

College Experiences, Decisions, and Inequalities in Bachelor's Degree Attainment

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Sample

- 3,299 members of the entering cohort of 1999 at three public, flagship universities.
 - 1,642 women and 1,657 men
 - 809 people of Hispanic origin
 - Among non-Hispanics, 820 African Americans, 829 Asians and Asian Americans, 841 Caucasians
 - 990 people who graduated from the university from which they were sampled in 4 years or less
 - 1,119 people who graduated from the university from which they were sampled in more than 4 years
 - 1,190 people who did not graduate from the university from which they were sampled

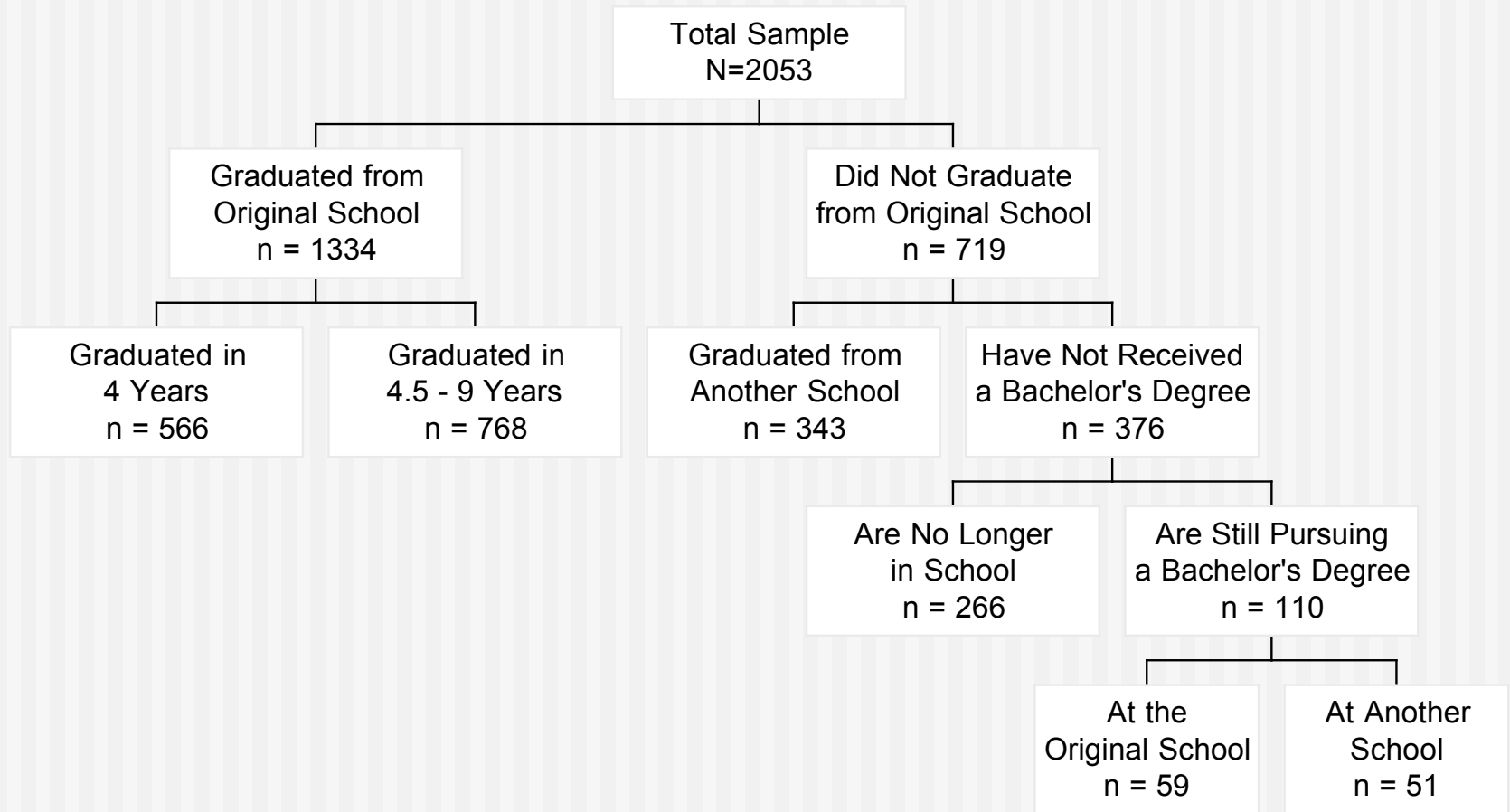
Number of Completed Surveys by School and Graduation Status

	University A	University B	University C	Total	Weighted Response Rate
Graduate	325	459	550	1,334	68%
Non-Graduate	223	187	309	719	63%
Total	548	646	859	2,053	--
Weighted Response Rate	55%	65%	72%	--	67%

Survey

- Section A: Applying to College
 - Application process, social support, factors that influenced decision to attend the target school, family attitudes, advising
- Section B: Experiences at the Target College
 - Choice of major, change of major, enrollment pattern, living situation, difficulties/challenges encountered
- Section C: Degrees and Satisfaction with College
 - Satisfaction with academic advising, housing, financial aid, overall, reasons for not graduating, highest degree received
- Section D: Background/Demographics
 - Age, family's educational background, living situation while growing up, current work status and salary, demographics

College Outcomes



Predictors: Demographics

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Mother's educational attainment (graduated from college or not)
- Father's presence more than 50% of the time while respondent was growing up

Predictors: Difficult or challenging situations faced while at the target school

- Academic performance
- School finances
- Personal health/well-being
- Family health/well-being
- Personal/social life

For each:

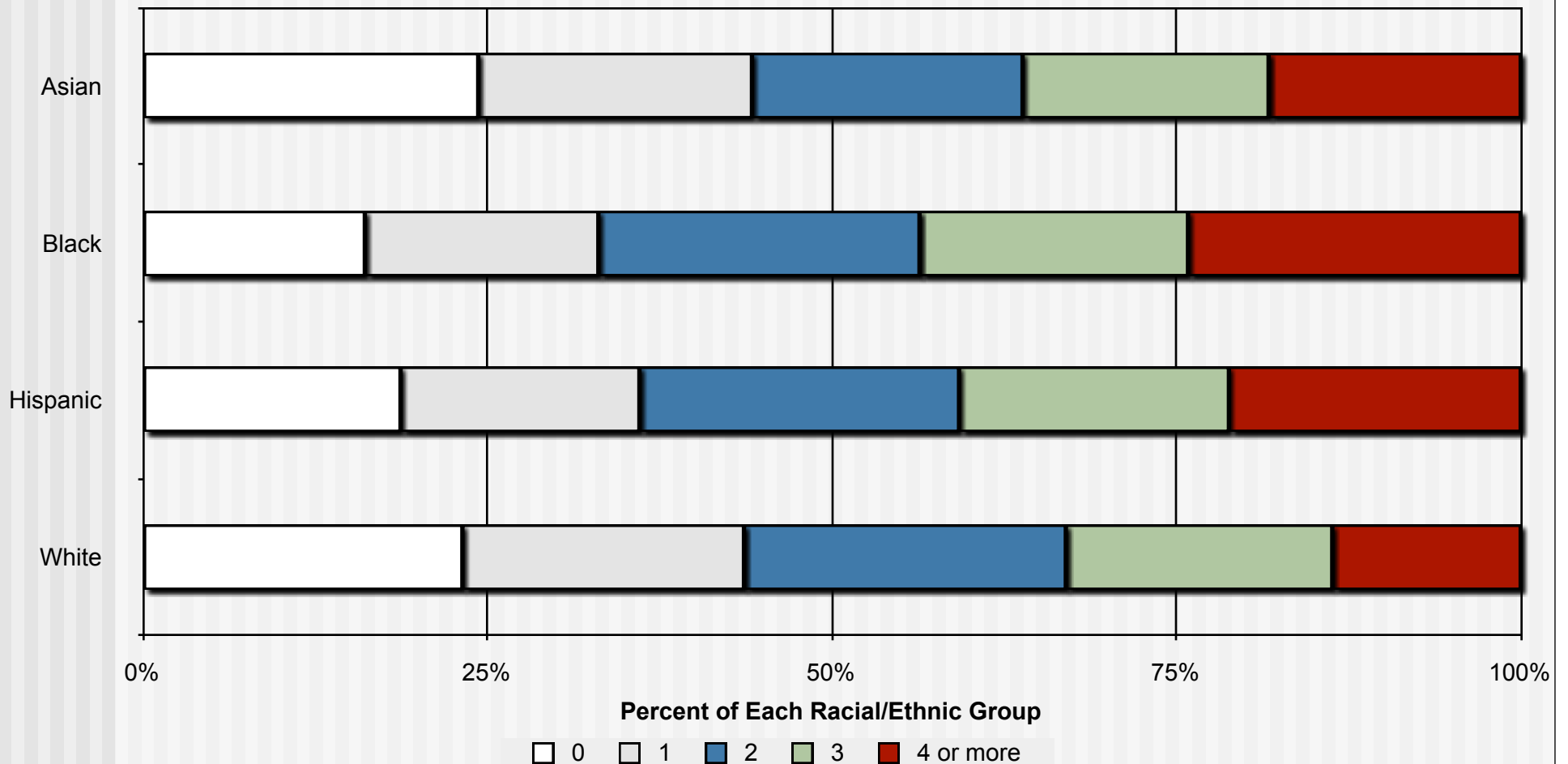
0 = No difficulty in that domain

1 = Difficulty reported

2 = Given as a reason for taking time off from the target university

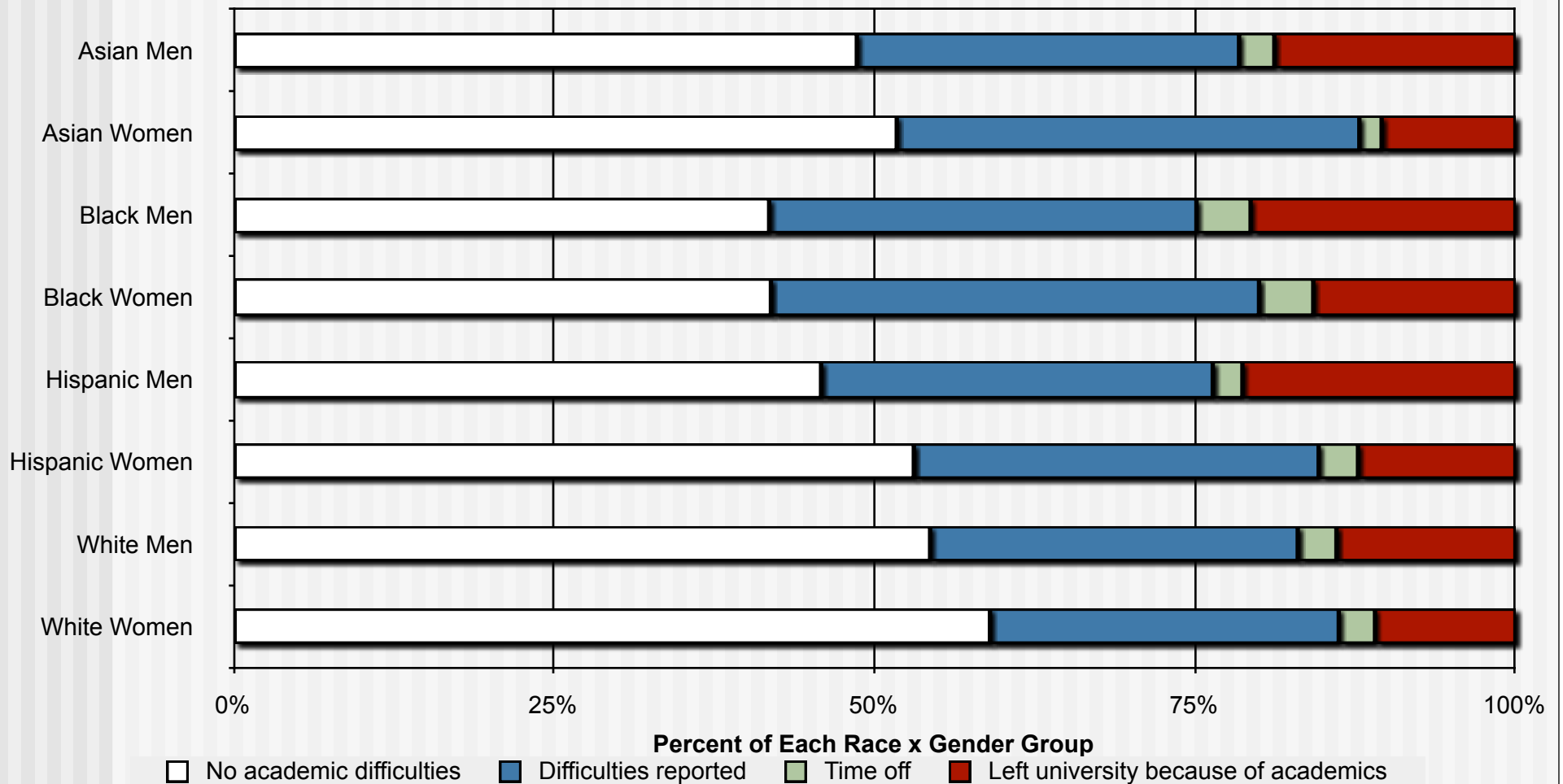
3 = Given as a reason for not graduating from the target university

Underrepresented minorities cite more difficulties during enrollment at the target school.



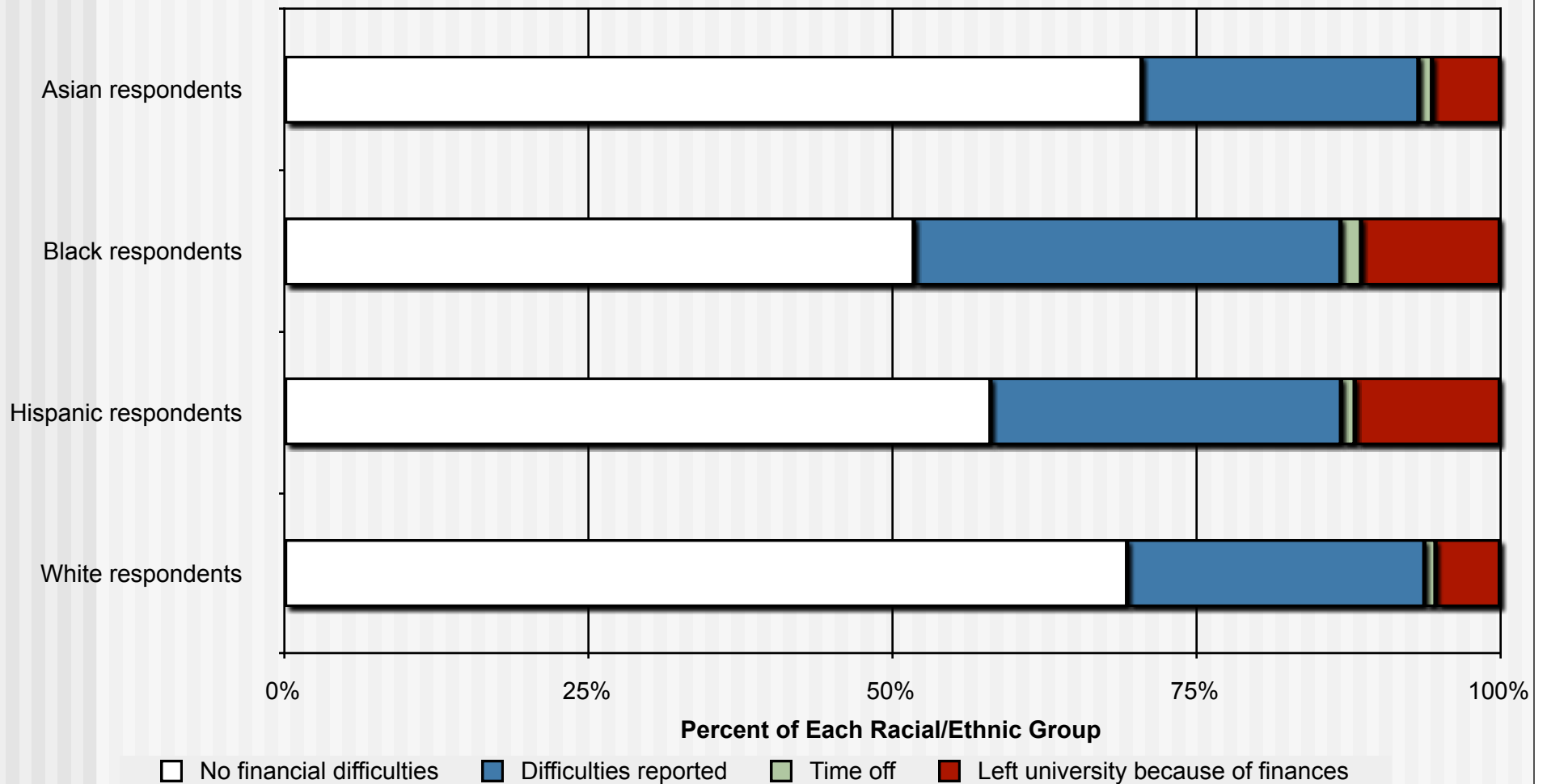
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Academic difficulties and their consequences vary as a function of race/ethnicity and gender.



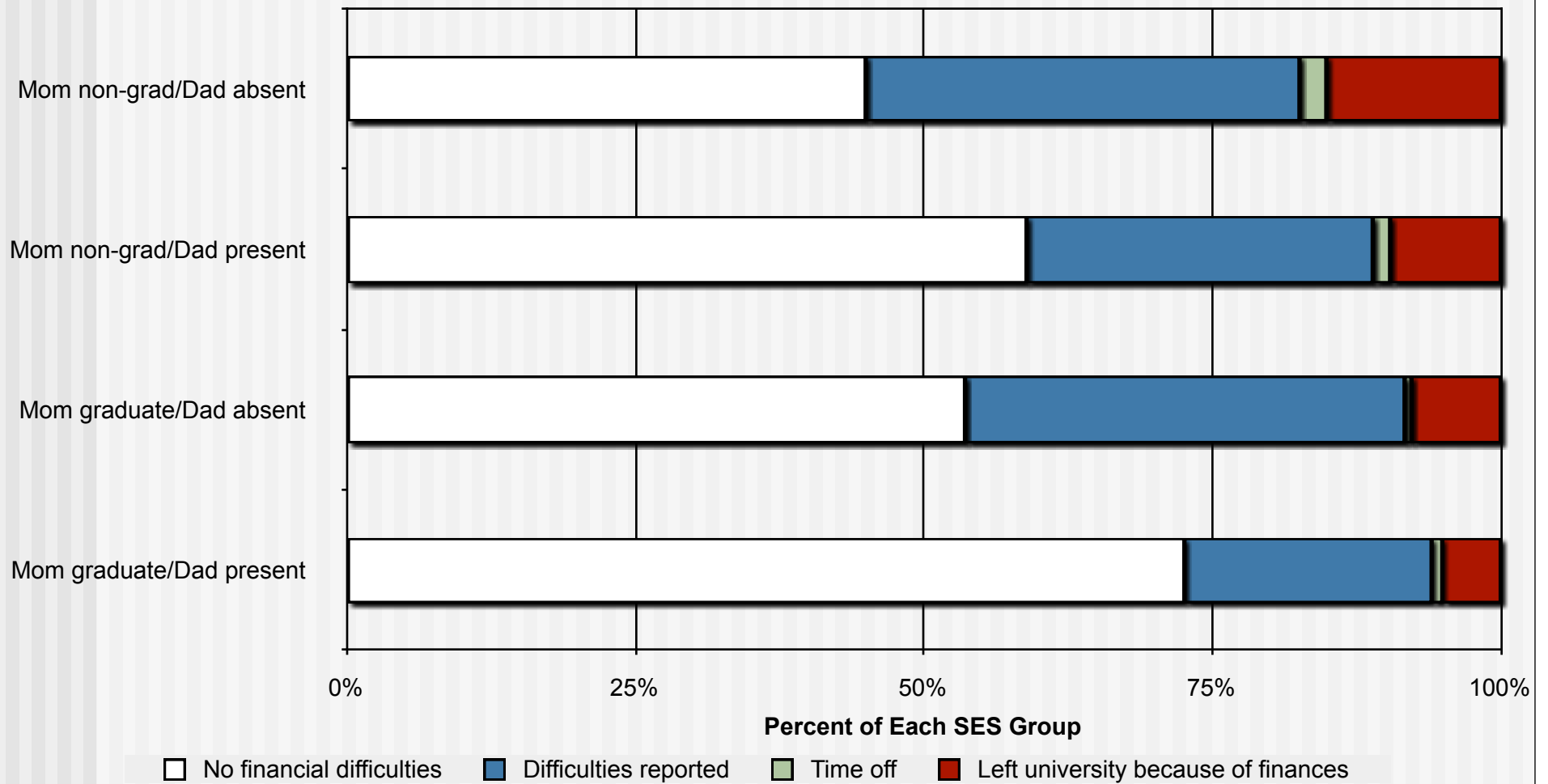
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Financial difficulties and their consequences vary as a function of race/ethnicity....



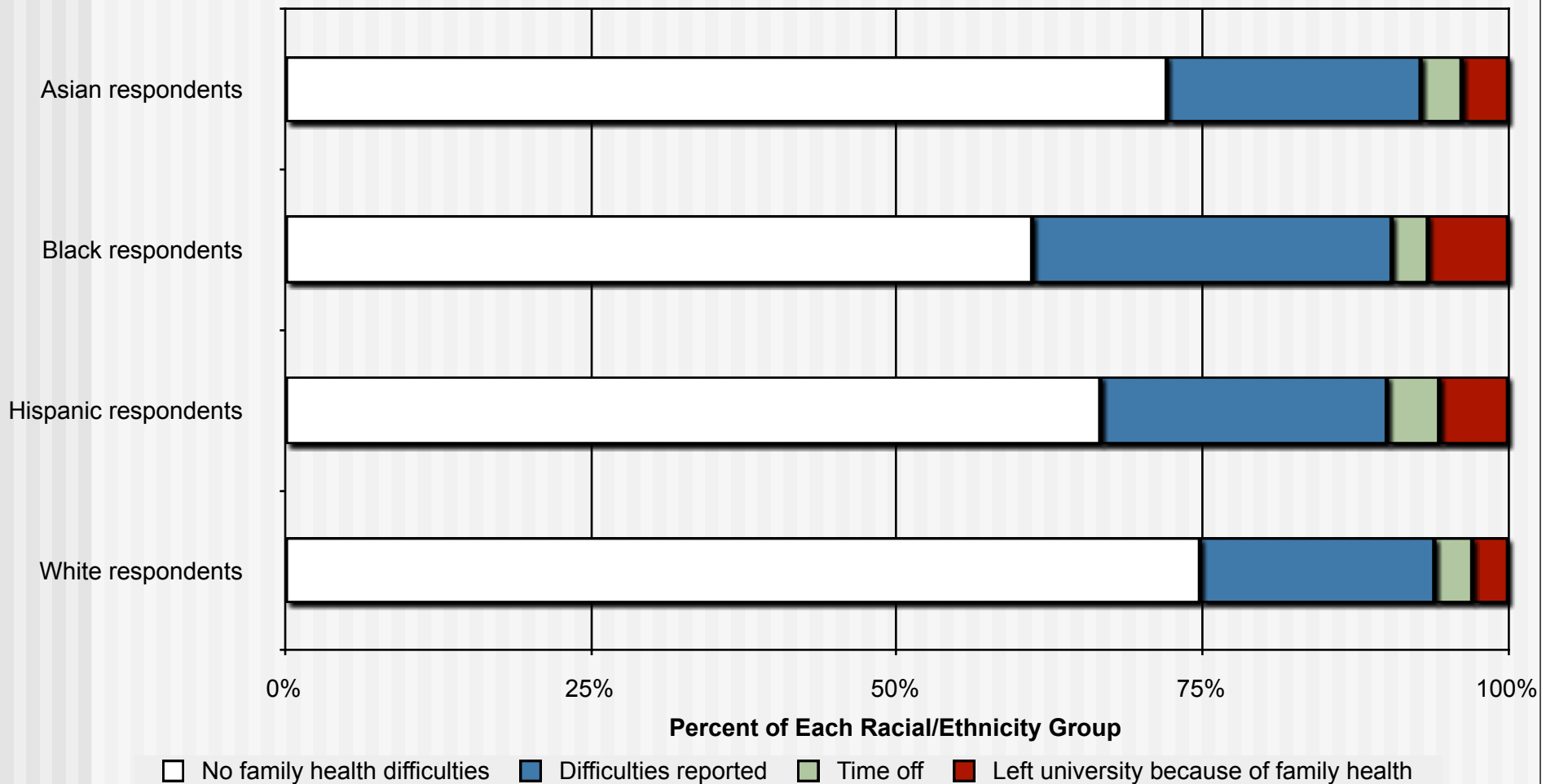
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Financial difficulties and their consequences vary as a function of race/ethnicity and SES.



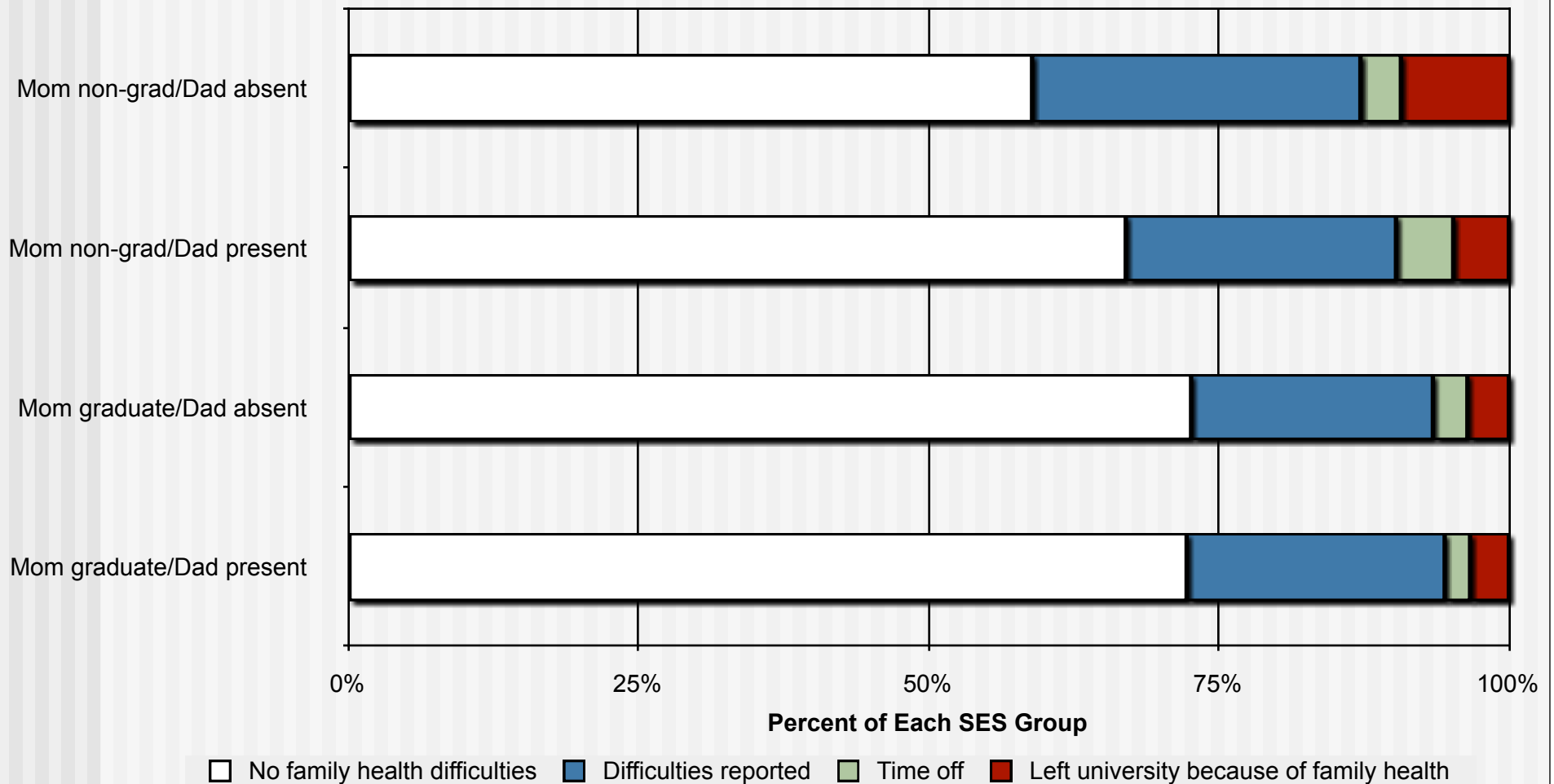
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Family health difficulties also vary as a function of race/ethnicity....



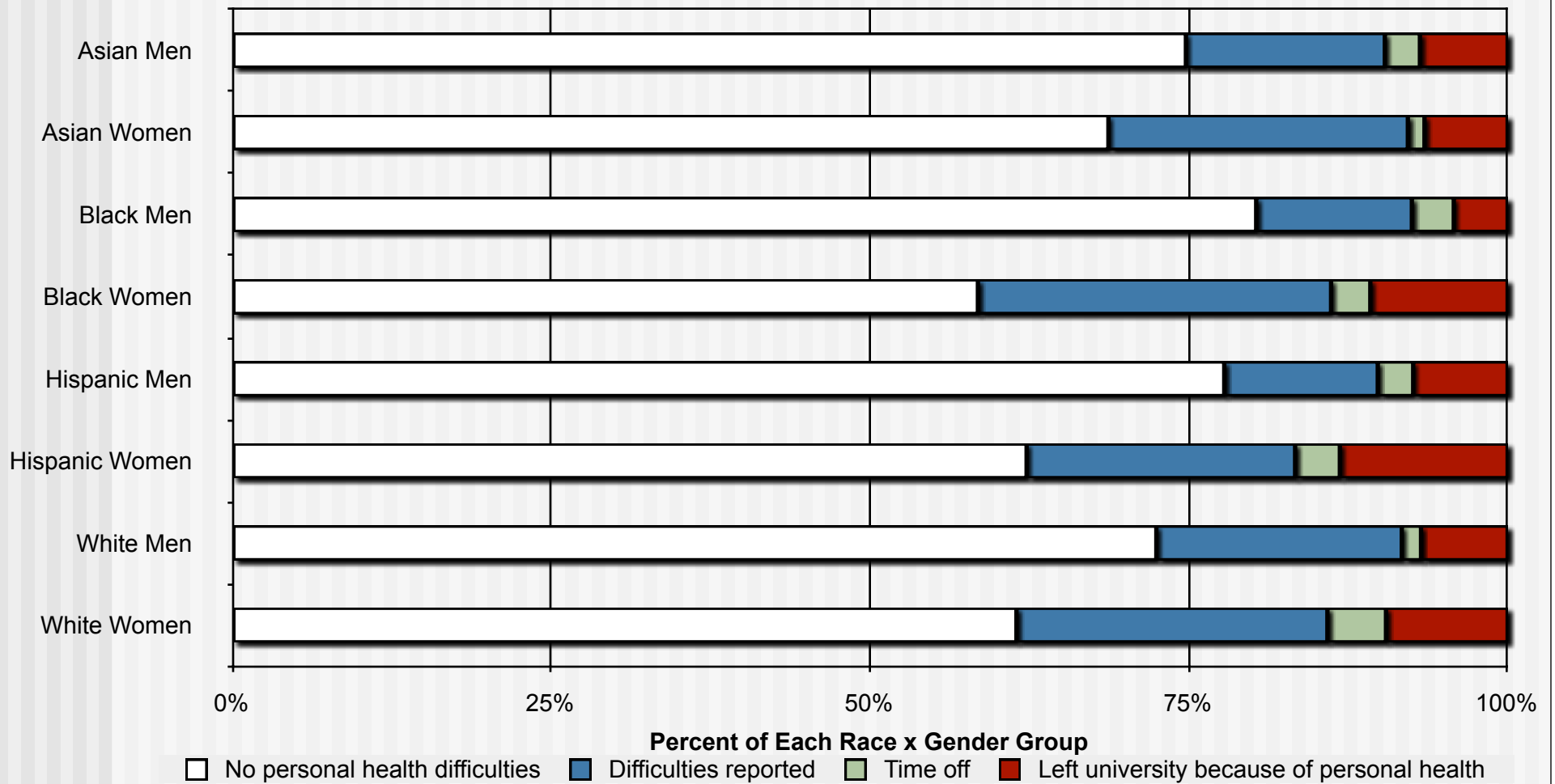
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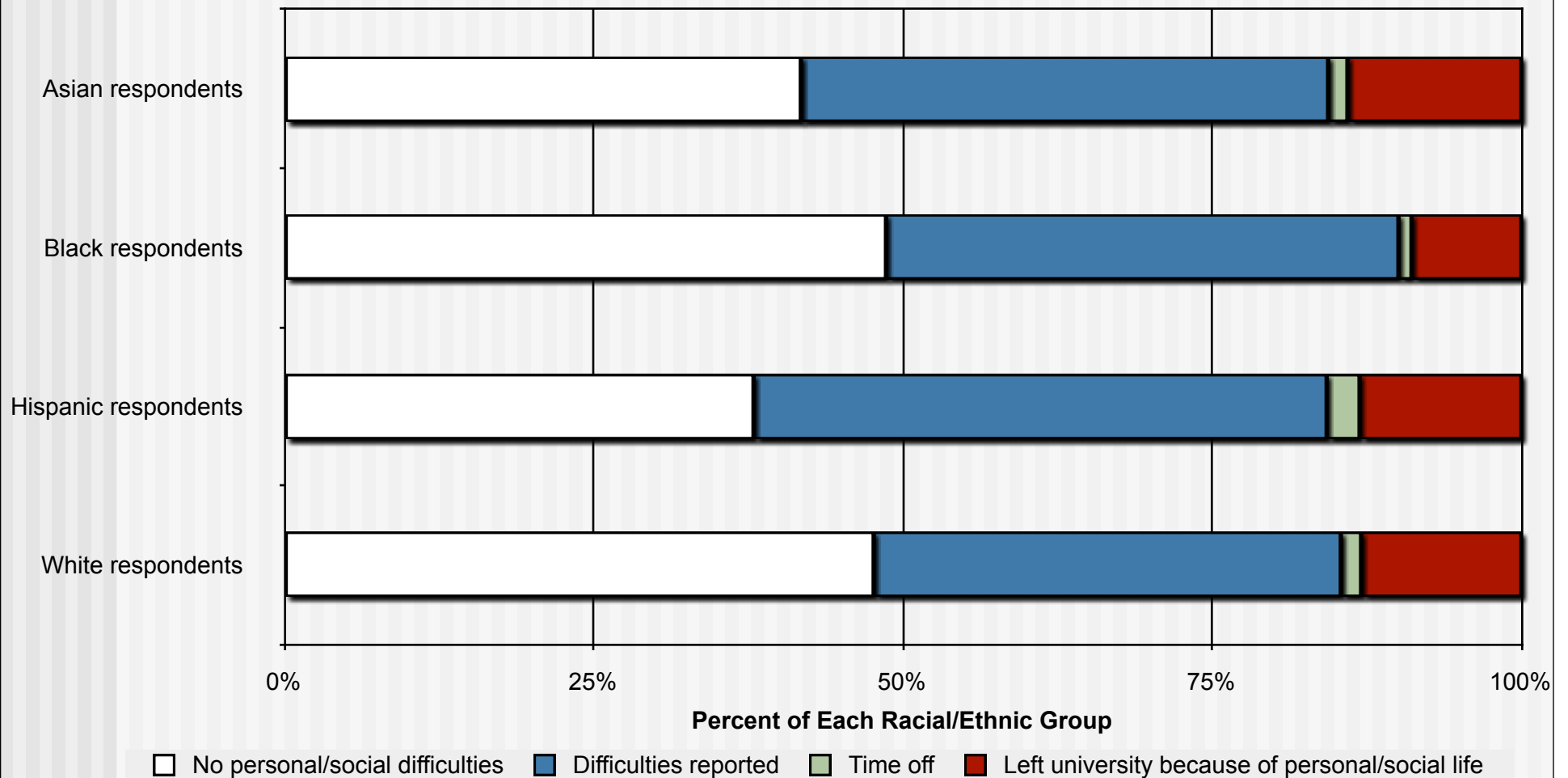
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Personal health difficulties are more prevalent for women.



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Difficulties with personal/social life are more prevalent for Asian and Hispanic respondents.



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Predictors of Attainment from a Transfer School

Step One

(Pseudo $R^2 = .043$)

	Odds Ratio
Race/Ethnicity	
■ Asian (vs. White)	0.779
■ Black (vs. White)	0.515
■ Hispanic (vs. White)	0.585
Mother's non-attainment	0.698
Father's absence	0.626

Predictors of Attainment from a Transfer School

Step Two

(Pseudo $R^2 = .228$)

	Odds Ratio
Academic difficulties	0.778
Financial difficulties	0.729
Personal/social difficulties	1.911
Personal/social difficulties * Mother's non-attainment	0.576
Persistence at target school	
■ for > 1 year but < 2 years	0.722
■ for > 2 years	0.200
Father's absence	0.486

Conclusion

- Racial/Ethnic group predicted academic, financial, and personal/social difficulties at the target school
- The difficulty variables, rather than group membership, predicted subsequent differences in transfer attainment

Further Research

- Institution effects
- Academic majors: Are some more conducive to graduation than others?
- Data from other data sources (released by 41% of respondents)
- Open-ended responses

Next Stage for the Research Team: Interviews

- Approximately 60% of respondents agreed to be contacted for a follow-up interview.
- Interviewed 213 respondents.
- Goals:
 - Learn more about the difficulties they encountered while enrolled and how they addressed them.
 - Learn more about how gender, race, and family background influence beliefs about persistence in college and when it is time to give up.
 - Probe respondents' experiences with the institutions they attended.