers don't care • Teachers don't help them enough with homework • Trouble with the teachers • Encourage students to do well seen as put down of Navajo in general • Embarrassing students in front of class • Not expecting more from the students • Teachers level of education • Teacher experiences • Teacher culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of teachers dissatisfied with school administration • Teachers were unwilling to do voluntary work for the school • Teachers frequently come late to school • Classes not very well supervised when teachers were absent • Teachers were unwilling to help out during their free time • Teaching classes of more than 40 students were difficult • Teachers' teaching styles were the same in all situations • Most teachers were unwilling to take part in staff development programs • Some teachers come unprepared to classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from teachers • Caring teachers • Caring school counselors • Parent-teacher partnership in checking homework daily

Table 8 (continued)

Factors Related to Dropouts in the U.S., Tonga, and Risk Factors for Dropouts among NHOPI Students in the U.S.

Categories	Factors related to dropout in the US	Factors related to dropout in Tonga (Tatafu)	Factors identified as protective measures and risk factors for dropout in the NHOPI in the US (Vakalahi)
Family-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had to get a job to support the family • Stay home to care for a family member • Low parental involvements • Low social economic status (SES) • Less or no parental support • Divorced parents • Home problems • No parental support • Parenting styles • Family decision making • Parents reacting to poor grades • Parents educational involvements • Family structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to discipline their students • Failure to pay school fees • Lack of parental encouragement • Lack of facilities for students to do their study at home • Failure to meet school demands • One parent is absent from home • Demand for domestic work • Lack of parental push to stay at home • Conflicts between parent and school • Family dislocation (separation) • Inability of parents to help with homework • Family crises (death) • Over spending on particular events (church collection) • Spending money on less important things (drinking) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational home with number of people ranging from 5 to 14, including grandchildren, in-laws, spouses, children, siblings, cousins, nieces and nephews, and parents • Low family income \$0-\$40,000 • English and other Pacific Islander language spoken at the home • Parents education 6 grade to college completion • Parents type of work which does not allow them time with their children: juvenile probation officer, care giving and nursing, construction, airport, taxi driving • Parents expecting high achievements in school, church activity and citizenship • Discipline: long lectures, losing privileges, physical punishment • Mom: Overbearing, enforce rules, administer rewards for school achievements • Parents can't help with homework because they don't understand English • Parents working many jobs • Less resources to help students • Parenting style: "my way or the highway" • Support from family members • Parents being there for their students • Family dynamics: dad was born in the islands and is very strict. • Mom most involved • Provide internet access • Provide a Pacific Islander role model

Table 8 (continued)

Factors related to dropouts in the U.S., Tonga, and risk factors for dropouts among NHOPI students in the U.S.

Categories	Factors related to dropout in the US	Factors related to dropout in Tonga (Tatafu)	Factors identified as protective measures and risk factors for dropout in the NHOPI study in the US (Vakalahi)
Culture-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial and economic relations in the community and school • Home child-rearing patterns of non-interference and early childhood • Cultural integrity and resistance • Older teaches hold traditional views of Native Americans • Barrier to successful learning in school • Students feel embarrassed for being praised publically for doing good • Need to develop more culturally sensitive framework for teaching & learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church emphasis and not school • Nobility have the most resources and poor people support them leaving less resources for their children's' education • Extended family uses the resources • Economy-taking care of others before their children • Slavery to what others might say • Preferred treatment of girls over boys • Outdoing one another in generosity • Obsession with academic success • Lack of prioritization of needs • Over spending in weddings, funerals, church collections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress from struggling to function in dual cultures • Too much time for practicing customs and traditions: love, respect, reciprocity, obligations to the community, cultural dances, ceremonies, speaking the native tongue • Tutoring by members of NHOPI • Good role model from the NHOPI community who has higher education and identified to have positive influences on students achievements
World-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight of real world events 		

Note. List of school-related factors not necessarily in the order of importance. Data adapted from Bridgeland et al (2006), Rumberger (1987), Tatafu (1997) & Vakalahi (2009).

CHAPTER 3—METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Research Method

This study is significant since it is one of the first studies to directly address the factors related to high school dropouts among the NHOPI students. It is further significant because it was carried out by a member of the NHOPI population in the U.S. The study explored factors associated with dropouts among NHOPI students in a mainland U.S. context. Since the NHOPI population is predicted to increase significantly in the next decades the results of the study could become increasingly important over time. It is imperative that the factors related to dropouts in the NHOPI community are explored and better understood now, while the population is still relatively small, so that we can start to work towards preventing or minimizing the proportion and number of future students from dropping out of schools.

Moreover, it is hoped that the factors that were identified in this study will establish a foundation for future researchers to formulate better theories, and to ask better, more relevant questions so that we may more clearly understand the factors related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI students

Institutional Review Board Approval

An IRB approval for this study was obtained from BYU IRB Office in the fall of 2012 (Study number X130010). Following the IRB approval data were collected in the fall of 2012 to spring of 2013.

Sampling of the NHOPI High School Dropouts

A convenience sample (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) of NHOPI high school students who dropped out of high school in Salt Lake and Utah counties in Utah was developed from the Provo School District and the following NHOPI organizations and churches: Provo

Utah Wasatch Tonga Stake, Salt Lake South Tongan Stake, Salt Lake North Tongan Stake, Tongan Society of Utah (1866 South Washington Center, Provo Utah), Samoan Community Associations of America in Salt Lake, Hawaiian Community Associations in Salt Lake, Tongan Catholic Churches in Utah and Salt Lake counties, Samoan Wards in Salt Lake County, Tongan Methodists Churches in Utah and Salt Lake counties, Free Church of Tonga in Salt Lake County and the Samoan Methodist Church in Salt Lake County, National Tongan American Society (3007 S. West Temple Building J, Suite #7, Salt Lake City, Utah 84115), Tongan Task Force (319 East Williams Avenue, SLC Utah), Pyramid Youth Services (2860 West 4700 South, #B, West Valley City, Utah), and other Pacific Islander services and organizations (see <http://www.schools.utah.gov/equity/Resources/Pacific-Islander.aspx>).

The convenience sample of dropouts was comprised of 13 males and 4 females who were between 18-25 years old at the time of their participation. They participated in this study after they were informed of their rights and they signed the IRB-approved consent form. Each participant was interviewed in his or her place of choosing. The interviews lasted from 30 to 60 minutes. The inclusion criteria included NHOPI dropout students who were 18-25 years old who had already dropped out of school between 2006 and 2012. NHOPI dropout students who were younger than 18 years old, in addition to those who had dropped out from high schools prior to 2006 were not included in the sample.

Data Collection

Qualitative data were collected through personal interviews with each of the selected dropouts. The author personally contacted the dropout students and got their agreement to participate. Additionally, permission was obtained from their parents or spouses in consideration of cultural expectations and norms of respectful behavior. Each interview location was chosen

by the participant on the basis of their perception of comfort and quiet, and which they felt would present minimal or no interference. Each interview was audio-recorded and then transcribed using QSR NVivo® 10 (QSR, 2012). Pseudonyms were used for all personal and school names. To maintain confidentiality all recordings were erased after transcription, the data were secured on one computer via password protection and were only accessible to the author of this study.

Analysis of the Data

The qualitative data for this study consisted of the words, phrases and meanings in the transcribed interviews, supplemented by the observations of the interviewer during the meetings. Data was obtained from semi-structured interviews with dropouts. The analyses of the data involved four distinct steps using QSR NVivo®10 computer software. First, the transcribed interviews were studied by the researcher, and the audio-recordings were checked against the interview transcriptions as well. Additionally, field notes and observations were written down during the course of the interviews. Further notes and observations were written while analyzing the data in NVivo®10.

During the course of the NVivo analysis key questions were identified on which the analysis was focused. The development of these emergent questions was guided by the initial research questions. As is typical in emergent analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) the questions evolved as work with the data progressed. Specifically, the analysis generated key questions, emergent topics, chronologies of time periods and events, all of which calibrated to the data as a whole.

The NVivo coding process began with open coding which identified various basic themes, topics, and chronologies and organized them into coherent categories. This step involved reading and re-reading the text and identifying the coherent categories and providing

descriptive labels for each category and sub-category. This step was repeated until new themes, topics and chronologies stopped emerging, indicating that the open coding process had reached the saturation point (Gibbs, 2008). Then, the categories were summarized to determine the extent to which they addressed the research questions which had emerged. Categories were merged and divided to capture a parsimonious representation of how the parts fit into the whole. Themes were retained as trustworthy when they were indicated by a majority (50% or greater) of the dropouts. This threshold helped to support the argument that the findings reasonably represent the data.

Next, the themes emerging from the NVivo data analysis which met the inclusion criterion were explored to identify patterns. These patterns represent connections within and between the themes. This process led to the discovery of how some themes may be related to other themes or to dropouts' characteristics and attributes (e.g., certain behaviors or demographics). The data were also examined for chronological patterns related to timing of decisions and actions, stages of the development of ideas, ordering of critical events, etc., that explained how and why NHOPI high school students drop out of school. Furthermore, this step provided a mechanism for clear data visualization to support the emergent themes and explanatory patterns. Specifically, theoretical models, in the form of diagrams including boxes and arrows showed how all the pieces of information derived from the data could be fit together in a coherent way.

Finally, the analysis of the data involved interpreting the themes and patterns that were related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI students in the Salt Lake and Utah counties in Utah. The focus was on how to make sense of them, within the cultural framework of the NHOPI students and to identify the major lessons learned from this study from which future

actions and solutions could be derived. The analyses of the data also identified some limitations of this study which might be helpful in identifying areas for further study. These are presented next.

Limitations of Research

There are several limitations apparent with this study. First, this is an exploratory study designed to identify in a very preliminary way the factors related to NHOPI dropout rates among youth in the Salt Lake and Utah counties of Utah. Therefore, this study did not test pre-existing theories that might be related to NHOPI dropout rates. The study was not designed to draw cause and effect relationships between the themes and patterns identified, nor to make generalizations about why all students, or even all NHOPI students drop out of high schools. Second, only a convenience sample of 17 dropout students (13 males and 4 females) were included in this study. Consequently, the results likely do not reflect all possible or even perhaps typical experiences of the NHOPI high school dropouts in the U.S. mainland. It is possible that there were other factors related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI students that were not captured by this study. Hence, it is imperative that additional studies of NHOPI high school dropouts are conducted with larger numbers of participants, as well as being done in areas with higher numbers and concentrations of NHOPI students, such as in California, Alaska, and Hawaii. Third, focus group discussions of the parents of the dropouts should also be conducted so that we may learn directly from parents about factors that they believe, or have experienced with that may be related to NHOPI high school dropout rates in the U.S. mainland.

CHAPTER 4—RESULTS

The qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interview data from NHOPI high school dropout students confirms that the five factors from Vakalahi (2009) and Tatafu (1997) were related to high school dropout rates among the NHOPI youths from Salt Lake and Utah counties in Utah. These five factors are: family-related, peer-related, personal-related, culture-related and school-related. I constructed the revised model for the factors related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI youths in Salt Lake and Utah counties in Utah as depicted in Figure 3. Table 9 identifies the main themes that emerged from the data for each of the Vakalahi's and Tatafu's five factors. The following sections explain these significant themes of each factor relating to NHOPI dropout rates and provide support using relevant quotes from the dropouts' interviews to demonstrate that the themes emerged from the data.

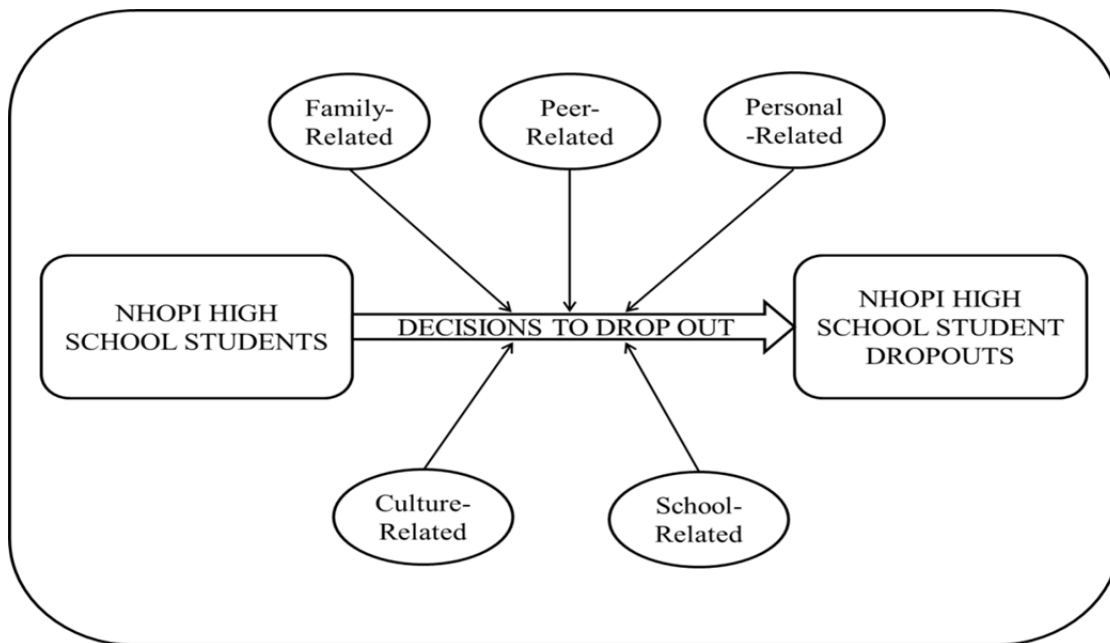


Figure 3. Revised conceptual framework for five factors related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school dropouts in Salt Lake and Utah counties in Utah. Factors are not arranged in any order of importance.

Table 9

Five Factors Related to High School Dropout Rates among NHOPI Dropouts*

Factor	Themes Related to NHOPI High School Dropouts
Family-Related Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' Home-School Lack of Communication (100%) • Parents' Less Involved in Their Student's Education (100%) • Parents' Lack of Training on How to Handle Failure (100%) • Technologically Unequipped Household (100%) • Parents' De-motivational Behavior (100%) • Parents' Lack of Knowledge of School and Community Resources (100%) • Families' Financial Struggles (94.12%) • Parents' Low Educational Achievements (88.24%)
Peer-Related Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Peers' Influential Activities (100%) • Bad Peers' Influential Activities (100%) • Daily Negative Peer Activities (100%) • Lack of Positive Interactions at School between Cousins/Siblings (100%)
Personal-Related Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time Mismanagement (100%) • Demotivational Behaviors (100%) • Building Invisible Self-Educational Barriers to Success in School (100%) • Personal School-Alienation Behavior (100%) • Lower Literacy Proficiency (100%) • Stressful Home Environments (82.35%)
Culture-Related Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' and Parents' Educational Goals Misalignment (100%) • Students' Lack of Employment during High School (100%) • Students Not Following Role Models (100%) • Negative Acculturation of Students & Parents (100%) • Teachers' Polynesian Cultural Incompetency (70.59%)
School-Related Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-Related School Deficiencies (100%) • Counselors' Lower Level of Polynesian Cultural Competency (100%) • Ineffective School Organization (100%) • School Accommodation for Free & Reduced-lunch Meals (94.12%) • Bullying & Disciplinary Actions (88.24%)

*Five factors based on Vakalahi (2009) and Tatafu (1997)

Family-Related Factors

Family background is known to influence student's academic achievements. In fact, Rumberger and colleagues (1990) reported that family background contributed to both students' academic achievements and dropout behavior. Family-related factors comprised of family background and other family-related issues are related to students' academic achievements. Furthermore, family-related factors have been shown to relate to dropping out rates among high school students in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997), and are also considered to be high risk factors related to NHOPI dropping out from high schools in the United States (Vakalahi, 2009). In all the family-related factors that I have found that are related to NHOPI dropouts rates, these were the highest themes, given by over 50% of the respondents: home and school lack of communication, parents being less involved in their students' education, parent's lack of training on how to handle failure, technologically unequipped households, parents' de-motivational behavior, parents' community disconnectedness, two income earner parents, parent's financial struggles, and parents' low academic achievements (Table 10).

Home and School Lack of Communication

This theme found that the lack of communication between the home of the NHOPI dropouts and the school is related to high school dropout rates among the NHOPI youths in the SLC and Utah Counties in Utah. The contacts between the parents and schools were made only when their students were in trouble. "They usually do the day before the term ends. They will come and talk to my teachers and see how I was doing and stuff" (M4)¹. This indicated that the parents only contacted the school before the end of the terms to check up on how the student was

¹ Quote citations represent male dropout respondents (M1-M13) and female dropout respondents (F1-F4) and real names in the dropouts' quotes have been changed to protect their identity.

Table 10

Family-Related factors Related to High School Dropout Rates among NHOPI Dropouts

Category	Factors Related to NHOPI High School Dropouts
Parents' Home-School Lack of Communication (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal contacts between parents and schools but most contacts were done only when their students were in trouble by personal visits or phone calls (100%) • Parents contacting counselors towards the end of the school year instead of throughout the school year to monitor students' progress (100%)
Parents' Less Involved in Their Student's Education (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents were very "mad" and "upset" when they found out that their students dropped out of school (52.94%) • Parents concerned about their students' future • Parents wanted to find an alternative way for their students to graduate but did not know what they were
Parents' Lack of Training on How to Handle Failure (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents not teaching students how to perform well at school because majority of the parents are dropouts themselves (100%) • Parents just providing basic necessities of life such as housing, food and some motivation but were not enough
Technologically Unequipped Household (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents not having internet service at their homes to help students with their homework (82.35%) • Parents not having a computer at home to help students with their homework (76.47%)
Parents' De-motivational Behavior (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents not motivating them continuously throughout high school but only at the beginning or sporadically throughout the school year (100%) • Parents not being able to help with their students' homework (82.35%) • Parents lecturing their students every time they found out any problems they had at school • Parents think that it is totally the teacher's responsibilities to educate their children and not theirs
Parents' Lack of Knowledge of School and Community Resources (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents not being aware of what are other options available for their students to graduate (100%) • Parents not consistently attending parent teacher conferences so that they were aware of the challenges their students faced at school (82.35%)
Families' Financial Struggles (94.12%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents with students that participated in reduced lunch program (88.24%) • Parents of dropouts' households consist of number of people from babies to teenagers, including grandchildren, cousins, nieces, nephews, siblings with their spouses and children (88.24) • Parents not having adequate financial support to enable their students to take packages from alternative school to graduate on time (82.35%)
Parents' Low Educational Achievements (88.24%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents were dropout themselves (52.94%) • Parents were high school graduates • Parents were college graduates • Parents that dropped out of college

Note. Factors related to NHOPI high school dropouts in SLC and Utah counties in Utah not necessarily in the order of importance. Subthemes with no percentages indicate that it did not rise to 50% of the respondents.

doing instead of contacting the school on a regular basis. Another dropout also indicated that “like if they find out that, that something happened at school or if I wouldn’t attend, they get mad at me, they do stuff, whatever, but then sometimes they would come to the school” (M6) is also indicative of the low interactions between parents and schools which seems to be limited to when they got into trouble or to check on them if they thought that they are in trouble. Yet another dropout student also indicated that the contact between school and parents were lacking since “my mom was always getting calls, like if I’m with grade [failing grades] and then my aunt would always check my grades and come to parents’ teacher’s conference. My aunt and my teachers would always email each other” (M7). The involvement of other family members in other members of either their immediate or extended family’s children’s education is a common practice in the NHOPI community, but this experience seems to indicate that the greater part of the communication was between the teacher and the aunt, and not necessarily with the student’s parents. As such, the parents do not know what is going on with their student’s school-life. Thus, the severity of the problems facing their student was lost in the process of relaying the messages from the aunt to the parents. Likewise, another dropout related the communication between the parents and the school in the following way:

Well, my parents are not the type that will call them, unless that they are looking for me to see if I was in school. And so, really it was like, they would do their part, but they wouldn’t like go above and beyond. (F1)

This experience also indicated that the parents’ reason for contact was not on how the student performs at school but rather about being present or absent. However, some of the communication that took place between the parents and the schools seemed to be towards the end of the term which suggests that her parents were not interested in their student’s academic

performance at that point. One of the dropouts indicated that “they usually do the day before the term ends. They will come and talk to my teachers and see how I was doing and stuff” (M4) while another dropout pointed out that “they would call our teachers, they would call the school and they come in. They basically call or come in when there is a need” (F2). Another dropout also emphatically indicated that “there was very little interaction. [The response] They will call at the end of the term if there is a problem” (F3) clearly demonstrated a lack of communication between the parents and the school. The communication seems to be towards the end of the term, regarding the safety of the students, and how the students are doing at school, but not always for their academic standing. However, the concerns for the academic welfare of their students need to be consistent and at various time-frames throughout the term but not just at the end of the term because it will be too late to help their students academically at the end of the term.

The experiences from the NHOPI dropouts confirm that the communication between parents and the schools was lacking. Thus, the lack of communication between parents and the school is one of the family-related factors that related to high school dropouts rates among the youths in the NHOPI community in Salt Lake and Utah counties in Utah.

Parents’ Less Involved in Their Student’s Education

Parents and families of NHOPI dropout students reacted to their students’ decision to drop out mostly negative and were described by the dropouts as being “mad” and “upset.” Some of the parents wondered what they were supposed to do next, yet others wanted to find an alternative, but they did not know what the alternatives were at the time. This type of reactions to their student’s decisions to drop out of high schools is indicative of parents being less involved

in their student's education (Rumberger et al., 1990). A dropout related a "mad" and "upset" experience when parents were told of the decision to drop out of school:

Oh... they were pretty mad. I knew right away that they were hurt. Just looking back I couldn't even see how my parents reacted when I wasn't graduating and stuff like that. I remember that you know like how the senior class or whatever, kind of like a party after graduation or something like that, either at the school, senior night or something like that, they either have it at the school or at the Rec Center or something, the year that I graduated...I just remember telling my mom, hey mom, I'm gonna go...spend the night, cause they had a overnight there for us, and she goes, why are you going over there, you didn't even graduated, you know. Just that look on her face and the way she said it, to me, it hit the spot, cause, I just felt like, I just felt like I let them down, you know, and to me, I never wanted to do that. I never wanted to do that intentionally. (M6)

Though the reaction from this parent to the student about not graduating from high school was serious, it is typical of the reactions that over 50% of NHOPI parents had towards their children in this study. In fact, another dropout student indicated the surprised reactions to the decision to drop out that they were "upset" and

They did not like it. They didn't like it one bit. I was surprised that not one hand touched me. I was surprised that my brother did not hit me or my aunt did not come down from California to beat me. She said that she is coming down for graduation and I say, oh, I am not going to graduate. You know, I am your aunt and your mom knows what I am going to do. I let them know why I wasn't graduating. She wasn't happy with me. (M11)

It seems that the dropout student was surprised by the reactions from various family members and did not grasp at first what were the anticipated consequences of the decision to drop out.

Again, this experience also confirms that various family members were not pleased but upset with the dropout situation, and they made their displeasure known. However, they did not carry out any further actions nor did they suggest any remedy that was available to mitigate the dropout situation. In another experience, another dropout related that “they were really, really mad. Mostly from my dad and my mom felt that way too but we never really talk” (M12). This is also indicative of the lack of parent’s involvement in their student’s education. The lack of parental involvements in their student’s education seems to be elevated to a higher level when another dropout said that “they were, hum, I really did not tell them. I left and lived at a friend’s house and then when I came back home, I told them that I was no longer going. They were angry with me but, yeah” (M3). Thus, the way that these parents reacted to the dropouts informing them that they were no longer going to school is indicative of parents that are less involved in their students’ education. This is a part of family-related factors that are related to dropouts’ rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Parents’ Lack of Training on How to Handle Failure

Parents are responsible for their children’s wellbeing and safety. They are also responsible for helping their children’s education and teaching them how to act if they fail on any given task (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). The lessons that the children learn from their parents and others on how to handle failure will help them to be successful in their lives. Therefore, when the children did not learn or ignored those lessons that they were taught by their parents and others, they will fail or struggle in what they do. Similarly, when parents do not teach their children how to handle failure, their children will likely fail. This was shown to be true from the lives and experiences of the NHOPI dropouts. One of the dropouts described it in this manner:

For me, I think that if I had someone to talk to. See because a lot of people in my family didn't really make it through high school either. So, it was hard for me to talk to them, because I felt pressure from everybody to be a certain way, do certain things because I was the next one in line. So, I wish I just had that one person to just sit there and listen to me with my frustrations and everything. So, it was just hard for me. (F1)

This dropout comes from a family that the parents were dropouts themselves and the four older siblings were also dropouts. It is no wonder that this dropout felt the pressure to graduate but did not know how to since no one can show her how to handle setbacks or failure. Hence, the parents were not equipped with the knowledge to teach this dropout how to handle failure and what to do to prevent failing from school, which ultimately leads to dropping out of high school. The importance of the lessons that children learn from their parents and from their siblings on how to handle failure, cannot be overestimated. In fact, one of the dropouts described the consequences of the difficulties that arose when parents separated, further compounding the lack of knowledge on how to handle failure or setbacks:

Um, my dad was a big factor for me being in school. So, when he is around, everything will be a lot better because growing up when he was in town, he take me to work. I only go to school not only wanted to work out but honestly, I go to school with a better attitude because I know it was going to work out with my dad. But, when he started to disappear for a long period of time, I just lost all my attention to school and working out. So, I lost both of them at the same time. (M9)

There is no doubt that the decision to drop out from high school was related to many things, but in this case the parent's separation and lack of knowing how to handle failure and setbacks were paramount. The father was very influential in the life of this dropout, and his absence also lead

to the dropout not being coached or taught how to properly handle failure. In another dropout example, the dropout described the lack of training on how to handle failure as follows:

It was, I didn't really think they care that much. All it was, if they saw a B in that class, they would say to continue to pick that up. There was never anything. They just said to go to school. (F3)

The parents instructed the dropout to “continue to pick up” (i.e., continue to improve) the school work to get a better grade but they neglected to ask why the student's grade went down from an A to a B. They also did not teach the dropout how to get an A since they were also dropouts themselves. As such, the lack of the parents' educational achievements also contributed to the lack of training of students on how to handle failure. This lack of training on how to handle failure from the parents was also described by another dropout: “They [parents] paid for it [high school] and dropped me off every morning. Ah, just about it.” (M4). This shows that, at least in this dropout's perspective, the parents did not do anything other than paying for his high school and dropping him off at school, and nothing else. This dropout experience was also similar to what another dropout described in these words: “They would do help me with some stuff but not a lot. May be they didn't know a lot back then so, they didn't really know” (M10) how to teach their children to handle failure successfully. Similarly, another dropout described the lack of training from parents on how to handle failure successfully by saying that “sometimes it is like letting us take the car, giving us a place to live, and they care about us and help us to choose a better life” (M2) morally, but that did not help the student in handling failure from schooling since other siblings also dropped out. Yet another dropout student elaborated on this lack of training to handle failure. Acknowledging the parents' concern about schooling and sluffing another student noted that:

They would always be there for me, like sometimes if I were to walk to school, they wake early to take me. No matter what time you got home from cleaning the night before, they would always wake up just to take me to school. I think motivation, like I had plenty of motivation, but I would say like, like right now, I wished I would've knew, or have the thoughts that I do now when I did in high school. Back then all I wanted to do was play, play, play. Right now, all want to do is to find work, work, work, you know, or school, school, school or something, so. I received a lot of motivation, but I never really took it into consideration. Like, I would be motivated to, instead of being motivated to go to school; I would be motivated to go to school to do music. Cause there is this one class that I took in high school is called TV Video Production, we would go film, go film and uh, edit on these big computer, these big Apple Computers, these big nice kind, had those in high school and before school we would go in there and we worked on music and beats and just produce music and stuff, and we would even go there during lunch and after school and sometimes we skipped classes to go in there because I liked it. And I just wished if I had an opportunity to do music like that, I think that would've motivated me to finish high school and to get more experienced with music. (M6)

Technologically Unequipped Households

Warschauer (2007) pointed out that “educational reformers suggest that the advent of new technologies will radically transform what people learn, how they learn, and where they learn, yet studies of diverse learners’ use of new media cast doubt on the speed and extent of change.” Most families of diverse learners do not have the means to purchase and own these technologies (Atewell, 2001; Gorski & Clark, 2001). As such, NHOPI homes that are without any internet services and working computers cannot be of much help to their students in doing

school projects and completing other homework that is required to be done online. Additionally, the inadequacy in not having working computers and internet services was described by the dropouts in the following manner. He had no computer and internet service at home “I have to use the computers at school. I used the school library and also city library but did not check out any books” (M5) because his home was technologically unequipped. The student utilized the resources available at school and the community but still fell behind on homework due to time mismanagement and other factors. However, the majority of the dropouts’ parents were not aware of the availability of the computers with internet services in their cities’ libraries. But, there was no way of knowing that these resources were available to them at the time since they had never visited the libraries with their students, in their respective cities. Another dropout described the lack of having a computer and an internet service in the home makes it difficult because not having a computer and an internet service “made things harder too, like doing school projects and stuff” (F2). In a similar experience, one of the dropouts who had a computer and internet at home described its limitations thus:

Like it barely ever worked. Like if we did had a computer, it was like, the internet, we never paid the internet bill so, it’s like we never got to do homework, or the printer was broken so, we cannot send in any reports. We did have a computer and the internet but it was never worked. (F3)

This dropout experience shows that having a functional computer and an internet service provider were crucial to doing the student’s homework and learning on the subjects associated with the homework itself. Again, another one of the dropouts also indicated that having a computer and an internet at home would have helped the student completed the homework successfully. In fact, the dropout pointed out that they had “no [computer or internet]. We did

not have any computer at home to help us with our homework” (F4) also suggests that this factor is related to dropping out. Clearly, dropout’s homes were technologically unequipped to support the student’s education. This is another family-related factor contributing to high dropout rates among NHOPI high school students.

Parents’ De-motivational Behavior and Working More than One Jobs

A review of some of the research on dropouts show that one factor in students’ decision to drop out of high school is motivation (Rumberger, 1987). Additionally, the motivational approach that has been found most useful in educational research focuses on intrinsic or extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Thus, I shall now discuss anything in the dropouts’ parents’ behavior that might be considered to be de-motivational regarding NHOPI dropouts. One of the dropouts related an experience that exemplifies parental de-motivational behavior:

Every time she finds out something, she always lectured me, like I told you to go to this class, I told you to do this, why didn’t you do this. It’s like I can’t say anything back because you know, she told me plenty of times but I still didn’t do it. (M11)

It seems that the parents’ lecturing the student is one of the factors that contributed to the student’s decision to drop out of high school. Constant lecturing of the student’s behavior by the parents does not motivate the student to work hard in school. Instead, constant lecturing ultimately leads to dropping out form high school and therefore it is a considered a de-motivational behavior. In another example of de-motivational behavior, one of the dropouts described how a family problem lessened the motivation to go to school.

I remember, um, things that held me back from going to school. Sophomore year was mainly, we just went through a really rough patch with our family. It was super hard for me because I took it really seriously. I just didn’t want to go anymore. And then I just,

junior and senior year I just started hanging out with kids, kids that I normally didn't hang out with and then just like stop going to class. (F2)

The experience that the dropout was referring to was presumably very painful because she did not want to discuss it. However, it is obvious from the emotions of the dropout during the interview that there was some type of hardship that the parents and the family were going through, and this resulted in a de-motivational behavior, contributing to the student's decision to drop out of high school. Another student talked about a different kind of de-motivational factor:

Well, one situation I think was hard for me to go to school, especially up here because we weren't as rich as the other kids or we didn't have as much as them. So, it was like, I felt belittle, like I didn't want to be here or I don't want to go to school with kids, they are preteen [not teenagers yet] stuck-up [not friendly towards Poly] or whatever. It wasn't anybody, it's just me, I feel like. So, what I wanted, what I want to try to do things that will I have to hustle to get a cell phone too or it was just hard to have nothing and coming up here to school with people that have everything. I wasn't jealous or anything, it was just like, I felt like that I was back there with all of our people where everyone are the same. (F1)

The dropout obviously described how she felt because the motivation to go to school and to do better was shifted to having a cell phone, a symbol of parents with money in the NHOPI community. This is a phenomenon known as French Structuralism (Barthes & Duisit, 1975) in which an object symbolizes something else than the object itself. Because the parents of this dropout have eight children and did not have enough money to buy her a cell phone, the dropout spends a lot more time figuring out a way to get a cell phone instead of focusing on schooling. Hence, parents not providing a cell phone is a de-motivational family-related factor for high

school dropouts. Another dropout related the de-motivational behavior that his parents had which ultimately led to the decision to drop out from high school because “my parents trying to separate. And, perhaps the whole distraction was I let my friends tell me what to do but in my junior year, I knew what I wanted [to graduate from high school]. [In my] senior year, I lost myself [because I did not know what to do and dropped out]” (M9). The parents’ separation became de-motivational because it diminished the student’s motivation to find himself and get back to school.

When parents were not motivating and teaching their students how to handle failure, their students were left to motivate themselves—a factor mentioned earlier but that now appears in sharper focus a de-motivational. One of the dropouts related the experience of trying to do self-motivation since the parents were not doing it in “just kind of keep my head on, just keep me motivated to want to graduate. That’s a lot, but they didn’t get to do that” (M7). Indeed, another dropout whom I cited earlier indicated that although “they feed me, take me to school and paid for my school” (F1) but made no mention of any motivational activities, in any form, from the parents. Therefore, the parent’s motivational activities, whatever they maybe, should be consistent, and must be throughout the school year but, especially when their students are struggling at school. The lack of parent’s motivation on their students was also displayed in another dropout’s life before dropping out. The dropout related that:

There were a lot of reasons [for dropping out of school] but mainly because I didn’t have the motivation to stay in school. I did not have that push [extrinsic or intrinsic] to be there, to be doing the work so I kind of get discouraged. I had no one really, so yeah. (F1)

Therefore, parent’s motivation towards their children’s education is paramount and they must display it strongly and often. In this case, the dropout student clearly identified one of the main

reasons for dropping out of high school was not being motivated enough, whether by parents or by oneself. However, parent's motivation is paramount for their students to stay in school, even if circumstances might seem (usually incorrectly) daunting. This is seen in the following case of one of the dropouts.

I feel like after a while, but if like I miss in the morning, then I kind of feel like I couldn't make up the work I miss, so, keep going to something that I'm going to fail. [Like, how many times do you miss in a week?] Like a full day, probably like four or five times a month. Like classes every now and then for a week. (F3)

The dropout seems to think that missing school work could not be made up because of excessive absenteeism. Although, the parents should have intervened before the dropout even reached this point of no return, they should still motivate the dropout and help her to find a way to get the school work done. Additionally, the parents should have known about this issue and should have contacted her teachers so that her school work could have been done at home to avoid having bad grades.

Parents' motivation is crucial to student academic success but so is the help that they give to their students when they are doing their homework at home. This is not an easy task among NHOPI parents in the Salt Lake and Utah counties. For the most part, NHOPI parents in this study were working two jobs; some parents work more than two jobs, and also were not academically successful themselves. Given those type of demographic backgrounds, the majority of the parents were not able to help with their student's homework. One of the dropouts related that:

Both of my parents work. That's why we stay with Grandma and Grandpa because every time we come back home from school, if they weren't there then we would be home

alone and don't know what to do. So, they go to work and my dad goes to *iate* [yard work]. (M11)

One of this dropout's parents had passed away before his freshman year. The mother could have helped out with his homework but was too tired most of the times when she got home. This dropout's experience was also manifested in another dropout's life. However, this experience seemed to be more serious because:

My mom works two jobs so she was never home. She wasn't there. She would come home like at eight and my dad have always been gone, driving his truck, so, he leaves on Sunday and come back on Sunday. So, we don't see him. (M7)

As such, the parents were not able to help out with the student's homework. Additionally, the parents were dropouts themselves, which compounded the difficulties of helping out with the student's homework. This issue also played out among the dropouts in which one of the them related that "my dad, he pretty much work from Monday to Saturday whenever he has a job opening and my mom just work, not really 24-7 but whenever her schedule was" (M2). This was also indicative of not being able to help out with homework and much more. The unavailability of the parents to help out with homework was related by another dropout whom he stated that:

We had a cleaning job all throughout high school. We have to wait until the banks closed. We always clean the banks. And the bank will close 3, 4, and sometimes 5. We have to leave and clean the bank and will not be home until 10 or 11 depending on how many banks we clean that week. Sometimes we get home at midnight but we always go and help our parents because we don't want them to be out all night because we want them to come home. (M6)

Even though the dropout did not work for money, the dropouts indicated their job was to help out the parents with their job which ultimately interfered with their homework time. As such, the student's homework was not done on times which led to bad grades. Parents' not being able to help out with student's homework was a theme that was repeated throughout the lives of majority of the dropouts in this study that many students said they spent a lot of time with aunts or grandparents was also indicative of the parents not being able to help out with the student's homework. This situation was further complicated when the mother was single and was trying to make ends meet by various jobs. Additionally, the student's aunt and grandparents were not able to help the students with their homework

Parents' Lack of Knowledge of Community and School Resources

There are several resources within the schools and in the communities where the NHOPI parents and students reside that can help them excel in their education. When parents are not aware of the resources that are available to them for their student's education, they will not know what they are, and how to access them in order to help their students academically (Dupper & Poertner, 1997). Such was the case with the parents of the NHOPI dropouts in this study. One of the dropouts related this experience when he told his mom that he was no longer in school:

Um, the principal called my mom and told her [that I am no longer in school]. My mom was crying. She wanted me to graduate but I talked to her and then we just sat down and [my mom said] no matter what school I went to, no matter where it is, I just got to get graduated and that's all the time left. (M7)

The mother's reaction is indicative of parents lack of knowledge of school and community resources that were available to help her student graduated from high school with a GED. However, she also indicated that it did not matter where it was, he would have to graduate

because time was running out for him to graduate on time. If the parents were knowledgeable of the school and community resources, they should have taken her to East Shore High School which is located within their school district. Because they did not know that, they reacted with direction to graduate but did not indicate where to go and get her GED. This experience was also similar to an experience that another dropout described.

Um, it was hard. It was hard for my mom, she felt like giving up. And it was really difficult to see her like that. To see her, how sad she was. So it makes me hit rock bottom. I felt like I was nothing. I couldn't do anything about it cause I already out of school and couldn't get back into school because they did not give me anymore chances. I was even thinking about a super senior [repeating the 12th grade again] buy they wouldn't let me do it. Like they say, you had your chance you know and that's it. It was just hard for me. I just like whatever! I have nothing else to do but to go and party. Nobody really wants to help so, yeah, it was difficult. (F1)

Again, the reaction that this dropout mother had, though difficult and painful, was similar to the previous dropout's mother's experience. Because the mother did not know the resources in the school and the community that are available to get a GED, she did not suggest that there is another chance of graduating from high school. As such, the dropout did not know what to do or where to go to get her GED. Similarly, another one of the dropouts also related the incidence when her family found out that she was no longer in school. It seemed that the mother knew the events leading up to the decision to drop out of high school but did not intervene because she did not know what to do. The dropout noted that:

My mom understood. She knew why I dropped out. My dad, he really didn't find out like until a week later after I had already made the decision [to drop out] and then, he was upset about it. But, I think he kind of thrown over it, cause it's already done. (F3)

The mother knew why her daughter was dropping out of high school, but she did not know what the school and community resources were available at that time that might have helped her daughter to graduate from her high school. Concomitantly, the mother also did not know the resources available in the district and in the community to take her to so she could get her GED. Yet another dropout also related that his: "Parents were really, really, mad. Mostly from my dad and my mom felt that way too but we never really talk" (M12). Though the parents' reaction to the dropout decision is indicative of a lot of things, it is indicative of the lack of knowledge of the resources that are available that they could have used. This lack of knowledge of school and community resources was also played out in another one of the dropouts' school experiences.

The dropout related this experience after he told them that he was no longer in school and:

They [parents] were disappointed. They knew I could graduate if I wanted to but I was behind [in high school credits] and it was too late. So, I just stayed home and helped out my mom. My church leaders told me that there is a way to graduate from high school but we did not know. (M4)

Again, this dropout also indicated that he was behind in credits and therefore did not graduate with his class because it was too late to make up the work. Additionally, the dropout found out that there was a way to graduate from high school with a GED from his religious leaders but not from his parents. Furthermore, I talked to the parents of all the 17 dropouts to gauge their knowledge or awareness of the school and community resources and it was clear to me that they were not aware of them. As such, parents' lacking of knowledge or being unaware of high

school and community resources that could have helped their students to graduate from high school or get a GED is a family-related factor that relates to NHOPi dropout rates in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

It is of paramount importance for parents to know what resources available to them and their students in their high schools and communities where they live so that they may know how and where to get help for their students to graduate from high school. Parents' attendance in their parents and teachers' conferences is an important part of knowing the resources that their students' schools has to offer their students to learn, study and graduate from high schools. Therefore, the experiences that these dropouts related in this study are indicative of the disconnectedness of their parents with their schools and its resources. As such, the dropouts' parents were not aware of the schools' resources. One of the dropouts indicated the severity of his parents' unawareness of the school resources because "I have never been to a parent and teacher conference since 4 grades" (M1). When parents do not participate in their parents and teachers' conferences, they are not being aware of the available resources that the school has but also do not know what their students' academic standings are. As such, dropouts in this study indicated that it was too late for their parents to intervene in their education which led them to drop out of high school. Another dropout also related his experience that "my parents did come [to parents and teachers conferences] but it stops like in 8 grades since I went to Cedar City but down there, my foster parents were [attending parents and teachers conferences]" (M2). This dropout experience also pointed out that they were other problems that complicated his parents not being able to participate in his parents and teachers' conferences. Yet another dropout also noted that "mostly just my mom [came to parents and teachers conferences]. Yeah, my mom did. My mom was a really big supporter. My dad, too, but he is not the type to be there, at places for

things like that” (F1). This dropout experiences also indicated the mother was more involved than the father but also pointed out that even though the mother went to parents and teachers conferences, she did not know what the available resources are at her school that could have been used to mitigate her daughter’s low academic performances. In a similar experience, one of the dropouts described how his parents participated in his parents and teachers conferences: “In elementary, yeah [they participated in parents and teachers conferences]. Only once in junior high but not once in high school” (M9). The parent’s behavior in their participation in one of their children’s education severely prevented them from knowing the academic standing of their son’s education and what the school resources were at the time. Yet another one of the dropouts also indicated that he did not tell his dad about the parents and teachers conferences. He noted that “no, my dad didn't come [to parents and teachers conferences]. I usually did not tell him when it was” (M12). The absence of the father in his parents and teachers conferences was complicated by the fact that his parents divorced during high school and therefore his mother moved to a different town and was not involved in his education. However, some of the dropouts in this study did not tell their parents the time about their parents and teachers conferences because their did not want their parents to know how they did academically in high school but also for fear of being punished for not doing well. The fear of being punished for not doing well in school is a common phenomenon among high school students in the NHOPI communities everywhere. Another one of the dropouts also related an experience that exemplifies this fear of being punished for not doing well in school:

When I was in high school, they probably stop attending [parents and teachers conferences] when I was a sophomore. The reason is, I will not even tell them anything about it. I was stubborn, I was scared to have them come over and have my teachers told

them how I was doing in school. You know how it is when we come home and we get hit if we get in trouble. (M6)

Even though this dropout student did not tell his parents about the parents and teachers' conferences, the parent's disconnectedness from the school also played a factor in not attending and therefore did not know what the school resources were available at the time to help their student academically. Additionally, he acted out of fear of punishment but his fear of punishment for bad grades became detrimental to his academic performances as well. The absence of parents from parents and teachers' conferences is complicated by working parents, being a single mother and by also by being a single mother that works full-time to make ends meet. This was evidenced from one of the dropouts' experiences. He noted that:

My mother sometimes [go to parents and teachers conferences] because she is always busy and working. I just go with my brother [that graduated from high school] and he just brings the report back and talk to my mom. [Any time that you did not attend parent teacher conference?] Just like one time at Junior High School. (M11)

Once again, from this dropout's experience, we learn that the mother sometimes go to parents and teachers conferences and his older brother that graduated from high school went in her mother's absence. This is a phenomenon that takes place more often among NHOPI households in which an aunt or one of the siblings fill in for the parents, as in this case, a single parent. Similarly, another one of the dropouts noted that:

Rarely [my parents went to parents and teachers conferences]. They did [participate in parents and teachers conferences] like through elementary but that wasn't important. I only remember my mom going once. [What did you do during those times when your

parents were not able to attend?] We just don't go [to parents and teachers conferences].

(M5)

This dropout indicated that his parents rarely attended parents and teachers' conferences but seemed to suggest that "wasn't important" which is indicative of parents not being involved in their children's education. The parents in this dropout study were not consistently attending parents' and teachers' conferences, and were not aware of the community and school resources that they could have used to mitigate their students' academic failures which are a factor in the dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Parents' Financial Struggles

Family financial capital is an approximation of family's wealth or income that provides physical resources that can help students in their academic achievements by providing a place in the home to study, additional school materials and computer and internet technologies to help with their learning, and any other financial resources that help the whole family to function effectively (Coleman, 1988). The dropouts' families in this study were struggling financially which is a family-related factor in the dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties. In fact, about 88.24% of the respondents indicated that the dropouts' families in this study were struggling financially while they were in high school. One of the dropouts related his family's financial struggles while he was in high school and noted that: "We are struggling financially but for some reasons we find a way to get by" (M6). This "get by" described by this dropout is indicative of his family's financial struggles which led, among other factors, him to drop out of high school. Yet another dropout just simply said that "well, to me we were struggling [financially]" (F1) during her high school time. Additionally, another one of the dropouts noted that his family was "struggling financially" (M9) and their financial

struggling was compounded by the fact that his family has seven other children and his father was a dropout. Similarly, another dropout also noted that her family was: “Well, I think we were struggling [financially] a lot” (M10). His family’s financial struggles were compounded by the fact that her parents were dropouts themselves, and her home was an intergenerational home where one of her aunts and grandma with their husbands and their children were also living with them. Yet another dropout noted that: “During high school, [her dropout brothers and sisters that are married] were moving in and out [of the parents’ home]. Probably 5 or 4 that is here with their kids [over 21 bodies in the home]” (F1). This dropout intergeneration home experience was also noted by another one of the dropouts in which he stated that: “Yeah, [I had other family members stayed with us] throughout high school. Ah, on and off, my brother and his family lived with us and my other brother move in with his family and so we have to give him a spot” (M6). Again, this dropout family’s financial struggles were further compounded with the additional family members staying in the home in which they had to further divide their smaller financial resources among a larger family household. In another dropout experiences, the dropout noted that: “Just one of my brothers [and his] wife and kids and other grandchildren” (M5) were also staying with him in his parents’ home. Similarly, another one of the dropouts also noted that: “Just one [family member stayed with us], us here in Utah but have about three [other family members from the extended families stayed with us] while we were in Hawaii” (M9). In a different experience, one of the dropouts related his experience that was different because “we almost always had proctor kids in and out of here [our home]. I think at one point we had like three [proctor] of them” (F3). This is a new phenomenon that has emerged in the last decade among NHOPI families in Utah due to the financial benefits that they get from housing and taking care of foster kids. Though the families are financially benefited from proctor kids, the

parents' attentions that they should have for their own children were divided and were inadequate for the children. Thus, the parents' financial struggles and divided attention between their own children and the proctor children will increase the likelihood of parents not being involved in their own children's' education which is a factor in dropout rates among NHOPI students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Parents' Low Educational Achievement

The background characteristics that have been shown to be closely related with high school dropouts are "low socioeconomic status (SES) and race or ethnicity." Interestingly, research studies on dropouts have also shown that students from lower SES have been consistently shown to have higher dropout rates than students in higher SES (Erkstrom et al., 1986; Steinberg, Blinde, & Chan, 1982, 1984). The families of the NHOPI dropouts in this study were struggling financially. In fact, about 88.24% of the respondents indicated that the dropouts participated in school free and reduced lunch programs. The higher percentages of dropouts that participated in reduced fee lunch programs are indicative of families with lower SES. Additionally, parents' educational achievements or lack thereof has been shown to greatly influence students' academic achievements. As such, parents with higher educational levels have children with higher educational levels (Black, Devereux, & Salvanes, 2004) and, parents with lower educational levels tend to have children with lower educational levels. The parents of the dropouts in this study had lower educational levels. In fact, 18 of the parents in this study were dropout themselves while 16 of the parents graduated from high schools. Out of the 16 parents that graduated from high schools 2 of them graduated from college while 2 of them dropped out of college. One of the dropouts noted that "they [parents] did not finish high school. My dad did not graduate from high school in Tonga and my mom did not graduate from high

school here in Utah” (F1). This is interesting because one of the parents dropped out of high school in Tongan while the other dropped out of high school here in the Utah where the study was conducted. Yet another dropout indicated that “I don't think they finish high school. I think my mom attends high school but that was it. My dad dropped out. He had to drop out to take care of his family before he hit Junior High” (M6). This dropout’s father did not drop out of high school because of bad grades but to help his family out since he was the oldest and his father was very sick. This is a phenomenon that takes place in some of the NHOPI families here in the U.S. and also in the islands of the Pacific. In another dropout’s experience, he noted that “my dad did not graduate from high school. My mom graduated after her class because she dropped out and got her GED later” (M7). The dropout’s mother dropped out of school and later got her GED but did not help know how to help her son to get his GED when he dropped out of high school. Additionally, the mother spend more time working due to the family’s financial struggles and did not have time to help her son out since she also dropped out of high school over 20 years ago. Yet another dropout noted that “my mom did some college. She didn’t graduate but my dad didn’t [graduate]. I think he went until high school...he did not even finished high school” (F3). This dropout experience was compounded by the facts that one of his parents dropped out of college while the other dropped out of high school. Similarly, in another dropout’s experience, he noted that “my dad help raised a couple (of his siblings) since his father died and did not finish high school and my mom did not finish high school either” (M2). Again, this dropout experience indicated that because his father dropped out not because of bad grades but to take care of his siblings because his father passed away. In another dropout experience, he noted that “my mom did not finish high school. My dad finished high school and also graduated from college but he later divorced my mom when I was very young. I had never seen him in years.”

(F2). This is a different dropout experience since she noted that her mother was a dropout but her dad graduated from college then later divorced her mother. Therefore, the parents' lower educational achievements in this study seemed to also have children with lower academic achievements. Thus, the lower educational achievements of parents of the dropouts in this study are a factor related to dropout rates in NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Peer-Related Factors

The influence of students' peers in their educational achievements and in dropping out from high schools is well established in the literature (Evans et al., 1992; Renzulli & Park, 2002; Rumberger, 1987; Rumberger et al., 1990). However, the influences of peers in the educational achievements of NHOPI dropout students are known in Tonga only from a study on high school dropouts (Tatafu, 1997) and in the U.S. only from a study on NHOPI high school students' risk factors for dropping out of high school (Vakalahi, 2009). Vakalahi's study was not done on high school dropouts but on students that were still in high school in California to examine the risk factors for dropouts among NHOPI high school students. Fortunately, Weisner, Gallimore and Jordan (1988) in their study on kindergarten children and up to 3rd grade students in Hawaii showed that NHOPI students did well in school because of high levels of sibling caretaking. Additionally, they also concluded that NHOPI excessive use of sibling caretaking encouraged students to have an extreme orientation to their peers and peer pressure. In fact, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander students were accustomed to learning from their siblings, which explains why they were less attentive to their teachers but were more attentive to their peers. The sibcare caretaking warrants further research into how this phenomenon works out in the

NHOPI high school students in the mainland U.S. and also into its effects on educational achievements and dropouts as well.

Even though Weisner and colleagues' studies were not done on NHOPI high school dropouts, they offer some suggestions as to the potential impacts of siblings and peers on NHOPI students' educational achievements. However, the influences of peers on high school dropouts among NHOPI students in the U.S. have not previously been known until now (Table 11). In this study, I found that 100% of the respondents indicated that their peers were very influential in their higher and lower academic achievements, and bad behaviors which led them to drop out of high school.

Good Peers' Influential Activities

Positive peer influential activities are crucial to an increase in academic achievements of NHOPI students (Weisner et al., 1988), and motivation also plays a role in high school completion (Somers et al., 2009). The dropouts in this study related many good experiences that they had with their peers which encouraged and motivated them to work hard and stay in school. In fact, one of the dropouts related his experience with one of his peers:

[It was] more like they were all in to work [hard in school] and also I don't know, they give good influence [on me]. It was uh, they keep on just telling [me that] I just [need to] get through [high school] and to keep my heads up and go to school. They encouraged me [to stay in school]. (M8)¹

This dropout was encouraged and motivated by his good peers to stay in school and worked harder to get good grades, but finally he did not listen to their good advice and this led him to drop out of high school. Additionally, he was not born in the U.S., but he was very connected to

¹ Quote citations represent male dropout respondents (M1-M13) and female dropout respondents (F1-F4) and real names in the dropouts' quotes have been changed to protect their identity.

his Polynesian culture and participated in many Polynesian cultural events. Furthermore, he was also struggling with the English language and social life in high school. Also, his father was working out of the state of Utah, which prevented him from helping him to cope with his problems effectively. In a similar experience, another dropout said,

Yeah, I had good friends. [My friends were] mostly Whites. [My good] friends tried to help me stay in school-yeah, the one that I played football with. [I] didn't listen to them. They wanted me to stay in school and someday we can all play football in college. I saw a couple of them playing this summer and I feel like going back to school. Just a problem of getting [admitted and then I go] down there [to Snow College]. (M5)

This dropout's peers were mostly White and despite their good advice and motivation for him to stay in school, he admitted that he did not listen to them. Interestingly, this dropout did see the importance of graduating from high school when he saw that his peers were successful after they graduated from high school. In another similar experience, another one of the dropouts also noted that:

I didn't have many good friends at school. Not in school. I have one best friend. Me and her played basketball together. She is the only one that I can say that she is my good friend in all my years at school here. Yeah but with her, I did not tell her a lot of things. I did not let her in, in a lot of things, so it wasn't really like, don't do this, don't do that. (F1)

This dropout transferred to a different school in a different community in which almost all of the students were from higher socioeconomic status (SES) families and did not feel that she fit in. However, she only had one friend but not at the level of being a good friend. This is important because having a best friend allows NHOPI students to freely share their personal and

Table 11

Peer-Related Factors Related to High School Dropout Rates among NHOPI Dropouts

Category	Factors Related to NHOPI High School Dropouts
Good Peers' Influential Activities (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivates student to stay in school (100%) • Not listening to their advice resulted in dropping out (100%) • Go to school and stays in school • Care about the success of their peers
Bad Peers' Influential Activities (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not motivated to go school (100%) • Sluff classes and go eat, cruising, hanging out and playing video games during school times (100%) • Do not care about friend's success • Greatly influenced peers to drop out
Daily Negative Peer Activities (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much time spent with peers, hanging out about 4-6 hours, on a daily basis, during weekdays and also on weekends (100%) • Not having good or any breakfast at home before going to school so they are hungry in the first or second period of the school day leading to going with any of their peers who has a car and money to eat during classes, thus missing classes as well (100%) • Spending lots of time playing non-school related sports activities and not doing homework • Doing drugs and drinking alcohol with their peers resulted in missing classes or school for a few days
Lack of Positive Interactions at School Between Cousins/Siblings (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dropouts identified that they had cousins and siblings in the school at the same time they attended school (100%) • Dropouts interacted with their cousins and siblings only at home (82.35%) • Hardly have any interactions with siblings or cousins that were at the same school during school time and so they cannot help one another (64.71%) • Some of the cousins and siblings were not doing well in school and so he or she cannot have the academic help that she or he needed from family members

Note. Factors related to NHOPI high school dropouts in SLC and Utah Counties in Utah not necessarily in the order of importance. Subthemes with no percentages indicate that it did not rise to 50% of the respondents.

educational problems in order to mitigate them. Yet another one of the dropouts related his experiences with his good friend's encouragement and motivation, noting that:

I had a lot of friends. Some of them are good and some of them are bad but some of them have good influences on me to go to school and some of them are bad. [The influences were] mostly positive feedbacks [from my good friends] that they wanted me to graduate [together] with them. They don't want us to fail or anything. They wanted something good to come out of high school. (M11)

Again, this dropout also identified that he had good and bad friends. In fact, his good friends were encouraging and motivating him to stay in school so that they could graduate together. However, the dropout did not listen to their advice and later dropped out of high school. Again, from another dropout experience, we also learn that he hung out with a group of kids that nobody wants to hang out with and despite their good advice, he still decided to drop out of high school. He related his experience:

I had bad friends. They were, ah, I guess you could say, I hang out with the group that everybody singles out. They were Caucasian kids. No [they did not influence me on my decision to drop out]. It is my decision. They wanted me to go back, but I just did not want to. (M3)

This dropout claimed that his peers were not influential in his decision to drop out of high school but also acknowledged that they wanted him to come back to school. His decision to drop out of high school was compounded by the fact that his parents were dropouts themselves.

Additionally, he also noted that he was not sure which culture he belonged to and also felt like he was “stuck in the middle” of the Polynesian and American cultures but was identified more with

the American culture. In another similar experience from another one of the dropouts, the dropout noted that:

Yes, I did have good friends in school. They all give me a lot of crap for not going and stuff. They are usually the one that make me go and stuff. Most of my friends graduated and only like two of them did not graduate. There were a lot of positive pressures to stay in school. (M12)

Good friends of this dropout encouraged and motivated him to go to school but this dropout still decided to drop out of high school. It is noteworthy that his parents just got divorced and were not very involved in his school activities and personal life. This led to his dropping out of high school. Additionally, this dropout was disciplined a lot for beating up the bullies because he “cannot stand them” and his grades were failing at the same time. Thus, he was send to East Shore High School to make up for his failing grades. However, this dropout did not finish making up his grades on time and decided to drop out of high school. In a similar experience with not listening to good advice from good friends, one of the dropouts noted that:

My sophomore year I just kind of kept to myself. And like the rest of my high school, I was like friends with a lot of people, cause I made friends easily like just from classes, from group projects and everything. But the most people I hung out with was basically my family and all the Polys at school. We hung out with like majority of people but it was just the same group. Like there was just a group of us. Yea, I think so, it was kind of weird because our group of friends, there was the good ones like they never skip class, they never had bad grades or anything and that was, one of them was my best friend. She tried to help me like to keep going to school cause she saw that I was slacking and everything, and there was just like my group of friends that they didn't care. They just

didn't care about anything at all. [The good ones, did they give you any advice?] Um, my best friend did. She would always beat me, she's like my mom. Like, she wasn't scared to hit me when I was slacking. It's um, do you know the...they like live up in...she's my best friend. She would slapped me, she's like a little palangi girl. Cause she knew our culture too and she would never let me get away with anything. She would come and walk up to my room and start hitting to get up and go to school. She's a good friend. We're still the best of friends to this day. (F2)

The dropout was emotional as she related this experience about her best friend. This is an important cultural example because when an NHOPI student considers anybody from another ethnicity or race to be a best friend, he or she is allowed to "beat me" or "hit me" so that the student will do his or her best to do well in school. Despite the encouragement and motivation that the friend provided the dropout, it was not enough to get her to do well in school. However, the dropout's family went through some tough times economically and emotionally due to her parents' divorce. Additionally, this dropout's mother was also a dropout and they both moved to live with one of her aunts. Perhaps, the encouragement and motivation that this dropout received were negated by the challenges and difficulties in her personal life, thus leading to dropping out of high school.

Though the experiences shown here were very similar to each other, the trend is the same: the dropouts were motivated by their good friends and peers but they did not listen to their advice and decided to drop out of high school. Additionally, other family and personal factors were also implicated in their decision to drop out of high school. Thus, not listening to and following good advice from their good friends and peers is a factor related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Bad Peers' Influential Activities

Just as the advice of good friends and peers was essential to higher academic performance of high school students (Rumberger, 1987), so was the bad influence of peers on their friends' educational achievement (Evans et al., 1992). From this study, I found that 100% of the respondents indicated that bad behaviors from peers and friends of NHOPI students were influential in their lower academic performance, which led to dropping out of high schools in Salt Lake and Utah counties. One of the dropouts related his peers' bad behavior that greatly influenced him:

They were ok. The only thing they just did not like to go to school. They had a big influence in me. Before I met them, I was a good student. I think I have a 3.0 every year until my junior year before I met them. Then just went downhill from there. (M4)

This dropout indicated that the fact that his peers did “not like to go to school” greatly influenced him. Interestingly, he also recognized that his academic performance was going downhill since the time that he had begun to hang out with them on a daily basis, but this did not stop him from hanging out with them. In fact, his peers also dropped out of high school, but I was not able to get a hold of them for this study. In a similar experience, another one of the dropouts related the negative effect that his peers had on him and noted:

I have a variety of friends cause I have just my personality of just getting to know everybody and yet there were some set friends that I fall back on. They were good friends but there were some that I hang out with that they were bad, did bad things and sluff. On the weekends, they party, they drink, they smoke. Hey just come with us [to get a bite] and we will come back [after] and it is a one-time thing [to get and get some food during school] but it turns out to be lots of time and turn into a regular thing. (M2)

The dropout's friends' bad behaviors greatly influenced him because he ended up sluffing classes, going to parties with them and finally dropped out of high school. However, it is important to note that the bad behaviors of his peers were very subtle in affecting his behavior. That is, they invited him to go and get food during school just one time but it turned out to be a regular activity. Interestingly, this dropout was also disciplined for excessive sluffing on some of his classes. Thus, having good friends is important and so is taking their advice for NHOPI students. Their influential behaviors on their academic achievements cannot be underestimated. Yet in another one of the dropout's experience, he said,

Oh man, [I had] bad friends, bad friends. Well, I wouldn't say bad friends, well yea of course they're bad friend, cause if they were good friend, then we would always go to school, we would go to class, we wouldn't sluff, we wouldn't always go out to eat and miss this class and this class or whatever. They would tell us, hey, let's go to class and go eat after school or something. (M6)

Again, this dropout also identified the bad behaviors that his friends had which he adopted to school, not going to classes, going out to eat during class time and sluffing classes as well. He was disciplined for excessive sluffing. Interestingly, this dropout also comes from parents were also dropouts themselves. In like manner, another one of the dropouts also said,

I had the kind of friends that they go to some classes, just the fun one, they were there, and other boring classes, they wouldn't even go. [Follow up question: Were they Poly kids or palangi kids?] They were Poly kids. [Follow up question: Did they influence you in your decision to dropout out?]. Yeah, they actually have a big part of it. Like, one of my friends did not graduate. So, me and him did not graduate. They just ask me what else

am I going to do if I am not graduating. I told them that I will try to get my GED. We both said that [we are going to get our GED]. (M10)

Once again, this dropout seems to follow the pattern that we have seen from the experiences of the other dropouts I previously described. That is, this dropout hung out with his bad peers that only went to classes that they deemed exciting and not the “boring ones” which led to failing grades. Consequently, he dropped out of school. Interestingly, this dropout also comes from parents that were also dropouts themselves and his older sibling also dropped out of high school. Another one of the dropouts looked straight at me when I asked him about the type of friends that he hung out with and said I had “friends that were exactly like me, sluff and go and hang out somewhere” (M13). This was a very bold statement because he seemed to suggest that he chose the type of friends to hang out with because they acted and behaved the same way he did instead of being influenced by their bad behaviors of sluffing and leaving classes to go and hang out.

Yet another dropout said,

I have 2 to 3 Polys and 2 White kids [as my friends]. Some of them [are] bad, and some [of them are] good. It is kind a hard because most of my friends, the good ones kind a like, most of the good ones are on their mission. One of them said, come to class, we have a test coming up and it is good to learn now otherwise you fail your test. I was like, alright, my friends on the other side [bad friends], kinda like dude we will come later. Let's come late and end up not going at all you know. You have to choose or make it even. [Follow up question: You think if you had listened more to your good friends, you could have stayed here and graduate?] Actually, I would have. Most of my friends will motivate me, like my bad friends—come with us and I will buy you something to eat or you come with us and I'll buy you something. That is how they motivated me. [My good

friends will say] you come with me, you will learn something but I wasn't thinking back then. Ooh, food sounds great. Go get some food. I have to eat before I go to class.

[Follow up question: Do you have enough food at home?]. Oh, I have plenty of food. I know there is *supo* and *saimini* but most time they asked me is like in the morning. Let's go get something to eat and we never come back until after lunch. Sometimes we go eat and talk forever or go to one of my friends' house and sit there and play video games and time just flying. You like what time is it? Oh, school is out, it is time to go home. Their parents were out working while he goes to school. Kinda like my parents are out working and my grandma and grandpa at home. I will bring them over but my mom won't like that. (M11)

From this dropout's experience, he indicated that he had both good and bad friends but he did not listen to his good friends' advice. Instead, he was greatly influenced by his bad friends' behaviors which were to sluff classes, go and eat and then go to one of his friend's home to play video games for the rest of the day. The dropout also indicated that he had food to eat to eat at home but they were leftovers from the family's dinner. Furthermore, *supo* (soup) is not considered in Tongan culture in the U.S. as breakfast for the NHOPI high school students. But for the NHOPI adults, *supo* is an excellent breakfast to strengthen your bodies throughout the day. *Supo* and other Polynesian leftover foods are a typical breakfast for older Polynesians at home in the islands, especially in Tonga and Samoa.

These dropouts' poor academic performance was attributed to following their bad friends' behaviors which were sluffing classes, going out to eat and then playing video games at somebody's house after for the rest of the school day. Thus, following bad friends' behaviors is

a factor that is related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Utah and Salt Lake Counties.

Daily Negative Peer Activities

Peers of NHOPI students have been shown in this dropout study to have bad influences on the NHOPI students' educational daily activities. However, good peer activities had led them to improve in their academic achievements while bad peer activities had led them to lower academic achievements and then they dropped out. In fact, these daily peer activities consistently took the NHOPI students away from going to their classes and doing their homework which ultimately led them to drop out of high schools. One of the dropouts related his experience on what they had normally done before he dropped out.

Um, depending on who they are, maybe cruising or if it is just the guys, we go to someone's house and just play video games or just whatever anybody is in the mood for. We just go do it: movies, eat out, and whatever past times [we can find], [or just] hang out and do whatever. [Also it greatly] depends on who is treating. I have a friend that has money and we did not use him, but he volunteered to help us and treated us but we also eat at somebody's home. (M2)

This dropout identified the activities that they did which were dependent upon the type of friends that they hung out with, and whether they had money or not. Interestingly, he also noted that the friend who had the money was the person that financed their daily activities. However, he also identified that his friends who had the money also had a vehicle, which is typical of Caucasian friends in high schools in Utah and Salt Lake Counties. But, the parents of this dropout student did not give him a vehicle or some money to eat out since they were struggling financially. It is

also important to note that these activities were done without the knowledge of his or their parents.

Yet another dropout said that he went with his peers, “just lifting [weights] and eat. Working out and eat out depending on if we have money” (M1). This dropout’s friends were other NHOPI students that were in the same school as he was but they were not related to them. Another one of the dropouts related his experience: “sometimes, we just jam and really did not do much. Oh we played basketball, and football [with friends but not sponsored by his high school]. [Follow up question: Play football?] I was supposed to but I wasn’t because of my grades” (M13). This dropout indicated that they played the *ukulele* and sang island music as well as American music for the most part of the day. However, it is important to note that this dropout was not allowed to play football for his high school because of his bad grades. Playing football was known to motivate high school students in the NHOPI communities across the U.S. and it was also known that those with bad grades were not allowed to play football. Not being allowed to play football because of bad grades is a source of embarrassments to his parents and family as well. Similarly, another dropout said that they “play video games, go and get something to eat and just hang out” (M12). Again, the activities that this dropout did with his peers seemed to always have three things which were “hang out”, “playing video games” and also “getting something to eat.”

The three important activities that the previous dropouts related were also identified in another dropout’s experience. In fact, he said that they “hang out and go get some food during school and got back at the last class of the day. After school, we go to my friend’s house and watch a movie, hang out and then go home” (M11). In contrast to the previous dropouts and their activities, this dropout got back to school for the last class of the day instead of just hanging

out with his peers for the rest of the school day. But, the activities that they did after school were also indicative of the effect parents not being at home due to employment. This dropout's father passed away before his freshman year. Yet another dropout said,

We would go to somebody's house and we would talk and talk for a long time cause girls can talk forever. And then we would just watch movies or we would go like, on lunch dates or we'd go out to dinner, or we'd just go and do fun games and stuff. We didn't do like a whole bunch, we just relax and just hang out. (F2)

The activities that this female dropout and her friends engaged in may seem to be different from the activities that the male dropouts did with their friends. However, a closer examination reveals that they were basically the same. That is, the activities had "food," "games" of some kind, and "hang out" to watch movies, talking and relaxing. This pattern of activities also played out in another dropout's experience. He said that they:

Dance [and also played] basketball, football, music, sluffing and eating. [Follow up question: When you say "food", does that mean you don't have enough food at home or fast food?] It was fast food. One of my buddies was really, really rich, you know, and his family was very well-off. So, every time we would be like, hey let's go out to eat or let's go bowling with this cause there's this PE class, all they do is activities and stuff. And they would go bowling every three weeks or so and we just get in the bus and go bowling with them. (M6)

Again, one of the friends of this dropout financed the activities which were basically to go and "eat out", played a game of some type such as "bowling" and also to "hang out." From this dropout's activities, it was apparent why he did not have time to do his homework and study for his classes and exams. This dropout had disregarded his parents' financial struggles which he

had previously talked about regarding his parents' struggles to come to American, and which had motivated him to go to school. It seems that although the parents had told their child of their struggle and had encouraged him to go to school, they did not do this consistently both throughout the year and over the years. The motivational activities and advice that NHOPI students should get from their parents and others should be consistent and throughout the whole year. Additionally, this dropout's experience was compounded by the facts that his parents were also dropouts themselves and also lived in an intergenerational home with meager financial resources. In contrast to the previous dropouts' experiences, another one of the dropouts said that "we did bad things. We were in to drugs, we were drinking, yeah" (M3). This dropout's low academic achievement was compounded by the fact that he moved out of his parents' home and lived for a few months with his friends who were also doing drugs and drinking beer which led to excessive absenteeism and then his out of high school. Additionally, his parents were also dropouts themselves and were no longer able to control him. Interestingly, he was born in Hawaii and never got involved in any of the Polynesian cultural events and he was more with the American culture than with the Polynesian culture. However, he was also among a few of the dropouts that said that they felt like that they were "stuck in the middle" of the American and Polynesian culture. Yet in another one of the dropout's experience, the dropout said that their activities were known to his friends' parents. He noted that they:

Just [have been] going to everybody's house. [We went to] each of our friends' houses and saying hi to everybody's parents. Just visiting them and after that we would go have lunch or dinner together or just go home. (M8)

This dropout's experience was different because his friends graduated from high school but he did not. Also, their sluffing was known to his friends' parents but not to his own parents.

Hence, parents whose children have Polynesian friends may need to let the Polynesian parents know about the kinds of activities that their children are involved in with their friends that might be detrimental to their academic achievements. This could be considered a community-related factor that warrants further research into its potential effects on dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Utah and elsewhere in the U.S. However, the activities that all of these dropout students were involved in with their peers always included something that is related to food, type of games to play and relax, and hanging out. These were clearly related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Utah and Salt Lake Counties.

Even though the negative daily activities of the peers of NHOPI students have been shown to greatly influence NHOPI dropouts in this study, I wanted to know how much time that the dropouts spent with their peers on a daily basis. The analysis of the interviews suggests that NHOPI dropouts spent an excessive amount of time with their peers. In fact, 100% of the respondents indicated that spend about 4-6 hours daily and on the weekends as well in doing daily negative activities. One of the dropouts said that he spent “all day, all morning and no sleep” (M13) with his peers. The amount of time that this dropout spent with his peers robbed him of quality time that he should have spent on doing his homework and studying for the upcoming exams. Indeed, this type of association with his peers is indicative of chronic mismanagement of his time. Further, some of his peers were also his cousins. As such, they all dropped out of high school. Similarly, another one of the dropouts said that he spent “a lot of time for hang out” (M12) with his peers. Again, spending so much time by hanging out with his peers deprived him of using his time wisely to better his educational status before he dropped out of high school. In a different experience, another dropout said that “after school, I hang out with my friends and watched movie for a while then I come home eat and go to sleep. I do my

homework at the last class and get that done at school” (M11). This dropout seemed to think that doing his homework at the last class was enough to mitigate his failing grades. Additionally, he also thought that you don’t have to study at home--that paying attention at school and finishing your homework before leaving school was enough. Again, this dropout spent a lot of time watching movies that could have been used to study for his classes. In contrast to the previous dropouts’ experience, one of the dropouts spent time with “most of my friends from school would be just when we’re at school. We would hang out during lunch, sometimes we would stay after or we would be together couple hours a day, usually” (F3). Even though this dropout’s experience was a little different from the experiences of the previous dropouts, she still spent at least two hours on a daily basis that could have been used to study for her classes or to finish her homework. Yet another one of the dropouts said,

Oh my goodness, um, there this time um, I’m just talking about my senior year. To me my senior year was the most; to me was the best that I see of all of my high school years. Because, I don’t know, just because but, um, we would always stay after, even, we would always stay after school till like 7:00 or 8:00 at night. Sometimes we would go stay in the dance room and dance, and practice for the talent show or so, basically with my friends. Every day sometimes passed 7:00 but other times like about 4:00 or 5:00. So, we would stay from the morning all the way until like 4:00 or 5:00. But that was just doing the school days. On the weekend, we would hang out at home. (M6)

This dropout spends about 3-4 hours a day during the week and also spent more hours with his peers at his home on the weekends. Again, this dropout could have used the times that he allocated to spend with his peers to finishing his homework and studying for his exams or quizzes. The excessive amount of hours spent with his peers was compounded by the fact that

both of his parents were working and usually did not get home around 8 pm. Additionally, his parents were also dropouts and were working two jobs to make ends meet, which might well explain the hours he spent with his peers after school. In a similar experience, another one of the dropouts said, “if I can put it into hours, on the weekends, it will be only about 5 or 6 hours. During the week, I came home or going to rugby. Never really went out” (M9). This dropout did not spend much time during the week with his peers by hanging out; instead, they practiced rugby. However, he still spent 5 to 6 hours on the weekends with his peers. The amount of time that he spent on weekends hanging out with his peers could have been well spent in doing his homework and studying. In like manner, another dropout said “I spend my whole week with them except Saturday and Sunday” (M4). Again, this dropout indicated that he spent a lot of his time during the week with his peers except for the weekends. This dropout did not do much school work during the week or on the weekends either, which led to failing grades and then he dropped out of high school. His experience with spending chronic amount of time with his peers was compounded by the fact that his father was always working late and his mother was a stay at home mom. However, she was not always aware of what this dropout was doing because she had 6 younger children to tend to. In another dropout’s experience, the dropout said,

I guess [I was spending a lot of time] with my good friends whenever there is time like every other day. Just whenever they are available and I am available to hang out other than that perhaps about 4 to 5 times a week. (M2)

The excessive usage of time with his friends was clear from the life of this dropout. That is, he spends a lot of his time with his friends hanging out instead of finishing or studying for his classes. As such, excessive usage of time with peers seemed to be dominant in the lives of these dropouts which deprived them of having quality time to finish their homework and studying for

their classes. Thus, excessive usage of times with friends and peers instead of doing their homework and studying is a factor related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI student in Utah and Salt Lake Counties.

Lack of Positive Interactions at School between Cousins and Siblings

Weisner and colleagues (1988) suggested that sibcare caretaking increases academic performances of NHOPI students. Furthermore, they also concluded that NHOPI students paid more attention to their peers than to their teachers, which might explain in part the dropouts' chronic misuse of time with their peers in this study. However, Weisner and colleagues (1988) studies did not explain sibcare caretaking effects of cousins and siblings on each other in the context of high school dropouts. I found that sibcare caretaking did not extend between siblings or cousins in their shared high school. In fact, 82.35% of the respondents indicated that they hardly interacted with their cousins or siblings that were in the same school with them but they interacted only at home. One of the dropouts related his experience while he was in high school together with one of his siblings. He noted that: "No [we did not interact with each other]. My sister was [in high school when I was there] but we did not interact at school. [We interacted] just at home" (M13). From this dropout's experience, the dropout and his sister were in high school together but they did not interact with each other at school. However, they interacted with each other at home. This mirrored the other dropouts' experiences in this study. Another one of the dropouts said: "Yes [we were in high school together]. [We] just [had] normal interactions at home" (F4). Similarly, another dropout also said: "Yes [we were in the same high school together]. My [twin] sister was at school too but I hardly see her" (M11). Again, the twin brother and sister did not interact with each other while they were in high school but they interacted at home. The lack of interaction between the twins was compounded by the

fact that his sister was playing sports and not sluffing classes. In fact, the twin sister graduated from high school on time while he dropped out of high school. Interestingly, the twin's father passed away while they were in junior high school and they were raised by their mother and their grandparents. The twin sister did not sluff her classes and did not go and hang out with her friends for hours during the week but only on some occasions during the weekends. In another dropout's experience, the dropout said this about their interaction with her siblings who were at school with her:

My freshman year, my brother was a senior and my sister was a junior, so I spent two years with my sister in high school and one year with my brother. No other cousins. We didn't really talk very much during high school. At home we talked as siblings do but at high school, they stuck with their friends and I stuck with mine. It's like, see you when you get home. (F3)

This dropout gave us a hint on why NHOPI siblings and cousins did not interact with each other at school because they "stuck with their friends and I stuck with mine." This dropout's experience was similar to another dropout's experience in which the dropout said,

Yes [I had some of my siblings with me while I was in high school]. I had my older brother and my younger brother. With my old brother, kind of [interacted with him but] he did not talk to us and stuff but my little brother; me and him were like [interacted a lot], he went to a different school, [and we] were together a lot. (M10)

It is interesting to note that this dropout did not interact much with his older brother in high school and also at home but he indicated that he interacted a lot more with his younger brother who was in junior high school. Interestingly, the interaction between the younger brothers intensified by the fact that the older brother dropped out of high school in his senior year.

Furthermore, this brother (M10) also dropped out of high school in his senior year as well a year after his older brother did. But, it is also important to note that the father of this dropout was deported to the islands and later died, leaving the mother to take care of the children. In a different experience, another dropout related that they interacted a lot more in high school and said,

Yeah, my cousin that moved back to Hawaii or our family friend. Since kindergarten, me and him have been pushing each other all the way to high school. We always talked about being the closest cousins in the world. Oh, there will be nobody can pull us apart then senior year come and he moved back to Hawaii. I am glad that I stayed up but at the same time I am disappointed about my dad and my cousin. (M9)

Unfortunately, the dropout's cousin moved back to islands leaving him without any sibling or cousin to interact with in high school. His cousin moving to the islands was compounded by the fact that his father also divorced his mother and then he moved back to the islands as well. Interestingly, his father was also a dropout. Since this dropout was the oldest, he felt the pressure to take care of his family. The pressure from his cousin's leaving and from his parents' divorce led him to drop out of high school. In like manner, another dropout also related his lack of interactions with his brother who was in high school with him said,

My brother, he was there, he was a year ahead of me. But the thing is, we never hung out. We never cause, my junior year, or my sophomore year with him, he had to go to an alternative school over here. He would always get mad at me and tell me to go to class and [when] he walked off and [he will turn and] see [me] if I would go to class. (M6)

This dropout's brother was in high school with him but he did not interact with him much since his brother spent part of his time in his high school and the other time in East Shore High School

to make up for his failing grades. Interestingly, this dropout also went to East Shore High School to make up for his failing grades, but his parents did not have the money to pay for all of his packets at East Shore High School, at which point he dropped out of high school. Similarly, another one of the dropouts said,

My brother, nephew and my younger sister [were in the same high school together with me]. We did not interact with one another at school. I had my own friends and they had theirs. [We] just have the [normal] interactions we [normally] have at home. (M5)

This dropout grew up in an intergenerational home and did not interact with his own brother and his nephew while they were in the same high school. It is also noteworthy that this dropout also said that the reasons why they did not interact with each other was due to the fact that his brother and nephew had their own set of friends, and he had his own set of friends to hang out with. As such, they did not interact with each other while they were together in high school. Thus, not interacting with your siblings or cousins while you are at school in addition to your normal interactions at home is a factor related to NHOPI high school dropout rates among high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties. However, the type of interactions between NHOPI students and their siblings or cousins at school warrants further investigation so that we can determine the mechanisms of their interactions that lead to increase in academic achievements and also prevent them from dropping out of high school in the U.S.

Personal-Related Factors

Research has shown that personal-related factors are related to high school dropout rates in the U.S. (Rumberger, 1987) and also among NHOPI high school students in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997) and are also risk factors for NHOPI students dropping out of high school in California (Vakalahi, 2009). In all of the personal-related factors that I have found in this study that are

related to NHOPI dropout rates, these were the highest themes, given by over 50% of the respondents: time mismanagement, demotivation behavior, personal school alienation behavior, home environmental stress, lower literacy proficiency, frequent disciplinary actions, and bullying. All of these are related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties (Table 12).

Time Mismanagement

Polynesians are well-known for being naturally laidback people but perhaps our laidback natures in the islands are also contributing to our high school students' time mismanagement here in the U.S. Further research is warranted to evaluate how our laidback behaviors in the islands are contributing to our students' mismanagement of their time in high schools in the U.S. However, 100% of the respondents reported that they had time mismanagement issues when they were in high school which contributed to unfinished homework and ineffective personal preparations for their exams and classes in addition to other factors indicated in this study that led to lower academic achievements. The result: they dropped out of high school. In fact one of the dropouts said that he missed: "a lot, yeah, a lot [of classes]. On average, I miss three classes a day and about at least 75% a day" (M1)¹. It is obvious that this dropout almost missed the whole day of schooling since there are four classes in a day. Interestingly, this dropout was also disciplined for excessive sluffing and poor academic performance before he dropped out of high school. Yet another one of the dropouts said,

Yeah, I was absent a lot. [I was] probably [absent from school in] close to half of the month. Yeah. Just [being] lazy and did not want to go to school. I stay eligible for football by going to East Shore [credit recovery] in the summer. (M12)

¹ Quote citations represent male dropout respondents (M1-M13) and female dropout respondents (F1-F4) and real names in the dropouts' quotes have been changed to protect their identity.

Table 12

Personal-Related Factors Related to High School Dropout Rates among NHOPI Dropouts

Category	Factors Related to NHOPI High School Dropouts in SLC and Utah Counties in Utah
Time Mismanagement (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive absenteeism (100%) • Students did not learn how to use time wisely and organize priorities to get their school work done on time since they were not employed during school (100%) • Procrastinated and thought that homework can be done later
Demotivational Behaviors (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not listening to and following advice from trackers, counselors, coaches, teachers, religious leaders and parents to stay in school (100%) • Going out to eat with friends during school time (88.24%) • Not personally motivated to do well in school (82.35) • Stress out from home environment and classes at school (70.59%) • Bored while in some of the classes at school
Building Invisible Self-Educational Barriers to Success in School (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing to hang out and followed their bad friends' examples (100%) • Not making the connections about what their future would be like if they drop out because they wished that they could have stayed in school and graduate (100%)
Personal School-Alienation Behavior (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not getting good grades or repeating a grade in school (100%) • Not understanding what is being taught but did not always ask the teachers for help because it will make them look dumb in front of other students (52.94%) • Not feeling connected to their school • Being Shy and not being conversational • Not taking school seriously because their parents will always be there for them
Lower Literacy Proficiency (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking bilingual but not very proficient in the Polynesian language or the English language (100%) • Struggled with reading and did not do any other reading besides those required in class (76.47%)
Stressful Home Environments (82.35%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families were struggling financially (82.35%) • Parents' separations and divorces • Parents not being able to fully communicate in English with their children instead they taught their children to speak their NHOPI languages but children were not able to fully communicate with them in their respective languages

Note. Factors related to NHOPI high school dropouts in SLC and Utah Counties in Utah not necessarily in the order of importance. Subthemes with no percentages indicate that it did not rise to 50% of the respondents.

This dropout clearly understood that chronic absenteeism is related to lower academic performance since he indicated that he went to East Shore High School in the summer to make up his grades so that he could continue to play football. Additionally, while he understood that he could make up his grades in East Shore, he did not know where to get his GED if he failed to graduate from high school. But, more alarming in this case is the fact that he was absent from school for “just [being] lazy and not wanting to go to school.” Parental training in how to handle difficult educational situations and to motivate students to do well in school is a factor. However, it is important to note that his parents’ divorce was also stressful to him and his siblings which is a family-related factor that also led to his decision to drop out of high school.

In another similar experience, another dropout noted that:

Yeah, actually I was absent a lot. That’s what got me to East Shore [High School]. Ever since I went to East Shore, I thought, man, those times that I missed classed, I shouldn’t. I could have graduated. I wouldn’t be in East Shore at the first place if I didn’t miss class. [How many times a month?]. [I was] probably [absent from school about] two weeks, maybe a week and a half [in a month]. (M11)

This dropout indicated that he regretted being absent from a lot of his classes and also linked his absenteeism to lower academic performance. Additionally, he also noted that he was absent from school about a week and a half to two weeks in a month. Hence, higher absenteeism and lower academic performance led to dropping out of high school. It was basic time mismanagement.

In like manner, another dropout said,

I will say my senior year, second semester, [I missed] quite a few [classes] because I knew I wasn't in line to graduate and then ah, my mindset towards school wasn't really

there because I knew I wasn't going to graduate. So, there is no point, to me! That is how I felt. [Follow up questions: How did you know that you were not going to graduate? Did your counselor talk to you?]. Yah, I had a goal at East Shore High School, an alternative high school, to go and do packets, and stuff like that. The downside on that is sometimes I did not have enough money to go and get a packet and stuff like that. And so, when that would happen, that was [what] happened quite a few times, numerous times while I was in high school. (M6)

Again, this dropout indicated that he missed quite a few classes especially when he found out that he was not going to graduate which is indicative of not only time mismanagement, but lack of motivation and parental training on how to handle failures in school. However, it is important to note that his parents were also dropouts. Additionally, his family was also struggling financially which led to his inability to pay for his packets in East Shore High School that could have enabled him to graduate with his class. Further, this dropout had an older brother that went to East Shore High School to make up for his failing grades. They did not interact during high school.

In another similar experience, one of the dropouts said,

[In my] sophomore year, I probably missed like two or three [classes in] a week. Yea, I missed like two or three classes a week and was like, I missed a lot each month and then junior year I missed like about one or two [classes] a week and same as senior year. Oh man, I was like absent quite a few times like through, like all throughout school like my sophomore year I missed out a lot because we had some family stuff and it was hard for me and junior year, I started doing good but I kind of like fell behind and skipped classes

so I was absent. Same with senior year but I tried to pick it up but I just kind of gave up too easily. It was hard for me. (F2)

This dropout also indicated that her family problems forced her to miss classes a lot before she dropped out of high school. Interestingly, she did not manage her time wisely so that she could help out her family during her family's tough time and still worked on her school work at the same time. However, it is interesting to note that this dropout's parents divorced when she was in elementary school and the pattern of missing classes continued for the rest of her freshmen all the way to her senior year in high school before she finally dropped out. Yet another dropout noted that: "Um, on my senior year, I started missing [classes]. Out of a week, I would miss three out of the five days [of schooling]. I would like [miss] the whole day, I would miss some classes" (M10). This dropout missed a lot of school days in addition to missing a few of the classes in a single day as well. However, it is important to note that this dropout's father was deported to the island then he later passed away leaving the dropout fatherless. Further, this dropout's oldest sibling also dropped out of high school first before he dropped out of high school. However, it is important to note that this dropout spend a lot of his time hanging out with his friends and playing rugby, but he did not doing his homework. This is clearly a time-mismanagement issue. Yet another dropout only recalled that: "If I remember right, I missed a lot [classes]. I miss quite a bit in a month, [and] quite often" (M3). This dropout also left his home and lived with some of his peers in which he participated in doing drugs and also drinking alcohol which led to missing classes and lower academic performance, and he dropped out of school. Further, because he moved out and lived with his friends, he did not learn to manage his time wisely so that he could still have gone to school, got his homework done, and graduated with his class. In a similar experience, another dropout said: "yeah. [I was absent] about 2 days

in a week that I am not in school. Hanging out with my friends and doing things that were fun instead” (M4). This dropout was bored with schooling because he indicated that hanging out with his friends and doing things that were fun were much better than being in school. As such, he did not manage his time wisely to do his school work but he ended up filling his time with activities that prevented him from graduating from high school. Similarly, another one of the dropouts also indicated that he was bored at school and said,

Yes, I was [absent a lot from school]. [I was absent] just because I did not want to be there. I was bored. I wanted to hang out with my friends who just want to go somewhere.

Yeah, sluff of a lot and go and eat. (M13)

Again, this dropout also indicated that he was also bored which led to his chronic absenteeism, and he dropped out of school. Interestingly, he also indicated that he wanted to go and “hang out” with his peers somewhere and “eat.” This dropout clearly did not manage his time wisely since he spend a lot of time with his peers and he also neglected his school work which contributed to bad academic performance. Hence, hanging out and going to eat has been identified as peer-related factors that are related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in this study. In contrast, another dropout said,

I was absent quite a lot. Usually if I miss the bus than I would have to walk to school, so, I missed couple of classes. [You walked all the way to Dakis?] Yea, it is a long walk. [In] middle school, [it] was the same. I missed the bus then, it’s kind of a, if you don’t go to school then you [will] get in trouble. So, you gotta walk yourself to school or get in trouble. (F3)

This dropout said that she missed some of her classes because she missed her school bus and therefore she had to walk to school. However, it is important to note that this dropout missed the

buses a lot starting from when she was in junior high school and then also all the way up to when she was a senior in high school which made it difficult for her to do well in school then she dropped out. This is clearly a time-mismanagement issue because she could not wake up on time and always missed the bus which always came on a specific time to take her and others to school. Yet another dropout said: “Yeah. Um, well. Probably, I cannot really estimate in a month but probably in a week would be at least two days or three” (F1). This dropout indicated that she did not remember how many days or classes that she missed in a month but she recalled that she missed at least two to three days of school in a week. It is interesting to note that after this dropout was dismissed from the basketball team, she lost her motivation to go to school and started to miss a lot of school days which led to poor academic performance, and she dropped out of high school. However, she was not managing her time wisely since she spent a lot of her time hanging out with her old friends that like to sluff and go out to eat during classes.

In another similar experience with M12, this dropout said,

[I missed school] about 3 days a month. I was either too lazy or I was sick for a while.

So, I try to force myself to go to school. But, if I really couldn't [go to school because I was too sick] then my mom will let me stay at home. (M9)

This dropout moved from the islands to Utah in the summer before his first winter here when he was a junior. It is important to note that the cold weather made him sick and he missed school a lot. But, it is alarming to note that he sometimes missed school because he was too lazy to go to school. However, his parents just got divorced and his mother moved here to Utah with all the children where he had no friends but also have to deal with a new school, a new culture, and a new environment that were different from where he was born and accustomed to in the islands.

In all of these dropouts' experiences, time mismanagement is clearly a factor that is related to dropout rates among these NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

High school students from the NHOPI communities in Salt Lake and Utah counties were not working during high school which contributed to their time mismanagement issues which led to not finishing their homework on time and ineffective preparation for their exams and classes. Like time mismanagement, 100% of the respondents were not working while they were in high school which also contributed to not knowing how to effectively plan out what they need to do to increase their academic performance. In fact one of the dropouts said that: "No, I was not working at all" (F4). It is also interesting to note that this dropout did not work while she was in high school but we would assume that she had a lot of time to do her homework and was well prepared for her exams and quizzes but she did not do any of that. In fact, she spend a lot of her time with her boyfriend which contributed to her lower academic performance and they both dropped out of high school together then later got married. However, the dropout's husband did not want to participate in this study but allowed his wife to participate. Yet another dropout noted that: "I didn't work. Only my mom and my older brother that worked at the time" (M11). Interestingly this dropout spend a lot of his time with his peers "hanging out" that he could have used to study and do his homework in order to do well in school. However, he did not do any of that at all.

In another dropout experience, the dropout said: "None. I did not work at all. [I was] just [going to] school, wrestling and then [playing] football all the time" (M12). This dropout indicated that he was going to school and participated in extracurricular activities; yet, he did not use his time wisely to study after those activities. If this dropout was working a part-time job he could have no time to hang out with his friends for hours daily and on the weekends as well. In

another dropout experience, the dropout said: “No I did not work during school” (F1) but she wanted to have a cell phone since all of her classmates had cell phones. She could have worked a part-time job on the weekends to pay for a cell phone. Additionally, this dropout moved from one of the high schools where majority of the students were from lower socioeconomic status at Salt Lake County to one of the high schools with students from higher socioeconomic status in Utah County. Further, this dropout’s five older siblings together with her parents were dropouts themselves and they were also struggling financially. Yet another one of the dropouts said: “I wasn’t working until I dropped out” (F3). This dropout’s older brother was also a dropout and so were her parents. Additionally, this dropout also felt like that she was “stuck in the middle” of the American culture of her mother and the Polynesian culture of her father. In contrast to F3 experience, this dropout indicated that even though he did not work during school days, he sometimes worked on the weekends and said: “No. Just helping out my uncle doing *iate* [yard work] on the weekends” (M10). Interestingly, this dropout’s father was deported to the islands and so he had to help out his uncle on the weekends in order to help his family financially.

Therefore, NHOPI high school dropout students, in this study, were not working a part-time job during school days did not learn how to manage and plan out their days’ activities effectively to be productive in their education which led to lower academic performance then they dropped out of high school. This is in agreement with Quirk and colleagues (2001) in which they concluded that students working fewer than 12 hours a week did better academically than those students that did not work at all during school. Additionally, they attributed the academic performance of students who worked fewer than 12 hours a week with their ability to learn time management form their work. Thus, not working a part-time job during high school is a factor related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Demotivational Behaviors

One of the outstanding demotivational behaviors of the dropouts in this study was failing to listen to advice from their parents, religious leaders, counselors, trackers, coaches, spouses, and teachers to stay in school. In this study, 100% of the respondents said that they did not listen to their advice. Examples from the experiences of the dropouts in this study will clearly demonstrate this demotivational behavior which is a factor related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students. In fact one of the dropouts said,

Just teachers that cares [about me], you know. Football coaches, not as much. One of them did but because our bond was much stronger than the newer ones. But just teachers, a single football coach and just parents, that is about it. [Follow up question: Who was that coach? Coach Kateni, we called him Coach K]. I played for him in sophomore, a freshman and we kind a have a little bond. He was really nice to me and was good about stuff, keep with me about school and everything. So he is the only one that kept me wanting to come [to school]. [Follow up question: How about teachers?]. I believe it was math and French class. Both of the teachers were really nice. They did not shut it off, they showed that they cared. They influenced me and they say to come for further education and stuff. (M2)

This dropout indicated that although some of his teachers and a football coach and his parents all gave him advice to stay in school, he did not heed them. His failure to accept motivating factors and to listen to and adhere to advice from the older generation is regarded as disrespectful, a great offense in the islands and in the NHOPI communities in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

In like manner, another one of the dropouts said: “Ah, the tracker or a counselor and last year, two other trackers, a teacher and an administrator” (M1). This dropout identified that

trackers, a teacher and an administrator all gave him advice to come to school and do his work but he also said that: “I get bored and there are funner things to do and I can leave, other than just sit there.” Hence, this dropout did not listen to these peoples’ advice and he dropped out of high school. Yet another dropout said: “My counselors and my parents. To better my future. Obviously, I did not listen to their advices and dropped out of school” (M3). Unfortunately, this dropout now realizes that his counselors and his parents gave him advice to stay in school but he “did not listen to their advice and dropped out of school.” In another dropout experience, the dropout noted that: “My parents. The bishop. My football coaches and my young men president. They told me that I am pretty smart but [I] lack the motivation to go to school” (M7). It is interesting to see that this dropout identified that his parents and church leaders all gave him advice to stay in school and work hard but he did not listen to them because he lacked “the motivation to go to school” then he dropped out. However, it is also important to note that he did not mention any of his teachers or counselors as part of the people that gave him advice to stay in school. Yet another one of the dropouts noted that:

I would say my family. My mom and dad definitely [gave me advice to stay in school]. Like they have a long way to show, but, you know how it is, but my parents were number one right there. [Follow up question: Why do you think they tried to keep you in school?] Because they don’t want me or my family to struggle like they did. They want us to live a better life than how they did. I think that’s the main reason why my dad came out here to America, you know, was to have a better life, a better education and I wished I should have known what I know now when I was back in high school so, I don’t know, just young and stupid. (M6)

This dropout now realized that his parents and other members of his family gave him advice to go to school and work hard so that he did not have to struggle like them when they immigrated to America but he did not listen to them. Additionally, this dropout parents were also dropouts themselves but his three older brothers and also his younger sisters all graduated from high school in the U.S. Further, this dropout concluded that he did not listen to their advice to stay in school because he was “young and stupid.” In another dropout experience, the dropout said,

Yeah, my dad was pushing me to stay in school and knock some sense into me. To stay in and not sluff. Also, my friends and one of my football coaches [gave me advice]. So I don't have to struggle from paycheck to paycheck so that my family can be well-off. My coach wanted me to be the best that I could be. (M12)

It is interesting to note that this dropout did not mention any of his teachers or counselors as part of the people that gave him advice. But, he indicated that his dad motivated him to stay in school as well as his friends and football coaches so that he did not have to “struggle from paycheck to paycheck” but he did not listen to their advice and dropped out of school. In a similar experience, another one of the dropouts said,

Yeah, everybody in my family [gave me advice to stay in school]. [Because they] want [me to have] a better life. Yeah also my coaches told me to catch up on homework so I can play and to graduate. It makes me feel that they care about somebody. (M5)

Interestingly, this dropout said that his family and football coaches gave him advice to stay in school so that he can continue to play football and graduate but he did not listen and later dropped out of high school. Likewise, another one of the dropouts said,

Yeah, my mom and dad [gave me advice to stay in school]. They were a big part of that but I just thought, like at the time I was in high school, during certain situation that I went

through in high school, it was like what the older people are going through. So, when my parents will do things like that, I did not want to do this, [because] I have other things in my mind. By telling me to go to school, it will just make me mad and I will not go to school. So, it was like that kind of a thing. [Follow up question: Why do you think that they want you to stay in school?] I know that it wasn't for them. I know that my parents meant the best for me and they wanted us to be better than what they are and to have more than what they have and just have a better future. Nothing [means] more to my mom than to see us happy and to do good in church and school. (F1)

This dropout identified that her parents gave her advice to stay in school but did not mention any of her teachers, counselors, and church leaders. Interestingly, she also mentioned that when her parents told her to go to school, she was more “mad” and refused to go to school which might explained why she missed “two to three days” of school in a week. Further, she also knew why her parents wanted her to stay in school but she did not listen then she dropped out of school. However, it is also interesting to note that this is the dropout that wanted to have a cell phone when she went to the high school with higher percentage of students from higher socioeconomic status. Additionally, this dropout's parents and her five oldest siblings were also dropouts themselves. Yet another dropout said,

My mom and church leaders [gave me advice to stay in school]. Just all the people from the church [gave me advice to stay in school]. Just ah, school is, what I have noticed, school is really important. I look into their lives; they are successful and well of. They were right from the beginning and I should have listened. But everybody gotta have learned a lesson. (M9)

This dropout identified his mother and all the people from his church including the leaders gave him advice to stay in school. Further, he also clearly made the connections between doing well in school and living successful lives and also concluded that he “should have listen” to their advice. As such, he failed his classes then he dropped out of school. Interestingly, this dropout’s parents got divorce and his family was also struggling financially and so he was not able to go to East Shore High School to make up his grades. In another dropout experience, the dropout said,

Staying in school was mainly [the advice that I got from] my family. Like at school it was hard cause our teachers and stuff. When one fail they automatically looked at us as failing, so they wouldn’t encourage us to get better, but there was this one teacher that did and I think it was my English teacher. She was not only my English teacher but she would pull me like after school and make me do classes with her, and she was the only one that helped me. And like, other than that, our school just like, once they saw us failing, they didn’t have the courage to help us. My counselors, they were like really bad counselors. They would call us in and that we would tell them that like we’re struggling and that like, I need help, like, I’ll take other classes just to get help but they would say one thing and they wouldn’t do it. (F2)

This dropout identified her family and English teacher were giving her advice and help to stay in school and graduate but she did not listen. Further, she also indicated that her “counselors” were “really bad” because they were not very helpful to her. This is clearly an indication of high school counselors’ lower Polynesian cultural competency which has been identified as a factor related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in this study. Yet another dropout said,

Ah, yeah, one of them was my wife; she was the one that is trying to keep me in school.

She try to change all her class to my class just to make me go to class. But, I keep telling her, I don't want to go to class. She always say to go for a few minutes and if I don't like it then we will tell the teacher you can leave. But it never happen, every time I go to class, I just stay there, I can't leave, it's like a trap. All my athletic coaches, try to keep me in there. That is why they use football, it is like a motivation. If you miss class, you can't play this game, if you miss class, you are going to run. [Follow up question: Football motivates you?] Not really because they want me to play their position and not my position. I want to play middle backer (MLB) and we kind a get into a fight. He said that if I don't want to play the position then I can leave. I will play for the team but I guess he wants me at the line since I am big and fast. He has his favorite people playing MLB. He says he doesn't but I know he does, because most of the kids in our team are small and skinny. He doesn't want to play them because he knows that they are not going to be good. So, I always tell the coach that he hasn't play [this player], he hasn't play [that player], he hasn't play [this player]. He says it's ok; we got guys out there that do the job. They work hard but, man, we got small guys working harder than big guys. That is why they don't like me cause I keep arguing with them, let me try this, let me try that. If the coach told me to do good in school and then I will play MLB, I could have way better. Because in my sophomore year, I was horrible but one of the coaches came up to me and say hey do you like football? I never play this, this is my first time. Come and try out. That was fun and in a game, my coach put me in MLB, and that is when I first like it. I have the view of everything; I can see everyone on their team so I will not be blindsided. It was just amazing, I was motivated, I was bump the whole game. After that, he let me practice MLB, but he will not let me play. I was fine with that, as long as I got

the MLB, I was fine. But, he make me a deal, like if you keep up, and getting the good work you are working with, I will talk to the coaches for the JV and Varsity, and talk to them, he is an amazing backer (MLB), you know you should try him out but it never got that far. I got good grades. That was the last time I played football in my junior year.

[Follow up question: Why do you think they want you to stay in school?] Because they know that I can do some, out of it, like use school for something, some that will help me in the future like taking care of my kid, my wife and family. Something like that. Kind a like a benefit. All my coaches. They kind a like “keep on going to class” and my school work then football. So it makes me go to class so I can play. [Follow up question: Is that a motivation for you to play football?]. Yeah. When the football season is over, my mother continues to motivate me to go to school. She teaches me that it is important to go to class. Just one of the coaches do about making goals for your education and football. He was a good coach too. Coach Matea, he was the student athlete guy. If you are failing, you go and talk to him and he will help us but it is a lot of work. He is really smart. You go to school early to meet him and he will help you with your homework and he will help you with everything. Like how to write a paper, study on a test, and he did stuff like that. [Follow up question: Will it help if they do that all the time?]. Hum, um. It is like going good in school and grades. We have a counselor at school and it is like a class that talks to you about how to get to college, what you need to do to get to college and stuff and what you need to do and stuff. [Follow up question: Did you feel motivated?]. Yes, because they make it sound easy but it is a lot of work. Yeah, lots of homework and stuff like that. Having a lot of homework is a lot of work, cause I don't get much sleep at night. I need help with my homework. You go to class at 6:15 AM until 7:15 AM. All

you do is homework; you can't talk, or turn on the phone. They want to make sure you are not doing anything, they kick you out. (M11)

This dropout experience was a little bit different from the other dropouts in this study because he got his girlfriend pregnant and they got married while they were in high school. However, he stated that his wife and football coaches gave him advice to stay in school and graduate but he did not listen to them and he dropped out of high school. Unfortunately, his wife also dropped out of high school a few months after he dropped out because it was harder for her to go to school due to complications with her pregnancy. Even though this dropout did not directly mention that his family, teachers, church leaders and counselors gave him advice to stay in school, they actually gave him advice to stay in school and he alluded to them in the beginning when he said that "one of them was my wife." In all, from these dropouts' experiences, we learn that they were not listening to advice from friends, football coaches, church leaders, a spouse, teachers, and counselors which led them to drop out of high school. Thus, not listening to advice from friends, football coaches, church leaders, a spouse, teachers and counselors is a factor related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

In addition to not listening to advice from others as a dropout factor, there is another demotivational behavior that NHOPI dropouts participated in high school before they dropped out. In fact, about 88% of the respondents said that they went out to lunch during school time when they were supposed to be in class which led to lower academic achievements, and they dropped out of high school. One of the dropouts said,

Sleeping in and usually absent in the morning before lunch. Also, just chill, go out to eat and play video games with random people but most of the times, [I went out with my] friends [during classes]. [We] usually [go] in a group of like 3 to 6 students. (M12)

This dropout identified sleeping in and being at lunch in the morning were his primary reasons for his absenteeism in the morning. However, he also said that he hung out with his friends and also played video games when he was supposed to be in school. Yet another dropout said,

I don't know, just peer pressure, my friends. Most of my friends, they graduate. Most of my friends took one class, two classes or three classes. So, they cut me out and say do you want to go and get something to eat? Sure. We didn't come back until the last class of the day and I show up to class really late and so it was just hard. There were a lot of things that I could have learned but I didn't learn. All of the classes I did miss, I could have learned a lot for the future. To tell you the truth, I kind like science. I like that class but I didn't like the work, the papers and stuff, but I love seeing the experiments. That is one thing I like about school. Yeah, fill up stuff, and figure out why this happen, you know, why it reacts that way. It was kind a hard but seeing it what science do, it is surprising. (M11)

This dropout identified going to eat during class time as a peer pressure issue but he previously said that they had food such as leftover food from the previous dinner in his house to eat in the morning. It is a known phenomenon that adults and older generation that were born in the islands prefer leftover dinner for breakfast which might explain why this dropout did not eat them for breakfast. As such, he was hungry during his morning classes and succumbed to "peer pressure" to go with his friends and ate. In another dropout experience, the dropout said that a: "Lot of my friends hung out but we probably had a lot of those food places to hang out. Yea, we just go over there and chill" (M10). This dropout also indicated that he went with his friends and ate out during school time. However, this dropout's older brother just dropped out a year earlier from the same high school but it appears that he did not learn any lessons from his older brother

since they did not interact with each other during school. And, not interacting with your sibling or cousins has been identified as a factor related to dropout rates among NHOPI students in this study. Yet another dropout also had the same experience with going out to eat during school noted:

Yes, I was [going out to eat during school]. Just, because I did not want to be there. I was bored. I wanted to hang out with my friends who just want to go somewhere. Yeah, sluff of a lot, and go and eat. (M13)

This dropout indicated that he was bored and was not interested in school; therefore, he went out with his friends, and ate during class time which led to poor academic performance, and he finally dropped out of school. Interestingly, however, he was expelled from another high school for excessive absenteeism but it appears that he did not learn a lesson from that previous experience. In a similar experience, another dropout said,

Honestly I just, I gave up and I wasn't motivated in school anymore and I lost my motivation. And during my junior year to senior year, I was doing really good and then um, I just fell behind cause I just stopped going [to classes]. I started hanging out with kids that would like [to hang out], that would fall in to and would skip classes and I would like loss all motivation for school from there. (F2)

This dropout also indicated that she started hanging out with kids that “skip classes” and went with them to eat out and “talked a long time...because girls can talk forever.” However, she also said that she was doing well in her junior year but was not doing well in her senior year because she “lost all the motivation for school.”

Going out to lunch during class time is one of the demotivational behaviors that is related to dropout rates and so is the stress that dropouts experienced from their home environment and

their classes as well. In fact, 70.59% of the respondents indicated that they were stressful from their classes and home environment as well which led to low academic performance then they dropped out of high school. One of the dropouts related her stressful experience before she dropped out said,

My family was struggling more financially. So, like my senior year, my parents would spend like in things that weren't necessary. So, when it came to important stuff like the house payment, they didn't have the money. So, I kind of took over the finances for my family. So, it was like, I was figuring out budgeting and how much we could spend. I was making all the grocery list so that we could have enough food. So, it kind of became overwhelming. I had to take care of finances, so, it was hard to take care of school. (F3)

This dropout was overwhelmed with having to take care of her parents' financial responsibilities which stressed her out in her education and going to school at the same time. As such, she also indicated that her stress came from doing schooling and being a financial decision-maker at her home. Additionally, she later indicated that she "ended up like, trying to do odd jobs for people so that I could earn money" (F3) to support her younger siblings who were at school and her parents as well. Furthermore, her parents also divorced in the middle of her senior year which added more stress into her life then she finally dropped out of high school. In a similar situation, another dropout said: "When I used to focus on school, failing grade or assignments, and stressing at school but not really caring about it at times" (M2). The time that this dropout used to focus on his schooling was compounded by the facts that he was failing in his classes and not turning in his homework on time which amounted to stressing him out, and he had to drop out of school in order to relieve that stress. In another similar experience, one of the dropouts said,

I get really stressful before a test, cause I would like, I would remember everything but when the test is right in front of me, everything is gone. And I just like sit there and I panic, it's frustrating, it gets stressful. A lot of little things get me stressful cause I wanna do so good and I just don't cause I forget everything. Right before taking a test, they quiz me and I just sit there and I'll just go over it in my head, that way I can remember it and I just, I try not to be stressed and not think about it. I'm doing a little better but at the same time like I'm not. (F2)

This dropout clearly identified that some of the events leading up to taking tests in school were stressful to her. However, because she sluffed classes a lot and also missing out on some of the tips that teachers normally gave out before the exams in classes, she was not fully prepared for the exams which might be a factor in her anxiety before taking her exams. Hence, she did not do well in the exams which led to failing grades then she dropped out of school. Yet another dropout said: "It was hard for me to talk to them, because I felt pressure from everybody to be a certain way, do certain things because I was the next one in line" (F1). This dropout said that she had a hard time talking with his parents about her poor academic performance at school because she was stressed out from the pressure that she felt from her older siblings to do things differently so that she could graduate. Interestingly, her five older siblings together with her parents were dropouts themselves, and her family was struggling financially. Further, she was absent a lot from her classes and was disciplined a few times for fighting and sluffing as well which led her to drop out of school. In like manner, another dropout noted:

I was kind a depressed but never really want to say I was because I did not want them to see that I was weak. But, when he [his father] started to disappear for a long period of

time, I just lost all my attention to school and working out. So, I lost both of them at the same time. (M9)

This dropout just moved from the islands to Utah and was having difficulties in dealing with his new environment as well as his parents' divorce. However, his father seemed to be the greatest motivator for him to do well in school and sports but when he divorced his mother, he lost the desire to do well in school and sports. In another dropout experience, the dropout said: "Not being able to turn in my packets on time. It was stressful to me" (M3). This dropout left his parents and lived with his friends that were doing drugs and drinking alcohol then he dropped out of school. However, because his family was struggling financially, he could not afford to pay for his packets and was not able to make up his grades on time to graduate together with his peers. Additionally, his parents were also dropouts themselves and were sick for most of his senior year which prevented them from fully engaged in his life. Yet another dropout noted: "Just getting lost in the friendship and trying to fit in to the American social life. Starting of school was stressful than I just decided that it wasn't for me" (M8). This dropout just moved from the islands and was struggling to fit in to the American high school social life. He was not successful in trying to fit in to high school social life and he decided to drop out of high school. Additionally, this dropout was also struggling with the English language and had a hard time understanding what were being taught because teachers were not bilingual, as they were in the islands. Furthermore, because his teachers were not bilingual, they were not able to "really explain most of the stuff in school for me so that I could understand it. Explain in a way that I could understand it" (M8). In another dropout experience, the dropout said that the:

Biggest factor in dropping out was my parents' divorce when they fought over [me and my siblings during their] divorce. I felt worthless and feel like a piece of property. My

parents' divorce [was stressful to me] and [also] being a Polynesian [because teachers do not understand how to deal with Polynesians]. Most of my friends graduated and only like two of them did not graduate. [Follow up question: There were a lot of positive pressures to stay in school?] Yeah. Mostly from my dad and my mom felt that way too but we never really talk. When I was trying to get caught up, I went to East Shore and do all those packets, like, screw it, I am not going to do it anymore. Yeah, I got 3 packets done. I was doing both high school, PG and East Shore. I was 5 credits away from graduating. (M12)

This biggest stress for this dropout was his parents' divorce but that was in addition to the stress that he got from trying to make up his grades in East Shore which led him to drop out of school. However, he indicated that there were positive pressures from his parents to finish school on time but they did not discuss the stress that he felt with his parents since they divorced.

Interestingly, this dropout's younger brother graduated from high school and so were his older sisters. Therefore, it seemed that he took his parents' divorce much harder than his siblings did.

Yet another dropout said,

This last year I was behind by a credit and a half. I couldn't make it up because it is hard to make that packet up in time. It is hard because I have to go to my normal school and that school [East Shore High School] to do it. It was just a struggling. [Follow up question: A lot of work?] Yeah, lots of homework and stuff like that. Having a lot of homework is a lot of work, cause I don't get much sleep at night. (M11)

This dropout indicated that it was hard to make up his grades because the classes were harder and he did not have the time because he has to attend two schools every day. Additionally, he also indicated that he did not have enough time to sleep because of the amount of homework that

was done and it took a long time to finish them. Interestingly, this dropout sluffed a lot of his classes in the morning to go out and eat in addition to getting his girlfriend pregnant. Further, he was also sent to juvenile jail for a crime which was also stressful to his single mother and his grandparents then he finally dropped out of school. In another dropout experience, the dropout said: “It was stressful trying to live like Polynesian and also live like Palangi. Mom always talked to me about that. You have to live like the Tongan way” (M13). It is interesting that this dropout considered it stressful to him personally in trying to live like Polynesian. Yet, he did not consider failing in his classes and being expelled from another high school to be stressful because he indicated that he did not listen to his parents because he “was in a state of having fun.” This dropout’s educational problem was compounded by the fact that he was not living in the U.S. legally at the time because his parents brought him here when he was five years old. Additionally, his younger sister also dropped out of high school but she was a U.S. citizen because she was born here. All the dropouts in this study had experienced very stressful home environments and classes at their school which led them to drop out of high school. Thus, living in stressful home environments, and continually experiencing stress from classes at school are related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Another one of the demotivational behaviors that I found in this study that is related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students was the fact that the dropouts were not motivated to do well in school but to do just enough to get by with passing grades. In fact, 82.35% of the respondents indicated that they lost their motivation to do well in school and other factors were also involved in their decision to drop out of high school. One of the dropouts said,

For me, motivation was playing basketball. It took me out from the crowd that I was in and the only thing that kept me, trying to be something. And I think that when I stopped

playing basketball, I was discouraged. I didn't think that I was really, hum, really, I don't know, eligible to. I did not have anything that I have that motivation. I did have anything to look forward to. And being in school is just like blah, you know. I mean, I really wish I could have stayed in school, and just tried a little harder, and even with my teachers, the one that I hated. I wish that I could try to get to know them. I just wish that I had more influences back then to help me stay at school with certain people. (F1)

This dropout indicated that playing basketball was motivating her to do well in school but when she was kicked out of the team for fighting and for failing her classes she was no longer motivated to go to school. As such, she started to hang out with her old friends that were also sluffing their classes as well which led to lower academic performance, and she was expelled from school. Additionally, she was also expelled from her previous high school for doing the same thing: sluffing classes, failing grades in her classes, and fighting. However, the dropout had a change of hearts and wished that she could have tried harder but there was nobody for her to talk to or to look up to in her family since her parents and her five older siblings were also dropouts themselves. Yet another dropout said,

Oh, yeah just like when I hear my dad working hard. Oh man, Tongans are hard workers. I just thought that Poly and hard work. It kind of pushing me to start working hard to graduate because it is expected. Others expected more out of you because you are Poly and stuff. (M10)

It is interesting that this dropout is using the word “pushing” that is frequently used in the NHOPI communities here in the U.S. to mean “motivating” which literally mean that something or someone is “pushing” (motivating) you to do things better and get the job done. Additionally, this dropout used “hard work” from his role model, his father, as a motivating factor for him to

graduate but he failed his classes due to excessive sluffing, and not doing his homework on time then he dropped out of school. Furthermore, he also indicated that his grandma and uncles were expecting him to graduate since his older brother dropped out of high school a year earlier before he actually dropped out of high school. In another dropout's experience, the dropout said: "I was motivated when I had to face to face with something physically and just dropped from there" (M9). Hence, working outs such as lifting weights and running with his father was a motivating factor for him to do well in school and sports. However, when his father left home due to the divorce, the dropout was no longer motivated to do the physical exercises which he indicated that they were motivating him to do well in school, and in his extracurricular activities. In a similar dropout's experience, the dropout said: "They [church leaders, parents, teachers and his counselors] told me that I am pretty smart but lack the motivation to go to school" (M4). This dropout was not only motivated by some of his teachers and counselors but was also motivated by his religious leaders to do well in school. Unfortunately, he did not heed their counsel and advice, and was not motivated to do well in school either after he started to hang out with his friends who were also unmotivated to do well in school as well. Yet another one of the dropouts said,

I don't think it had anything to do with my culture. I know my brothers have always been talking to me about how he wants to change the world, like how they view Polynesians. Everyone thinks that Polynesians don't do well in school, they have bad credit and all those stuffs, and feel like his influences on me, kind of got me to push harder and I want to change that view too. [Follow up question: That's the motivation that you need?]. Yea. (F3)

This dropout was not sure which culture she belonged to since her father did not teach her the Samoan culture. Additionally, she also indicated that her older brother inspired her to do well which “kind of got me to push” harder in school. Unfortunately, she did not stay motivated all the way through her senior year then she dropped out of high school. Interestingly, her older brother that motivated her to do well in school also dropped out of high school and later got his GED. But, their parents’ divorce seemed to have the biggest impact in their lives which led them to drop out of high school on different year. In contrast to the previous dropouts’ experiences, one of the dropouts said,

In high school, I received a lot of motivation, but I never really took it into consideration. Yea, basically. Like, I would be motivated to, instead of being motivated to go to school; I would be motivated to go to school to do music. Cause there is this one class that I took in high school is called TV Video Production. We would go film, go film and uh, edit on these big computer, these big Apple Computers. These big nice kind, had those in high school and before school we would go in there and we worked on music and beats and just produce music and stuff, and we would even go there during lunch and after school and sometimes we skipped classes to go in there because I liked it. And I just wished if I had an opportunity to do music like that, I think that would’ve motivated me to finish high school and to get more experienced with music. (M6)

This dropout acknowledged that he received a lot of motivation but he did not make the connections between the motivation he received, and doing well in school, to graduate. As such, the only event that he considered to motivate him was producing music in which he spent a lot of his time and energy on. Unfortunately, he failed in his other classes in addition to sluffing a lot of his classes which led him to make up his grades in East Shore High School. But, because his

family was struggling financially, he was not always able to pay for his packets and was not able to make his grades on time to graduate with his classmates. In another dropout's experience, the dropout said that he was:

Just trying to find that self-motivation to stay in school and try to get my stuff done.

Knowing what we know now, it is something that you have to learn by making mistakes.

It is something that you have to learn for yourself. You have to find that motivation for yourself. [Follow up question: What do you consider motivation?]. Like if my aunt told me to go to school, like I never wanted to go to school. Things that motivate me to be like: no stress, no financial problems, just like no problems in the future and school helps with that. (M1)

This dropout indicated that he had a hard time finding that self-motivation to get his school done. However, not being self-motivated was compounded by the facts that his father was deported to the islands and his mother was working in California. Therefore, he moved with his other siblings and lived with one of his aunts. Additionally, his aunt and some of his cousins were also dropouts themselves and they were living in an intergenerational home. Further, he also indicated that things that motivated him were not having stress and no financial problems. Unfortunately, he had a lot of stress and his family was struggling financially which prevented him from being motivated to do well in school then he dropped out of high school. Yet another one of the dropouts said that he was:

Lazy. I would just try to get by, just to pass, instead of putting all my efforts in to it to see what came out of my grade. To put everything in, if got a B or not, but I was just trying to get at least 70% to pass the class so it would be done. (M7)

This dropout indicated that he was just “lazy” which is an indicator that he was not being motivated to do well in school. However, he was only motivated to do enough work just to get by with at least a 70% passing grade in his classes. Interestingly, his parents were also dropouts themselves and his father was only home on weekends because of his work. As such, parental involvement was inadequate but his aunt was filling in for his parents and did they best she could but it was not enough to motivate him to do well in school then he dropped out of high school.

In another dropout’s experience, the dropout said,

Um, I have a lot of help. My parents were the number one supporting, always pushed me and doing what basically the parents does and other family, and some of my friends from school kept reminding me that I have to look forward in high school to graduate but dealing with a lot of stuffs. Um, everything, they, basically they put both of their shoulders on me and push me through it. Making sure that I do my best to go to school. Just religion when I grew up they push us in to it, it’s just a Tongan thing and just education is for life too. That everybody needs it, so, basically they are both in to it. But, I guess I did not take the same emphasis since we moved here on my 10 grade and it was hard for me to adjust to that in this country. (M8)

This dropout indicated that his parents were not only very supportive of his education but they also motivated him to do well in school and religion. Unfortunately, moving from the islands to the U.S. in his 10th grade presented additional stressful events such as teachers speaking only the English language and a different social life in high school that he was not personally prepared to deal with them effectively despite his parents’ constant “push” (motivation) to do well in school. From all of these experiences concerning motivation, these dropouts were not personally motivated, and were not able to sustain their motivation throughout the school year to do well in

school. They also had difficulties with other factors identified in this study, and decided to drop out of high school. Thus, not being motivated or able to sustain the motivation to do well in school is a factor that is related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Utah and Salt Lake Counties.

Personal School-Alienation Behavior

Personal school-alienation behaviors of the dropouts before they dropped out of school have been documented and shown to be a factor related to high school dropout rates (Rumberger, 1987; Rumberger et al., 1990; Tatafu, 1997). In this study, I found that NHOPI dropouts had personal behaviors that seemed to alienate them from being at school and associated with their teachers, counselors and their other “good” friends. In fact, about 100% of the respondents said that they did not have good grades or had to repeat a grade at school before they dropped out.

One of the dropouts related an experience with not having good grades said,

Yes, my senior year, ah, I met up with all my friends that I had starting out high school. By that time, my senior year, they were all into drugs and alcohol like I said. But, after the second term, my senior year in high school, I moved in with a buddy who lives here in Provo, I moved in with a friend, and he never went to school and party all night. So, I got on to that lifestyle, and then I stopped going to school. So, I just dropped out the second term. The following year, I repeated 12 grades, but then they told me that I was too old with all my peers and I was to oldest kid. So, they did not want me to stay there. They told me to go to adult education. And, so I was there, a building right by Independence. That is where people who could not finish [high school goes to] in Independence. They go there to get their GED and their diploma. (M3)

This dropout repeated the entire 12th grade but was later expelled from school because he was too old. However, he was told to go to Provo Adult Education and made up his failing grades. Unfortunately, his family was struggling financially and was not consistent in paying for his packets then he dropped out of high school. Yet another dropout also related a similar experience with bad grades said: “They had me repeat a couple of classes cause they said I fail in junior high and then they said they lost some of my 9th grade credits so I had to redo that” (F2). This dropout had bad grades and also failed some of her classes which frustrated her because it was partly her fault and the counselor that was working with her. However, she was stressed out and overwhelmed, and she dropped out of high school. Similarly, another one of the dropouts said that he: “Just [repeated his] senior and the classes I am re doing in East Shore” (M8). This dropout immigrated with his family to California first for a few months then to Utah, and he had to redo some of his classes. Though this dropout’s family was not struggling financially, he was struggling with the English language which led to poor grades then he dropped out of high school. Yet another one of the dropouts related his experience with bad grades said: “Yes [I did not have good grades]. I sluff a lot [of classes]. I went to East Shore and took packets to make up for it” (M12). As a result of excessive sluffing, this dropout had bad grades and went to East Shore High School to make up his grades but he later dropped out of high school. Similarly, another one of the dropouts said,

I have been playing football for two years. I did not play in the last two years because I did not go to class. Because of the grades. I just sit out [and was not playing football]. [Nobody come and look for you?]. Well, we have trackers. Said, I did not want to go to class because it is boring. Its kind like when the day comes to go to that class, you do not

want to go anymore, it will be boring like the last time. Yeah [I did not have good grades] and I have to make up at East Shore. (M11)

Again, excessive sluffing and going out to eat during class times led to bad grades which led him to also enroll in East Shore High School. But, because his family was struggling financially, he was not always able to pay for his packets then he dropped out of high school. Yet another one of the dropouts said: “In my senior year [I did not have good grades] and went to East Shore” (M5). This dropout’s family was not struggling financially but he did not complete his packets on time so that he could have graduated together with his classmates, and he dropped out of high school. Another one of the dropouts said: “Yes, because I did not do the work. I have to make up for them in East Shore” (F1). Interestingly, this dropout did not have good grades and was previously expelled from another high school for failing some of her classes and fighting. In another dropout’s experience, the dropout said,

I tried out for the basketball team, my sophomore year I tried out for the basketball team but my grades were bad. The coach came up to me, took me aside, I felt good you know, cause he’s like, yeah you’re pretty good but sorry dude I looked at your grades and you can’t play but if you would’ve fixed those grades before you tried out, you would’ve played. And I tried out my senior year in high school, I just wanted, I knew I wasn’t gonna play but I just wanted to show them that I could play. (M6)

This dropout did not remember if he repeated a grade in junior high or in high school but he did not have good grades so he was not allowed to play in his high school basketball team. Again, he also tried out for his high school basketball team as a senior, and he was told that he could not play because of his bad grades. In another dropout’s experience, the dropout said:

Psychology, I think that's the one I was in. That one was really hard. Always writing papers, always doing different projects and what made it worse was like I was in that class with like seven of my friends and it was the first class of the day, so it was like, we would go to IHOP instead of going to class. I left on my senior year, but I was behind on quite a few credits. (F3)

This dropout was behind on credits because she did not take the classes that she needed to take in order to graduate. Additionally, her grade was not good because she failed her psychology class and so her academic performance was lower which led her to drop out of high school. Yet another one of the dropouts said,

Most hard class, I would say, probably math. It was going good because we have the sub teachers from BYU and they would help us a lot. But, when it just all of us and one teacher, it was getting a lot harder and I did not get a good grade. (M10)

This dropout seemed to do well in his math class because there were “substitute teachers from BYU” that helped out a lot of the students including him. However, when the “substitute teachers from BYU” left, there were more students to teacher ratio in his class and his math teacher was not always available to help him understand some of the math concepts. As such, he was not doing well in his math class and he did not have a good grade at the end. These dropouts' experiences show that the dropouts in this study were not having good grades or were repeating some of their grades because they failed some of their classes. Thus, repeating a grade or not having good grades is a factor that is related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Utah and Salt Lake Counties.

In this study, repeating a grade or not having good grades is a personal school-alienation behavior and so does not understanding what is being taught but did not ask the teachers for help

because they were embarrassed that it will make them look dumb is a factor that is related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students. In fact, 52.94% of the respondents said that they did not want to ask the teachers for help but they did ask their parents, friends and other people to help them. One of the dropouts said: “I usually try to talk to my counselor at school or come talk to my family members so my family members [that] I just talked to, like my mom and stuff” (M10). This is an interesting experience because the dropout did not want to talk to his teacher about the things that he did not understand; instead, he chose to talk to his counselor and his mother. He previously indicated that he did not feel connected to his teacher which might explain why he did not ask him for help. Interestingly, his mother is a dropout but he chose to talk to her about it. In contrast to the previous dropout’s experience, another dropout said,

Sometimes I try to get it. I try to understand. I know that if I keep trying to do that and still wouldn’t understand, than I just block them out. You know I just wouldn’t listen no more, just zone out or something like that. If I didn’t really get it or whatever, I don’t know, I wouldn’t try. Sometimes I would go [and] ask the teacher and I tell the teacher, hey, I don’t understand this. Sometimes the teacher would try to break it down for me. Other times I know I can get it, but I just struggle with it. But at times when that would happen, I don’t know I just block them out and wouldn’t do it. (M6)

This dropout seemed to always try to understand the things in his classes that he could not understand but he also asked his teachers for help as well. Unfortunately, he sometimes just “block them out” rather than asking his teachers for help. Additionally, this dropout did not have a computer and an internet access that he could have used to look up solutions to his homework problems. In another dropout’s experience, the dropout indicated that he:

Just [invited] somebody who can really explain most of the stuff in school for me so that I could understand it. Explain in a way that I could understand it. Um, I just had a friend that always spent time with me here in Utah. He and I always spend time together.

Whenever I open my book to do my homework, I call him to come over just to explain most of the stuff. I hardly go to my teachers, same as the coaches. (M8)

This dropout indicated that he hardly went to get help from his teachers or football coaches but he always asked one of his friends to help him understand what was being taught. Additionally, his friend was bilingual, and was able to explain things in Tongan as well as in English.

Apparently, his friend's help was not adequate since he repeated some of his classes and was not doing well in school as well. In another dropout's experience, the dropout said,

All my hard classes, I took with my best friend. She's like book and school smart, if I was struggling or anything, I would go to her. Or, I don't know why but I hate answering questions, like asking questions in class. So, I would go before class or after class and talk to the teacher. [Follow up question: So, you don't like to ask questions during class?]. Oh I do now, but at first no, I did not like it at all. I don't know why, I just didn't. I just sat there very quietly and waited for the teacher to like, she walked by me and I would ask her but I wouldn't want to ask her in front of the whole class. (F2)

This dropout preferred to ask for help from a best friend who she trusts instead of the teacher. Additionally, she also did not like to ask any questions or answer any questions in front of her class out of fear that she might be labelled as dumb which is why she "waited for the teacher to like, she walked by me and I would ask her but I wouldn't want to ask her in front of the whole class" (F2). This fear of asking questions in front of her classes is phenomenon that is very common among NHOPI high school and college students. In another dropout's experience, the

dropout said: “I ask my friends that were in my class with me and they will explain it to me” (M1). This dropout has to repeat a grade when he moved from California to Utah, and also sluffed a lot of classes as well. Also, he relied heavily upon his friends’ help to understand things at school. However, his friends graduated from high school but he did not. Yet another one of the dropouts said,

Friends and then if it is a really hard question then a lot of us have the same question, I go ask the teacher and asked him for help. Just depending if I am willing to do the

homework or not. And at home, when I do my homework, I ask my mom or dad. (M2)

Again, this dropout preferred to ask his friends for help when he did not understand things at school instead of asking his teacher. However, he only asked his teacher if the question was hard to understand. Additionally, he only asked the teacher if he was willing to do the homework but if he was not going to do the homework, he would not ask the teacher for help. Further, the dropout indicated that he would also ask his parents for help but his parents were dropouts themselves. In a similar experience, another dropout noted: “I just stayed quiet. Just look at other people and ask other people instead of asking the teacher. [Follow up question: Ask your peers?] Yeah. [Follow up question: Ask your parents?]. Yeah. I came home and ask them” (M4).

This dropout preferred to stay quiet and would rather ask his friends, parents, and other people instead of his teacher. Yet another dropout said: “Sometimes I talk to the teacher, sometimes my friends. Sometimes I just try to figure it out by myself” (F3). This dropout indicated that she talked to her teacher and her friends about it but then sometimes she tried to figure it out on her own. Additionally, she did not mention talking to her parents, who were also dropouts themselves, about things that she had a hard time understanding at school because her parents were divorced. All the dropouts in this study preferred to ask friends and other people to help

them when they did not understand things that were taught at school instead of just asking their teachers for help. Thus, not asking their teacher for help when they did not understand things at school is a factor that is related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Lower Literacy Proficiency

Literacy is the quality or state of the ability to read and write (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/literacy>) which is paramount to be successful in education. However, educational policy on education put constraints on educational opportunities for NHOPI students to become “biliterate in public schools” (August et al., 2009, p. 451). As such, NHOPI students will not be able to speak, read, and write well in English, and also in their parents’ native language. In this study, I found that 100% of the dropouts were bilingual but were also not very well literate in both English and in their NHOPI language. In fact, one of the dropouts said that she speaks: “Tongan and English between my mom and aunt, and with my grandparents as well” (F2). However, this dropout was not speaking very well in Tongan but she could carry a simple conversation in Tongan. Further, she speaks very well in English but did not like writing English papers since she did not understand the English grammar very well in which she indicated that she “hate writing papers.” In another dropout’s experience, the dropout indicated that: “My first one is Tongan and I speak English as well” (M1). Again, this dropout indicated that he spoke both Tongan and English. However, he could not write in Tongan and he was only able to carry out a simple conversation in Tongan. But, he could speak English very well and had the ability to write in English better than in Tongan. Yet another one of the dropouts said: “My first language is Tongan but as I grew older, it is English. Not very fluent, but I can have a conversation with other Polynesian in Tongan” (M2). This dropout indicated that he changed

from L1 (Tongan) to L2 (English) as he grew older and was able to carry out a simple conversation in his L1 language but he was not very fluent in that language. In another dropout's experience, the dropout indicated that he spoke:

Tongan when I am at home. I speak Tongan but when I am out and there are Tongans, I speak Tongan and everyone say "what are they saying?" Then I speak in English to them and told them that we are talking about this and that. (M11)

This dropout indicated that he was bilingual in which he spoke Tongan and English as well. However, he was not able to write in Tongan but only knew enough Tongan to carry out a simple conversation. In contrast, the dropout spoke English very well in comparison to his Tongan language. Yet another dropout said that he spoke:

English but I do understand Tongan since my parents always speak Tongan to us but I am not fluent in it as my English. I am now learning to speak it since we went to Tonga a few years ago. (M6)

This dropout indicated that he was also bilingual since he spoke English fluently but not very fluent in his Tongan language. In a similar experience, another dropout said: "English is my first language. I can speak Tongan just a little bit and understand some of the conversations in Tongan but I cannot speak well as my English" (M5). Again, this dropout indicated that he was also bilingual since he spoke English and Tongan. However, he was not very literate in speaking and understanding of the Tongan language. In like manner, another dropout said,

I speak English [well]. [Follow up question: Do you speak Samoan as well?]. I speak pretty good Samoan and English since my mom is Caucasian and my dad is Samoan. I also learn Samoan from my aunts and my Samoan friends too at church. (M7)

This dropout indicated that he was also bilingual and he could speak English and Samoan as well. However, it is important to note that his father, an aunt, and friends from the church all taught him the Samoan language but, he was not able to write well in Samoan. In another similar experience, another dropout said: “I consider my native language, Tongan, as my first language. I also speak English and trying to learn as much as I could about it since we moved here from Tonga on my 10th grade” (M8). This dropout was also bilingual but was very well versed in the Tongan language but he was struggling with the English language even though his classes were taught in English in his high school in Tonga. But, the teachers in Tongan were bilingual and were able to explain things in Tongan so that he could easily understand them. However, this was not the case here in the U.S. since his teachers were not able to speak Tongan but only in English. Yet some of the teachers were bilingual and also spoke Spanish but the dropout did not understand the Spanish language at all. Yet another dropout said that he spoke: “English when I was in school. I have learned Tongan lately and now [I] can speak it and also read and write in Tongan as well but not quite as good as my English” (F1). This dropout was also bilingual since she spoke English and Tongan as well. However, she also admitted that she did not speak, write, and read in Tongan as well as speaking, writing, and reading in English. In another dropout’s experience, the dropout said: “English is my first language but not Tongan or Samoan or Hawaiian. I can understand some Tongan when I go to my Tongan grandma” (M10). This dropout was also bilingual. The dropout’s father was Tongan and his mother was Hawaiian-Samoan but he only spoke, read and wrote well in English and a little bit in Tongan in which he attributed that he learned from his Tongan grandmother. From all these dropouts’ experiences, the dropouts were all bilingual but were not equally effective in both languages. However, they were more literate in the English language compared to their NHOPI languages. Thus, being

bilingual students but were not equally literate in both English and their NHOPI languages is a factor that is related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Utah and Salt Lake Counties.

In addition to the dropout factor of being bilingual students but were not equally literate in both English and their NHOPI languages, dropout students were also struggling with reading. As such, they did not do any other reading besides those required for their classes which seemed to be a factor in their lower literacy proficiency. In fact, 76.47% of the respondents indicated that they were struggling with reading and did not do any other reading besides those required by their classes. In one of the dropouts' experience, the dropout said that he:

Never read. I'm good at reading inside my head but never good at reading out loud. I never read for fun. For junior high, my grandma would, my grandma would make us read books, but after that in high school, I only read books because I had to for class.

(M11)

This dropout indicated that he never read any books besides those assigned for his classes. Also, his grandmother was able to help him read books while he was in junior high school but not when he was in high school. However, this dropout did develop a love for reading and enjoyed reading when he was in jail. In another dropout's experience, the dropout said,

Just any fantasy kind of books because [it encourages] imagination of kind of everything you know. It is not just a movie that you see but when you are reading it, it is imagination and the sky is the limit. So, I read a couple of Twilight books and just adventures books, knights, dragons, and anything that the first chapter captures my imagination and I will read it. [Follow up question: Any books of crime fighters?]. Some, yeah for assignments

depending on how I am. If I am tired, I just don't read but if I am in my room, I just read.

Not very often but on and off I guess. (M2)

This dropout indicated that there were certain type of books that he loved to read especially if the first chapter caught his attention. However, he read most of the books that were listed for his assignments but he did not read them often which led to his lower literacy proficiency. Yet another dropout said,

I was reading, I was actually reading the scriptures. It was hard, it was way different in English before, I was like, I understood cause it was during one of our classes that we would read. I didn't really read a lot back then but I really need to start reading a lot now.

I read the scriptures a lot now. Primarily read in English. (M10)

This dropout indicated that he sometimes read the scriptures before in his seminary classes but he also admitted that he did not really like reading. His lack of extra reading was compounded by the facts that he spend a lot of his time playing football and rugby which left him with hardly any time to do any extra readings at all. In like manner, another dropout said,

I struggled a lot [with reading] cause I had to go through a lot of program to teach me, but I love reading and reading books. Speaking I am good at it but like, if I talk to fast, I stutter. It was, um, the last book I read was like a mystery book and I love reading books because to me like, when I read a book it's like I can picture the whole thing in my head. It's like a mini movie and like, I just like how, I get really lost in it. Reading books is what really helps me with my reading and I'm like, like, the program I took, I moved really fast for my age in my class, so, it was because of reading. I like reading books that I'm interested in not like these books that the school give you and you have to read it. Like some of the books that they give us was really good but other times was like, I don't

want to read this. I like reading mystery, drama, I like reading all kind of books, it just depends. We try to read the Tongan scriptures but it's hard. (F2)

This is an interesting experience because the dropout indicated that she enjoyed reading and described why reading is good but she was not interested in reading the books that were required by the teachers for her classes. As such, she had lower literacy proficiency and bad grades then she dropped out of high school. Yet another dropout said that he was:

Uh, speaking [English], I can speak perfect English, but proper English, uh, so, so. So, so, with speaking proper English, but having a conversation, we can go for days with having a conversation. Reading, reading wise, that was one of my hardest challenges. [Follow up question: Why was it a challenge for you to read?]. Because I, I never really read, like in high school, and in growing up too I just, sometimes I sit down and try to read a book. But I never, I don't think I ever read a book cover to cover, besides like at school when we were reading like a book in class or like the Book of Mormon. Those are the only thing that I read from cover to cover, but like uh, me really sitting down and reading, I can't do it. I'm too impatient. But um, like sometimes when I am reading, I uh, what gonna happen next, but I just get too impatient that I just put the book away and try to do something else. (M6)

This dropout indicated that he did not like to read and so he did not do any other reading besides his required readings for his classes. Additionally, he also indicated that he did not like to read because he was "too impatient" to sit down and read a book which led to lower literacy proficiency. In another dropout's experience, the dropout said,

Actually, I have it in my kindle. It was "Rich dad, poor dad" It was a good book. It is not school related but I figure it will be helpful. Plus, it was the number one best seller. It was

good. No. I usually don't read at all. That just caught my attention. Books that caught my attention, I just read them right away. Mystery books are good and that is one of the things that I like. Supernatural books, I like that. Crime books, before I moved up here, I used to have a whole collection of it back in my old house in Hawaii. I have a book shelves, they are all just mystery books and crime solving books. The library gave away books, and I just go through and found the books I wanted. The ones that caught my attention was the CSI ones. I just said, oh, I think I am interested in this. Later on I found out that this is what I was interested in. (M9)

This dropout indicated that he “usually don’t read at all” unless the books “caught” his “attention” then he “read them right away.” Additionally, the books that caught this dropout’s attention were books containing detective works and actions which might explained why he did not read the books assigned by his teachers at school. Yet another dropout said,

I cannot remember the last time I read a book. [I did] not [read] really often. [I only read in] English. Reading, [is] kind a, my dad always told me to read, but I never did. I always kind a find a way not to read. (M3)

This dropout seemed to have a hard time recalling the last time that he read a book but he also indicated that he refused to read even when his dad told him to read. Hence, refusing to do what your father asked you to do is considered a very disrespectful behavior in the Polynesian’s culture. In another one of the dropout’s experience, the dropout noted what he read and said,

It was a story about football. It is really fun because the story kind a related to mine. So, I kind like to read those kinds of books that kind of relate to life. [Follow up question: Do you like to read?]. No, I usually do not like to read. I usually just read the Book of Mormon when I wake up and when I go to sleep. [I like to read in] English. Yeah. (M4)

It is interesting to note that this dropout actually wanted to read books with stories that were related to life and his situation. But, he also indicated that he “do not like to read” all of the books except the Book of Mormon. Interestingly, this dropout seemed to indicate that the Book of Mormon have stories that were related to his life and situation. All of these dropouts’ experiences with readings indicated that they were struggling with reading and were not reading other books besides those assigned for their classes. Thus, students who were struggling with reading and were also not reading other books besides those books assigned for their classes had lower literacy proficiency which is a factor that is related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Utah and Salt Lake Counties.

Building Invisible Self-Educational Barriers to Success in School

There are barriers to educational success of minority students which have been shown in “urban high school youth, particularly minority youth, face increasingly severe obstacles in pursuing their educational goals and career aspirations” and they “are more likely to drop out of high school” (Maureen et al., 2003, p. 142). In this study, I found that the NHOPI dropouts were building invisible self-educational-barriers when they were in high school which prevented them from achieving success in their educational goals. In fact, 100% of the respondents indicated that they chose to hang out and follow the examples of their bad friends which led to lower academic performance then they dropped out of school. One of the dropouts indicated that the biggest barrier to staying in school was:

Bad friends and sometimes staff members that just there [and] being a punk to us and not a friendly guy from the start but just being there to profile us as you can say. But, he would not say he did. But just being there and seeing him and him countering us in a negative way and always in time not making us want to go to school. (M2)

This dropout indicated that the biggest barrier to his educational successes were his bad friends because they were very influential in his sluffing and hanging out instead of doing his homework. Additionally, he also indicated that some of the staff members were profiling him, some of his siblings and cousins that were in the same school. However, he failed to realize that the staff member was monitoring him and the other students because they were consistently sluffing classes. Additionally, he also did not realize that he was building invisible self-educational-barriers which prevented him from attending his classes and making connections with his teachers and members of the staff at his school. Yet another dropout also related her experience with building invisible self-educational barriers said,

Um, well one situation I think it was hard for me to go to school, especially up here because we weren't as rich as the other kids or we didn't have as much as them. So, it was like, I felt belittle, like I didn't want to be here or I don't want to go to school with kids, they are preteen stuck up or whatever. So, what I wanted, what I want to try to do things that will I have to hustle to get a cell phone too or it was just hard to have nothing and coming up here to school with people that have everything. (F1)

This is an interesting experience because this dropout did not make a lot of friends in her first high school in Utah County because she did not have a cell phone and did not feel that she was connected to the students in that high school. As such, she went back to her "old friends" and hang out with them because they did not have cell phones either. But, more importantly, they were sluffing and not doing well in their classes. As a result, this dropout started to sluff her classes and was not doing well in school then she dropped out of high school. In another dropout's experience, the dropout said,

My parents [were] trying to separate before we moved here to Utah. And, perhaps the whole distraction was I let my friends tell me what to do but in my junior year, I knew what I wanted. Senior year, I lost myself. (M9)

Even though this dropout indicated that his parents' divorce was a big factor in his decision to drop out of high school, he also indicated that "the whole distraction was I let my friends tell me what to do but in my junior year." That is, they sluff classes to go and eat out and also spend a lot of hours on a daily basis, including weekends, to hang out instead of studying and doing their homework. Again, this dropout did not realize that letting his friends told him what to do was actually building an invisible self-educational-barrier that prevented him from doing well in school. Yet another dropout said: "The group that I hang out with, they were just bad and I got into drugs in high school" (M3). This dropout spend a lot of time sluffing classes, hanging out and also got into drugs and alcohol which led to poor academic performance then he dropped out of high school. Again, this dropout's decision to hang out, and did drugs, and alcohol with his friends enabled him to build his own invisible self-educational-barriers which prevented him from being a high school graduate. In a similar dropout's experience, the dropout said: "Ah, I guess I got mixed up with the wrong friend, and we sluffed, and do other things" (M4).

Interestingly, this dropout actually got a 3.5 GPA before hanging out with the "wrong friend" and sluffed classes, and did other fun activities together which led them to drop out of high school. Once again, this dropout did not realize that he was building invisible self-educational-barriers which prevented him from graduating together with his good friends. In another dropout's experience, the dropout noted:

Yeah, I say friends. You know, you got to choose the right friends because the friends you choose [will influence you in what you do]. Bad friends, you do bad things you know

you shouldn't be doing during school. You could pick good friends, you go to school and go to class, and then hang out after school. So I say friends. (M11)

This dropout clearly indicated that his bad friends were influential in his poor academic performance then he later decided to drop out of high school. But, this is also indicative of students who had built invisible self-educational barriers because this dropout did not realize what he did at the time was actually going to be detrimental to his success in high school. Yet another dropout student said,

They were all the Poly kids from school. Cause the normal Poly kids from school was basically our family and then like some of the kids I went to junior high with, so, like, they were basically like my only friends. So, they just started skipping classes and then at first I was nervous of skipping class cause I have never really did it a lot, but once I kept doing it with them, it became easier and I didn't care as much. (F2)

This dropout indicated that she hung out with some members of her extended families as well as some of the kids that she went to junior high school with. They were all sluffing classes together. As such, they were failing in their classes. In contrast to these dropouts' experiences, one of the dropouts said: "I was born like a leader of bad influence. Basically I was a bad influence on everybody" (M1). This dropout confessed that he was the leader in influencing others to hang out, sluffing classes and not doing well in their education. However, he also failed to recognize that his bad behaviors also helped him to build his invisible self-educational-barriers so strong which prevented him from graduating high school. Yet another dropout said,

Um, just going to class and being strong mentally to not let anyone else change my goal. Like not letting any of my friends say, hey, let's go to lunch instead of going to class. I should've been stronger and say no. (M7)

This dropout indicated that he was not mentally strong because he was always sluffing classes to go out to lunch with his friends instead of just saying no to them. As a result, he was failing in his classes and was not doing well academically then he dropped out of high school. But, more importantly, he was prevented from graduating together with his class by the invisible self-educational-barriers that he had built for himself. Thus, hanging out with bad friends, and following their examples daily, was part of building invisible self-educational-barriers that prevented them from achieving their educational success. This was a factor that is related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Utah and Salt Lake Counties.

In addition to dropouts hanging out with, and following the examples of their bad friends, the dropouts in this study were also not making connections with what their future would be like if they drop out because the all wished that they could have stayed and graduated with their class. In fact, 100% of the respondents indicated that they wished that they could have stayed and graduated from high school. One of the dropouts who indicated his wish said,

Just focus on school and don't focus on things that you think that it is more important like your girlfriends, friends, parties and stuff. We are friendly and all but like to go and do those kinds of things but then yet but in the long run, it is going to bite you in the butt if you do not get it done. So, just focus on school, surround yourself with good friends, and just set goals like simple goals cause when you build simple, short-term goals it will help you with the long term ones and follow through with homework and things like that it will help a lot. (M2)

This dropout indicated that he was not focusing on the importance of his education at the time prevented him from doing well in school. Additionally, he did not make the connections between hanging out with, and sluffing classes with setting goals to be successful. Furthermore,

he also indicated that did not follow through with his homework and things that could have helped him in his schooling. The experience related by this dropout is an indicative of students who do not have the ability to make connections between what they do with what they want to accomplish in the future. Similarly, another dropout related her inability to make connections said,

I think that they are a lot of hard things that I went through in high school. Not that they go through the same thing but other Polys need to stick to it. Just keep on going because there come a time in your life that you look back and say why didn't I finish? Why didn't I do that? I could have been here or I could have done this for my family. It makes you feel resentful but that is not how you should live but you cannot help but you think, if I stayed in school, I could do so much better. I would [not] have to look for a second job like me right now. I am working a second job. I just think that I should have more patience, I should have communicated more with my teachers, even I should have watched my counselor and like you guys haven't called me in, you know, can you guys care about me, you like counselor should like. I should have done way more than I let myself do back then. That is one of the biggest things, just stick to it, rough it out, and do it because in the end it is all worth it, you will not live with regrets. (F1)

This dropout indicated that she did not make the connections with what she did back in high school to what her future would be like when she decided to drop out. Furthermore, she also indicated in her advice to other Polynesian students to stick to do their homework and go to school, to be more patience with their teachers, and also to be more conversational. Thus, allowing them to ask pertinent questions that would have enlarged their understanding of the subject matter which would increase their academic performance. In another dropout's

experience, the dropout said: “Just to take school seriously. Just do your work right now. Don't wait until the last minute. Cause most of the time you will not make it if it is last minute” (M4). This dropout indicated that he did not make the connections about the importance of doing “your work right now” and “don't wait until that last minute” to do it because you would not be successful. As such, he advised Polynesian students to take their schooling seriously. In a similar experience, another dropout said: “I would just say just do all you can to graduate from high school, and go to college, and get a good education; get a good job and career (M10). It is a great advice to “do all that you can do to graduate from high school and go to college and get a good education; get a good job and career” but he failed to make that connections while he was in high school then he dropped out. Yet another dropout explained the connections between doing your homework on time and being successful in high school said,

The biggest thing with me was getting behind and then not feeling like I could catch up, and so, being able to stay on top of your work the day it comes out. No more late assignments, to go in the day they were due instead of waiting a couple of weeks and just waiting to get them all done once. It's always easier to get things done on time. And waking up early. If I could go back, I would try harder to wake up early, cause now I'm waking up even earlier than I did when I was in high school to go to work, so, it's like, and it's going to happen eventually. Like, if I could've gone back and just woken up on time, I could've gotten those couple of classes done instead of sleeping in and walking myself to school. That would've been so much easier. (F3)

This dropout indicated that she did not make the connections between doing your homework on time and turning it on time because she “was getting behind and then not feeling like I could

catch up.” Furthermore, she always seemed to be late to the bus as well which led to her poor academic performance. Another one of the dropouts said,

Like right of the bat, like I think the top on the list would be higher education, definitely. To this day, I’m 24 right now. I would’ve graduated when I was 17. It’s been seven years. Seven years out of high school it’s a huge struggle. I would’ve gotten better jobs if I graduated from high school. There are numerous jobs if I would’ve had my high school diploma or my GED. You know I would’ve got a job or like a decent job or a better job. One thing that I looked at in high school was um, always look for fun. Like, oh I’m gonna go play basketball tonight, I’m gonna go do this with my friends today or right after school we’re gonna go play ball or something like that. Basically it’s just your priorities. Priorities and Higher Education basically. (M6)

This dropout indicated that he did not make the connections between always looking for fun while he was in high school with having a good job because he has been struggling financially after he dropped out of high school. Furthermore, he also indicated that he did not set or organize his priorities well; he suffered from not having a good job. In another dropout’s experience, the dropout said,

Through all my experiences and stuff, I would tell um, cause I hated that I gave up very easy, now that I’m older, I hate giving up, to me I look at it, if you’re giving up, you’re like a loser. So, I would tell them to never give up and I would offer my help and then I would basically tell them to get help, like from your family or the biggest thing that helped me too was our ward. Like every Wednesday, like homework, like we did this thing, like go to your leaders, and I just, I would help them as much as I can because I know that if they were not getting helped, I know how they fell and that um, just like, try

to be there for them. Cause I don't want to say something and they'll be like, oh yea, I tried this and this and this and it didn't happen. I would say that I know how you feel, I know like, exactly how you feel. I'll just offer my help as much as I can. (F2)

This dropout did not make the connections between giving up easily when things get tough and dropping out of high school because things did get tough for her and she dropped out of high school. Furthermore, she also indicated earlier that she lost all her motivation to do well in school which might explain her inability to make the connections that he was able to do at this point. However, she indicated that she also received extra educational help from some of her religious leaders at her church but it wasn't enough to prevent her from dropping out of high school. Similarly, in another dropout's experience, the dropout said,

Education: Study hard and don't play around. Football: Well, I always want to go to the NFL but it is hard for me to go to school. I will tell them to get good grades and play hard. There is a connection between good grades and playing football. If you leave school, leave with something. If you leave school because it is boring don't just leave school because it is a waste of time. Leave with a GED. It might make you rich. (M11)

This dropout clearly identified the connections between having good grades and playing football in high school but he did not see the connections before because he wasn't eligible to play football in his junior and senior years due to his bad grades. In another dropout's experience, the dropouts said: "Stay in school and don't drop out because you will regret it" (M12). This dropout clearly made the connections between staying in school and being successful in life since he advised other Polynesian students to stay in school or they would regret it later in their life. This dropout finally got his GED five years later after he dropped out of high school. Similarly, another one of the dropouts said: "Enjoy [high school] and make the right decisions. If

you pass that point [of graduation], you will regret it” (M5). Both of these dropouts (M12 and M5) made similar connections between staying in school and making the right decision but emphatically warned other Polynesian students that they would regret their decisions to drop out of high school. Thus, not making the connections between what they did in high school that led them to drop out with what their future were going to be like when they dropped out of high school is a factor that is related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Utah and Salt Lake Counties.

Stressful Home Environment

Positive home and school environments are crucial to all students’ educational success but especially in the education of the minority students which is in agreement with Schneider and Lee (1990, p. 359). They found that the home learning activities in which students participated with their families were crucial to the success of the East Asian students. However, it is logical to think that when students are not participating in those learning activities they might have lower academic performance. In this study, I found that the 82.35% of the respondents indicated that their families were struggling financially which was also stressful to them. Additionally, their parents were both working outside their homes and did not have enough time for any meaningful learning activities with them. One of the dropouts related his experience with his home environmental stress said: “Sometimes [his family is] moderate and sometimes struggling [financially]. So, there were highs and there were lows but depends on the months” (M2). This dropout indicated that his family sometimes struggled financially which led to his parents working from Mondays to Saturdays. As such, the parents did not have enough time to have learning activities with him and his siblings, and were also not very involved in their education as well. Yet another one of the dropouts said: “Well, to me we are struggling” (F1). This dropout indicated that her family was struggling financially which led to not having the ability to

pay for her packets to make up her grades in East Shore then she dropped out of high school.

Furthermore, this dropout also indicated that she was stressed out from not having a cell phone

as well which was indicative of families with lower socioeconomic status in the NHOP

communities in Utah and Salt Lake Counties. In another dropout's experience, the dropout said:

“We are struggling financially but for some reasons we find a way to get by” (M3). This dropout

knew that his family was struggling financially but he did not work hard at school to avoid

paying for packets to make up for his bad grades. His family could not afford to pay for his

packets then he dropped out. In another dropout's experience, the dropout indicated that:

My family was struggling more financially. So, like my senior year, my parents would

spent like in things that weren't necessary, so, when it came to important stuff like the

house payment, they didn't have the money so, I kind of took over the finances for my

family. So, it was like, I was figuring out budgeting and how much we could spend. I

was making all the grocery list so that we could have enough food, so, it kind of became

overwhelming. I had to take care of finances, so, it was hard to take care of school. (F3)

This dropout indicated that her home environment was stressing her out from having to take care

of her family's financial situation. However, her family's financial situation was compounded

by the facts that her parents got divorced and she had to look after her younger siblings while her

mother was working full-time to take care of them. In another dropout's experience, the dropout

said: “Well, I think we were struggling a lot” (M10). This dropout indicated that his family was

struggling financially but it was also compounded the facts that his father was deported to the

islands then he later passed away in that year. Furthermore, his mother was left to raise him and

his siblings, and to support them financially. But, his older brother dropped out of high school

before he also dropped out of high school. Yet another dropout said that they were: “Struggling

[financially]. [We were] Definitely struggling but we got help from my brothers and the church as well” (M6). This dropout said that even though his family was struggling financially they received help from his older brothers who had good jobs because they graduated from high school. Interestingly, he also mentioned that the church which he belonged to was also helping them as well. Furthermore, this dropout’s parents were also dropouts themselves and therefore he did not make the connections between his family’s financial struggles and dropping out of high school. In like manner, another dropout said that his family was: “Struggling [financially]. She was a single parent and trying to feed some kids and take care of some grandparents” (M11). This dropout indicated that his family was struggling financially since his father passed away and her mother was working two jobs to take care of him and his siblings. Additionally, his grandparents were also staying with them and they were also dependent on his mother for their food, housing, and their prescription medications as well. From these dropout experiences, we learn that their home environments were stressful to them because their families were struggling financially which is in agreement with the results reported by Peraita and Pastor (2002). Thus, students that come from stressful home environments is a factor that is related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Utah and Salt Lake Counties.

Culture-Related Factors

Culture has played an important part in what we do, how we learn and interact with people in our own and those not from our culture, how we see and define things, and how we react to things that are pressed upon us. Schools in the U.S. are increasingly serving very diverse cultural student bodies (West, 2003) but the makeup of the administrators, teachers, counselors, policy makers, and school policies do not reflect the diversity of the student bodies. In fact, the “culture of the students and that of the school are important in understanding the educational experience of an individual or a group” (Weisner et al., 1988, p.328) which might explain how

the Polynesian culture plays a big part in the lives of the NHOPI dropouts at their home and in their school environments (Table 13).

Students' and Parents' Educational Goals Misalignment

Students' goals in education should be in alignment with what their parents or teachers intend for them at school so that they may become successful in their education. However, when students do not align themselves in what they do at school with what they are expected to do from their teachers and parents, they tend to fail and later drop out of schools. This was evidenced from the lives of NHOPI high school dropouts in which 100% of the respondents indicated that their educational goals were not in alignment with their parents' educational goals. Many dropouts were interviewed. One of the dropouts pointed out the goals that his parents put on religion and education. He noted that:

They are the most important thing. When I was growing up, they valued it a lot, education and religion. But I have my own problems and things to deal with that they were not the same to me then but now it is. (M3)¹

Even though this dropout realized that his parents put strong emphasis on religion and education, he failed to realize the importance of aligning his educational goals and actions to those of his parents. As such, not aligning his educational goals with those of his parents is an example of student and parents' goal misalignment which is a factor in the dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties. In another dropout experience, the dropout did not see the importance of aligning himself with the educational goals that his parents had for him. However, he noted "I did not see it that way at all before, but I do now because at the time it was about me and fun at school" (M6). In fact, this dropout identified the reason for not

¹ Quote citations represent male dropout respondents (M1-M13) and female dropout respondents (F1-F4) and real names in the dropouts' quotes have been changed to protect their identity.

Table 13

Culture-Related Factors Related to High School Dropout Rates among NHOPI Dropouts

Category	Factors Related to NHOPI High School Dropouts
Students' and Parents' Educational Goals Misalignment (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dropout students not putting the same emphasis on education and religion as their parents do (100%) • Parents not consistently communicating their educational goals to the students throughout the school year
Students' Lack of Employment During High School (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dropout not being employed during high school so they did not know how to use their times effectively & prioritize their priorities because working during high school is not the cultural norm in the islands (100%) • Help out parents on the weekends • Help out parents work after school
Students Not Following Role Models (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dropouts not using their role models' examples of hard work and determination for success in their schooling (100%) • Role models identified were members of the immediate or extended families (94.12%)
Negative Acculturation of Students & Parents (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents spend majority of their financial resources in church collections, family, and cultural things (100%) • Dropouts not sure which culture they belong to and are identified with both American and Polynesian culture; however they do not know how to function well in both cultures but seems to be "stuck in the middle" (64.71%) • Dropouts not knowing which elements of Polynesian culture that could have helped them in not dropping out (58.82%) • Dropouts spending too much times practicing traditional dances for cultural events that could have being spend in studying & doing homework (52.94%) • Dropouts not participated in cultural dances and cultural events and therefore felt disconnected with their own culture • Dropouts not knowing the stories about their parents or grandparents struggling when they immigrated to the U.S. • Dropouts stressed from learning new cultures and languages
Teachers' Polynesian Cultural Incompetency (70.59%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dropout students stressed out from teachers that did not know how to work and interacted with them (64.71) • Suspicious of Polynesian students when they are in good behavior • Teachers not teaching in a way that Poly students can understand the concepts and eager to learn more

Note. Factors related to NHOPI high school dropouts in SLC and Utah Counties in Utah not necessarily in the order of importance. Subthemes with no percentages indicate that it did not rise to 50% of the respondents.

aligning his educational goals with those of his parents was due to his selfishness and about him having fun at school. Interestingly, this dropout now admitted that he saw the importance of aligning his goals for education with those of his parents. Similarly, another one of the dropouts related his experience about goals misalignment that:

They [parents] are really in to it [religion and education], both of them. Just religion, when I grew up they push us in to it, it's just a Tongan thing and just education is for life too. That everybody needs it [education and religion], so, basically they are both in to it. But, I guess I did not take the same emphasis [on education and religion] since we moved here on my 10 grade and it was hard for me to adjust to that [religion and education] in this country. (M8)

From this dropout's experience, we learn that not only did he not align his educational goals with those of his parents, he was also dealing with the pressures of adjustment to his new environment and a new school system that was completely different from that which he was familiar with in the islands. Those pressures led him to drop out of high school. Yet another one of the dropouts did not realize the emphasis that his parents put on religion and education before he dropped out of high school. He noted:

That [religion and education] was the main thing that they talked about every single day. That was our lives and I see that church is my main priority like growing up. Then high school came, that is when all my priorities got mixed up. I am still working on them now. Most of them are not bad but one of them is going to church. I need to start picking [going to] it [religion] up again. (M9)

Again, this dropout also realized that his parents put emphasis on religion and education because his parents talked about on a daily basis. However, he failed to realign his educational goals

with those of his parents which resulted in dropping out of high school. Similarly, another one of the dropouts also related his experience that his parents valued: “Religion. They really wanted us to have a big value in life. Education, it was pretty good but I guess something else happens and did not go as you wanted” (M10). This dropout knew that his parents put a lot of emphasis on religion and education so that he could have a better life. But, he also indicated that there were other factors that got in his way which led him to drop out even though he previously wanted to graduate from high school. In another dropout experience, the dropout related her misalignment with her parent’s educational goals and noted that:

They told us that education is like our number one thing and how, like it’s very important as times are getting harder. We knew that our culture was very important cause our grandma and grandpa [taught us], but I think, we took it [education], like we didn’t really take our education very seriously. I remember one time looking around, I realized that everything that we have that like, back in the islands they don’t have and it makes you more grateful. Like to come here to have the best education, but we just take it for granted because we don’t know and we just treat it like it’s whatever. (F2)

This dropout also indicated that education was the “number one thing” in her home but she did not take her education seriously because her educational goals were not aligned with those of his parents. Furthermore, she also indicated that she knew that the Tongan culture is important because her grandparents taught her. This dropout educational goals’ misalignment with those of her parents and grandparents was compounded by the fact that her mother and grandparents were dropouts themselves. In like manner, yet another dropout said that his parents’ value on education and religion were: “Super high. But we just never listen. I valued religion more than education. As you can tell I did not graduate” (M13). This dropout clearly indicated that his

goals for religion and education were not in alignment with what his parents wanted him to do because he never listened to his parents. Thus, students' educational goals' misalignment with those of their parents' educational goals is a factor related to NHOPI high school dropout rates.

Students' Lack of Employment During High School

The majority of the young people in the U.S. graduate from high schools (Rumberger, 1987; Rumberger et al., 1990). However, the risks of dropping out of high schools are much higher among youths from racial and ethnic minorities, especially those who come from lower socioeconomic levels (Lee & Staff, 2007). Additionally, working during high school has also been shown to be beneficial to high school students because they learn responsibility, time managements, work experiences, and job skills among other financial benefits (McNeal, 1997 & 2011). However, Quirk, Keith, and Quirk (2001) found that students that were working fewer than 12 hours per week were doing better educationally than those students that were not employed.

Culturally, NHOPI students are not expected to work during high schools, but they are expected to help out at home daily, after school, in the evening, and on the weekends. This is the norm in the islands of the Pacific. Even though NHOPI students in this study are living in America, their parents and the NHOPI communities in Salt Lake and Utah counties are still adhering to the norms in the islands. In this study, 100% of the dropouts did not work while they were in high school. In fact, one of the dropouts said that: "No [he did not work during school], just *iata* [yard] when my dad needs help on the weekend" (M2). This dropout indicated that he did not work during school but he helped out his dad on the weekend doing yard work. Hence, this dropout followed the cultural norm in the island. Yet another dropout said: "No. I did not work at all during high school" (M3). Again, this dropout also followed the cultural norm of

students not working during high school in the islands. Another one of the dropouts also shared his experience and noted that: “I did not work” (M13). Similarly, another dropout said that: “I did not work either” (F4). Interestingly, these dropouts (M13 and F4) were brother and sister and the sister could have worked because she was a U.S. citizen but the brother could not work because he was not in the U.S. legally. In another dropout experience, the dropout said: “I didn’t work. Only my mom and my older brother and twin sister that worked at the time” (M11). This dropout indicated that he did not work but his twin sister, mother, and his oldest brother did. Interestingly, this dropout’s twin sister worked part-time on the weekends where his mother was employed, and played sports in high school, and she graduated but he dropped out of high school. Yet another dropout said: “I wasn’t working until I dropped out” (F3). Interestingly, this dropout indicated that she started working after she dropped out of high school but not during her high school time. In a similar experience, another one of the dropouts said: “No, I was not working at all” (F2) which is similar to the other dropouts’ experiences of not working during high school. As such, NHOPI dropouts did not know how to prioritize or use their time effectively while they were in high school so that they could have succeeded in their education. This is in agreement with views expressed by Quirk and colleagues (2001) that students who worked fewer than 12 hours a week did better educationally compared to students who did not work. Thus, unemployment during high school is a factor related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Students Not Following Cultural Role Models

A role model is defined as “someone who another person admires and tries to be like” (*Merriam-Webster's online dictionary*, 2013). As such, having positive role models plays a huge role in motivating and inspiring students to finish high school. In fact, Vakalahi (2009, p.4)

found from her NHOPI study on risk factors for dropping out of high school that “role modeling by members of Pacific Islander communities who have earned higher education degrees were also identified as positive influences on student achievements.” In this study, I found that 94.12% of the dropouts identified members of their families as their role models. The result is in agreement with those reported by Somers and colleagues (2009) but only one of the dropouts identified a millionaire, who was not from his culture, as his role model. This is understandable since this dropout’s families was struggling financially which led to this dropout and his siblings moving to Utah to live an auntie. This relocation was further compounded by the fact that his father was also deported to Tonga. However, the dropouts in this study identified various members of their families as role models but they did not follow their role models’ examples. One of the dropouts indicated in his experience that:

Um [I looked up to] my dad and my grandma. Cause basically my grandma, she’s the one who took care of me, and in our days, she is crippled in half of her body and I heard from her that she’s still working hard. My dad is reaching the age of retirement and I just look into his eyes and just know that he had no desire to retire seeing that his family needs him. (M8)

This dropout identified his dad and grandmother as his role models because they work hard but not necessarily because they are educated. In fact, his father and grandmother did not finish high schools at all. In another one of the dropouts experiences, he noted that he “looked up to older cousins because they are playing football and just going to college and graduating and stuff, and going on missions and stuff” (M10). This dropout looked up to his cousins because they were playing football in college which is considered a huge success in the NHOPI communities in Salt Lake and Utah counties as well as graduating from colleges. Another dropout also noted that she

had a different experience since she was from a single-parent family and also lived with one of her aunt. The dropout noted:

I didn't really have a role model. The one that I really looked up to was basically, I looked up my cousin cause he knew like everything. I called him our little all-star, overachiever, cause he could speak Tongan fluently and he could go to school and do everything he would like and he was popular at school. And at home, he never got hit because he knew everything. He got away with everything cause he knew everything. He was really smart. That's one thing that all of us, now that I realized, now everybody, we wished we paid attention more growing cause, like, we understand all the Tongan but it was hard to carry a conversation, but where my cousin could go and just carry a conversation with somebody and straight in Tongan, it's like um, he was, he was my role model for a while, growing up. I think my uncles; my uncles were my biggest role models too. Because I really didn't have a father figure, so, they were there to support us. (F2)

This dropout identified one of her cousins and her uncles as role models and she did look up to them since her parents divorced. Interestingly, the cousin that she referred to as her role model also dropped out of high school. Yet another dropout also noted that:

My older brother [was my role model]. He is just a humble person. He did not care if I try to make him mad, he never get mad. Whatever my mom and dad told him to do, he did it. No questions asked. No hesitation. That is why I wanted to be like him. So, he is the role model. (M3)

It is noteworthy that this dropout identified his older brother as his role model but also identify humility which is one of the aspects of Polynesian culture. This aspect of Polynesian culture will

be dealt with in the next section. Yet in another one of the dropouts' experiences, the dropout identified his "sister that graduated [was my role model]. She did things right and she made it easier for us to work towards it but I forgot about that part and dropped out" (M5). This role model showed him the way but the dropout forgot about it. However, the role model was identified as a member of his family. Unlike the other dropouts' experiences, only one of the dropouts noted that:

A billionaire who did it [became successful]. He didn't graduate from high school and his mom was poor and he lives in Europe or something. And he just playing around, made some type of alcohol, and he became a billionaire. Basically anybody can do anything, you have no limit. (M1)

This dropout identified a billionaire as his role model that was in a similar situation but became financially successful. It is noteworthy that his family's financial struggles have influenced his choices of who his role model was. Yet another dropout also related his experience with great emotions but with teary eyes. He noted that:

I look up to my dad. Um, that's my role model. Because his love is unconditional. Even though he might be mad at me or whatever, like *sipi'i* [slap] and stuff, like back then, to me, I took it the wrong way. Now that I look at it now, I'm just like, hey, to me, I never seen a guy like my dad forever. I can never compare my dad with anybody that I know of right now. Cause he is a hard-working man, he's a family-man definitely, you know and all the sacrifices and stuff that he has done for my family. It's ridiculous, he told me once he was living in Hawaii that he would work 4 to 5 jobs just he can bring my mom and my two brothers. I can barely stay with one job. And even when I was working with two jobs, I cannot pull it off. And just to hear that he did it in Hawaii, where the living is like

ten times more than here, man, it's crazy man, just to think that coming from nothing. I mean, I went out there to Tonga, I see the house that he build, there's only one bedroom in that house, and the house is not even that big, it's probably as big as the garage, but even smaller, but that's not the point, the point is, to see him come from nothing and to see him now, it's a lot. I see how [he] raise his kids and stuff and it just, I just look up to that and to me I want to be like him. I won't be half the man he was or he is but I'm going to try my best to get there. (M6)

The emotion, teary eyes, and the feelings that I felt when this dropout related his experiences was sacred because of his love and respect for his father. Even though he identified his father as his role model and also related an incredible experience, he failed to follow through with his education using his father's determination and sacrifices to graduate from high school. Thus, not following a role model's successful behavior to graduate from high school is a factor related to NHOPI high school dropout rates in Utah and Salt Lake Counties.

Negative Acculturation of Students and Parents

Acculturation is the process in which one group adopts a culture different from their own. In fact, acculturation has positive and negative effects on educational outcomes of children of immigrants (Rumbaut, 2005). Rumbaut also described the difficulties in the immigrants' acculturation processes and their effect on families and their children's education. He noted that:

Indeed, growing up in immigrant families is often marked by dissonant acculturation, when children's learning of English and American ways and simultaneous loss of the immigrant culture outstrips that of their parents. When that occurs, the linguistic and other cultural gaps between them can exacerbate intergenerational (Rumbaut, 2005, p. 1).

Acculturation has negative effects on both parents and students in the NHOPI communities in Salt Lake and Utah counties. This is attributed to the fact that most of the parents in this study were not fully acculturated themselves when their future dropout students were born in the U.S. The differences in the acculturation levels between the dropouts and their parents led to cultural differences and difficulties in the lives of the dropouts and their parents as well. In fact, the experiences from the dropouts in this study showed these struggles with acculturation. One of the dropouts noted that:

I was born here and so I know more about American culture than Tongan culture. My mom and grandmother taught me about it. I am more identified with American culture than Tongan culture but I think that I identify with both of them but much more to American than Tongan. (M11)

This dropout identified more with the American culture than with his parents' culture which led to his difficulties in giving allegiance to both culture as a student. As a result of difficulties in his life from living a dual culture, he was not sure about which culture with which he should bond. This difficulty led him to drop out of high school. Hence, negative acculturation is a factor related to NHOPI dropout rates among high school students in Utah and Salt Lake Counties. In a similar experience, another one of the dropouts also noted that:

[I identify with] both cultures. But, I think that I can say that I identify more with American culture than Tongan culture. When we went to [a] family reunion every year and saw my other cousins who actually identified more with Tongan culture, we want to be the same but felt like we [are] stuck in the middle. (F1)

Again, this dropout also related her difficulties in living a dual culture but also pointed out a new phenomenon that Vakalahi (2009) indicated that it is a risk factor for dropping out of high

schools among NHOPI students in the U.S. That is, the feelings from NHOPI students that they were “stuck in the middle” of the American and Polynesian culture. Yet another one of the dropouts related his experience with the difficulties in living a dual culture and noted that: “My parents wanted to get the Samoan culture in us. They talk to us in Samoan. They tell us to live the Samoan ways and stuff like that. Yeah. We were living more American than Samoan” (M4). From this dropout experience, we learn that his parents taught him the Samoan culture and how to live like Samoan but he was identified more with the American culture than with the Samoan culture. Similarly, another one of the dropouts related that:

Here in our house is the Caucasian culture and the Samoan would only be once or twice a week. When I would go down to the Ward, I would get myself immerse in the Polynesian culture. [Follow up question: Did you like it?] Yeah. I wish that my dad did teach us about the Samoan culture because it is beautiful but he did not and so I have to learn it for myself. It was hard. I was not quite sure which culture I belong to but now I know that I am Samoan and so it helps. (F3)

This dropout experience was different from the other dropouts that have NHOPI parents since her mother is Caucasian and her father is Samoan. Interestingly, she seemed desperate to learn her Samoan culture but her father refused to teach her. Her father’s refusal to teach her the Samoan culture caused his daughter to spend a lot of times searching out and learning Samoan culture from a religious organization. The time spent on searching out and learning about the Samoan culture could have been better spent on studying and doing homework which could have saved her from dropping out of high school. In contrast, another one of the dropouts related his experiences in living with dual culture and noted that he was identified with:

Polynesian culture because my dad taught me but my mom is White and so I also identify with that culture as well. Definitely more to Polynesian culture but speaks very little of the language; but, sure love the food and the *Haka* [Maori war dance]. I am very proud of my Polynesian heritage. (M12)

This dropout experience was different from the previous dropout experience since his dad taught him the Polynesian culture but his mother is Caucasian. However, he also identified with the Maori war dance (*haka*) and Polynesian food as attachments to the Polynesian culture even though he did not speak the Tongan language well. It seemed that he was living in a dual culture but he was not fully embracing one culture over the other. As such, not living both cultures to the fullest led him to feel like that he was stuck in the middle which led to drop out of high school. Thus, living in dual culture but not functioning well in both cultures is a factor for dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Knowing and living your parents native culture makes it easier to use cultural norms and values to function well in our society. However, when parents come from separate cultures there are challenges that are pressed upon their children as students that may negatively affect their educational achievements. I found in this study that dropouts did not know the elements of the Polynesian culture that they might have used to be successful in high school. One of the dropouts related his experience that:

Discipline and respect [are the elements of Polynesian culture]. Discipline is your parents push you and respect you really want to repay your parents for what they had done to you, like getting to America, and try to give you a better life than they have. Stories of how my parents get to America motivate me. They motivate us to do better in school when I grow up that I will make money so that my mom will be stress free. (M1)

This dropout experience is very important because he clearly identified the elements of the Polynesian culture that are important for success in life but he did not use them while he was struggling in high school. Hence, making the decision to drop out of high school without consultations with his parents is clearly a sign of disrespect and not being disciplined enough in the NHOPI communities in the U.S. In contrast, this dropout related his experience that:

I do not know [the elements of Polynesian culture]. [Follow up question: How about respecting your parents and discipline?] Oh yeah, respect my friends, teachers and parents. Reading, kind a, my dad always told me to read, but I never did, I always kind a find a way not to read. (M3)

This dropout did not know the elements of Polynesian culture that could have been leveraged to mitigate his high school educational problems that led him to drop out. Additionally, this dropout also indicated that he did not read beyond his normal reading for his classes, which is a huge problem emerging from this study that will be discussed later in the personal-related factors. Yet in another dropout experience, he related that: “Hard work [is an element of Polynesian culture]. My parents worked hard. I did work hard but I felt behind and so it was hard to work hard when you are behind in credits” (M5). This dropout identified “hard work” (*ngāue mālohi*) as one of the elements of Polynesian culture but he did not use it to mitigate his low academic performance in high school. Similarly, another dropout said,

I should have thought of the respect for my family cause that was kind a disrespectful for me to just make my own choice and kind a selfish and make my own choice and not finishing high school. I did not realize it but I look at it as an example to my brothers and sisters. Teach them respect is what I was raised up with and teach them respect. Some part of it staying in school was about respect. Of course in the Polynesian

culture, probably respect is the number one thing next to humility. And, there was no respect coming towards my way so I shouldn't respect what is going around me. (M9)

This dropout also identified respect as one of the elements of Polynesian culture that he could have used to finish school but he disrespected his parents by making the decision to drop out of high school without involving his parents in making that decision. Additionally, he also vowed to teach respect to his younger siblings so that they can use it to graduate from high school. Yet another one of the dropouts identified motivation (*faka 'ai 'ai*) as another element of Polynesian culture that could have helped him to graduate from high school but he did not use it to increase his academic performance. However, it is important to know that stories of his parents trying to come to America did motivate him but he did not use that motivation to do better in school. He noted that:

They [his parents] wanted us to get a better future, a better life as you say, and knowing where we came from, to help us know where we are going. Yes, stories of my parents coming to America motivates us. Same thing, they always told us that we are lucky where we are and what we have here. Like we said, we know we are lucky but we do not really know that we are lucky because of what they experienced in Tonga. Sometimes, it is good to see it but you do not want to end up doing that [struggling here in America], so just push yourself and get your school done with to get you further away from that fear [of struggling in the U.S.] and possibility of that happening [dropping out of school].

(M2)

This dropout seemed to be confused since he identified his parent's stories of struggling to come to the U.S. as a motivating factor to push himself in his school work; yet, he feared the possibility of struggling in acculturation in the U.S. like his parents and later dropped out of high

school. Apparently, his motivation was overcome by fear and he did drop out of high school. Unfortunately, this dropout's parents were also dropouts themselves and his own motivation and the motivations from his parents were not consistent throughout the school year. This seems to be common, another dropout also identified some psychological and personal factors in addition to motivation as a Polynesian cultural element that he could have used to not drop out of high school. However, he further explained that all of those psychological and personal factors, including motivation effectiveness were dependent upon him using the right mindset. He did not use the right mindset and noted that:

I would [have] use my strength, my motivation, my ego, my pride, but to me, all those stuffs that I just named off, if I just put my mindset in school, all those things would kick in. You know my mindset was not in school. Respect! It's catching up to me right now. Ever since I left high school it's been bugging me man. (M6)

This dropout obviously knew that there were some psychological and physical factors that could have helped him if his mindset was set in his schooling. Perhaps this dropout identified mindset as an important psychological factor that warrants further research into the effects of students' mindsets in dropping out of high school. However, from these dropouts' experiences, we learn that the majority of them did not know the Polynesian cultural elements that they could have used to be successful in school. Acculturation, again, became the issue, and some of the dropouts identified some of the Polynesian cultural elements but they did not know how to use them effectively to mitigate their educational problems which eventually led them to drop out of high school. Thus, not knowing the Polynesian cultural elements and how to use them effectively in your schooling is a factor related to NHOPI high school dropout rates among high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Dropouts who did not know the elements of their culture and how to use them effectively to increase their academic performances dropped out of high school in this study. However, only some of the dropouts were identified with their Polynesian culture through Polynesian cultural dances, war dance, and eating the Polynesian foods. These dropouts spend a lot of time in practicing various Polynesian dances instead of doing and completing their homework. One of the dropouts related his experience with spending too much time in practicing Polynesian cultural dance noted that he did:

Not [participated in Polynesian cultural dance] over in the mainland. [In] Hawaii, I was [involved in Polynesian cultural dances]. Mayday [cultural festivals] and all that. I did not get to do Samoan [cultural dance], I was up here by the time I wanted to. Probably an everyday thing for me, I go and practice with friends that were in the group and we just try to learn it every day. (M9)

This dropout showed that he participated in Polynesian cultural events while he was in Hawaii before he moved with his mother and other siblings to Utah after his parents separated. Perhaps the stresses that he experienced from his parents' separation were compounded by the moving to a new school and environment which led him further down the road to drop out of high school.

In a similar experience, another one of the dropouts also noted that:

We used to dance cause of my grandma [taught them the Polynesian cultural dances]. She used to sing and we do a lot of Hawaiian dances, when I was little. I love it and when we were in the ward, we did the *mā'ulu'ulu* [one of the Tongan cultural dances] and stuff, so yeah. We also did the *kailao* [Tongan war dance] that was fun. We practiced at least two to three days a week. And so, I have to practice at home so, I practice a lot. (M10)

While seemingly positive, devoting a lot of time to practicing cultural dances at the expense of

formal education is negative. From this dropout experience, we learn that he participated in several Polynesian cultural dances and also spend a lot of times during the week in practicing them in his religious meeting house in addition to also practicing at home. The cultural dance practices took time away from the dropout that he could have used to finish his homework and studied at home. As such, not having enough time to finish homework and studying at home led to poor academic performances which resulted in dropping out of high school. This dilemma is not uncommon. In a similar experience, another dropout also noted the displacement of valuable study time by participating in Polynesian cultural dance:

When I was in junior high, like when I was a freshman, would dance. [Follow up question: Was that fun?] Yeah it was fun. [Follow up question: How did you feel about it, what kind of things came to you when you were involved in it?] I just see smiles on people's faces. They didn't know our culture. They just seen us dance, that was cool. [Follow up question: About how much time did you spend in doing those cultural events?]. Man we spend a ton of times practicing those dances so that we can be good but it was all worth it. (M4)

Again, this dropout experienced what the previous dropouts experienced in which he was practicing "a ton of times" in preparation for the cultural events. However, this dropout reasoned that the smile on people's faces was worth the "ton of times" that he spends on practicing the Polynesian dances. Unfortunately, the "ton of times" that he spent on preparation for the cultural events robbed him of the much needed time that he could have spent in doing his homework and studying for his classes. As such, his homework was not done in time and he was not fully prepared for his classes which led to poor academic performances then he dropped out of high school. Yet another one of the dropouts also noted on the type of activities and events that he

participated in the Polynesian cultural dances:

Yeah [I participated in Polynesian cultural dances]. The ward activities and school [had a] lot of events coming up. Also, getting picked out to go dance for the king and most of the time just dance for the chiefs or help out in visitors and representing the school to go dance for the visitors and dance for the ward. We basically just put on the music and prepare right there, maybe two hours a day and maybe three or maybe like almost eight hours a week. (M8)

It is interesting to note that this dropout experience was similar to what the other dropouts were experiencing in taking a lot of time for preparation to perform in a Polynesian cultural event. As such, he did not have enough time to finish his homework and study for exams which led to dropping out of high school. Even though participation in Polynesian cultural dances reconnected students to their Polynesian culture, the “ton of times” used in preparation for those cultural dances robbed them of the times that they could have used to seek help for studying and doing their homework. As such, using too much time in practicing Polynesian traditional dances for cultural events is a factor that is related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Another factor related to NHOPI dropout rates in this study was how parents spend their financial resources. When parents have adequate financial resources, they are able to help their students with school supplies, clothes and also hiring a tutor to help the students out when they are not doing well in school. However, the dropouts in this study indicated that their parents were spending their financial resources in ways that were not helpful to them academically. One of the dropouts indicated how his parents spent their financial resources in “funerals, weddings and tithings were the main thing other than the food that we have to eat every day” (M5). It is

well established in the NHOPI communities in the U.S. and also in the islands of the Pacific that the majority of the families do not have money but when there is a funeral or a wedding of a member of the immediate or the extended families, our parents will find money from somewhere. Additionally, donations to the church are highly regarded as an important duty to God and must be paid as part of respect which is a component of the Polynesian culture. However, the donations to funerals and weddings have been known to be excessive and sometimes the donations were well beyond the financial means of some of the families. Yet another dropout also indicated that “they spend their money on rent, food, funerals and weddings and church as well” (M1). This dropout’s experience is similar to the other dropouts’ experiences mentioned earlier in which funerals and weddings were also listed. I had seen families spent monies on funerals and weddings where usually more than \$500 dollars is donated if the dead were a close relative and much less if he or she is a distant relative in the NHOPI communities everywhere. Sadly, in some cases, there were several funerals and weddings in a month that had stretched the financial resources of some of the families in the NHOPI communities in Salt Lake and Utah counties to the bare minimum. Yet another one of the dropouts also indicated that this is the case in his family because:

They spend money on tithing, wedding, and it’s crazy when something happen like that, wedding or funeral like that, money comes out of nowhere. Like, you’ve been paying your tithing or what, but, you know. It’s not like that; they’re just smart with their money. And they know what to do, like *li pa’anga* [donating money in a group to help group members in time of need], *li pa’anga*, oh my goodness. It helps out so much, so much. Crazy [to find money for everything], [but it is also] ridiculous. (M6)

Again, this dropout indicated that even though his family did not have a lot of financial resources, his parents had found money for funerals and weddings which was kind of “crazy” and “ridiculous.” This type of financial-spending behavior takes away financial resources that should have been used to pay a tutor to help the dropout student do well in school. Similarly, another dropout indicated that: “They [her parents] spend a lot of their money on church stuff, funerals, weddings and helping other people. They also spend them on food and things for the grandchildren too” (F1). The financial-spending behavior of the parents of this dropout followed the financial-spending behaviors of the other dropouts’ parents. This dropout’s parents spent money on funerals, weddings and helping other people but not for their own daughter by paying for a tutor or for additional packets so that she could have graduated on time. Sadly, this appeared to be a case of parents not prioritizing their priorities effectively. In like manner, another one of the dropouts also noted that:

My mom and grandparents spend a lot of their money on the church donations. When there is a death in the family here [in Utah] or in California or Hawaii, they went there with money and Tongan stuff. They did the same for weddings as well and other cultural events that they were involved in. (F2)

Again and again and again, dropouts who could have had access to financial resources from their families, were left empty-handed because money was allocated to funerals, weddings, cultural events and the expenses for traveling to California and Hawaii. This is a culture issue. Not a money issue. Additionally, the financial-spending behaviors of the parents of these dropouts made them unable to help pay for the extra packets that they needed to take, in order for them to graduate on time. Thus, the excessive financial spending on funerals and weddings is a factor related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in this study.

Teachers' Polynesian Cultural Incompetency

Cultural competency is described as “using cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Gay 2002, p 106). As such, the academic achievements of diverse students, including students from the NHOPI communities in the U.S. and elsewhere, can improve if their ethnic perspectives are used. Interestingly, research has shown that Native Hawaiian perspectives of learning often emphasize context and are built around relationships, even between the teachers and the students (Kawakami, 1999), which is crucial to their academic achievements and for prevention of dropping out from high school among NHOPI students. In this study, I found that 70.59% of the respondents indicated that some of the teachers that were working with the NHOPI dropouts were Polynesian culturally incompetent, and therefore were not effective in dealing with, and teaching the NHOPI students in Salt Lake and Utah counties. One of the dropouts related his experience with one of his teachers in his school that was Polynesian culturally competent in dealing with him. He noted that:

I only like one teacher. She was my English teacher. In all seriousness, she is a, she is really easy to talk to if I had a problem in class. She is easy to connect with and she also has a good sense of humor. (M1)

This dropout indicated that his English teacher was easy to talk to if he had a problem in her class, but more importantly he was able to connect with her. For Polynesian students, being able to connect with teachers and easily talk to them are two fundamental qualities of a great teacher. Interestingly, this dropout also pointed out that she graduated from the University of Utah where she mingled with a lot of Polynesian students. As such, she was exposed to the Polynesian culture and also became familiar with how to interact and work with Polynesian students. Yet

another one of the dropouts also related a similar experience with the same English teacher. He noted the same thing with math:

There were some teachers I like. Like I had a math teacher, he was a good one and I switch to another math teacher, he was yeah, just a crumby guy and was really not someone to get along with. But, the other teachers were good cause I guess just their personality, and my personality kind of intertwined and feel good about helping like certain English teachers. She was good and was pretty too. She played volleyball for Utah so there are a lot of Polys there too so she know how we are. She is young so she kinds of understand us and it was easier to talk to her. (M2)

Again, this dropout also described his teachers that he liked and others that he did not like because he was not able to connect and get along with. Additionally, he also pointed out that the teacher that was familiar with the Polynesian people played sport in the University of Utah and therefore understood how to interact with Polynesian students. This dropout also confirmed the usefulness of teachers that know how to act and treat Polynesian students and also have the ability to connect to students as well. In a similar manner, another one of the dropouts also indicated that only a few of his teachers he likes because they made him feel comfortable around them. In fact, when Polynesian students are comfortable with any of the teachers, they will be able to ask questions and also do well in school because of the respect that they have for that teacher. This idea was supported by the experience from this dropout in which he noted that:

I don't want to answer that. Any teachers that I like? Yeah, a couple [of teachers I like]. Because they make me feel more comfortable. Teach in a certain way that I can understand. Up to that point, I did not feel comfortable around them to raise my hand. Having teachers making you comfortable makes me want to study more. (M5)

This dropout pointed out the importance for the teachers of NHOPI students that they need to make sure that Polynesian students feel comfortable in their classes. Once NHOPI students feel comfortable in their teachers' classes, they will raise their hands and ask questions and will be motivated to do well in school. Since there were only two teachers that were able to make the dropout felt comfortable, and other teachers did not make him comfortable in their classes, the dropout succeeded in some classes and sluffed other classes. He was also not being motivated to do well in school. As such, the student did not do well academically which eventually led him to drop out of high school. Yet another one of the dropouts related her experiences with some of the teachers that were not culturally competent in dealing with her. She said,

Just to sum it up, I wasn't the type to go to class and kiss butt for, you know, for your attention, for you to notice me that you are my teacher. I expect you to be there for me and be there for me when I needed your help, things like that. And, I have to admit, I have an attitude, I would be just like, whatever. I didn't even listen to my own parents and I am not going to come here and sit and listen to you. So, it was just hard for me and my teacher to communicate in a certain [way]. I don't know. We just didn't see eye to eye. And I just thought, well, I have one teacher, he was a really good guy. Me and him would like get into to it and just like I would not come to your class. So, then I didn't go to his class. I see him in the hallway and he just like I know that we don't see eye to eye but let's try to know each other not in school because I have these many kids. So, I started talking to him like, I started seeing him as a person. I started seeing him like he is a good guy, you know. It is pretty cool and him and I had a good relationship, my teacher and I. I started to have good grades in his class, so that is the only class I passed. Then all the other classes, I will go to him and tell him that I am frustrated, but he will be my math

teacher but he will help me with my English. So that is why I was like more *connected* to him because he has that *patience* for me and he had that like, try to help me to do good, not only in his class but in other people's classes. Yeah, I had a teacher that I knew for sure that was like that. And, ah, this is, well, a teacher that was like that to me, I already knew that she has a problem with Polynesian because she was divorced to a Polynesian. So, we will never get along. It came to a point that I wasn't in her class anymore because I wanted to whoop her butt. I knew it because she will talk about Canadians, oh they are just good people, she will talk about this race, like blacks -- they are good people. When it comes to the islanders, she will just say the word like greedy, and she will just say, you Polynesians are like this, and this, and this, and I felt picked on because I was the only person in her class that was Polynesian [Interviewee was emotional at this time]. I felt like that I have to be the voice, and so I would be like, you are wrong, maybe you got married to something else. Maybe you got married to something else, because Polynesians are the most friendliest people, you know. They are so quick to give. I felt like I have to fight with her, for my voice to be heard, for the Poly. It was just a show, and I just like, whatever. I need to leave before someone else leave. (F1)

This dropout indicated the she has three different experiences from three different teachers. The first teacher she was not able to connect with but she was able to connect with the second teacher. We also learn that she was able to connect with the second teacher because the teacher was willing to connect with the student first. As such, this dropout realized that the teacher was willing to connect with her and she was able to connect with the teacher. As the dropout indicated, she was motivated to do well in his class because she was able to connect with that teacher. In contrast to the second teacher, the bias of the third teacher was compounded by the

fact that she previously divorced a Polynesian husband which prevented her from making connection with the dropout. As a result, the dropout did not come back to her class which resulted in a failed grade for that class. Further, the dropout poor performance in this class and other classes was due to the fact that she was not able to make connections with those teachers which led her to drop out of high school. This dropout experience also confirmed the importance of teachers making connections with their students but it might also be an issue of teachers' cultural competency as well. In another dropout experience, the dropout noted that:

Depending on what teachers, there were some teachers were, I didn't talk because I felt that they did not like me just cause the way they look or there was, most of my teachers, they were amazing. They like me a lot. I want to hang out with some of them. In lunch time, I go in there just to hang out with some of them. Well some of them felt that I was fake because I was fake but that was just me being nice because how I got through everything and some teachers kept a close eye on me. But, never can bust a smile on my face. (M9)

This dropout indicated that he did not talk to some of the teachers because he felt that they did not like him. Additionally, some of the teachers felt that the dropout's good behavior and easy going was a "fake" which is an indication of not knowing how Polynesian people behave and act towards their teachers. It is unfortunate that these teachers' Polynesian cultural incompetency prevented them from knowing how to support and motivate this Polynesian student before he dropped out of high school. Yet another dropout said,

The teachers were more better, cause like, we have like, kind a like, I was kind of a fun guy and mess around in class, and I get along easier with the teachers because I knew them more and spend time with them. (M10)

This dropout experience is a good indicator of how students and teachers should interact when teachers are culturally competent in the student's culture. In fact, the teachers in his senior year in high school were "more better" in comparison to his teachers that he had in his junior year in high school. Again, this dropout indicated the he was comfortable and easily gets along with his teachers because he and the teachers spent a lot of time together. Thus, teachers' Polynesian cultural incompetency is a factor related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

School-Related Factors

Research has shown that school organization may contribute to the high school dropouts' dilemma (Bryk & Thum, 1989). In fact, school-related factor has been shown to be related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997) and a risk factor for dropping out of high school (Vakalahi, 2009) among NHOPI students in the U.S. However, school-related factors have not been shown to be related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI students in the U.S. until now. In all of the school-related factors that I have found in this study, these were the highest themes, given by over 50% of the respondents: student-related school deficiencies, counselors' lower level of Polynesian cultural competency, ineffective school organization, school accommodation for free and reduced-lunch meals and, disciplinary actions and bullying (Table 14).

Student-Related School Deficiency

Students are ultimately responsible for their academic achievements and school personnel should facilitate their educational achievements. As such, if they do not pass their classes, they should seek out help from teachers, tutors and others to avoid repeating a grade which has been shown to be one of the most powerful predictors of dropping out status (Jimerson et al., 2002).

Indeed, I found that student-related school deficiency such as repeating a grade is also part of the

Table 14

School-Related Factors Related to High School Dropout Rates among NHOPI Dropouts

Category	Factors Related to NHOPI High School Dropouts in SLC and Utah Counties in Utah
Student-Related School Deficiencies (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeating a grade (82.35%) • Not being able to play sports because of bad grades even though playing sports will motivate them (70.59%) • Not knowing how to write well • Not knowing English grammar • Not seeing the connections between classes and real life • Not having a Polynesian class that teaches their culture and motivates them to do well at school
Counselors' Lower Level of Polynesian Cultural Competency (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School not having a Polynesian counselor or teacher that they can relate to and get help from with their homework (100%) • Counselors not allowing NHOPI students to change from their pre-assigned counselors to go to counselors that they felt comfortable with (52.94%) • Not getting along with school counselors • Counselors giving up too easily on NHOPI students once they show sign of failing • Counselors not remembering what was discussed and messing up transcripts so students did not graduate on time • Counselors not very patient with NHOPI students
Ineffective School Organization (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers not having good relationships with students (82.35%) • Classes [Core, Financial Literacy, History, Psychology, US Government] were hard to understand (76.47%) • Administrators were looking down on them because they are Polynesians and seems to be associated with troubles • Teachers not having options in exams such as multiple choices and a list of homework assignments that you can choose from • Teachers not having enough time to talk with students and further explain answers to their questions
School Accommodation for Free & Reduced-lunch Meals (94.12%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students were granted reduced fee meals (94.12%)
Bullying & Disciplinary Actions (88.24%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some students were bullied at school which contributed to missing school while they were young (76.47%) • Being disciplined for fighting against the bullies

Note. Factors related to NHOPI high school dropouts in SLC and Utah Counties in Utah not necessarily in the order of importance. Subthemes with no percentage did not rise to over 50% responses from dropouts interviewed.

school-related factor that is related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students. In fact, one of the dropouts said,

Yeah, I had to [repeat a grade]. I got held back in 8th grade because I, at first, it was supposed to be for my mission right after high school. But then me, my cousin, and two other friends, we are called the home school boys, so we got held back and went to a homeschool. We were held back because we were in our right grade. We were kind of where because we had late birthdays, all of us and we were with the people our age. We felt more fit in. (M9)¹

This dropout experience was different from the other dropouts because he was initially held back by his parents for religion reasons while he was in the island. Interestingly, this dropout later repeated a grade; then he dropped out of school a year after he moved to Utah. The dropout was also frequently sick since they moved to Utah due to cold temperatures. Additionally, his parents' divorce also compounded his lower academic achievements. Then he dropped out of high school. In another dropout experience, the student said: "The following year, I repeated 12 grades, but then they told me that I was too old with all my peers and I was the oldest kid" (F1) so they told her that she needed to go to East Shore High School to make up her grades so she could graduate.

This dropout was frustrated when she was told to transfer to East Shore High School because she had to pay for every packet and her parents could not afford them. Her frustrations were compounded by the fact that her five older siblings all dropped out of high school and her parents were also dropouts themselves. But, perhaps the biggest issue was the dropout had to

¹ Quote citations represent male dropout respondents (M1-M13) and female dropout respondents (F1-F4) and real names in the dropouts' quotes have been changed to protect their identity.

repeat some of her grades because she failed in some of her classes. Yet, in another dropout's experience, she said,

Um, they had me repeat a couple of classes cause they said I failed in junior high and then they said they lost some of my 9th grade credits so I had to redo that [entire grade as well]. (F2)

This dropout was very emotional while she was relating her experience because her counselor was an older woman and she forgot a lot of things. Further, the high school changed her counselor when she retired and the new counselor could not find her 9th grade records. She found this out on her senior year and she was told to go to East Shore High School and make up her grades for the entire 9th grade. Additionally, her parents divorced and she was forced to go and live with one of her aunts. Furthermore, her mom and aunt were struggling financially and were not able to pay for her packets at East Shore High School consistently. Additionally, her aunt and her husband have six children of their own plus three kids from another aunt, making it a ten-child home. In another dropout experience, one of the dropouts said that he only had to repeat "just [his] senior year and the classes I am re-doing in East Shore" (M8). This dropout moved from the island to California first for his 10th grade year, and then his family moved to Utah for his 11th and 12th grades. He struggled with the English language and social issues that confronted him at the high school. However, he also failed some of his classes during his senior year because he spent so much time playing football and rugby that he neglected to do his homework or study for his classes and exams. From another dropout experience, the dropout said: "Yes [I repeated a grade in high school]. I sluff [classes] a lot. [Therefore], I went to East Shore and took packets to make up for it" (M5). This dropout was forthcoming in stating that he repeated a grade because he was sluffing a lot of classes. Further, he also lived with one of his

aunts because his father was deported to the island and his mother was living in California working two jobs. Yet, another dropout said that: “Yeah [I repeated a grade] and I have to make up [that grade] at East Shore [by taking packets]” (M1). This dropout also identified that fact that he repeated a grade. However, because of the financial struggles his family had, he was not able to make up his grades on time. Then he dropped out of high school. Similarly, another one of the dropouts said that he repeated a grade “in my senior year and went to East Shore” (M12) to make up for that grade. However, because his family was struggling financially, he was not able to buy his packets on time and he decided to drop out of high school. From the student-related school deficiency experiences that these dropouts shared, it is clear that repeating a grade is a factor related to high school dropout rates among the NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Repeating a grade is a student-related school deficiency so is not being able to play sports in high school because of bad grades. This is a factor that I have personally seen for over decades that has plagued so many talented NHOPI College and high school students in the U.S., especially those who play football. In fact, one of the dropouts relating his experience with not being able to play football because of his grades said,

Ah, yeah, one of them was my wife. She was the one that is trying to keep me in school. She tried to change all her class to my class just to make me go to class. But, I keep telling her, I don't want to go to class. She always says to go for a few minutes and if I don't like it then we will tell the teacher you can leave but it never happens. Every time I go to class, I just stay there, I can't leave, and it's like a trap. All my athletic coaches, try to keep me in there. That is why they use football, it is like a motivation. If you miss class, you can't play this game, if you miss class, you are going to run. [Follow up

interview question: Football motivates you?] Not really because they want me to play their position and not my position. I want to play middle backer [middle linebacker] and we kind a get into a fight. He said that if I don't want to play the position then I can leave. I will play for the team but I guess he wants me at the line since I am big and fast. He has his favorite people playing middle linebacker. He says he doesn't. But I know he does, because most of the kids in our team are small and skinny. He doesn't want to play them because he knows that they are not going to be good. So, I always tell the coach that he hasn't play, he hasn't play, and he hasn't play. He says it's ok; we got guys out there that do the job. They work hard but, man, we got small guys working hard than big guys. That is why they don't like me cause I keep arguing with them, let me try this, let me try that. If the coach told me to do good in school and then I will play middle linebacker, I could have way better. Because in my sophomore year, I was horrible but one of the coaches came up to me and say hey do you like football? I never play this, this is my first time. Come and try out. That was fun and in a game, my coach put me in middle linebacker, and that is when I first like it. I have the view of everything; I can see everyone on their team so I will not be blindsided. It was just amazing, I was motivated, I was bump the whole game. After that, he let me practice middle linebacker, but he will not let me play. I was fine with that, as long as I got the middle linebacker, I was fine. But, he make me a deal, like if you keep up [your grades], and getting the good work you are working with, I will talk to the coaches for the JV and Varsity, and [he] talked to them saying he is an amazing backer [middle linebacker], you know you should try him out but it never got that far. I did not get good grades. That was the last time I played football in my junior year. (M11)

The issues surrounded this dropout were many. First, his father passed away, leaving him and his sibling to be taken care of by his mother and his grandparents. That is, he did not have a father figure to guide and discipline him. Second, he got his girlfriend pregnant while they were in high school but they were allowed to stay in school. Third, his family was struggling financially and they did not have the means to take care of themselves without any financial support. Fourth, he was sent to juvenile jail for a few months for a petty crime. Fifth, he was no longer allowed to come back to high school after he got out of jail and so he dropped out of high school. This dropout was bombarded with many issues that led to his lower academic performance and for not being able to play football. In another dropout experience revolving around not being able to play football because of bad grades, the dropout said,

My [good] friends, my football coach and my family and Bishop [were pushing me to stay at school]. My coach wants me to have good grades so that I can play [football] with my brother but it was too late and I dropped out [of high school] and so as my [older] brother later [at the end of his senior year]. (M10)

It is obvious that the dropout was not able to play football anymore because of his bad grades. Sadly, both he and his older brother were such outstanding football players that they received scholarship offers from various universities in the PAC 12; however, both brothers dropped out of high school and so could not the scholarships offer from universities in the PAC 12. This dropout experience was also compounded by the fact that his father was deported back to the island and shortly after passed away. Further, his mom has to support them financially by working two jobs. Yet, another dropout said that he was not allowed to “play football because [he] did not have the grade” (M13) despite having the size and toughness for a lineman. Additionally, he was also expelled from a different high school for excessive sluffing and

absenteeism. Therefore, we see evidence here that not being able to play football or any sports in high school because of failing grades is a student-related school deficiency regarding dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

High School Counselors' Lower Level of Polynesian Cultural Competency

Cultural competency has been defined as the “ability of educators to successfully serve children and youth of all cultural backgrounds represented within school populations, particularly those from racially/ethnically, linguistically, or economically marginalized groups” (Landa, 2011, p. 8). As such, schools, educators, and especially school counselors who are working with minority youths need to have higher level of cultural competency to be more effective in their role as teachers and counselors. Otherwise they will not be able to help minority youth be successful in their education. I found in this study that dropout students did not feel that they were connected with their school counselors. As such, when the dropouts were asked if having a Polynesian counselor or a teacher would have make a difference in their educational experiences and decisions to drop out of high school, everyone of them astoundingly said yes. In fact, one of the dropouts said,

I think if my counselor was Tongan, I could have connected more because we have that connection and culture wise. For example: Kakai was a music teacher in Taku High and anytime a Poly kid sluff or runaway he will call the parents and the kids will get a slap.
(M13)

This dropout indicated the importance of connecting to his counselor in addition to respecting him because of his culture. It is important to note the example of what happens when a Polynesian kid sluffs in school where there is a Polynesian teacher or counselor, for it has been shown in the peer-related factor section of this study that excessive sluffing is related to NHOPI

high school dropout rates. Yet another dropout said: “I think that a Poly teacher will know how to teach because they know how Polys are because they know how to get our attention” (F4).

This dropout also pointed the importance of having a teacher or a counselor in his own culture so that he or she can feel that connection so important to NHOPI students in being successful in high school. In contrast, another one of the dropouts said that she was not sure why having a teacher or a counselor from her own culture would make a difference in her educational experience. She noted that:

I don't know if that's what makes the difference, although as I looked back my two favorites were Polynesians. I'm not sure why it would make a difference for me, cause PRN, I always felt like she understood me. She was always trying to help me do better. And I felt the same way about Coach Noah. He was always asking me what he could do to help me. Helping me with my homework, letting me leave to go talk to my teacher and how I can make things up. They were always the one to support me. They try to push me to do better. [If you were given a choice to pick which counselor to help you, who would you pick?] Oh I would pick PRN. There is no doubt about that, I would pick PRN. (F3)

Even though this dropout was not sure about the effect that having a Polynesian teacher or counselor would have made, she said that the Polynesian football coach and a Polynesian counselor were most helpful to her before she dropped out of high school. This dropout experience was exacerbated by the fact that her parents were also dropout and divorced during her junior year before she dropped out in her senior year. Additionally, she also indicated that she felt like she was “stuck in the middle” of Polynesian and American culture. Further, she indicated that she wanted to learn her Samoan culture but her father, who is Samoan, refused to

teacher her. She opined that this might have led to the feeling that she was “stuck in the middle” of two cultures. In another dropout experience, the dropout indicated that:

They know where we're coming from and not only that but like just feel like they would help us more. And because we have like, big hearts and stuff and willing to help, so I feel like that would help a lot. We had a Polynesian sub and he was just a sub but he would, like a lot of kids were failing and he saw that when he was subbing for the whole two weeks and so, he, he actually made the difference. He helped kids and stuff and he got hired on as a teacher but it wasn't for Fab High, it was for another school. So, it was really cool, cause, just having him for those two weeks, like helped improve a lot of kids. I think it would be not hard to talk to um, I think it would be, I would be way open with him or her and tell them what I need help with. And if he helps me, that would be a lot cause from my other counselors, through experiences, I never got helped from my counselors. (M11)

This dropout also indicated that it is important to have a Polynesian counselor or a teacher because the other counselor whom he had in high school was not very helpful to him and the other Polynesian kids in his high school. Additionally, he also indicated that the Polynesian counselor or teacher, but in this case was a Polynesian substitute teacher, connected with him and the other Polynesian kids that were failing in just two weeks of substitute teaching. Another dropout said,

Yes, it will make a big difference [to have a Polynesian teacher or counselor]. [Why?]
Just because like I said they know where you're coming from and they have more experience than others [in dealing with Polys]. And other Palangi [Caucasian] people

have coming from different country [but] because a lot of Poly know, they know each other [from Polynesian cultural and religious events]. (M7)

Again, this dropout also confirmed what other dropouts were saying that having a Polynesian teacher or a counselor would make a big difference because they know them and also know how to interact with them. Additionally, the statements of this dropout and the other dropouts before him were indicative of the fact that they had lower culturally competent counselors and teachers. In contrast, another one of the dropouts said,

I think my classes will be a lot more relaxing. Not in a way that I will be more lazy in the class but in a way like I could feel and relate to the teacher and I could laugh at things. When I was here [at LMK], I did not laugh at the jokes because I didn't understand them. [What would happen if one of the counselors were Polynesian?] It will be more helpful. I was able to explain things to my counselor but having a Polynesian counselor, [as] I did in Hawaii, he was the first counselor I had. His name is Brother MKL, he was my counselor and I could explain everything to him. And he even, outside of school, he come over my house and bring food to my family or we take something to his house. He lives a few blocks down the house. We felt like family so I was just like, I can explain everything to him and he could help me out with everything. He did help me out with everything. So, I think it will be a lot helpful. (M9)

There are two points to note that in this dropouts' experience that are of paramount importance if we want to raise cultural competency in teachers and counselors who are working with Polynesian students in high school. First, Polynesian students like to relax or have the ability to relate to the teacher so that he or she can laugh at the jokes being told during class time. This is very important because Polynesian people like to joke around and laugh with each other.

As such, when the dropout did not understand the teacher's joke, he was not very interested in what the teacher had to say or teach after that joke. Second, the dropout recalled a great experience that he had with a Polynesian counselor in which he interacted with the counselor outside of the school time. The interaction outside of school time allowed the dropout to make connection with and also develop trust in his counselor. Hence, he was able to tell him about anything he wanted help with in school, and the Polynesian counselor was able to help him. This is also important because once a Polynesian student trusts a teacher or a counselor; he or she will open up to that teacher or counselor and will become teachable and more easily motivated to do well in school. Similarly, another dropout said that it would also be good to have a Polynesian tutor as well. He said: "Yeah [having a Polynesian teacher or counselor is good]. But, it doesn't have to be a counselor or a teacher; just hoping may be a tutor that can speak both [English and Tongan]" (M8). This dropout just moved from Tonga to the U.S. in his 10th grade. Additionally, he was also struggling with speaking and understanding the English language, and also encountered difficulties in the social life activities in high school. He then dropped out. Yet another one of the dropouts said that: "Yeah [it will make a difference if I had a Polynesian teacher or counselor]. I think our teachers could communicate better. There will be a better understanding and they could help us understand more" (M5). Enhanced communication between teachers and students is important for higher academic performance. This dropout said that the teachers could have communicated better with her or the other Polynesian kids in school. This does not mean that the teacher did not know how to communicate but the teacher was not teaching her in a manner in which she could have understood what the teacher was communicating to her. Another dropout said,

Definitely [having a Polynesian teacher or counselor would have helped me]. [Why?] Cause I feel more comfortable around them. Because it's my people, you know, like, when I am in high school, there was only like four or five Polys over there. You know that all we did, we stuck together. It was just us in our little group. He or she will probably threaten to call my parents, like, cause I was like very prideful. I was very prideful and, I don't know, I was just like, just to see them be there was like, hey, if they can do that, maybe I can do that too. And if they are here to help me, it's just different when I look at a Polynesian to me, you know. When I look at a Polynesian, they are my brother, my sister, you know, someone close. It's just different at looking at them than looking at a palangi or Mexican or something like that. I would listen more, cause like he knows exactly where I was coming from, you know, he will know exactly where I was coming from. I 'm sure there are other people out there, I'm not just saying that to a Poly in general but there are people out there like that. You gotta get to know them first but to me, if it's a Polynesian, I'm gonna open up myself to them, you know. (F1)

From this dropout's experience, one is able to note five things that are crucial to Polynesian students in order for them to do well in high school. First, having a Polynesian teacher or counselor would have made this dropout feel comfortable around the teacher. Second, feeling comfortable around the teacher or a counselor would have allowed him to trust his teacher or the counselor. Third, the dropout would have easily connected with the Polynesian counselor or teacher because they are from the same culture. Fourth, this dropout said that having a Polynesian teacher or a counselor could provide a good role model who would have motivated him to open up and ask questions. This is so important because Polynesian students always prefer to sit at the back of the classroom to avoid being asked to answer any questions for fear of

being labelled as dumb or stupid. Likewise, another dropout said this about the importance of having a Polynesian counselor or a teacher that:

It will probably make it easier to talk to. To talk to him or her about what you don't understand [and] what you need to do to understand them. It will be easier since he or she knows you and your family and where you come from and the connections will be there.
(M5)

Again, this dropout indicated that communication would be easier between a Polynesian student and a Polynesian teacher or counselor because they can connect with each other. Further, the Polynesian teacher or a counselor knows where the student is coming from since they belong to the same culture. Furthermore, this dropout seemed to suggest that a Polynesian counselor or a teacher would have helped him understand some of the difficult concepts better than a teacher or a counselor from a different culture. Judging, from these dropout experiences, the trend seems to be that Polynesian students suggest that having Polynesian teachers and counselors would have made a salient difference in their educational experiences. However, these dropouts' experiences also suggest that some of the non-NHOPI teachers and counselors in their schools were not culturally competent in dealing with them. This suggests that high school counselors and teachers having lower levels of cultural competency is related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties. Higher levels of cultural competency among NHOPI students' teachers and counselors are badly needed.

In this study, I found that lower levels of counselors' cultural competency is related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI high school students and so is the counselors' refusal to help or even allow Polynesian students to transfer to other counselors with whom they were comfortable. Additionally, I also found that when NHOPI students are comfortable with their

counselors, they will not only trust them but also open up and ask pertinent questions that allow them to be taught by their counselors. However, about 53% of the dropouts said that their counselors did not allow them to talk to the counselors that they felt comfortable with in order to mitigate their low academic performances. In fact, one of the dropouts said,

My counselors! My first year, she was this really old lady and she would forget everything and she would mess up my transcripts so I didn't have the patience to be with her. And then we got a new counselor and she was like young and she was really good. She came from a regional university in the state, but at the same time she was just like, she gave up on students very easily. I wasn't the first one. She gave up on one of my friends [previously] and she also gave up on some of my friends and stuff [later] cause she was like the one. Once she saw you failing [or] she suspected you [fail], she wouldn't offer her help. We would go and ask her for help but she would say one thing but she would do another. And that's one thing that I got frustrated with our school and that's when I stopped going to school cause I didn't like her. I didn't like my school anymore. Nobody was there to help me, cause I wouldn't understand something and when I asked the teacher, they just sit there and mocked me. I hate that, like, I'm that student and you're supposed to help me and you're not. The counselors, I never did get along with my counselors. And the Administrators, they never really, I know they did not look down on us but at the same time they did. I really don't like our Administrators in ADA, and I really don't like our counselors. There was only one counselor there that was really good but they wouldn't let me go talk to him. They wouldn't let him help me. I'm not part of his alphabet. And it was really hard because I wanted to go and see him and he told me you can come and see me and so I was trying one day but the counselor and the secretary

and stuff, they wouldn't let me go see him and I was getting irritated because my counselor wasn't good and she wasn't helping me and she was just telling me to just quit already and just go to East Shore. So, I wanted to say and keep doing East Shore and get my diploma through ADA, cause, I worked hard and I wanted, so, I don't like them at all. I was trying to change counselors but she would not let me. I wished I knew that I could change counselors. If I knew that, I would've gone back, cause I could've done it and still be on track to graduate, like they basically pushed me out because they didn't want to deal with me. I just got irritated cause it's your job to help and you're a counselor for a reason. Our trackers were basically like our counselors. One of our trackers, I would just go to her and like, tell her that I'm failing and that I need help and she would just sit there and help me. Like, there is only so much things you can do because she already had so much on her plate cause everybody would run to her. Everybody would run to her like all of us would run to her and she would send us to the counselors but none of us like the counselor cause they were not doing their job. They gave up way too easy and I guess they just, to me I looked at it as they did not want to deal with us so they put us away.

(F2)

From this dropout's experience, we identify several difficulties with her counselors. First, her 9th grade counselor was quite old and she messed up the student's transcript. Second, her second counselor was young and new but she also quickly gave up on her when she suspected that she was failing. Sadly, this dropout also said that the new counselor also gave up on some of her friends that were failing or at risk of being failed. Additionally, the dropout also indicated that the counselor did not allow her to go and see one of the counselors that she felt comfortable with. Finally, a combination of all the frustrations that the dropout encountered while she was trying to

work effectively with her counselors had led her to drop out of high school. In a different experience, another dropout said,

My counselor was good doing his counselor's job but then the other one [counselor]. He went further into Snow [College, where the majority of the football players are NHOPI] and he grew up here around Polys and so he knows how we are and so he helped me out a lot more than the other one [counselor] did. I guess our relationship was good and we talked about school and stuff. (M2)

This dropout experience was not as dramatic as the previous dropout above but she indicated that the counselor was good at doing his job. However, her second counselor was better and she also felt comfortable with him because he knew the Polynesian culture and also know how to interact with Polynesians because he grew up around them. From this dropout experience, it is so important to note that higher level of Polynesian cultural competency allows a non-Polynesian counselor to connect with and make the NHOPI dropout felt comfortable. As such, the counselor was effective in doing his job and helped out this dropout more than the previous counselor. However, despite the excellent relationship that this dropout developed with this counselor, other family-related factors led her to drop out of high school. By way of contrast, another dropout said,

I feel like if my counselor hadn't made me feel like I was already a failure. I feel like I could've done so much more. Cause just walking in and talking to him like a class that I may have failed. He gave me the feeling that there was no way to make that up. "You are too far gone." So, and that was just the start of my freshman year, I felt like, it's too late now. And then I was like talking to him like starting maybe some online classes, he said,

well those are harder. [He said] are you sure you can do that? So, I just kind of felt like, maybe I can't do this and I felt, maybe I am not. (F3)

This is a sad experience that no student, regardless of color or race, should have to face in this nation or anywhere in the world. In the beginning of her high school life the counselor made her feel like a failure. Additionally, when she asked to change her counselor to the other counselor that she felt comfortable with, her request was denied and she felt that nobody cared about her. Interestingly, this dropout's parents were also dropout themselves and were not educationally or financially equipped to help her take any of the packets at East Shore High School. Further, this dropout's five oldest siblings were also dropouts themselves. Yet another dropout said,

It was bad. I know I never wanted to talk to him after the first couple of times. I preferred to go to [the Polynesian counselor] except I couldn't. Cause she said she wasn't over my area, you know but, I don't know. I tried not to talk to him if I could. (M4)

Again, this dropout did not have a good relationship with her counselor at school but there was a Polynesian counselor at school. Her request to transfer to the Polynesian counselor's "alphabet" was denied. The Polynesian counselor felt helpless because of school policy that seemed to be good for a homogeneous student body but not for a multicultural students. According to another dropout:

Most of them [counselors] were pretty chill and they were nice to me but one of them was kind a mean I guess. He was like one minded person when he was not listening to other people's opinion and stuff. He was always thinking he was right even though we can prove him wrong. (M12)

This dropout seemed to be satisfied with his counselors except for one of them whom he indicated was not open minded. Because his counselor was not open minded, the dropout could not reason with him. As such, the counselor was not listening to the dropout's point of view. Hence, the dropout did not listen to his point of view and later dropped out of high school. It is also worthy to note that he was not allowed to transfer to another counselor. To further complicate what he experienced at the hands of one of his counselors, his parents got divorced and he stayed with his dad. Additionally, the dropout also said that "I felt worthless and feel like a piece of property" when his parents were fighting for the custody of him and his siblings. However, the stresses from his parents' divorcing and his frustrations with his counselor contributed to him dropping out of high school. As yet another dropout said of his counselor:

Never knew her. I just met her like one, just once. She never called me to discuss anything even when I was failing and going to drop out of school. She should have met with me regularly or I could have talked or met with her as well but she didn't and I did not go and see her too. (M13)

This dropout did not really know his counselor since he only met with her once. Counselors are supposed to counsel the students under their alphabet on a regular basis. But, counselors need to meet often with their students, especially those who are underperforming to find solutions to their educational dilemma. However, he also recognized that he should have gone and met with her instead of waiting for her to call him in to her office. This is an especially point to note about NHOPI students because they will not initiate the contact. Counselors need to know this and if they have NHOPI students in their alphabet, they should call them in on a regular basis, especially if they are not doing well in school. Additionally, parents and other educators need to teach NHOPI students to be responsible for their own education and choose to act upon things

that must be done, and not simply wait to be acted upon. Thus, not allowing NHOPI high school students to change their counselors to those with whom they feel comfortable working with is a factor related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Ineffective School Organization

School organization's effectiveness is comprised of eight elements and their related indicators of effectiveness according to The National High School Center (2012). The eight elements are rigorous curriculum and instruction, assessment and accountability, teacher effectiveness and professional growth, student and family involvement, stakeholder engagement, effective leadership, organization and structure, and sustainability. Teacher effectiveness includes, but is not limited to, teaching students from ethnic minority groups well using culturally-appropriate pedagogy (Brown, 2007; Mayes et al., 2007). As such, any school organization that provides education to minority students as part of the student body must train, and be willing to re-train teachers often to make sure that they are culturally responsive and are using culturally-appropriate methods of teaching. In this manner, students, especially minority students, will be more likely to understand and make connections among the concepts being taught, and this will lead to higher academic performance. In this study, I found that about 82% of the respondents indicated that they did not have good relationships with their teachers because they were not culturally responsive and were not using culturally-appropriate methods of teaching. As such, not having good relationships with teachers who are not culturally responsive and using culturally-appropriate teaching methodology is a factor related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI high school students. In fact, one of the dropouts said,

Ah, I only like one teacher. She was my English teacher. In all seriousness, she is a good teacher [because] she is really easy to talk to if I had a problem in class. She is easy to connect with and she also has a good sense of humor. (M1)

This dropout identified just one teacher that he liked because she was easier to talk to and connected with in addition to having a good sense of humor. Being easier to talk, and connect with, in addition to having a good sense of humor are characteristics of teachers that NHOPI dropouts found useful to them before they actually dropped out of high school. Interestingly, the other teachers were not considered useful because they could not connect with them. As such, the dropouts lost interest in what they were teaching and treated them lightly, which led to bad grades. In a similar experience, another dropout said,

Um, there were some teachers I like. Like I had a math teacher, he was a good one and I switch to another math teacher, he was yeah, just a grumpy guy and was not really not someone to get along with. But, the other teachers were good cause I guess just their personality, and my personality kind of intertwined and feel good about helping like certain English teachers. She was good and was pretty too so I was kind a, she was played volleyball for Utah so there are a lot of Polys there too. So she kind a know how we are so she is young so she kinds of understand us and it was easier to talk to her. (M2)

In contrast to the previous dropout's experience, this dropout liked all his teachers except for his math teacher. It is interesting to note the description given by the dropout about his math teacher-- that he was grumpy and was not easy to get along with in comparison to his other teachers. That is, he was not able to make connections with this dropout. Additionally, this dropout was able to connect with the other teachers because his "personality" and his teachers' "personalities were intertwined." Further, the teacher that the dropout singled out from his high

school experience was his English teacher who had previous experiences with other Polynesian students at the university level. In another similar experience, a dropout said,

Ah I don't want to answer that [question about my relationships with my teachers]. [Any teachers that I like?] Yeah, a couple [of teachers I liked in high school]. [Follow up question: Why?] Because they make me feel more comfortable. Teach in a certain way that I can understand. Up to that point that I did not feel comfortable around them to raise my hand. Having teachers making you comfortable makes me want to study more.

Teachers working with Polynesian kids should make the kids feel comfortable. (M5)

Again, this dropout identified several key elements that NHOPI dropout students considered effective in teaching NHOPI high school students. Further, the dropout also identified only two of his teachers in high school that he liked and gave us the reasons. First, the two teachers that he liked actually made him feel so comfortable around them that he actually raised his hands to ask questions. It is a monumental step forward in a life of any Polynesian high school student to actually raise his or her hand to ask a question during class. That is, because it is well-known in the NHOPI communities in the U.S. that the majority of the NHOPI high school students do not raise their hands to ask questions for fear of being labelled as stupid. Second, the dropout also said that the other teachers did not teach in a way that he could understand what they were teaching. As such, when he went to their classes, he was not paying attention to what they taught. Not paying attention to the other teachers of course led to lower academic performance, followed by his dropping out of high school. Lastly, the dropout said that when teachers made him felt comfortable, he wanted to study more. This is one of the most important characteristics of an effective teacher: to motivate and inspire students to work hard.

Motivation and inspiration are paramount in raising NHOPI students' academic performance and dropout prevention. Another dropout reported that:

At first I didn't like her cause I thought she was rude but when I got to know her that was just her personality. And like, once I really like my teachers, I like them and I will go to class. And when I saw that she could help me with everything, I really liked her. Like I could go to her and get help for any subject, even if she just taught science. I mean cause none of my other teachers would help me. Or they would help me but then, at the same time they would not really help me. (F2)

Although differences in personalities between teacher and student were a stumbling block at first, the dropout was finally able to connect with the teacher. Differences in their personalities were resolved and they were able to work together. The student then went to her class.

Additionally, the other teachers were helpful in a certain way but they were not connected to the dropout. Therefore, the dropout got help from the teacher that she was connected to even though she did not teach that subject. Further, she did not seek help from the other teachers. This led to lower academic performance and then she dropped out of high school. Similarly, another one of the dropouts said,

Um, there were a couple [of teachers] that I had a really strong relationship with, like Coach Like. He was my favorite. I always talked to him about anything I might need help with. He talked to me about it a little bit. The other teachers, I didn't feel any connections with any of them. (F3)

Once again this dropout's experience was similar to the other dropouts' experience described earlier. That is, she identified only two of her teachers in high school that were helpful, and were able to connect with her. One was a Polynesian teacher who also coached football in her high

school. Therefore, she would talk to him about “anything I might need help with” but not the other teachers. Additionally, she also pointed out that she did not feel connected to the other teachers which led to lower academic performance. She then predictably dropped out of high school. Additionally, another dropout said,

Yeah, I would say that there were [some of the] teachers that they care if I pass or not, I stay in class [or not and], I miss [class] or not. Um, kind a say about half of them [cares about me]. (M12)

This dropout identified one of the characteristics of an effective teacher and school organization. This is to care for all students equally (The National High School Center, 2012). The dropout seemed to suggest that half of his high school teachers cared about him while the other half did not even though all were Caucasians. Even though it is hard to believe this dropout’s statement that only half of the teachers really cared, it is important to note that the dropout’s statement indirectly confirmed the importance of teachers making connections with their students.

In addition to teachers’ ineffectiveness as it is related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI high school students, I found that NHOPI dropouts also indicated that they had so much trouble with some of their classes because they did not know where to turn to for help outside of class. This accounted for about 76.5% of the respondents. In fact, one of the dropouts said,

Um, mine were science, yeah depending on the project. But the major one was social studies, like government and stuff. It was hard for me to get a grasp on it. When it was done using real life scenario it was easier but when it was book work, that stuff was harder. (M2)

This dropout experience showed that he had a hard time with science but it depended upon the science project that he was working on. His hardships with sciences in some of the projects that

he was working on were compounded by the facts that his family was struggling financially and they did not have any computer or internet service at his home. That is, he could have used the internet to find out more information on the projects that he was working on at school because he did not have internet access; he was not able to finish some of the science projects that he was working on. He thus failed his science classes, which led to dropping out of high school.

Interestingly, his parents were also dropouts themselves. However, the dropout also indicated an important point that when science “was done using real life scenario it was easier but when it was book work, that stuff was harder than.” This is a phenomenon that is far too common among Polynesian students who hate sciences because they do not see the connections between what you teach and what happen in real life. Hence, they will lose interest in what the teachers are trying to teach them. Therefore, it is paramount that science teachers take the time to make the connections between the concepts they teach in their science classes and also give an example of what is being taught in real life. In another dropout experience, the dropout indicated that he had a hard time with “just old English, yeah. Other than that, everything else was easy for me” (M12). This is an interesting statement because the dropout’s mother is Caucasian and his father is Tongan. Additionally, the dropout was born here in the U.S. and he was one of those students that they felt that they were “stuck in the middle” of the American and Polynesian cultures. Further, the dropout’s parents also divorced during his freshman year which seemed to elevate all the issues that he faced which led to drop out of high school. Similarly, another dropout said,

I have to say, financial literacy. They teach about saving money. It’s just crazy. It is like math, everything put together in one class. It is a good class. I wish I learn a lot of that because I could have save money now and get what I want in the future if I need some.

That is more difficult that math. I rather do math. I can do that in my head. When it comes to financial literacy that is something you have to do when you are older. Well, I see it now but before we were in high school, why are you teaching that in high school? Now, I am older, I see it. That is why you wanted us to learn. (M11)

This dropout indicated that he had a hard time with financial literacy but loved math.

Interestingly, the dropout has no concept of savings because his family was struggling financially and the idea of taking a portion of what his mother's income in a month to put into a saving account in the bank did not make any sense to him. This is due to the fact that they needed all the money that they earned to pay their rent and buy food. Additionally, this dropout sluff a lot classes to go with his friends and get food during school, leading to lower academic performance. Concomitantly, the dropout also indicated that saving money is done when you are older which seemed to suggest that the teacher did not help him make the connections between saving money early on in life to enjoying financial benefits in the future. In like manner, another dropout said,

Psychology, I think that's the one I was in. That one was really hard [because it was not relevant to her life]. Always writing papers, always doing different projects and what made it worse was like I was in that class with like seven of my friends and it was the first class of the day, so it was like, we would go to IHOP instead of going to class. [Follow up question. Did you used to go with them?] Yea, I would. They would pick me up from my house when I missed the bus. (F3)

This dropout indicated that she had a hard time with her psychology class but her problems were compounded by the fact that seven of her friends were also in the same class. Her friends picked her up from her home when she missed the bus to go and eat. Also, this dropout also

experienced hard times at home since her parents divorced before her senior year and she was left to take over her family finances. As such, she started doing odd jobs to help her mother pay for food and rent. This led to her dropping out of high school. Further, this dropout's parents were also dropouts. Another dropout noted that:

Um, [I struggled with] English. Because basically everything was English, even the teacher speak English. Um, back in Tonga our teacher speak English but at the same time they speak Tongan too, so, every time we don't understand stuff, we asked her in Tongan. She explained in Tongan and makes us understand it, but over here like, English was like basically English. (M8)

This dropout, who was unique in just having moved from Tonga to the U.S., struggled with English because the teacher was not bilingual thus things could not be explained in the student's language as teachers did in Tonga. As such, the dropout did not fully understand what was being taught, leading to such lower academic performance that he dropped out of high school in his senior year. Interestingly, the dropout's father is Polynesian but was born here in the U.S., but his mother is from Tonga. This illustrates especially how a student is caught between two cultures, it is important that school organization hires bilingual teachers so that they can be effective in teaching classes to minority students. In another example with a difficult class or classes, one of the dropouts said,

My English, to me my English was so hard, like vocabulary, writing full sentences, commas, question marks you know, all that stuffs. To me it was just hard, it just couldn't click. Um, even to this day, I'm over here, like, when I was texting you, I'm over here, k I'm texting Bro Palu so I gotta be you know, period, commas, this and that this and that, so, I know. I know you don't care but you know I was just like, I got to do this, gotta do

this, so, I'm over here saying does this comma go over here or after, does it go right there. (M6)

This is an interesting experience because the dropout was born here in the U.S. and speaks more English than any Tongan, yet he struggled with English. Perhaps, his dropout's experience was compounded by the fact that his parents were also dropouts themselves. But, his two older brothers, who graduated from high school in the U.S., were born in Tonga before they migrated to the U.S. And, the language that was frequently used at his home was Tongan but the dropout noted that his first language was English. From these dropouts' experiences, it is clear that they struggled with at least one of the core classes and also the English language. Predictably, this led to lower academic performance and they finally dropped out of high school. Thus, having difficulties with core classes being taught in high school is a factor related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties because students do not make the connection between the subjects and their lives. Thus, teachers should take more time and care in making such connections since, as Dewey (1916) said, students learn best what is relevant to them.

School Accommodation for Free and Reduced-lunch Meals

In addition to teachers' ineffectiveness and having hardships with some of the core classes, school accommodation for students with reduced-lunch meals accounted for 94.12% of the respondents. This matters because the number of students participating in free or reduced lunch program is an indicator of families' social economic status (Rumberger et al., 1987). In this study, 94.12% of the dropouts (M1-M13; F1-F4) said that they participated in free and reduced-lunch program before they dropped out of high school. However, the dropout that did not participate in the free and reduced-lunch program just moved from Tongan to the U.S. and both of his parents graduated from high school and his father also graduated from college in the

U.S. as well. Additionally, 82.35% of the dropouts said that their families were struggling financially while 35.29% of the dropouts' parents were both dropouts and 50% of the dropouts' parents actually graduated from high school. Further, only 5.88% of the dropouts' parents graduated from college while 5.88% of the dropouts' parents actually dropped out of college. Although, the high schools accommodated these dropouts in their meals, they did not seem to accommodate them in their learning by providing culturally-responsive teachers who use culturally-appropriate teaching methods to accommodate all students, but especially the NHOPI students. Thus, knowing the NHOPI students socio-economic status via their participation in the free and reduced-lunch program and not facilitating their learning styles and providing additional programs to prevent them from dropping out, is a factor related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Bullying and Disciplinary Actions

Disciplinary actions and bullying are known to be related to higher high school dropout rates in the U.S. and elsewhere (Cornell et al., 2012; Townsend et al., 2008). In this study, I found that 76.47% of the NHOPI dropout students were bullied in elementary, junior high and in high school as well because of their weight and race. In fact, one of the dropouts said,

Oh, I did see one but then the little kid beat up the bully and I already knew that the kid was going to win since he learned Jiu Jitsu. The bully got beat up. I was also threatened by a big kid and running his mouth towards me and my family. I was ready just to leave it then he came up on my face and I hit him. I met him a few months ago and just talked to him that I was sorry about it. He said that he "was cool with it." We got along. (M1)

This dropout saw a kid being bullied. Fortunately, the bully was beaten by the kid that was being bullied. Additionally, this dropout also said that a "big kid" bullied him and was disrespectful

towards him and his family. Though he took care of the bully physically, he was expelled from school for beating up and breaking the nose of the bully. Further, this dropout was already failing in his classes and he went to East Shore High School to make up his grades.

Unfortunately, because of financial struggles that his family went through during his senior year in addition to having his father deported to the islands, he could not afford his packets. He dropped out of high school. Another dropout said,

Um, I did not noticed any bully, cause I am a bigger kid. But, when I was younger with my cousin when we moved here [Athens] from Tau, there was a lot of bullying. We were just the only Polynesian in school and the older guys and the older girls were bullying us, calling us names, like the "N" word and we don't belong here. And as times getting on, we were getting bigger, and they started to get smaller, and it stopped. They are cool now but back in the days, bullying was one of the major things why we did not want to go to school. (M2)

Once again this dropout said that he was bullied together with his cousin when they moved from Orem to American Fork and they were frequently being called the “N” word because they looked African American. However, it is worth noting that the students who bullied them could not differentiate Polynesians from African Americans. The bullying stopped when they “were getting bigger and they started to get smaller.” Interestingly, the dropout’s cousin also dropped out of high school. Above all, this dropout indicated that “bullying was one the major things why we did not want to go to school”, which seems to verify the research study by Cornell and colleagues (2013). Yet another one of the dropouts said,

Well, when I was in elementary, I was a heavy kid. I was a big kid. I was always made fun of because of my weight. And when I go to middle school and high school, it did not bother me as much and so that is how I got by. (M11)

This dropout indicated that he was made fun of because of his weight early on in elementary school. However, this dropout moved back to California and lived with his grandparents for a few years before they moved back to Utah. When he came back to Utah, he was much bigger and much taller than those that bullied him in elementary school; they did not bully him at all but were trying to become his friends. Additionally, another one of the dropouts said,

Bullying was one thing I did not tolerate. If it was around me, the bully will be bullied often than that. I will not let anybody [being] bullied around me. That is just how I am. I can't stand it. Because that is really in the line of respect [Polynesian culture]. Unless somebody do something to your family, I can't see why you do something like that to them. (F1)

It is interesting to note that this dropout expressed her dismay against bullies but later indicated that “the bully will be bullied” if she saw one. Further, the dropout indicated that she cannot stand bullies because they are disrespecting others. This tendency to not tolerate bullying of others which is a component of Polynesian culture, has been identified to be a factor related to high school dropout in this study. Interestingly, this dropout was disciplined a great deal due to fighting against bullies in addition to failing her classes then she finally dropped out of high school. In another dropout experience, the dropout said,

I was never bullied and in my training it was and it was because of race and so I told my family and they came. I talked to the principal and everything worked out. But I've seen bullied and we tried to help the kid and the sad part was, it was a kid from our ward and

that was in junior high. He was being bullied for standing up for the discipline kids and so, he came to Dash one day and we tried to help him out so we spend every day at lunch with him, we would walk with him to class and stuff and that got over really quick and so his dad came and he was like a hall monitor at our school. (F2)

This dropout was bullied verbally because of her race but she told her family and they were able to work it out with the principal and the bully. However, she also indicated that another Polynesian student was being bullied because he stood up for the kids that were disciplined. In fact, the bullying was so bad that his father has to be at school for two weeks working as a hall monitor to prevent others from bullying his son. However, this dropout student was also bullied earlier in elementary school together with her cousin. She was also told to repeat her 9th grade and she had to go and make up her grades in East Shore High School, but her family's financial struggles prevented her from improving her grades. She then dropped out of high school. In another dropout's experience, the dropout said,

Oh yeah. I say a lot of people got bullied. I just cannot take it. If I see someone got bullies, I just talk to the kid and tell them you know you cannot do that. Just because you are bigger than the kid, you cannot push them around like nothing. You know, I am bigger than you, I don't push you around. I cannot stand watching it because I had experience you know. I was bullied before. When I was in Junior High, I was small like, I was really small. I was surprised how big I got. I was picked by all these kids in 9th grade. When I come back from California, man, they see me, and say, who's that? Hey, remember me? Oh, hey, now they look at me and say hey, how are you doing? They treat me good now. They respect me. I respect them. I would hurt them. Hurting you is a waste of my time. I don't want to hurt you and have to pay fees, [and] get locked up. (M5)

This dropout's experience with bullies was similar to what another dropout (M11) experienced with bullies in elementary school. Additionally, this dropout was very helpful later because he admonished bullies to be respectful of other students. In a different experience, this dropout said,

I got into fights a lot with those who bullied other people. I can't stand those type of stuff. Actually, I got transferred a couple of times for fighting bullies. Not really, but I was bullied when I was younger [through Elementary school] I got bullied but I got older and people did not want to mess with me. In my school, there was a lot of bullying and downgrading [belittling] people that doesn't make sense, yeah. Based on what? Just random, stupid immature stuff. Like people's races and kind a pick on different kind of ethnicities and stuff. Mostly against Hispanic kids. (M12)

This dropout was disciplined at different high schools for fighting against bullies. This resulted in his expulsion. His discipline problems seemed to grow exponentially after his parents were divorced. However, his grades were also failing and he was also not sure about which cultures (American or Polynesian) he belonged to at the time. Hence, his failing grades and disciplinary problems were also compounded by his parents' divorce, which led him to drop out of high school. Therefore, student-related school deficiencies, counselors' lower level of Polynesian cultural competencies, ineffective school organization, the poverty associated with school accommodation for free and reduced-lunch program, and bullying and disciplinary actions are school-related factors that are related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

CHAPTER 5—DISCUSSION

Theoretical Implications

In broader terms, the empirical findings from this study support the arguments for revitalization of the professional development and pre-service training programs for teachers, annual cultural competency training for high school counselors, education of policy-makers on the effects of their policies on the education of minority students, and diversification of the state and district school boards of education. In more specific terms, the findings from this study also support the arguments for increased training of NHOPI parents and students from their religious and community leaders on factors related to dropout rates to increase retention and graduation rates among high school and college students in the U.S.

The findings from this study (Table 15) were also compared to the findings from the high school dropout study in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997) and the findings from the risk and protective factors among NHOPI high school students in the U.S. (Vakalahi, 2009). My research differed from these two early studies in five ways. First, a technically unequipped household was found to be a risk factor for dropping out in the U.S. (Vakalahi, 2009) but it was also found to be related to the dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties. However, a technically unequipped household was not found to be a factor related to dropout rates in Tonga. Tatafu (1997) study was done in the early 1990s and computers were not used in the high schools in Tonga during that time. Second, negative acculturation of students and parents was not found in Tonga since both teachers and students were from the same culture. However, NHOPI parents and students had negative acculturation in the U.S. which was related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Salt Lake and Utah counties. This was a culture-related factor that negatively impacted both NHOPI high school students and parents.

Table 15

*Findings Compared to Vakalahi's (2009) and Tatafu's (1997) Five Factors**

Factors	Themes Related to NHOPI High School Dropouts	Findings of This Study in U.S.	Found in U.S. (Vakalahi, 2009)	Found in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)
Peer-Related	• Good Peers Influential Activities	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Bad Peers Influential Activities	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Daily Negative Peer Activities	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Lack of Positive Interactions at School Between Cousins/Siblings	100%	Yes	Yes
Personal-Related	• Time Mismanagement	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Demotivational Behaviors	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Building Invisible Self-Educational- Barriers to Success in School	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Personal School-Alienation Behavior	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Lower Literacy Proficiency	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Stressful Home Environments	82%	Yes	Yes
Family-Related	• Parents' Home-School Lack of Communication	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Parents Less Involved in Their Student's Education	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Parents' Lack of Training on How to Handle Failure	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Technologically Unequipped Household	100%	Yes	No
	• Parents' De-motivational Behavior	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Parents' Lack of Knowledge of School and Community Resources	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Families' Financial Struggles	94%	Yes	Yes
	• Parents' Low Educational Achievements	88%	Yes	Yes
Culture-Related	• Students' and Parents' Educational Goals Misalignment	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Students Not Following Role Models	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Students' Lack of Employment During High School	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Negative Acculturation of Students & Parents	100%	Yes	No
	• Teachers' Polynesian Cultural Incompetency	71%	Yes	No
School-Related	• Student-Related School Deficiencies	100%	Yes	Yes
	• Counselors' Lower Level of Polynesian Cultural Competency	100%	Yes	No
	• Ineffective School Organization	100%	Yes	Yes
	• School Accommodation for Free & Reduced-lunch Meals	94%	Yes	No
	• Bullying & Disciplinary Actions	88%	Yes	Yes

*Five factors based on Vakalahi (2009) and Tatafu (1997)

Specifically, NHOPI parents born in the islands were more strict and had lower educational achievements which prevented them from helping out in their students' education (Vakalahi, 2009). For example, dad only asked for something only once, physical punishment for disobedience, and heavy handedness in strict observance of Polynesian traditional values. Third, teachers' Polynesian cultural incompetency was not found in Tonga by Tatafu (1997) since both the teachers and the students were from the same culture. But, it was identified by Vakalahi (2009) as a risk and a protective factor for dropping out of high schools among NHOPI students in the U.S. That is, teachers' higher Polynesian cultural incompetency leads to more NHOPI dropouts while lower Polynesian cultural incompetency leads to fewer dropouts. Further, the findings from this study clearly indicated that teachers' Polynesian cultural incompetency is a factor related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in the Salt Lake and Utah counties. Fourth, counselors' lower level of Polynesian cultural competency was not found in Tonga by Tatafu (1997) since there are no high school counselors employed in the Tongan Educational System except in LDS sponsored Liahona High School. However, in this research Polynesian cultural competency was cited repeatedly as a factor related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school dropouts in Salt Lake and Utah counties. Additionally, Vakalahi (2009) found that counselors' lower level of Polynesian cultural competency is a risk factor in NHOPI high school dropouts. Thus, higher level of Polynesian cultural competency is a protective factor against high school dropouts. Lastly, school accommodation for free and reduced-lunch meals was not found in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997) but it was identified as a risk and a protective factor for dropping out of high school in the U.S. (Vakalahi, 2009). This makes a lot of sense since the Tongan government does not provide free and reduced-lunch to students. However, providing a free and reduced-lunch protects NHOPI students from sluffing classes which ultimately protect

them from dropping out of school. Consequently, not providing a free and reduced-lunch to NHOPI students is a risk factor for dropping out of school. Therefore, the alignment of the findings from this study and the findings from Vakalahi (2009) and Tatafu (1997) (Table 15) should be utilized by teachers and counselors to prevent NHOPI high school students from dropping out of school in the U.S.

Implications for the Conceptual Model

The initial conceptual framework (Figure 1) for this study highlighted the relationship between family-related, peer-related, personal-related, culture-related, and school-related factors and the dropouts of NHOPI high school students. Although, these factors are shown in a linear fashion, the findings indicated that the influences of these factors on the NHOPI high school students which led them to drop out of school were by no means linear. Indeed, the factors related to NHOPI dropout rates seemed to be mediating their decision to drop out of high school in a more complex fashion and in various degrees of effect, as shown in the conceptual model for the findings of this study (Figure 4).

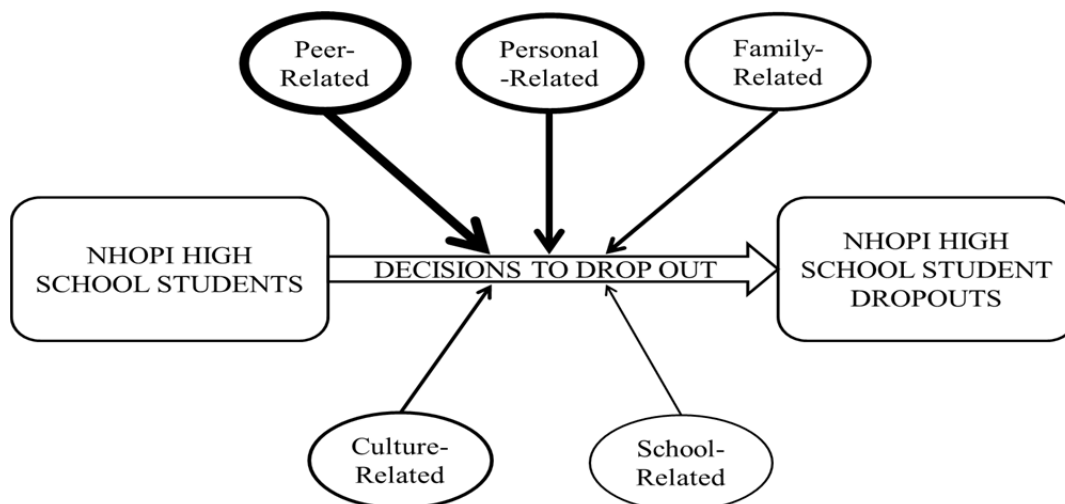


Figure 4. Conceptual model from the findings of this study. Factors arranged in varying strengths of effects

The conceptual model (Figure 4) depicts the factors related to NHOPI high school students in their decision to drop out of high school in a linear relationship and factors have varying strength of effects as indicated by the thickness of the lines. However, in reality, the findings suggest that this model should actually be more like a web showing how the factors are connected to each other. For example, one of the dropouts (M12) was stressed out (a personal-related issue) from his parents' divorce (which is a family-related issue), so then he started to hang out with his friends (a peer-related issue) who were sluffing classes because they deemed them boring. Consequently, this dropout failed his classes (personal issues) but he was also not getting along, and connected with his counselors and teachers (school-related issue), and indicated that he was "stuck in the middle" of the American and Polynesian culture (a culture-related issue). All of these factors greatly influenced his decision to drop out of high school despite the advice, encouragement and motivation that he received from his good friends, father, some of his teachers and football coaches.

In another example, one of the dropouts (M7) related that his parents were not very involved in his education (personal-related and family-related factor issues) because his mother worked two jobs and his father was always out of state due to his truck-driving job (family-related issue). Additionally, his parents were also dropouts (family-related issue) and he also indicated that he was not sure which culture that he belongs to since his father was Pacific Islander and his mother was Caucasian (culture-related issue). Further, his parents did not attend the parents and teachers' conference which is both a family-related and school-related issues. These factors greatly influenced his decision to drop out of school. Similarly, another dropout (F3) indicated that her older siblings were in high school when she was a freshman (peer-related). However, they did not have much interaction with each other (peer-related issue) and

her brother later dropped out of high school (school-related). Unfortunately, her dropout brother was her role model (culture-related issue) and she dropped out three years later. This dropout also indicated that she was stressed out from her parents' divorce (family-related issue) and also felt that she was "stuck in the middle" between the American and Pacific Islander's cultures (personal-related and culture-related) because her father did not take the time to teach her the Pacific Islanders' culture. These factors greatly influenced her decision to drop out of high school. These examples and many more examples like these in the results section of this study suggest that the interplay between family-related, personal-related, peer-related, culture-related, and school-related factors are not linear but are more complex than what was depicted in the original conceptual framework (Figure 1), and the newly revised conceptual model (Figure 3) for this study. However, the aim of this current study was not to investigate the interaction between these five factors but to examine and identify how and why the five major factors were related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school dropouts. Furthermore, I also believe that there might be other factors that were involved in their decision to drop out from high school that were not captured in this study. For example, in Table 8, it was shown that world-related factors were related to dropout rates among high school students in the U.S. However, the design of the Vakalahi (2009), Tatafu (1997) and this study were not able to explore whether world-related factors are related to dropout rates among the NHOPI high school dropouts in the U.S. The potential interaction between these five factors related to NHOPI dropout rates warrants further research so that the theoretical model may be further developed. Future research should also seek to understand which, if any, of the five major factors are most influential in NHOPI high school students' decision to drop out and under what circumstances. Such future research study

will help to provide support for helping to prevent NHOPI high school students from dropping out and raising their academic achievements.

Findings of this Study Match or Conflict with the Dropout Literature

The findings from this study confirm earlier research in that family-related, personal-related, peer-related, culture-related, and school-related factors were influential in the NHOP high school students' decision to drop out of high school in Utah and Salt Lake Counties in Utah. Additionally, the findings from this study are also in agreement with some of the findings from Tatafu's dropout study in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997) but it was in total agreement with the findings from Vakalahi (2009). That is, the five major factors related to the dropout rates in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997) were also found to be the five major factors related to the dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Utah and Salt Lake counties and risks and protective factors for NHOPI students in the U.S (Vakalahi, 2009). Table 16 aligns the findings from this study from those of Vakalahi (2009) and Tatafu (1997).

However, as can be seen in Table 16, some of the subcategories from the five major factors related to dropout rates in this study were different from those found in the dropouts in Tonga. Following are some of the many examples of such differences. In family-related factors, technologically unequipped household was not found in Tonga. The absence of this factor in Tonga makes sense since the internet and computers were not available to high school students at the time but they were relying on text books. Additionally, in peer-related factors, good peers' influential activities were not mention in Tatafu's study from the dropouts in Tonga. This does not mean that good peers' influential activities do not take place in Tonga because the author personally knows that it takes place in Tonga. Furthermore, the lack of positive interactions at school between cousins and siblings was not identified in the dropout study in Tonga by Tatafu

Table 16

Themes Related to NHOPI High School Dropout and Comparison with Studies in U.S. (Vakalahi, 2009) and Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)

Factor	Found in U.S. in this Study (2014)	Found in U.S. (Vakalahi, 2009)	Found in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)
Peer-Related Factor	Good Peers Influential Activities (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer group discussion in attending college • Playing cards, dancing, playing basketball, football, softball, watching movies, and church activities • Involvement with good peers 	
	Bad Peers Influential Activities (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If one person goes to do homework the others will tease that person • Playing cards, dancing, playing basketball, football, softball, and watching movies <p>Involvement with bad peers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involved in bad peer groups • Breaking the rules • Causing trouble at school
	Daily Negative Peer Activities (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions on activities for the day were always made as a group • Hanging out at home, shopping center, park • Spend a lot of time with their friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stealing • Committing other crimes • Drinking • Loafing in the village • Smoking
	Lack of Positive Interactions at School Between Cousins/Siblings (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong influence on achievements since their peers consists mostly of siblings and cousins • They get our backs we got theirs 	

Note: Comparison of findings with findings from Vakalahi (1009) and Tatafu (1997). List of sub-themes not arranged in any order of importance.

Table 16 (continued)

Themes Related to NHOPI High School Dropout and Comparison with Studies in U.S. (Vakalahi, 2009) and Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)

Factor	Found in U.S. in this Study (2014)	Found in U.S. (Vakalahi, 2009)	Found in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)
Personal-Related Factors	Time Mismanagement (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No student is working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not doing homework
	De-motivational Behaviors (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teasing students who go home to do homework (negative peer pressure) • Involvement with delinquent peers • Positive relationships with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not paying attention in class • Lack of student cooperation with staff • Lack of cooperation from fellow students • Involved in bad peer groups • Not sharing difficulties with others (students and teachers)
	Building Invisible Self-Educational-Barriers to Success in School (100%)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling of being a failure • Not taking school seriously • Not studying at home • Not understanding what is being taught
	Personal School-Alienation Behavior (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being shy about asking for help in class for fear of being labeled “dumb” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not attending school daily • Disobeying school rules • Trouble making at school
	Lower Literacy Proficiency (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual • Bicultural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to read, write and speak English
	Stressful Home Environments (82%)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family dislocation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in sports • Pride in being Pacific Islander 	

Table 16 (continued)

Themes Related to NHOPI High School Dropout and Comparison with Studies in U.S. (Vakalahi, 2009) and Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)

Factor	Found in U.S. in this Study (2014)	Found in U.S. (Vakalahi, 2009)	Found in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)
Family-Related Factors	Parents' Home-School Lack of Communication (100%)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts between parents and school
	Parents Less Involved in Their Student's Education (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents type of work • Parents working many jobs • Parents not being there for their students • Less parental involvement • Mom most involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One parent is absent from the home • Demand for domestic work
	Parents' Lack of Training on How to Handle Failure (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mom: Overbearing, enforce rules, administer rewards for school achievements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of facilities for students to do their study at home • Lack of parental 'push' (tenge) to stay at home
	Technologically Unequipped Household (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not providing internet access 	
	Parents' De-motivational Behavior (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family dynamics: dad was born in the islands and is very strict • Dad most powerful • Discipline: long lectures, losing privileges, physical punishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of parental encouragement • Failure to discipline their students • Family crises: death • Lack of parental 'push' (tenge) not to stay home
	Parents' Lack of Knowledge of School and Community Resources (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not providing a Pacific Islander role model • Parents excessively expecting higher achievements in school, church activity and citizenship • Less support from family members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over spending on particular events • Failure to meet school demands
	Families' Financial Struggles (94%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational home with number of people ranging from 5 to 14 • Low family income • Less resources to help students in their education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending more money on less important things (drinking) • Failure to pay school fees
	Parents' Low Educational Achievements 88%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' education from 6 grade to college • Parents can't help with homework because they do not understand English • English and Pacific Islander languages spoken at the home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability of parents to help with homework

Table 16 (continued)

Themes Related to NHOPI High School Dropout and Comparison with Studies in U.S. (Vakalahi, 2009) and Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)

Factor	Found in U.S. in this Study (2014)	Found in U.S. (Vakalahi, 2009)	Found in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)
Culture-Related Factors	Students' and Parents' Educational Goals Misalignment (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic-taking care of others before their children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church emphasis and not school • Obsession with academic success • Lack of prioritization of needs
	Students Not Following Role Models (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not having a role model from members of Pacific Islander communities who have earned higher education degrees • Not having tutoring by members of NHOPI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatives with good education who could have been role model
	Students' Lack of Employment During High School (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No student was working 	
	Negative Acculturation of Students & Parents (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress from trying to function in dual cultures • Too much time practicing customs and traditions: love, respect, reciprocity, obligations to the community, cultural dances, ceremonies, speaking the native tongue • So much emphasis on church activity but not school • Not having regular family prayer and meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended family uses the resources • Nobility have the most resources and poor people support them leaving less resources for their children's education • Slavery to what others might say • Preferred treatment of girls over boys • Outdoing one another in generosity • Over spending in weddings, funerals, church collections
	Teachers' Polynesian Cultural Incompetency (71%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not having Pacific Islander mentors • Not taking pride in being Pacific Islander 	

Table 16 (continued)

Themes Related to NHOPI High School Dropout and Comparison with Studies in U.S. (Vakalahi, 2009) and Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)

Factor	Found in U.S. in this Study (2014)	Found in U.S. (Vakalahi, 2009)	Found in Tonga (Tatafu, 1997)
School-Related Factors	Student-Related School Deficiencies (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not teaching time management skills • Not involved in extra curriculum activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not doing homework
	Counselors' Lower Level of Polynesian Cultural Competency (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and administrators perceptions of Pacific Islander students as "trouble makers" and "dumb" • Not providing complete information on admission, financial aid and graduation from university • Not developing a career path 	
	Ineffective School Organization (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Pacific Islander tutors from the surrounding universities • Not providing help with standardize test strategies and test-taking skills • Not having study halls and additional help and resources for homework • School not having a schedule that fits family needs and abilities • No workshops on the importance of staying in school • Not having snacks during study hall • Special help in English, math, history, computer, and languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good teachers were heavily concentrated in the higher classes • Curriculum catered mostly to academically bright students • Emphasis was mainly on passing exams, and little attention given to other activities • Teachers and students were rarely given opportunities to celebrate anything • Little time for revisions before exams because many teachers could not complete their syllabi on time • Little help from school for "intellectually slow" students • Shortage of trained teachers • Shortage of qualified teachers • School buildings not in good conditions
	School Accommodation for Free & Reduced-lunch Meals (94%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not providing free or reduced-lunch meals at school 	
	Bullying & Disciplinary Actions (88%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive discipline for failing school work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporal punishment was used fairly regularly at school

Note: Sub-themes related to NHOPI high school dropout and comparison with five factors by Vakalahi (2009) and Tatafu (1997). Sub-themes are not listed in any order of importance.

(1997) but I know from personal experiences that it takes place among high school students in Tonga. In addition to family-related and peer-related factors mentioned above, in school-related factors, counselors' lower level of Polynesian cultural competency was not mentioned in the dropout study from Tonga because the Tongan school system does not have counselors at the time. Additionally, school accommodation for free and reduced-lunch meals does not exist in Tonga since parents and students are responsible for their lunch meals. Furthermore, corporal punishment was used fairly regularly at school in Tonga but corporal punishment was not allowed in the Utah schools. Teachers were unwilling to help out in their free time in Tonga but teachers in the Utah schools were able to help out their students before school starts and after school as well. In culture-related factors, teachers' Polynesian cultural incompetency was not identified in the dropout study in Tonga because teachers and students are from the same culture. The differences in some of the subcategories accounted for some of the differences in the dropouts in Tonga and in the U.S.

In contrast, there are also subcategories that are either the same or similar to each other. Following are some of the many examples of such similarities. In family-related factors, dropout students in Tonga indicated that their parents were overspending in church donations, funerals, and weddings which were also similar to the dropouts' parents' financial spending here in Utah. Also, dropouts in Tonga indicated that they did not receive much encouragement from their parents, and dropouts in Utah indicated that, although they received encouragement, it was not consistent, and not continual throughout their years in high school. Additionally, they did not listen to their parents and good friends, teachers and football coaches as indicated in family-related, peer-related, and school-related factors. Furthermore, parents were not able to help out doing homework in Tonga and this was also found to be the case for the dropouts in Utah as well

as risk for dropping out of high school among the NHOPI students (Vakalahi, 2009). Unlike the dropouts in Utah, dropouts in Tonga were not sluffing classes to go eat and hangout in one of their friends' homes, but dropouts in the U.S. and in Utah were sluffing classes to go eat and hangout with their friends. However, there are some similarities between the dropouts in Tonga, U.S. and the NHOPI dropouts in Utah. That is, dropouts in Tonga, U.S., and in Utah spend a lot of time with their peers, which contributed to their lower academic achievement before they dropped out of high school as part of peer-related factors. Additionally, they also repeated a grade, which led them to drop out. Furthermore, all dropouts from the U.S., Tonga, and in Utah indicated that they were frequently absent from school (school-related factors) throughout the school year before they dropped out of high school.

In contrast to Tatafu's study (1997), majority of the dropouts interviewed in this study were Tongan students followed by Samoans, and then Hawaiian (family-related factors, culture-related factors). However, there were also three students from Polynesian and Caucasian parents as well. And, the dropouts in this study came from mixed Polynesian and Polynesian-Caucasian students born to Tongans, mixed Polynesian, and Polynesian-Caucasian parents. The findings in this present study will also contribute to the broader high-school-dropout literature elsewhere (Brandt, 1982, Bridgeland et al., 2006; Bryk & Thum, 1989; Chavez et al., 1991; Cornell et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2002; Ekstrom et al., 1986; Garnier, Stein, & Jacob, 1997; Jimerson, Anderson, & Whipple, 2002; Jimerson et al., 2000; Lee & Burkam, 2003; Orfield et al., 2004; Rumberger, 1987; Rumberger et al., 1990).

Tatafu's dropout study was conducted in Tonga with full-blooded Tongan students born to full-blooded Tongan parents. Vakalahi's (2009) study was conducted with NHOPI high school students who were still in high school, to determine the risk factors for dropping out of

high school in California. This study confirms some of the risk factors for dropping out of high school identified by Vakalahi (2009) were also factors related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Utah and Salt Lake Counties. However, this study also identified new issues that were not identified in Vakalahi's study.

The following are some of the findings in this study that were not identified as risk factors for dropping out of high school in Vakalahi's study: First, role model (culture-related): 16 respondents indicated that their role model was a member of their immediate or extended families but only one dropout indicated that his role model was a millionaire from another race. The majority of role models in this study were not highly educated but were actually dropout themselves. However, role models identified by Vakalahi were from highly educated members of the NHOPI community in California, where the study was conducted. Second, not working during high school was not identified as a risk factor for dropping out but was not shown in this study to be a factor related to dropout rates. Third, students teased their peers if they were trying to do their homework while teasing was not found in this study to be a factor. Fourth, the "my way or the high way" parenting style was not identified in this study as a factor in dropping out but it was indicated by Vakalahi as a risk factor for dropping out among NHOPI high school students. Fifth, snacking during study hall was a risk factor for dropping out in Vakalahi's study but was not identified as such in this study. However, sluffing classes to eat out was found to be a factor related to dropping out in this study. Sixth, creating a school day schedule to fit NHOPI families was identified as a protective factor by Vakalahi but it was not found to exist in this study. Seventh, not having especially caring teachers was not identified as a risk for dropping out while it was found to be related to dropout rates in this study. Eight, bullying was not found to be a risk for dropping out by Vakalahi while it was found to be a factor related to dropout rates

in this study. Tenth, workshops on the importance of staying in school were indicated by Vakalahi to be a protective factor but was not identified in this study as a factor related to dropout rates. Lastly, Vakalahi's study indicated that speaking the native tongue was a risk for dropping out while it was not found to be a factor in this study. However, bilingual teachers, counselors and tutors were identified in this study to be helpful to NHOPI students in understanding the concepts taught at school.

Revitalize the Professional Development and Pre-service Training Programs for Teachers

In addition to the five differences between the findings from this study and from the two early studies from Vakalahi (2009) and Tatafu (1997), the pre-service trainings for all students who want to teach and current teachers in the workforce who are in dire need of critical enhancements because the U.S. population is increasingly multicultural and multi-lingual (Chavez et al., 1991; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, 2010). However, the current model that is being used in these pre-service trainings of teachers is tailored to the culture of the majority. As such, the model is not conducive to facilitate and increase learning for all students, especially those of the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders. I would recommend three critical enhancements of educator pre-service trainings and curriculum: (1) know what you teach, (2) know how to teach it, and (3) know whom you teach. The first element will be discussed briefly because the schools and teachers are doing much better in that area. More discussion will follow on the second and third critical enhancements I suggested above. These factors or critical enhancements seem called for since my study seems to implicate that schools and teachers were not fully prepared to teach and work with the NHOPI dropouts in this study. Other dropout studies and reviews of dropout studies suggest that a majority of the schools and teachers in those studies were struggling with how to teach and whom they teach with respect to learning of

minority students in the U.S. (Bryk & Thum, 1990; Clark & Gorski, 2001; Cornell et al., 2013; Landa, 2011; Patterson et al., 2007; Rumberger, 1987; Schneider & Lee, 1990; Stewart, 2007; Weisner, Gallimore, & Jordan, 1988).

Frist, knowing what you teach is one of the critical elements in having high quality teachers (Beteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2009; Carlson, Lee, & Schroll, 2004). That is, the teachers must know their subject-matter well, but that, in itself, is incomplete and will not make them effective teachers. Hence, it is crucial for teachers to use what they know to make connections between what they teach and real-life examples of what they teach so that all students from diverse populations can fully understand them. In this study, 100% of the respondents tended to implicate that they lost interest in what the teachers were teaching when they could not make the connections between what the teachers taught and what they were familiar with in their lives in the U.S. Additionally, all dropouts in this study were second generation Pacific Islander-Americans but their parents were first generation and their families were struggling financially. Further, their parents were not aware of school and community resources that they could have used to help their students do well in school because they were busy just trying to make ends meet. Thus, teachers need to help fill this family capital gap by making sure subject-matter is relevant and taught in a culturally appropriate manner.

The empirical evidence from this study suggests that teachers not only should know what they teach but they should also speak another language and not necessarily NHOPI language, apart from their native tongues, which might allow them to use examples from any of the minority students' culture so that they will be able to make the connections with what they are being taught to real-life situations. Additionally, speaking a different language allows the teacher to use an example from a difference culture that might help the student understands what

is being taught. For example, one of the dropouts (M11) indicated that he had a hard time with financial literacy class in high school because he was taught to save and invest money for a rainy day. But, saving and investing money for a rainy day is meaningful only if you have extra money. However, in his case, his family was severely struggling financially. As such, they barely made their rent payments from month to month and other bills in addition to buying enough food to feed ten people in his household. Further, because this dropout was not able to make the connections between the financial literacy principles that were taught, he started sluffing which led to poor grades, then he finally dropped out of high school. Interestingly, 100% of the respondents indicated that they would feel more comfortable with their teachers if their teachers were from their own culture and could also speak their language. However, this is not easily done in the U.S. since majority of the teachers are Caucasian. But, if the teachers were able to use examples from the minority students' culture to enhance their understanding and learning in school, this would help them to do well in school as well. Therefore, school districts and principals should seek out and strategically place teachers who work well with minority students to effectively meet the needs of their minority students in their schools, in this case, the NOHPI students.

Second, knowing how to teach what you know is one of the critical elements of having high quality teachers that will be helpful in increasing educational achievements of NHOPI and minority students everywhere. I believe that this is a critical link that binds the first critical element (know what you teach) with the third (whom you teach) critical element. As such, school district leaders, principals, professional development leaders and teachers should be eagerly engaged in revising and re-revising their curriculum's framework for training of teachers

to make sure that teachers will be effectively prepared to know how to teach what they know to all students (Ball, Hill, & Bass, 2005).

Additionally, all educational leaders need to know the ethnic makeup of their classes ahead of time so that they can use proven research-based methods of teaching that have been shown in clinical settings to work best in schools. This will benefit all students, including the NHOPI and other minority students in the class. For example, Ball and colleagues (2005) argued that the quality of teachers that are teaching mathematics is lacking because teachers are lacking sound mathematical understanding and skills. Hence, it is important for teachers of mathematics to know how to present what they teach to elementary students and to students in junior high school. That is, the presentation of math concepts to elementary school must be different from the presentation of the same math concepts to junior high school students since junior high students have more experiences in mathematics than elementary students. And, as with every subject, teachers must know how to teach their students about what they know so that they must make the necessary adjustments to their presentations of the materials. Thus, they will be able to keep the students interested and avoid being bored during classes because boredom was shown in this study to be related to high school dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Utah and Salt Lake counties and in other dropout studies in the U.S. (Rumberger, 1987; Rumberger et al., 1990).

Furthermore, teachers' presentation of the course materials to classrooms of White-only students should be different from presentation of the same materials to classrooms made up of Whites, African-Americans, Latino & Hispanic Origins, Asians, NHOPI, Native Americans and Alaska Natives. The presentation of the course materials to classrooms of students from multicultural, multiethnic, and multi-linguistic students should be enhanced with pictures and

real-life examples that all students can relate to, and make connections with, which will help them understand the concepts well. However, the presentation of course materials will also be elevated to another level of understanding if teachers are also multi-lingual themselves and have some basic understanding of the cultures of the students that they are trying to teach.

Furthermore, the presentation of course materials should use all the necessary resources that teachers have access to in their schools—that is, to use the multimedia, PowerPoints, video clips, and any other electronic resources that might help enhance students' learning in addition to using group projects and other methods of teachings besides lecturing all the time. However, in order for this to happen smoothly, and work effectively, regular trainings from educational leaders using up-to-date effective multicultural teaching methodology, cultural awareness, and learning styles through professional development trainings should be strategically planned and executed at the highest level to effectively prepare students in the 21st century.

Third, to whom the teachers teach is the last element of critical enhancement to revitalize pre-service training of teachers in college and professional developments for teachers currently in the workforce. Even though the critical elements for enhancement to revitalize pre-service trainings and professional developments are discussed separately, they do not exist as separate entities but as a whole. They are only discussed here separately to call attention to their importance individually. It is critical for teachers to know the racial and cultural makeup of their students before school starts so that they can leverage the knowledge that they learn from their professional development about multicultural educations to effectively prepare for and to teach all students. However, if the racial and cultural makeup of the students is not known before school starts then the teacher need to talk to the students directly to gather this information on the first day of school. But, the culture of the students in the classroom must be clearly identified

using U.S. Census, state, and district data which are readily available on a yearly basis without any extra costs to the school and teachers. Additionally, to identify the students' learning styles, teachers should have that type of information from their professional development trainings or from the educational literatures that are available in scholarly journals. And, teachers can implement different learning styles of their students in their preparations and teachings (Mayes et al., 2010). This step is crucial to the critical enhancement of pre-service training and the professional development of teachers because the school needs to prepare teachers to teach “so well that family background is no longer an issue” (Martin Luther King Jr., 1967, as quoted in Rouse & Barrow, 2006, p. 100).

The responses from the dropouts in this study tended to implicate that teachers were not prepared to work well with NHOPI high school students. That is, teachers knew what they taught, and for the most part, know how to teach their lessons, but this study indicates that they failed to recognize to whom they taught their subject matter. The failures seem to have been indicated by the dropouts in this study as originating from a lack of connection between the dropouts and their teachers. For example, one of the dropouts did not make any connections with the concept of savings for a raining day since the dropout's family was barely surviving and therefore saving money does not make any sense. The dropout did not make the connection and he stopped going to class which he ended up with bad grades then he dropped out. Additionally, those teachers were not teaching material in a way that the NHOPI dropouts understood their lessons. Consequently, NHOPI students were not able to make connections with what their teachers taught them and they were not interested, were bored, and were sloughing classes. As Dewey (1916) said, students learn best what is relevant to them. That is, the teachers should take the appropriate time and examples to show NHOPI students why they are relevant to them.

Therefore, it is crucial that teachers know the cultural makeup of their students so that teachers can align their teaching styles with their students' learning styles (Auxier, 2003; Felder & Spurlin, 2005; Mayes et al, 2007; Rita, 1997). This concept was eloquently described by Jacobson (2001) when he asked: "Why should teachers be concerned about learning styles? Simply stated, when teachers teach in a way that acknowledge and validate different styles of learning, students do better" (Jacobson, 2001, p. 142). But what is learning style? Jacobson also noted that there are no common definitions of learning styles but suggested that professors should apply the concept of learning styles in their teaching to help their own students understand the course materials from various cultural perspectives (2001). Further, it is important to note that Jacobson indicated that learning styles are comprised of "those cognitive, affective, and psychological behaviors that indicate how learners interact with and respond to the learning environment and how they perceive, process, store, and recall what they are attempting to learn" (Jacobson, 2001, p. 142). Hence, students need to be engaged in their own learning and make connections with what they learn in their own personal lives. This also indicates that different styles of teaching will increase learning for all students regardless of race or ethnicity (Mayes et al., 2007). As such, students' academic performance will increase, which will lead to a reduction in the high school dropout rates. This is crucial in our quest to lower high school dropout rates among minority students in the U.S., but especially, for the purposes of this study, NHOPI high school students' dropout rates.

Annual Cultural Competency Trainings for High School Counselors

High school counselors are playing an important part in the education of our children. Children in America are increasingly more diverse, and are also multi-lingual, which presents a unique challenge to educators to make sure that school-family-community partnerships are

strong (Bryan, 2005). Therefore, the role of high school counselors, as education leaders, needs to be redefined to explicitly include the following basic duties: consistently tracking all students' academic performance to monitor their daily school activities and regularly meet with all students but especially the minority students who are underperforming. Additionally, school counselors should also communicate regularly with the parents or guardians of underperforming students, offer professional suggestions as how to mitigate educational problems, motivate students to do well at school, and regularly meet with teachers of underperforming students to explore other avenues that might be helpful in increasing academic performance of underperforming students (Bryan, 2005; Rowell & Hong, 2002). The dropouts in this study tended to implicate that their counselors did not meet with them often, even when they were not doing well in school.

In addition to redefining high school counselors' most basic and fundamental roles in the education of our children, they must be regularly trained to become more culturally competent and culturally sensitive to serve all students well. Therefore, policy makers must enact school policies that require all counselors to be trained annually in becoming culturally competent and culturally sensitive. In fact, all high school counselors need to have cultural competency and cultural sensitivity endorsements as part of their requirements for obtaining licenses to teach and work with all students and their parents (Amatea et al., 2007). These suggestions are in agreement with some of the conclusions from a study on multicultural counseling competence in the United States (Airen, 2009). In the study, 165 American School Counselor Association members participated in an online survey. The Multicultural Counseling Competence and Training Survey-Revised was used to examine the perceived multicultural counseling competence of counselors. Airen (2009) found that gender did not make a significant impact on

multicultural competency but race did. Additionally, counselors who had master's level or specialty courses on multicultural counseling were more competent than those who did not. Furthermore, counselors' multicultural competency levels ranged from somewhat competent to competent. Hence, annual training of high school counselors will help maintain competency level of those who are already competent in multicultural counseling while it also increases multicultural competency in those who are not. We must also teach multicultural counseling as part of counselors' professional development and pre-service training of students who want to be counselors as well. Thus, our high school counselors will be more prepared to effectively counsel, and guide our students towards higher academic performance.

Educating Policy-makers and the Needs of Minority Students

Policies that have guided the education of our children in the past decades must be upgraded to effectively change the way we teach our children in the 21st Century. Therefore, diversity among policy-makers needs to increase so as to reflect the diversity of the students in the districts and the states where they serve. As such, perspectives of minority students' educational issues will be adequately addressed in various school policies that will be enacted by policy-makers. Educational policy-makers in Utah are still overwhelmingly from the majority population. Perhaps diversity input to educational policy can be enhanced by giving senior members from the Coalition of Minorities Advisory Committee (CMAC) voting rights in policy-making decisions of the state board of education. Additionally, increasing number of minority legislators should also be encouraged since the Utah legislators are to governing body of educational policies. Right now, only the CMAC chair is allowed to be in the meeting with policy-makers but with no voting right. However, the policy-makers of education in Utah and elsewhere will be more likely, despite their good intentions, to enact "assimilationist policies that

will exclude minority languages and cultures from the schools and will not enhance their educational achievements” (Paquette, 1989, p. 405). Educational assimilation policy negative effects were also shown in the “kill the Indian so as to save the man within” here in Utah which involved taken of the Native American Indian children to be educated to ensure that they lived good lives (Cross, 1999, p. 944). Therefore, the cultures of the minority students are not taken into account in making policies. These policies will not address the learning styles of the minority students or the teaching styles of teachers, which is of paramount importance if we want to increase academic performance of minority students and prevent them from dropping out of high school.

For example, this study revealed that NHOPI high school students were told that they would not be allowed to change their high school counselors because of school policy. This policy was implemented to prevent students from changing counselors whenever they do not agree with the counselors’ advice. It would appear that if students who dropout often have a lack of connection with a counselor, as seems to be implicated in the responses to this research, then it might be a better policy to let students, especially at risk or ethnically diverse students change counselors at least on a reasonably limited basis to seek the type of connection that might enhance their persistence and success at school. As a result, the NHOPI students did not have good relationships with them and were not seeking their help. Thus, NHOPI students continued to have lower academic performance and they dropped out of high school.

Therefore, policy-makers should have been aware of this problem with all students, especially minority students, not being able to change their counselors if they are not comfortable with them or not being able to make connection with to enhance their educational experiences. However, the unawareness of policy-makers of the effects of the educational

policies that they enacted regarding minority education is possibly attributable to the fact that they have not read any or enough research studies on minority educational issues and dilemmas that they are facing at school. Furthermore, district and state level policy-makers are not involving teachers and parents in their policy decision making. Instead, state educational board and state legislature often make educational policies according to the information that they are provided by those they pay to do the research for them. This was a matter that I found while serving as a member of CMAC for two years. As such, the research studies provided tend to represent majoritarian views and it is possible that their efforts may not be beneficial to all students, especially the minority students. Further evidence about this was revealed in my personal conversation with one of the Utah State Senators which represented views from a few other Utah senators that wanted to push educational issues that they did not know will have negative impacts on minority students' education. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that educators and policy-makers who are familiar with educational issues and dilemmas of minority students should be included in the policy-making decision. An importantly step in that direction would be for minority educators to run for Utah State senate and house of representatives seats so that the racial makeup of the Utah State legislators be reflective of the changing demographics in Utah. Then, the minority legislators can be influential in enacting educational policies that address the minority issues in education.

In addition to the importance of having policy-makers understand the educational issues facing minority students, they should also understand the changing demographic in Utah and that of the nation which has been known for some time but adjustments to the changes have been slow and contentious at times due to the rise in minority population and increases in the number of immigrants from countries whose native language are not English (Berube et al., 2010). In

fact, University of Utah economist Pam Perlich said that Utah "...will continue to become much more diverse in many ways, including age, culture, language, nativity, race, ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomics" (as quoted in Kendell & Sperry, 2011, p. 5). Furthermore, she also predicted that the minority population will be about 41 percent of Utah population by 2050 (as quoted in Kendell & Sperry, 2011). Therefore, it is in the best interest of those in charge of the legislature now to make gradual changes to the process of implementation and formulation of educational policy that will affect minority population and their students' academic achievements. That is, almost half of the tax payers of the State of Utah will be from the minority population. If we do not help them to be better educated, the minority population will be over represented in the social programs of the state and federal government in the years to come which will further drain the financial resources from the state and the nation. This could result in lowering available resources for minority educational programs, and as a result educational challenges for minority students may be exacerbated.

In addition to increase in ethnic diversity and educational challenges among students in Utah, several educators have already been working together to mitigate the issues and challenges that students are facing in Utah. This argument is further supported by the fact that the Whitley Institute in 2009 organized six focus groups and discussions that were held over a period of eight months, in various places in Utah to discuss educational challenges facing students in Utah. Participants in these focus groups and discussions included university presidents, school board members, superintendents, teachers, business people, and professional colleagues with many years of experiences in public and higher education. Interestingly, participants in these focus groups and discussions "agreed that minority children are not given the priority that is required

for these children to succeed in school. Important programs and services to help these children are missing or underfunded” (Kendell & Sperry, 2011, p. 5).

Just as knowing the demographic change in Utah is important to the legislators to change their agendas and priorities for educating the minority population, so is the control of the educational policy in the state. The Utah State Board of Education has certain powers under the Utah State constitution to control and supervise public education but the racial makeup of that board is from the majority population. As such, minority educational issues will probably tend to not be equally or adequately addressed. Additionally, the Utah State Legislature controls the funding of the public education and is entrusted with holding schools responsible for their performance (Kendell & Sperry, 2011). As such, they require school personnel to be regularly trained to become effective in the execution of their duties and responsibilities. But who is supposed to train the legislature on the educational issues and problems in education in the state? They should be trained regularly by educators chosen by the Utah State Board of Education and the sitting governor on all educational issues that the state is facing. Furthermore, the governor also influences the educational agendas set by the legislature and other boards of education in the state. Besides, these three separate powers control some or all of education resources but they do not necessarily represent the views of the minority students. As such, they do not see and understand the minority students’ needs fully. Consequently, the groups are not working together for the benefits of all students. Their unwillingness to work together synergistically will not improve the achievement gap and the educational dilemmas of the minority students will be ignored.

Diversification of the State and District Board of Education

State and local school boards of education are heavily dominated by members of the majority. This may well both reflect and promote a certain unresponsiveness to important demographic changes in the state. Interestingly, the respondents in the focus groups were also concerned about this issue because they questioned whether “schools and districts, as presently organized, are sufficiently responsive to the important changes that are taking place in society at large” (Kendell & Sperry, 2011, p. 10). It is obvious that if we want to solve the educational issues that our children face in the state, we must work together to bring about the necessary changes to effectively prepare our children for the future. However, what is not so obvious in this process is the fact that the process of electing school board members is largely dependent on name recognition, money, and political ties and influences in the state or in the local districts. This is a process that it is presently very difficult for even the educated and solvent members of the minority population to overcome. Therefore, those in power need to address the question of how the state board of education process could be changed so that the boards of education racial makeups represent the demographic changes in the state (Hess, 2002). This can be accomplished by giving authority to the Coalition of Minority Advisory Committee to seek out highly qualified minority members from the largest minority groups in the state to serve as voting members of the state board of education. Those that meet the qualification criteria will also have to be approved by the governor. Then, they can present those that approve by the governor to the minority population to vote for in the election of state board of education. In this way, the perspectives on what works in the education of the minority population will be better heard, and the educational dilemmas of their children will be better addressed so that their educational achievement will increase to close the achievement gap that has divided us for decades.

Practical Implications

The Value of this Study

This study adds value to the high school dropouts' literature existed in the U.S. and elsewhere because of a paucity of studies on NHOPI high school dropouts. What is more, the findings from this study will help educators, policy-makers, and teachers to become aware of the factors that were related to dropout rates of NHOPI students. As such, they should use the findings from this study to guide them in their interactions with NHOPI high school students, to revise their teaching styles to accommodate NHOPI high school learning styles, and to enact research-based programs that may help raise NHOPI high school students' academic achievement. Additionally, the findings from this study will allow teachers, counselors, and administrators to work closely with NHOPI parents so that solutions to their students' lower academic performance can be adequately addressed.

Just as the findings of this study are important to teachers, principals, policy-makers, and high school counselors, so are the findings important to the NHOPI communities, parents, students, and their church leaders. That is, the NHOPI church leaders can do a better job reaching their NHOPI high school students' parents than their teachers and counselors to encourage them to work together with their students to raise their academic achievement. In fact, I am currently working with NHOPI religious leaders in teaching effective parental involvement to all thirty plus NHOPI units of congregations in Utah and Salt Lake Counties using factors related to dropout rates in the U.S., Tonga (Tatafu, 1997), the risk factors identified by Vakalahi (2009), and my own findings in this present study. Additionally, once the findings from this study are published, I will teach all parents in the congregations in both counties the factors related to NHOPI high school dropout rates. The values of this study cannot be measured

in terms of money but it can be measured in what our ancestors in Tonga referred to as *'ofa lī'oa*. *'Ofa lī'oa* literally means to love others by giving them all of what you have in your basket (*'oa*) made from the coconut leaves to hold your fishes, octopuses, seashells, seaweeds, and other foods from the ocean. As such, I view this study as *'ofa lī'oa* because it will help me and other educators to design dropout prevention programs that will help rescue many high school students from dropping out of high school not only in the NHOPI communities here in Utah but also across this nation, and in the islands of the Pacific as well. Additionally, the findings from this study will also help me and other NHOPI educators to design future studies to investigate if these factors that I found are also related to NHOPI college dropouts. Furthermore, the findings of this study will also help us to design future studies that enable us to find other factors that may be influential in the NHOPI high school and college students' decision to drop out of school but were not identified in this study. As such, the results from this study and future studies may help us lower the dropout rates among NHOPI College and high school students and raise their academic achievements and attainment as well. All of this will help us to better prepare our NHOPI students to do well in school and able to cope with the academic challenges of the 21st century.

Recommendations for Educators, Legislators, and Policy-makers

The practical implications of the findings from this study consist of four major suggestions which are pertinent to the future of NHOPI high school and college graduation. First, the findings from this study will undoubtedly benefit the schools where NHOPI students are currently attending and in the future. That is, the school educational leaders will use the findings to enhance and modify the way they work with NHOPI students. That is, the teachers and counselors can be better prepared to work with, and make connections with NHOPI students. This will make NHOPI students more comfortable to ask questions and thus do better in school.

Additionally, teachers, counselors, and principals will be able to invigorate the way they teach students especially NHOPI students so that they understand what they are being taught and what they want them to accomplish in their classes. Furthermore, the findings from this study will also help principals and other education leaders to design better professional development program for teachers so that they will teach, interact, and connect with all students but, for the purposes of this study, especially NHOPI students. Additionally, the policy-makers will be better informed of the factors that were related to NHOPI high school dropouts which will help them craft education policy that will help mitigate their educational difficulties. For example, school policy should be updated to grant all students permission to change their school counselor if they cannot work well with them to turn around their lower academic performance, and this will, of course, help prevent them from dropping out of high school.

In addition to what can be done with teachers, principals, and education policy-makers, the findings of this study will also help legislators understand the need to fund afterschool programs that will greatly benefit minority students. That is, they can put explicit provisions in legislation for education to provide funding for afterschool programs which will allow tutoring for minority students so that they do their homework well since their parents cannot help them at home. Additionally, the Utah State legislators should have provided explicit regulations for school districts that only allow them to use the education funds to build turf football fields if their graduation and dropout rates for each race are consistently maintained at 90% and up and 3% or less, respectively, every year. School districts in both counties are continually spending millions of dollars in building turf-covered football fields while their dropout rates are higher and graduation rates are either static or lower than 90% for all students (Park, 2010). Thus, the funding for education are spent on things that are not directly related to higher academic

performance and lowering of dropout rates for all students but especially for minority students.

The grass-covered football fields that the schools have right now are attractive; however, the millions of dollars used in building turf-covered football fields should have been spent on educational programs that may benefit minority and other lower performance students.

Additionally, a portion of the millions of dollars that school districts spent on turf-covered football fields should have been used to pay for teachers who specialize in core class instruction helping lower performing students to do well in school.

Recommendations for Parents of NHOPI High School Students

The findings of this study in the family, peer, personal, culture, and school-related factors that are related to NHOPI high school dropout rates will benefit NHOPI parents. That is, parents will be better informed on factors that will greatly influence their students' academic performance. The five factors from this study are like the "*lofa tala matangi*" proverb that our ancestors provide us as a warning thousands of years ago. *Lofa tala matangi* literally means "bird telling the wind." When you see seagulls flying away instead of circling the school of fishes in the ocean during your sailing to another island, you know that there is a very strong wind that is coming, and you must immediately seek a safe harbor to avoid being blown away from your final destination. One of the destinations for NHOPI high school students in their sailing to a better life is graduation from high school. Thus, NHOPI parents must know the five factors identified in this study well so that they must continually watch out for any "strong winds" that may come in the forms of any family, peer, personal, culture, and school-related factors to seek help immediately in preventing their students from dropping out from graduation, which is their final destination in high school.

In like manner, students should also be educated on the importance of the five factors found in this study to be related to NHOPI high school dropout rates. Educating our NHOPI

elementary, junior and high school students about these risk factors will help them understand the factors that will help prevent them from dropping out of high school so that they can graduate. Hence, they must also be taught about the importance of our ancestors' proverb "*lofa tala matangi*" in this connection. This might help them connect with our ancestors in the islands of the Pacific while they are sojourning in a foreign land. This type of teaching can be taught not only in the schools by NHOPI counselors but also at home in their families, communities, and their religious congregations throughout this nation and in the islands of the Pacific as well.

Recommendations for Religious Leaders of the NHOPI Students

Religious and community leaders of the NHOPI communities should also be taught to know about the five factors that are related to NHOPI high school dropout rates. For example, all the leaders should be taught about the importance of the influence of culture-related factors in the education of the children in their congregations. Also, the community and religious leaders can teach all parents the importance of moderation in various cultural practices such as overspending on funerals and weddings which may deprive them of extra money that may help pay for a tutor to help their students do well in school. The education of NHOPI parents and their students can take place in their religious congregational meetings on Sundays and during the week in their youth meetings as often as possible so that they clearly understand them.

In addition to educating NHOPI community and church leaders, they should also work with various educators to better train parents so that they may all know how to be involved in their children's education and their lives in general as well. This will help NHOPI parents and their students to also become better citizens of this country and effectively contribute to the betterment of our society.

Recommendations for Educators From the NHOPI Community

Fourth, all educators from the NHOPI communities should work together to share and form educational programs such as a tutoring program where they may volunteer their time to help their students to do well in school. This volunteering program will help supplement any teachers' help given at school. Additionally, this tutoring program will take advantage of the availability of a pool of bilingual educators to help NHOPI students understand the concepts being taught at school from their own cultural perspectives as well. Furthermore, bilingual educators can explain concepts in English and in another NHOPI language such as Hawaiian, Tonga, Samoan, and Fijian as well.

In addition to NHOPI educators creating educational programs for NHOPI students, NHOPI educators should also help train parents to help supervise their students during these educational programs. This will allow parents to volunteer their time when they can, and also to feel that they contribute to the education of their students or grandchildren as well. Hence, it will promote unity in the NHOPI community so that they may help each other's children to do well in school, which is a phenomenon that has been practiced so well in the NHOPI cultures.

Recommendations for non-NHOPI Educators and Researchers

The lack of research regarding NHOPI high school students' academic performance and dropout rates is an indication that educational researchers do not know the factors that influence these students' educational performance and attainment. One possible reason for this lack of pertinent studies is that educational researchers assumed that NHOPI high school dropout rates are caused by the same factors that were previously found among the Latino and Hispanic Origin, Native American and Alaska Natives, Asians, Blacks and African Americans, and Caucasians students. I would suggest to all educational researchers that NHOPI students' academic performance and dropout rates are fertile grounds for meaningful studies that will not

only benefit NHOPI students but also add to the existing NHOPI educational literature, which is basically nonexistent at the moment.

Additionally, future research studies on NHOPI students and dropouts are needed to determine the actual effects of NHOPI culture on their educational achievements so that we may know which components of the culture if any that may adversely affect them. Further, a pilot study is also needed to determine whether working during high school will help NHOPI students with their educational achievements. These are mere suggestions but the possibilities for more studies are endless so that we may know more about NHOPI students' educational achievements.

Recommendations for NHOPI Students' Athletic Coaches

NHOPI students are participating in various extracurricular activities in high schools throughout this state and this nation. But, quite often they are not allowed to participate because of bad grades. Coaches were shown to play an important part in the student-athletes' educational achievements in this study before they dropped out. Hence, it is important for the coaches to use the findings of this study to personally connect with and work with NHOPI high school student-athletes to make sure that they are motivated to do well in their schoolings. As such, they will maintain their eligibility and continue to play the sports they love which might enable them to get scholarship offers from colleges.

Recommendations for NHOPI Students

NHOPI students' educational achievements are gradually improving behind their Hispanic, Caucasian, and Asian counterparts. However, NHOPI students' dropout rates are much closer to the Hispanic dropout rates than to the Caucasian and Asian dropout rates. But, NHOPI students' educational achievements could be quickly raised to the levels of Caucasian and Asian students' educational achievements if they use the major findings of this study. That

is, they will study the factors related to dropout rates carefully and use them like “*pelu la kei mama ‘o*” (fold the sail ahead of time) to avoid being blown away from their final destination-graduation.

Additionally, NHOPI students should also know all the risks factors for dropping out and all the protective factors against dropping out of high school (Vakalahi, 2009) so that they may be better prepared to face the challenges in their lives and education. Thus, they will work harder than they are right now in order to achieve success and be able to make connections with their teachers and counselors.

Further, NHOPI students should also learn time management well so that they can avoid falling behind on their school work and prevent them from spending excessive amount of time hanging out with their peers and going out to lunch during school time which have been shown to be associated with dropout rates.

Conclusion and Future Research

This study has a significant potential to add much needed empirical evidence to the existing high school dropouts’ literature which contains relatively no studies on the factors that are related to Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander dropout rates in the United States. I found that family, peer, personal, culture, and school-related factors are related to dropout rates among NHOPI high school students in Utah and Salt Lake Counties in Utah. Some of my findings are consistent with similar research regarding students from other ethnic groups. However, some of my findings pinpointed factors that are relatively unique to NHOPI students. The conceptual framework and the findings of this study will provide fertile grounds for future educational studies on NHOPI students’ academic performance in the United States and in the islands of the Pacific.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Research Questions

Demographic Questions

1. What level of education did your parents complete? Grandparents?
2. Where were your parents born? Grandparents?
3. When you were in high school, did you qualify for fee waivers or free lunch?
4. How would you describe your family during your high school time: well-off financially, moderate income or struggling financially?
5. Tell me about your parents work while you were in school?
6. To what extent did both your parents live with you during your school years?
7. Who raised you during your high school years?
8. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
9. Were there any other families living with you and your parents in the home?
10. What levels of education have your brothers and sisters achieved?
11. What was the language spoken in your home during your school years?
12. What language did your parent's communicate in while you were in high school?
13. What was your first language?
14. What grade in Junior High School or High School have you reached?
15. How would you define your race or ethnicity?
16. What is your religious background or preference?
17. How often did your parents attend teacher conferences with you?
18. Who were the first in your family to come to America?

Questions for the Participants

Personal-Related

1. To what extent were you absent from school? How many days a month, on the average, do you estimate? Why were you absent?

2. What was a typical reason for missing school?
3. What barriers or challenges did you encounter that might have made it harder for you to stay in school?
4. Who, if anyone, tried to help you stay in school? Who were they? Why do you think they tried to keep you in school?
5. What are your feelings about leaving school early without graduating?
6. What do you think would have helped you choose to remain in school?
7. How well can you read and speak English well? What other languages do you speak? How well?
8. Think of a time you were reading something for fun, or beyond your school assignments. What type of reading was it? Would that be normal for you?
9. How much do you read? In what language primarily?
10. Could you describe any disciplinary actions or trouble you had at school?
11. How would you describe yourself as a student?
12. What did you do if you did not understand what was being taught?
13. To what extent were you working when you were in school? What kinds of work did you do?

Family-Related

1. How did your parents or (guardian) interact with the school?
2. How did your parents contribute to your education?
3. What was your family's response when you decided to leave high school early?
4. Did you have a computer at home that you use for your homework?
5. To what extent did you use the internet for homework at home?

Peer-Related

1. What kinds of friends did you have while at school? What was their influence on your decision to leave high school early? What was their opinion, or advice?
2. Did you have cousins or siblings that were in the same school with you? What kinds of interaction did you have with them that might be related to you dropping out of schools?

3. How much time did you spend with your peers on a daily or weekly basis?
4. What kinds of things or activities that you and your peers do?

Culture-Related

1. What elements of your culture that might be a factor for you dropping out of school?
2. Were you involved in your cultural events? About how much time did you spend in doing those cultural events?
3. What elements of your culture that might be helpful to you to staying in school if you follow them?
4. Do you identify with your parents' culture or the American culture or both?
5. Is there a role model for you from your culture? Who is that person and why?
6. Could you explain how your parents spend their financial resources in cultural events such as funerals, weddings, and church collections?
7. What kinds of stress did you encounter in trying to live both of your parents' culture and the American culture?
8. Did your parents put more emphasis in school or religion?

School-Related

1. What was your relationship like with your counselors?
2. Did you feel that your teachers cared about you? How?
3. Did you feel that any of your teachers had any bias against you based on your culture, race, religion or some other reason? How?
4. Can you explain in your own words any violence or bullying in school?
5. Will you share your experiences about a time that you repeat a grade?
6. Can you describe your experiences when you took a class that was difficult when you were at school?
7. What extracurricular activities were you and/or your friends involved in?
8. Will it make a difference if one of your teachers was from your own culture? Why is that?

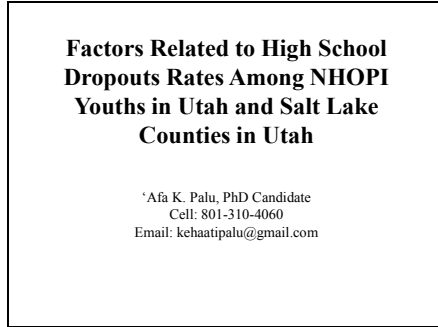
Others

1. Are there any other experiences, you have not shared with me, that you want to share with me at this time so that we might be able to understand your educational experiences better?

APPENDIX B

Recruitment Announcements Presentation and Consent Form

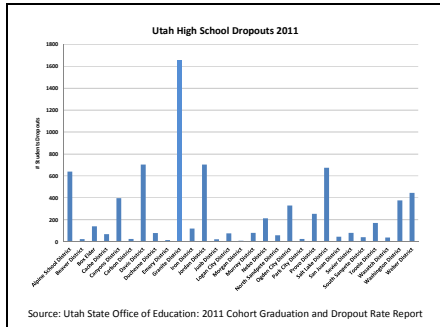
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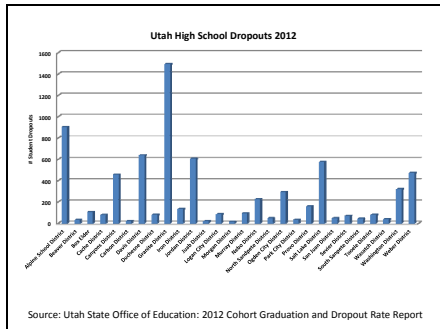
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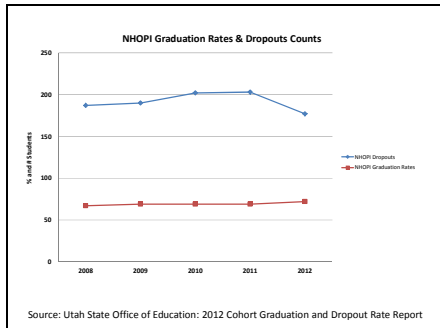
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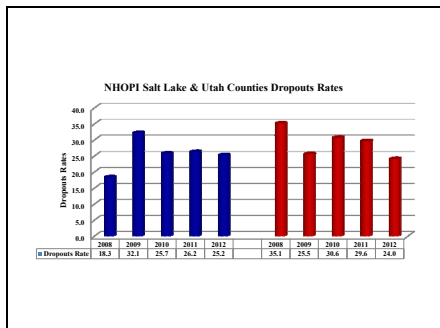
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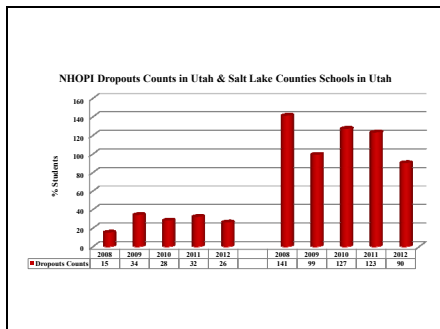
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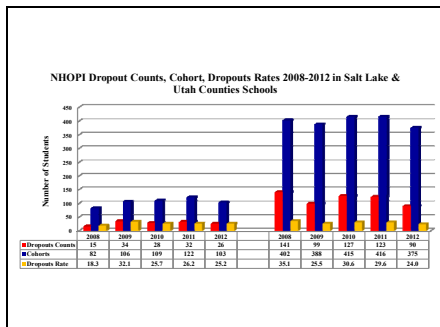
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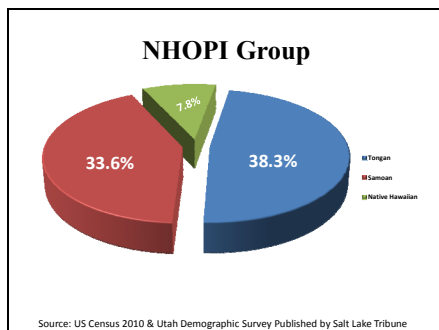
Slide 7



Slide 8



Slide 9



Slide 10

What to do next?

- Community leaders and all other concerned citizens help with the following:
 1. Identify all dropouts in their community within the last 5 years
 2. Call or email 'Afa with your list of names and address and any contact information.
 3. 'Afa will come to your ward on Sunday and you show him who is who? Then he takes care of the REST!
- Afa will talk with dropouts about their educational experiences first.
- Second, help them to get their GEDs
- Results will be shared with you concerning emergent themes and patterns and not personal information
- You and Parents can help our kids to stay in school

Factors Related to High School Dropout Rates Among Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific
Islander Youths in Salt Lake and Utah counties in Utah

Consent to be a Research Subject

Introduction

This research study is being conducted by ‘Afa K. Palu, doctoral student, from the BYU Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations. We seek to understand the factors that affect individuals’ decision to drop out from high schools in Salt Lake and Utah counties.

Procedures

You will be asked to participate in a private interview that should take about 30 minutes depending on how fully you wish to respond to the researcher’s questions. The questions will be based on your experience in high school, and your own thoughts regarding what factors, individuals and influences affected your early exit. We will also seek to understand your educational and career plans for the future. Your identity will be kept confidential in any discussion of the results. The interview will be audio recorded and then transcribed.

Risks/Discomforts

There are minimal risks for participation in this study. However, you may feel emotionally discomfort when answering questions about things you experienced in high school, or the factors that influenced your educational path. You may discontinue the interview and ask to not have your data used at any point in the research or interview.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. However, it is hoped that through your participation researchers will learn more about the factors and unintended consequences that may provide barriers to success for all students. We may be able to influence local schools to organize interventions more effectively for students in the coming years based on what we learn from you and other participants.

Confidentiality

All information provided will remain confidential and will only be reported with non-identifying assigned pseudonyms. All data, including tapes/transcriptions from the interview will be kept

secured, and will be stored in a locked storage cabinet and password protected hard drive in a secure faculty office. After the research is completed, notes and tapes will be destroyed.

Participation

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at anytime or refuse to participate entirely.

Questions about the Research

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact ‘Afa K. Palu at (801) 310-4060, kehaatipalu@gmail.com.

Questions about your Rights as Research Participants

If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project and research, you may contact the BYU IRB Administrator at (801) 422-1461, A-285 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602, irb@byu.edu.

I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Researcher’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

Institutional Review Board and Provo School District Approval Letters

Institutional Review Board
for Human Subjects



Brigham Young University
A-285 ASB Provo, Utah 84602
(801) 422-3841 / Fax: (801) 422-0620

January 16, 2013

Professor Clifford Mayes
306D MCKB
Campus Mail

Re: X 130010

Factors Related to High School Dropout Rates among NHOPI Youths in salt Lake and Utah Counties in Utah

Dear Afa Kehaati Palu

This is to inform you that Brigham Young University's IRB approval of the above research study is contingent upon the receipt of the following:

- Letters from Alpine, Provo, Salt Lake, and Granite school districts indicating that they have read your protocol and they agree to release potential participant contact information.

The approval period is from 1-16-2013 to 1-15-2014. Your study number is X130010. Please be sure to reference this number in any correspondence with the IRB.

Continued approval is conditional upon your compliance with the following requirements.

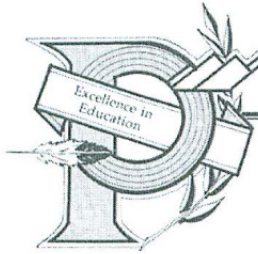
A copy of the Informed Consent Document, approved as of 1-16-2013 is enclosed. No other consent form should be used. It must be signed by each subject prior to initiation of any protocol procedures. In addition, each subject must be given a copy of the signed consent form.

All protocol amendments and changes to approved research must be submitted to the IRB and not be implemented until approved by the IRB.

A few months before this date we will send out a continuing review form. There will only be two reminders. Please fill this form out in a timely manner to ensure that there is not a lapse in your approval. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Allen Parcell, PhD., Chair
Santee M.P. Munoz, Administrator
Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects



PROVO CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Keith C. Rittel
Superintendent

Ray W. Morgan
Assistant Superintendent

March 14, 2013

Brigham Young University IRB
A-285 ASB
Provo, UT 84602

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to give approval for 'Afa K. Palu to conduct a research study at the Provo High School in Provo City School District. I have reviewed the study and give permission for the study to move forward.

If you have any questions or need additional information, feel free to contact me at (801) 374-4868. I would be interested in the results of the study.

Sincerely,

Ray W. Morgan
Assistant Superintendent
Provo School District