

THE HOUSTON ARTS SURVEY: A Conversation on Participation, Perceptions, and Prospects

25 September 2012



Challenges and Opportunities for the Arts

Some Key Findings from the First-Ever Houston Arts Survey

Stephen L. Klineberg

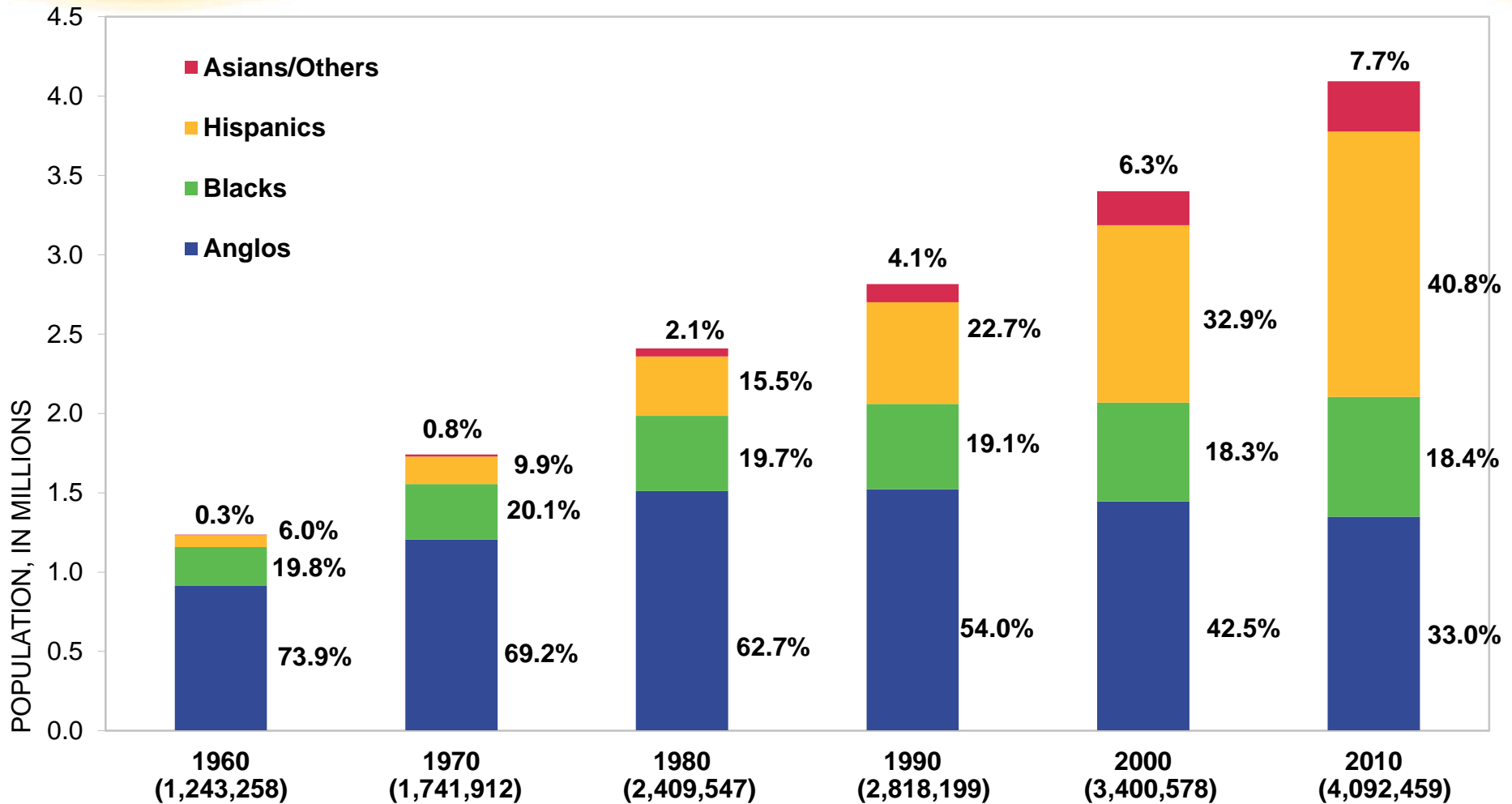
Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University



HOUSTON'S NEW PRO-GROWTH AGENDA

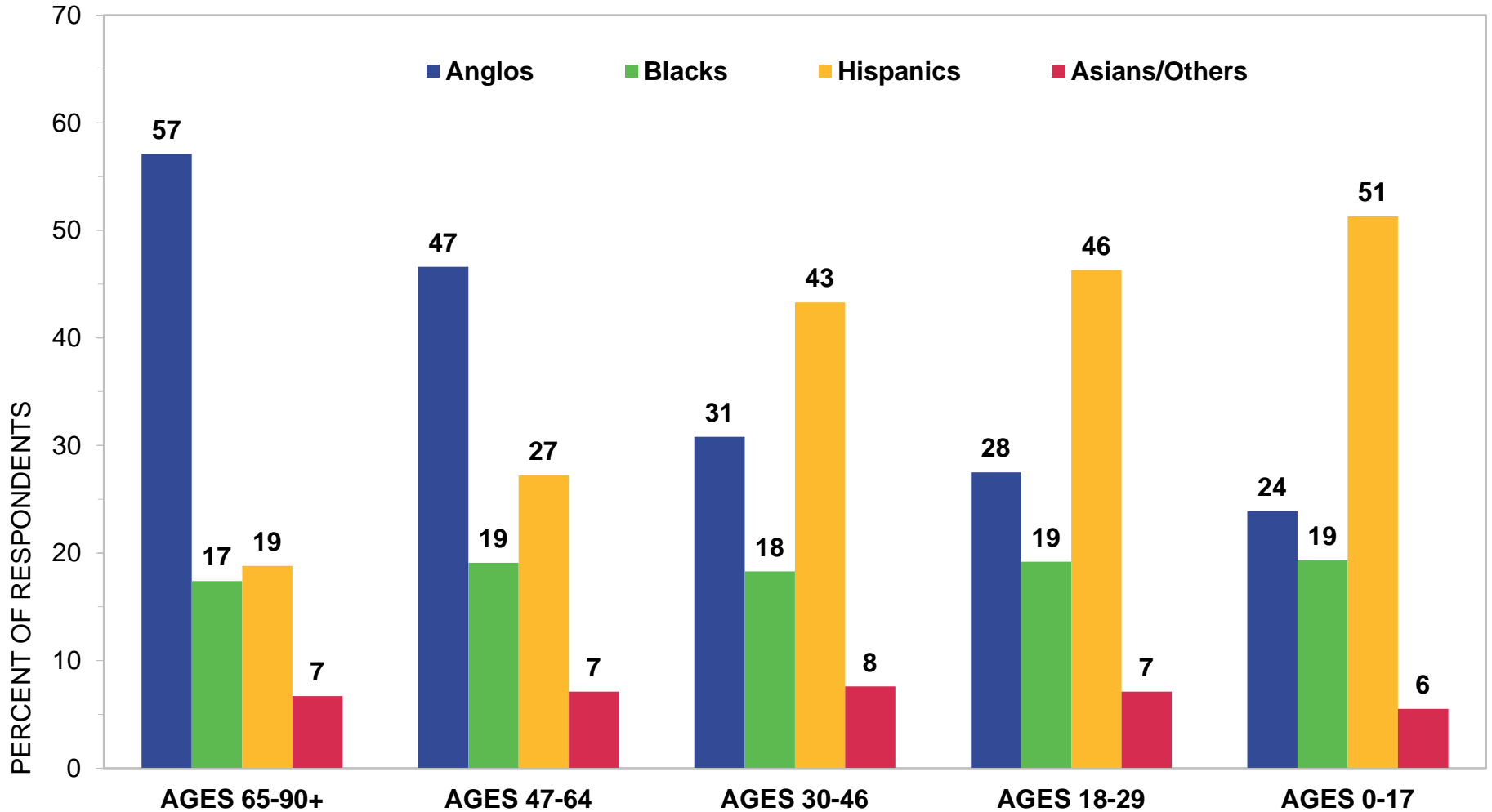
- ❑ **To prosper in the new high-tech, knowledge-based, global economy, Houston will need to nurture a far more educated workforce and find ways to redress the rising inequalities.**
- ❑ **To attract the talent that will grow the knowledge industries, Houston needs to develop into a much more appealing urban destination and continue to improve its overall quality of life.**
- ❑ **If this region is to flourish in the years ahead, it will need to grow into a more unified and inclusive multiethnic society, capitalizing on its burgeoning ethnic and cultural diversity.**
- ❑ **The vitality, quality, and visibility of the arts will have much to do with determining this city's success in the years ahead.**

THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATIONS OF HARRIS COUNTY (1960-2010)



SOURCE: US CENSUS. CLASSIFICATIONS BASED ON TEXAS STATE DATA CENTER CONVENTIONS.

ETHNICITY BY AGE IN HARRIS COUNTY (THE 2010 CENSUS)





**THE FIRST-EVER
HOUSTON ARTS SURVEY
(November 2011 to January 2012)**

THE HOUSTON ARTS SURVEY

- ❑ Supported by a special grant from Houston Endowment Inc., the Houston Arts Survey was developed during 2011 through periodic meetings with local arts leaders and national experts.
- ❑ Between November 2011 and January 2012, 1,200 scientifically-selected Harris County residents were interviewed, with 70% reached by landline and 30% by cell phone.
- ❑ Weights were assigned to the data to ensure that the final distributions are in close agreement with the actual Harris County distributions with respect to ethnicity, age, gender, education, home ownership, and geographic information.
- ❑ The results presented here reflect the weighted data.



ATTENDANCE AT ARTS EVENTS

FAVORITE FREE-TIME ACTIVITIES

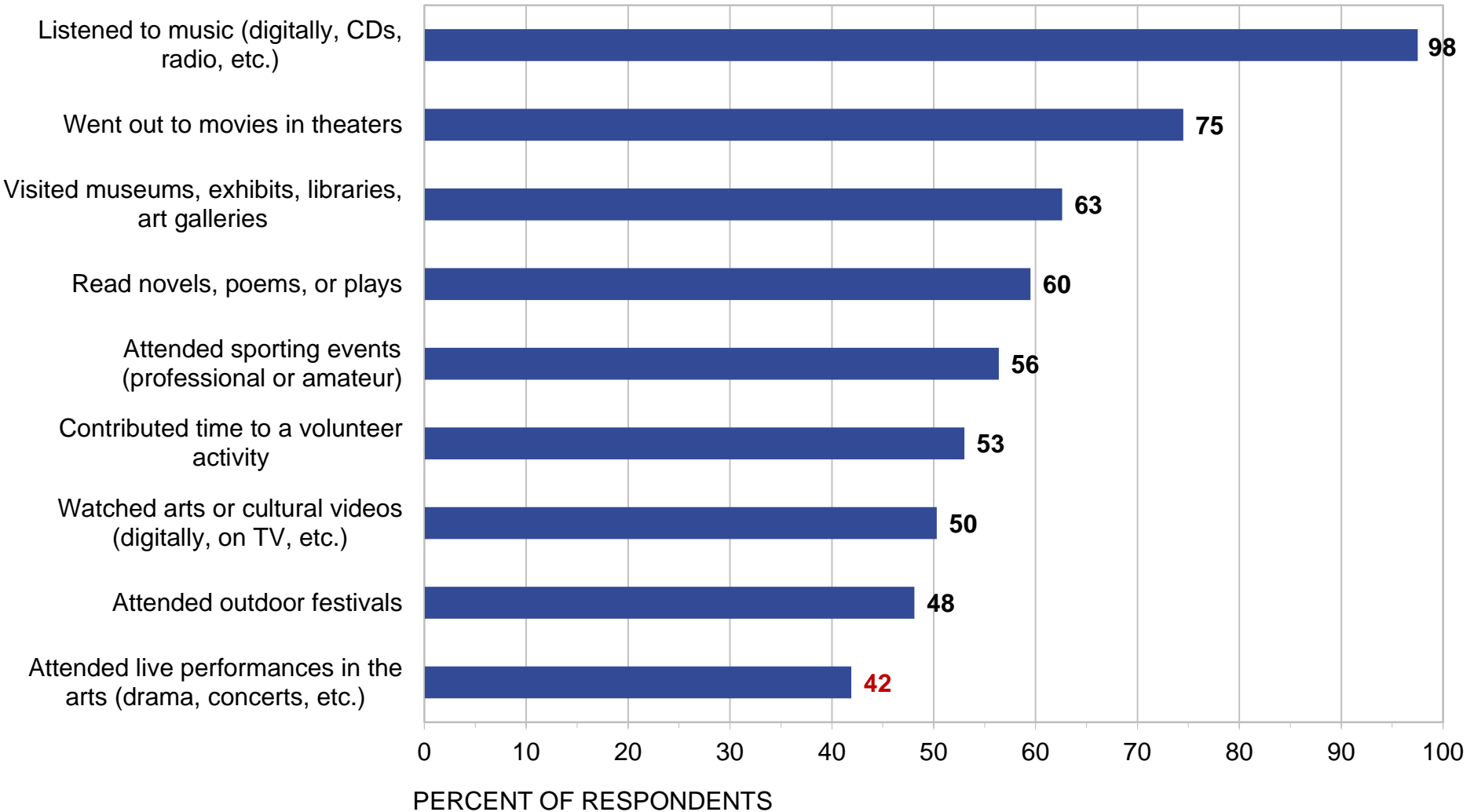
❑ “First of all, a question about your free-time activities. Thinking about all the different things you do when you’re not at work, or taking care of family chores, or sleeping – which one is your overall favorite free-time activity?” (Open-ended.)

❑ The most frequently mentioned favorite leisure activities*:

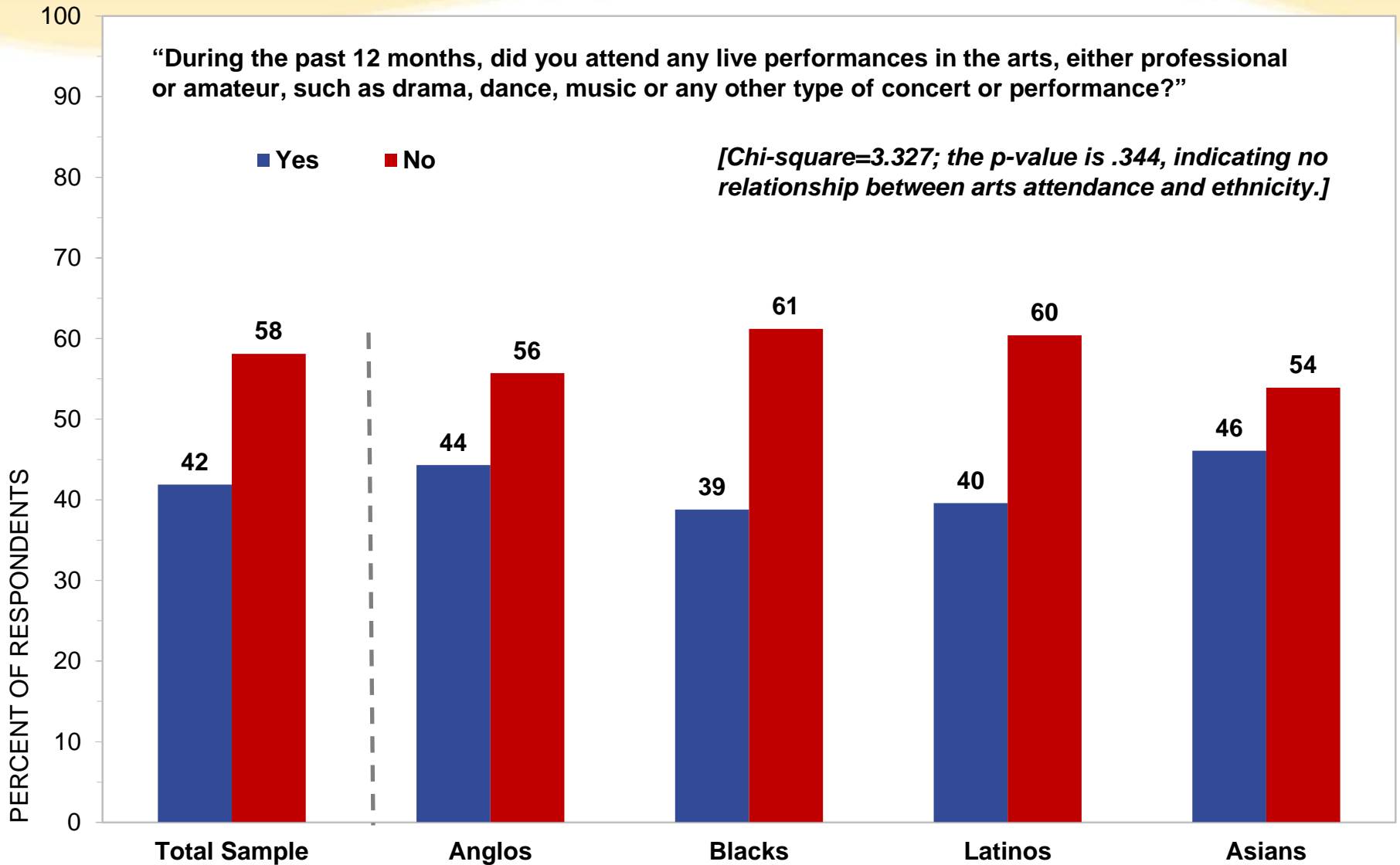
Sports (attending or playing, including outdoor sports)	17.0%
Watching TV or recorded videos	12.2%
Reading	11.3%
Social activities, with friends and family	11.3%
Arts (attending, performing, or creating)	10.3%
Exercise, working out	8.3%
Relaxing, napping	5.9%
Watching movies	5.2%
Spending time on a computer, tablet, or smartphone	4.9%

* Note: For those who gave multiple answers, only the first response is presented here.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES ACTUALLY ENGAGED IN DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS



ARTS ATTENDANCE: BY ETHNICITY

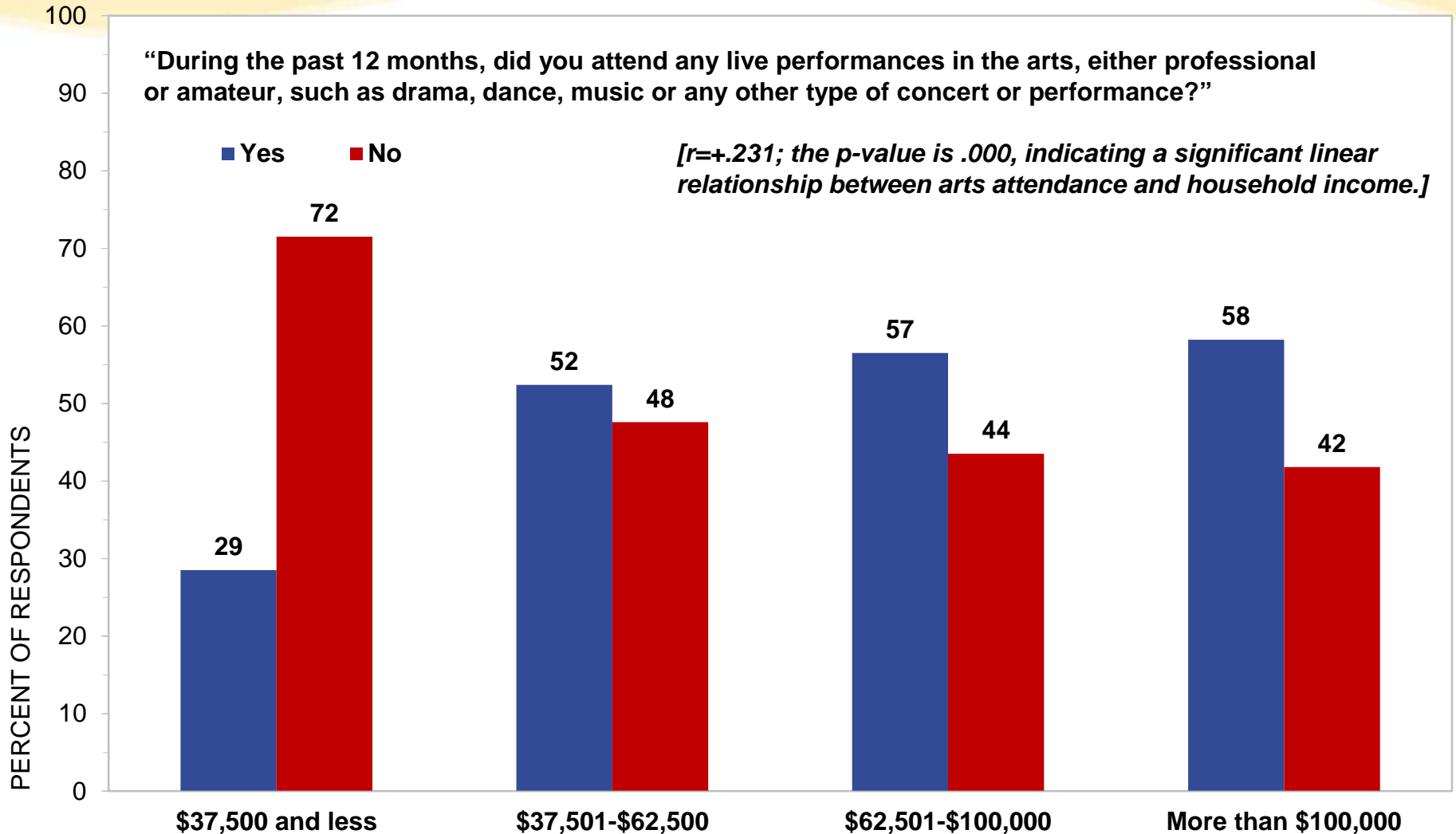


ARTS ATTENDANCE: BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

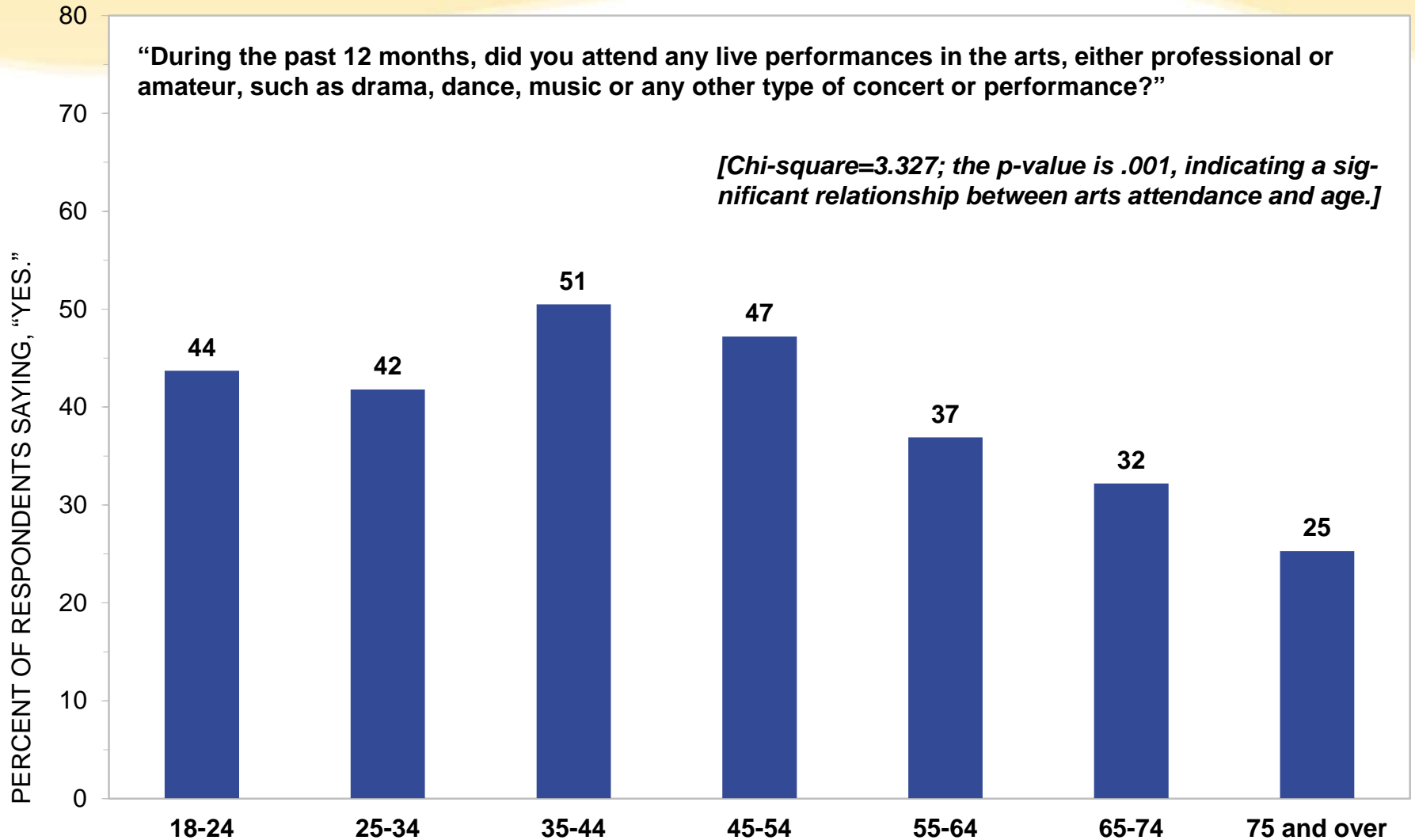
“During the past 12 months, did you attend any live performances in the arts, either professional or amateur, such as drama, dance, music or any other type of concert or performance?”

■ Yes ■ No

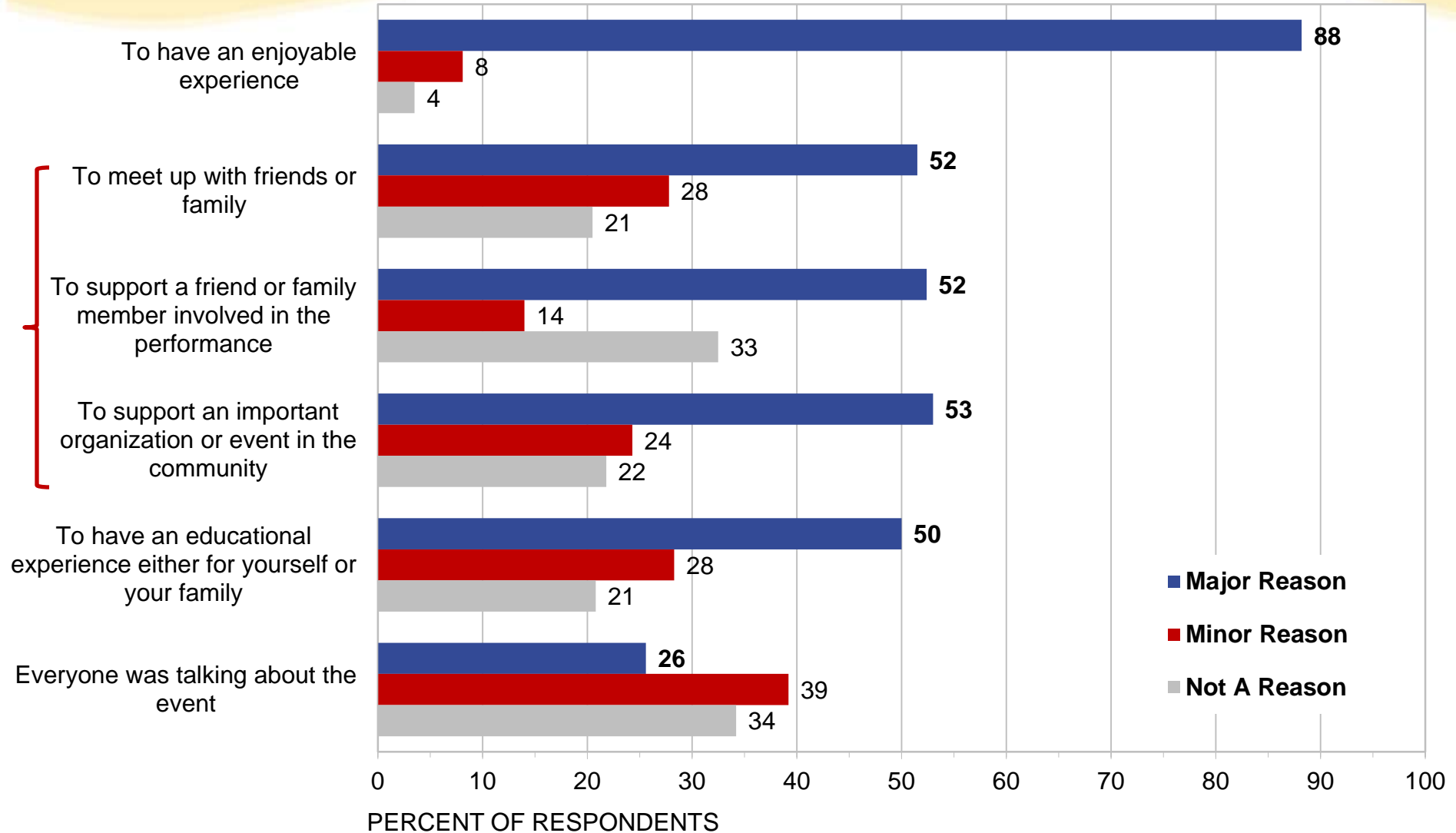
[$r=+.231$; the p -value is $.000$, indicating a significant linear relationship between arts attendance and household income.]



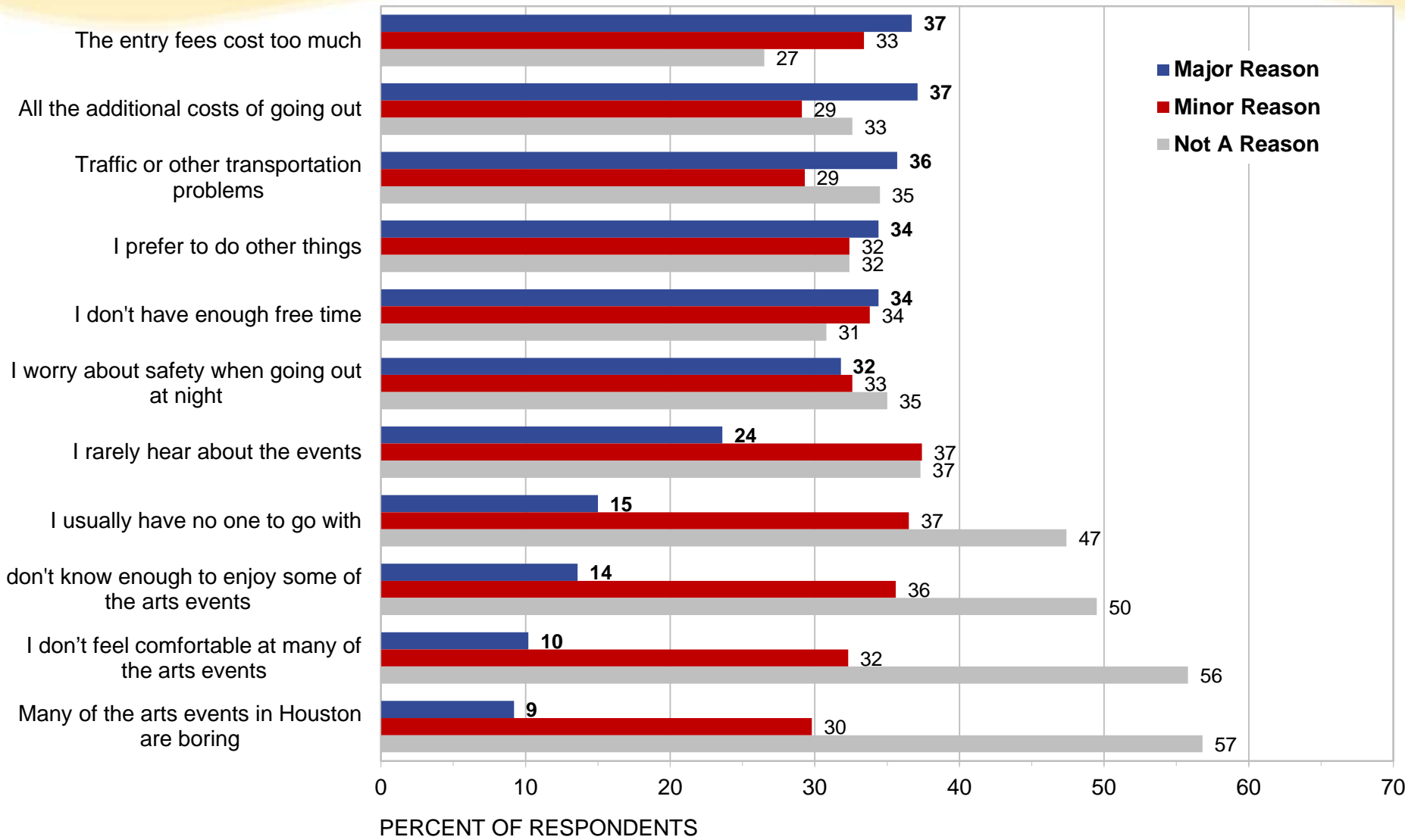
ARTS ATTENDANCE: BY RESPONDENTS' AGE



REASONS FOR ATTENDING A LIVE PERFORMANCE IN THE ARTS DURING THE PAST YEAR



REASONS FOR *NOT* GOING OUT MORE OFTEN TO ARTS OR CULTURAL EVENTS



PARTICIPATION IN ARTS ACTIVITIES



ACCESSING THE ARTS AT HOME

- ❑ **Many more people are viewing or listening to arts broadcasts (at home, on radio, TV, or online) than are attending live arts performances.**
 - 98% listened to some kind of music and 50% watched arts or cultural videos at home, compared to 42% who actually attended a live performance in the arts during the past 12 months.

- ❑ **Exposure to the arts at home seems clearly to enhance rather than depress attendance at actual arts events.**
 - 36% said their ability to listen to music through the media actually increased their interest in attending live musical events; only 4% said it decreased their attendance, and 59% said it had no effect.
 - 47% said their ability to watch cultural videos increased their interest in going out to such events; 7% said it reduced their attendance.

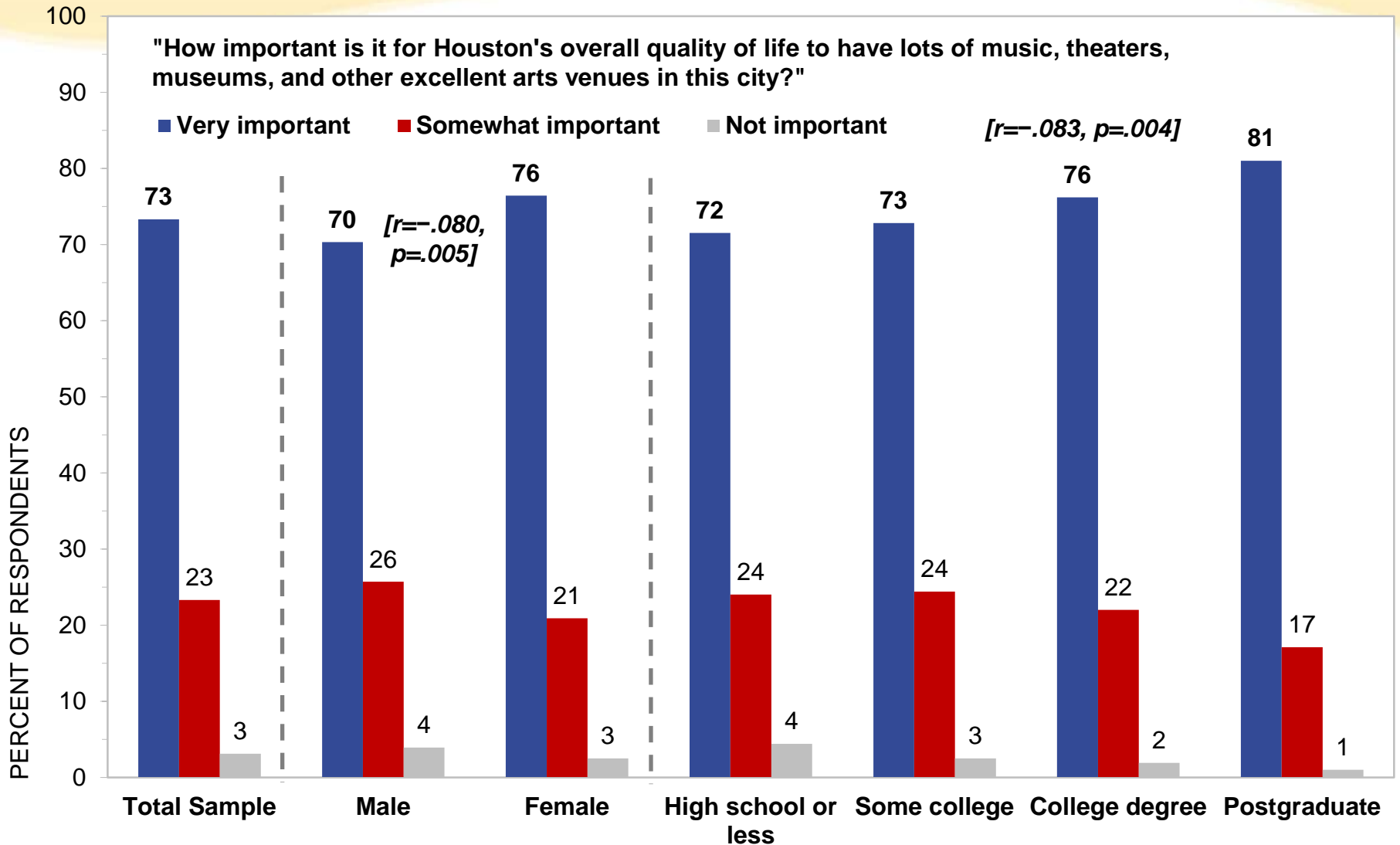
PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT WITH THE ARTS

- ❑ **More than a third (37%) of all Harris County adults said that they were actively participating in the arts (e.g., performing, creating artistic objects, writing, and other creative endeavors). National surveys have found that only about 10% of all Americans report having any personal involvement with the arts.**
- ❑ **There was a clear relationship between respondents' education and their personal participation in the arts. Age was also a significant predictor. Respondents' ethnic backgrounds were generally unrelated to their personal participation in the arts.**
- ❑ **Of all the 445 respondents who reported being personally involved in the arts during the past 12 months, 31% said they were currently taking classes to improve their skills in one or more of these arts activities. This represents more than one in ten (11%) of the entire Harris County adult population.**

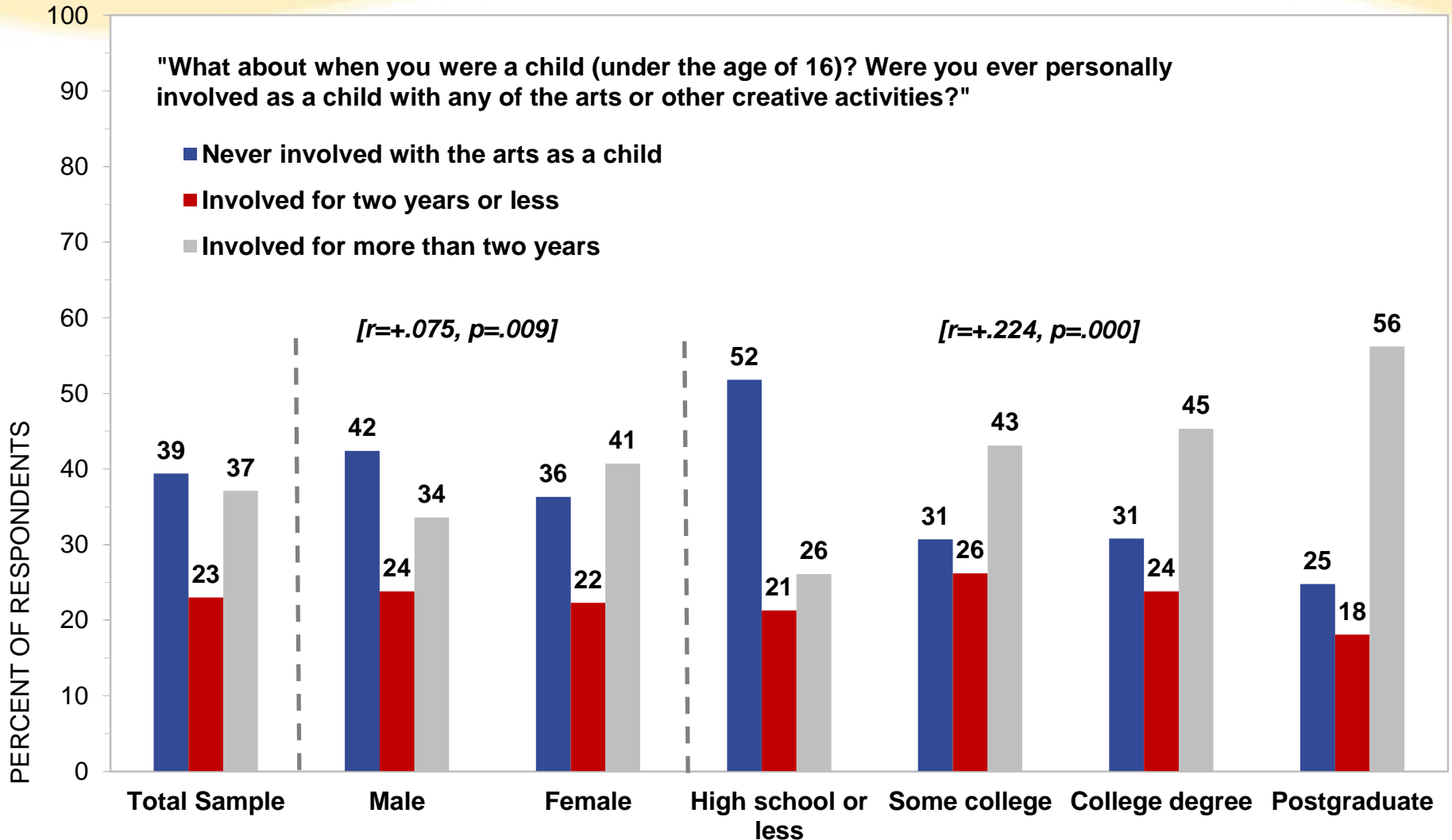


SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS

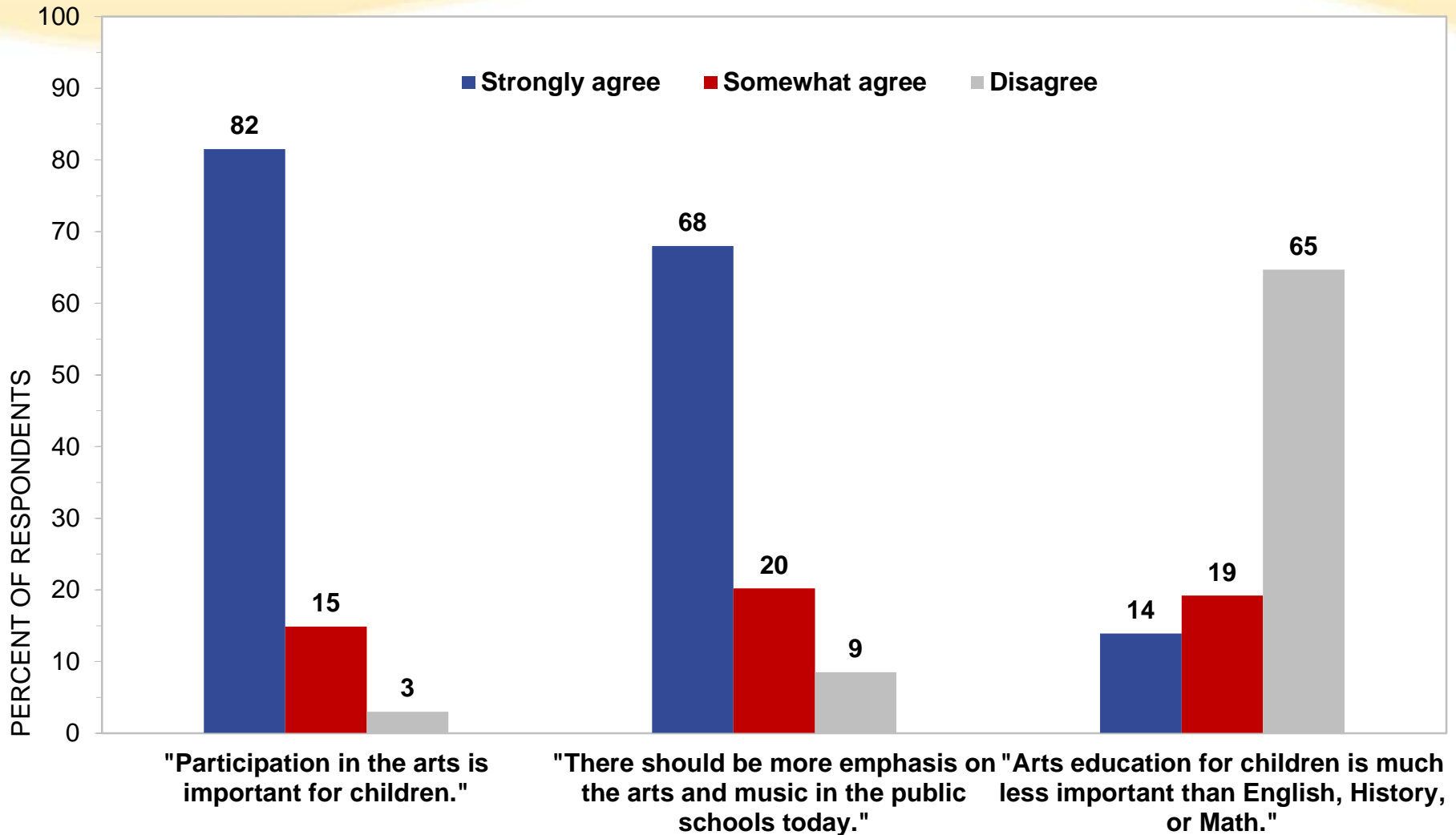
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ARTS FOR HOUSTON: TOTAL SAMPLE AND BY GENDER AND EDUCATION



EARLY EXPOSURE TO THE ARTS: TOTAL SAMPLE AND BY GENDER AND EDUCATION

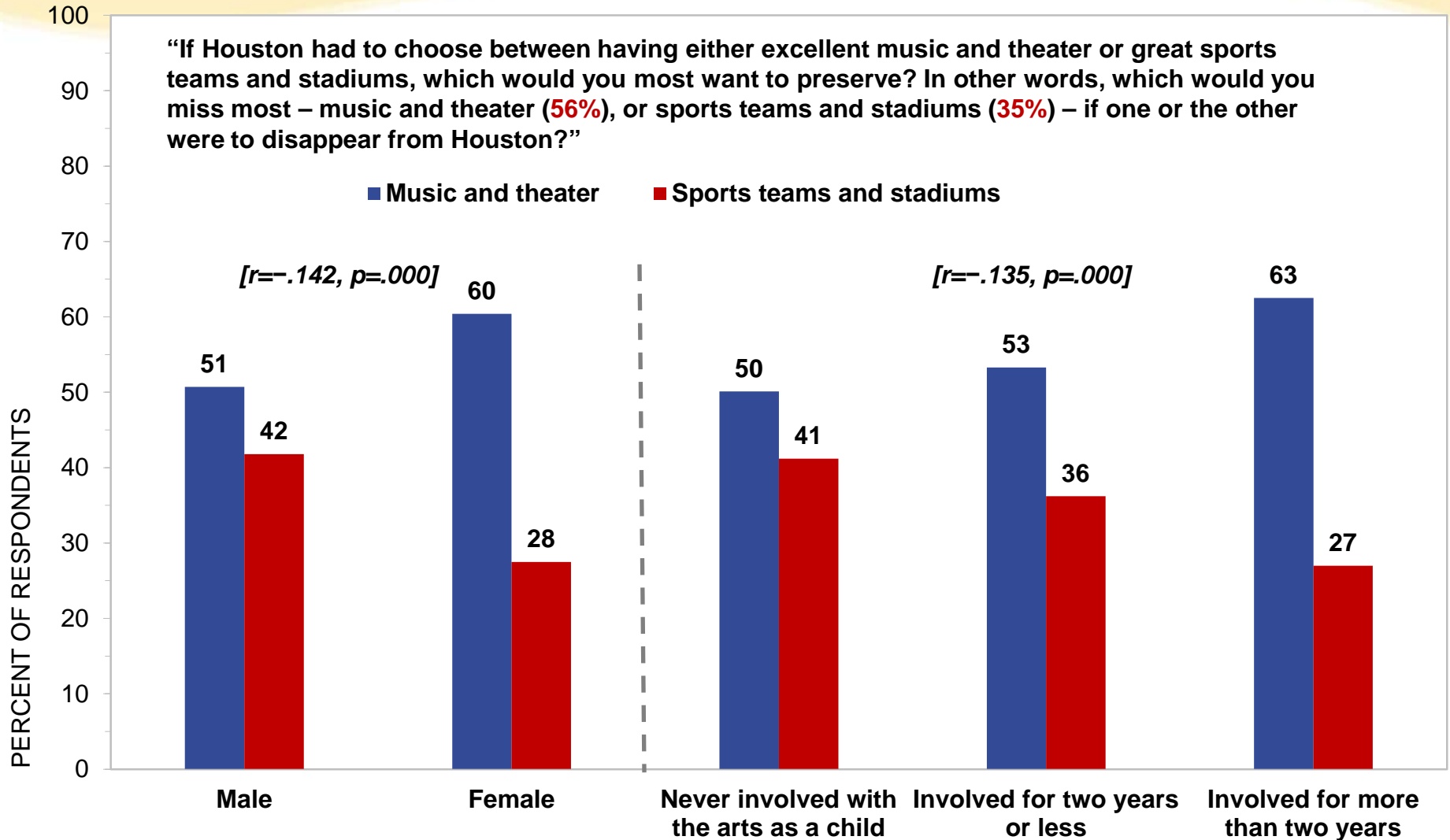


THE IMPORTANCE OF PROVIDING ARTS EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS: THREE QUESTIONS



IF HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ARTS AND SPORTS: BY GENDER AND EARLY EXPOSURE TO THE ARTS

“If Houston had to choose between having either excellent music and theater or great sports teams and stadiums, which would you most want to preserve? In other words, which would you miss most – music and theater (56%), or sports teams and stadiums (35%) – if one or the other were to disappear from Houston?”





SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

WIDESPREAD PARTICIPATION

- ❑ **Harris County residents are more likely than Americans in general (SPPA, 2008) to report having attended a live arts performance in the past year and to be currently participating in arts activities.**
- ❑ **The most important predictors of attendance at arts performances are education, income, and early exposure to the arts in childhood. Ethnic background is not a significant predictor of the frequency of attendance at arts performances nor of childhood arts exposure.**
- ❑ **Viewing or listening to the arts at home through the media has an overall positive impact on attendance at live arts performances.**
- ❑ **60% reported participating as a child in the arts or other creative activities. Meaningful exposure to the arts in childhood is a major predictor of subsequent support for and involvement in the arts.**

BROAD-BASED SUPPORT

- ❑ Across a variety of questions, area residents clearly believe that the arts are an essential component of Houston's quality of life and exposure to the arts should be part of every child's education.**
- ❑ By 56% to 35%, the survey participants were decisive in saying that they would choose excellent music and theatre over great sports teams and stadiums, if Houston could only have one or the other.**
- ❑ This first-ever survey of area residents' experiences with and attitudes toward the arts has documented an unexpected depth and pervasiveness in the public's support for the arts in Houston.**
- ❑ Given the significant role that the arts will play in this city's efforts to address its central educational, aesthetic, and demographic challenges, these findings bode well for the future of the region.**

**The first-ever Houston Arts Survey
was made possible by:**

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A PHILANTHROPY ENDOWED BY JESSE H. AND MARY GIBBS JONES

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