

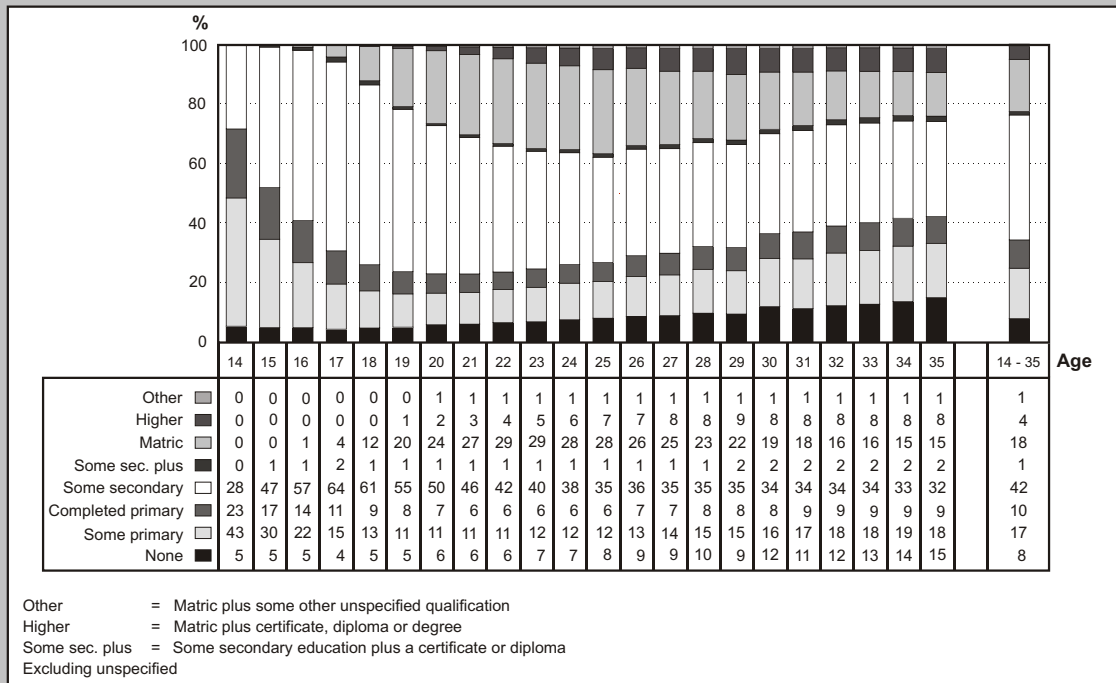
In South Africa, the official compulsory age for school attendance is from 7 years to 15 years. Children who are in the last two years of compulsory education, i.e. 14 and 15 years, fall within the category of youth. Children of this age should have completed primary school, which comprises seven years of education.

Education levels of youth aged 14-35 years

Figure 4.1 below shows the total population of youth of South Africa in each age category by their highest level of educational attainment.

Those who indicated that they had no formal education are proportionately fewer among younger youth. As Figure 4.1 indicates, the proportion of youth without any formal education gradually increases with age, from 5% among those aged 14 years to 15% among those aged 35 years. Nationally, 8% of all youth indicated having had no formal education.

Figure 4.1: Highest level of education attained by youth, by age



A large proportion of youth in the age category 14-17 years had only ‘some primary education’, that is, between grades 1 and 6. This group constitutes 43% among 14-year-old youth but moves down to 15% among those aged 17 years. The national proportion of all youth with similar educational qualifications stood at 17% in 1996.

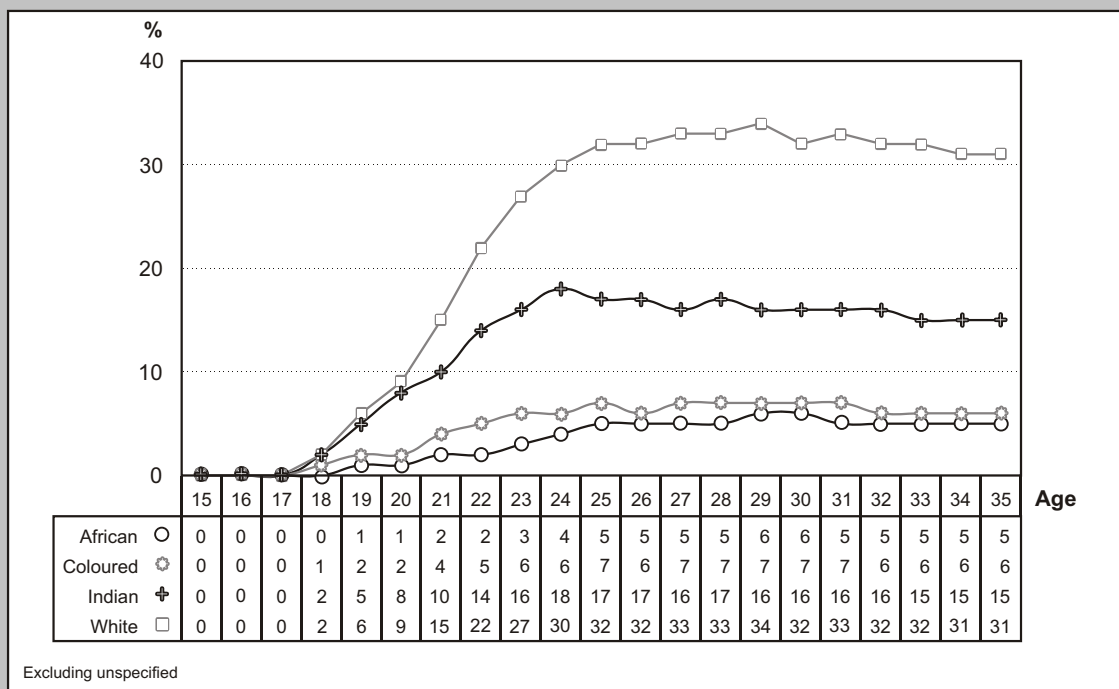
Generally youth whose highest educational level was ‘some secondary’, that is grades 8 to 11, were the largest proportion in all the age categories except the 14 years age category. Nationally more than two in every five youth (42%) had ‘some secondary’ education.

The proportions of youth with standard 10 or matric (grade 12) as their highest qualification was largest (29%) among those in the 22 and 23 years age category. A smaller proportion of 15% of youth in the 35 years age category had grade 12 or matric as their highest qualification. Of all the youth in South Africa, those who had matric as their highest qualification made up 18%.

Regarding post-matric qualifications, 8% of youth aged 35 years had qualifications higher than matric.

On average, white youth form the largest percentage of youth with post-matric qualifications, followed by Indian and coloured youth. Figure 4.2 shows that at 18 years, 2% of white and Indian youth and 1% of coloured youth already had post-matric qualifications.

Figure 4.2: Percentage of youth with post-matric qualifications in each age category, for each population group



Among African youth, the proportion of youth with post-matric qualifications remains comparatively small throughout, for example, 5% among those aged 35 years.

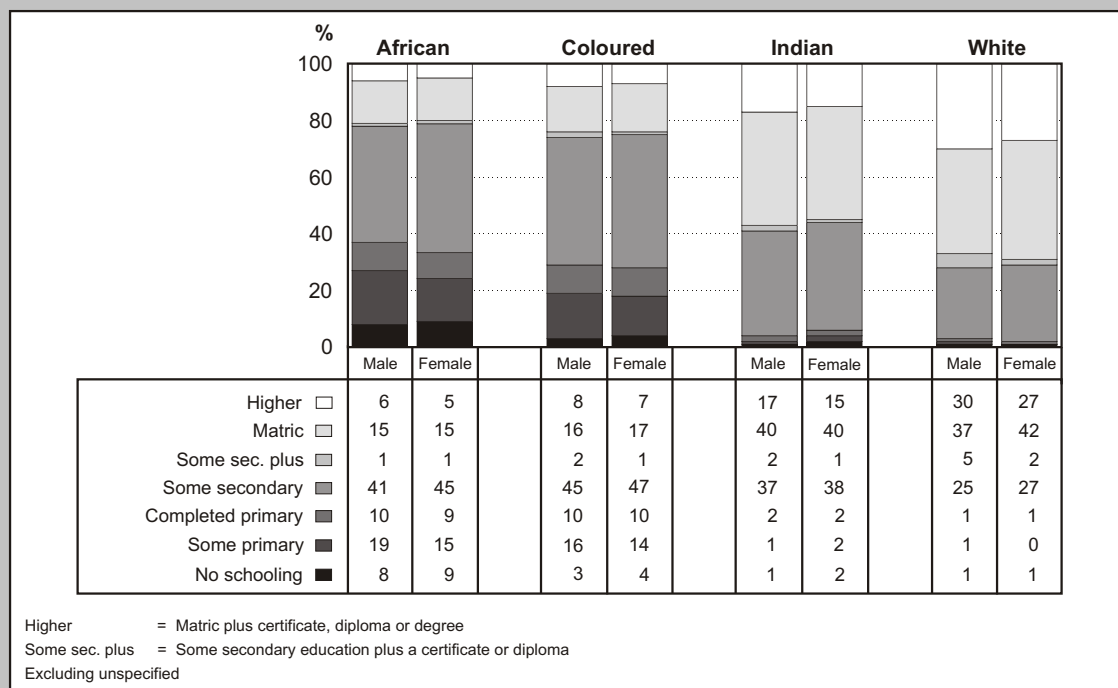
Coloured youth show a similar trend to African youth. The proportion of coloured youth with post-matric qualifications is also relatively small throughout; only 6% of coloured youth aged 35 years had such qualifications.

Compared to Africans and coloureds, the percentage of Indian youth with post-matric qualifications is larger throughout, e.g. 10% among those aged 21 years, 18% among those aged 24 years and 15% among those aged 35 years.

Among white youth, however, Figure 4.2 portrays a picture totally different to that of other population groups, particularly of African and coloured youth: 15% of white youth aged 21 years have post-matric qualifications. This proportion doubles to 30% among those aged 24 years. From the age of 24 to 35 years, at least three in every ten white youth reported having post-matric qualifications.

The overall picture of the education levels attained by youth in the different population groups in South Africa is shown in Figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3: Highest qualification of youth by population group and sex



Comparatively, African youth are the most disadvantaged group as regards access to educational opportunities. Eight per cent of young African males and 9% of African females reported having had no formal education while 41% of African males and 45% of African females had completed 'some secondary education' (between grade 8 and 11) as their highest qualification.

Although the proportion of youth without any formal education was relatively smaller among both male and female coloured youth, (3% and 4% respectively), they also share educational characteristics with African youth. Forty-five per cent of coloured male youth, and 47% of coloured female youth had some secondary education.

Among Indian and white youth in particular, those with lower qualifications form only a small proportion. A large proportion of Indian youth, i.e. 57% of males and 55% of females, had matric or higher while among white youth 67% of males and 69% of females had matric or higher.

The percentage of youth with post-matric qualifications was higher among whites, both males and females, than the other population groups.

Attendance at educational institutions

Figure 4.4 shows the percentage of youth in each age category by whether or not they were studying. The age category with the highest proportion of youth studying at the time of Census '96 was the 14 year olds (94,3%).

From 15 years upward, the proportion of youth in each age category that was studying decreased. For example, 12% among those aged 27 years were studying decreasing to 6% of all those aged 35 years.