

GALLUP®

Framing the Value of Higher Education

Perspectives from Prospective, Current, and Former Students

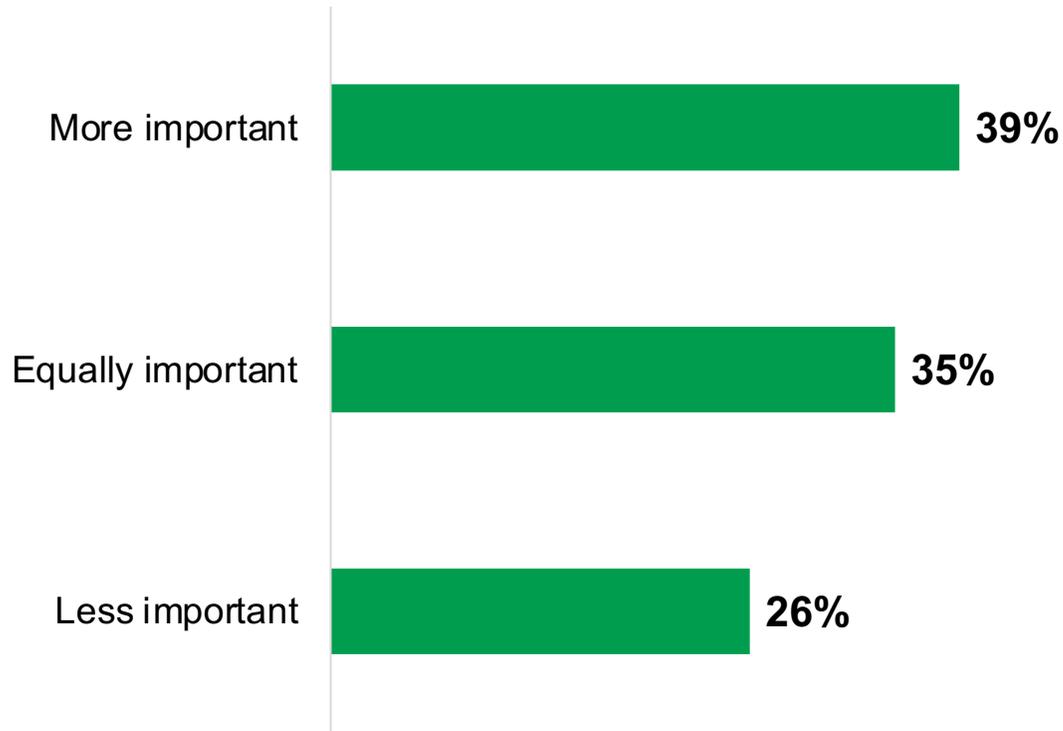
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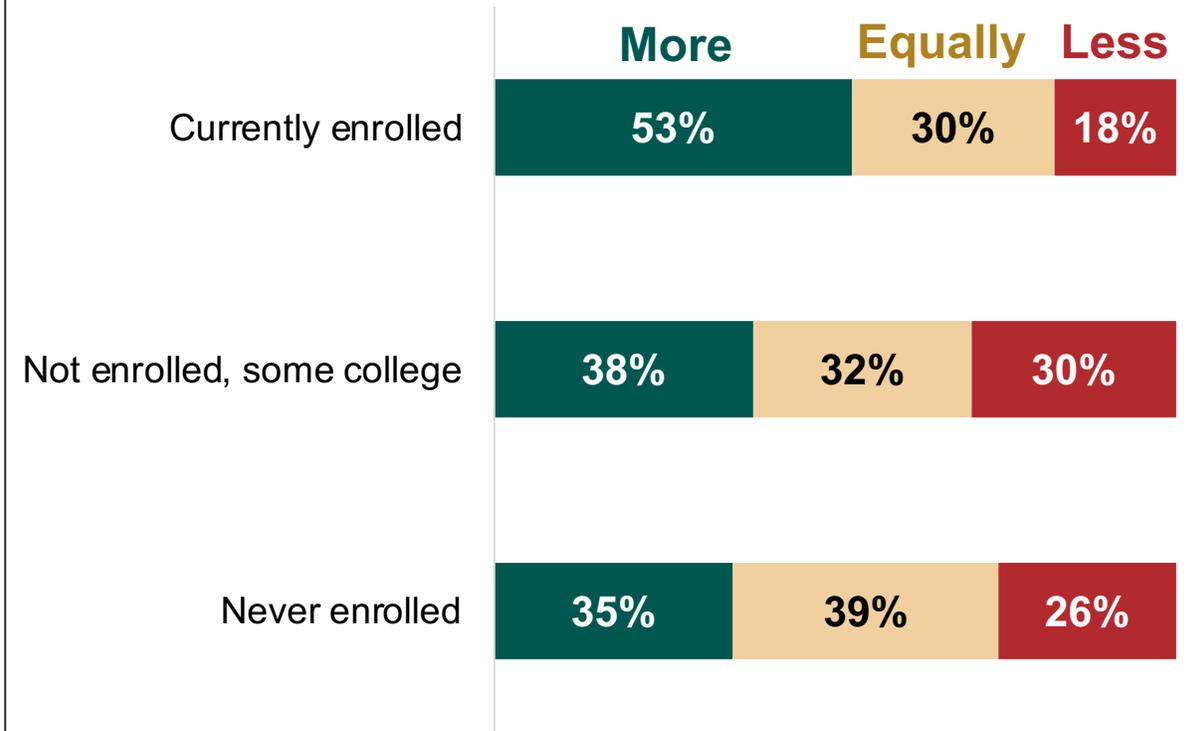
Public Opinion of Higher Education

Three quarters of U.S. adults believe a college degree is at least as important to a successful career today as it was 20 years ago

Compared to 20 years ago, how important is it for people to have a two-year or four-year college degree in order for them to have a successful career?

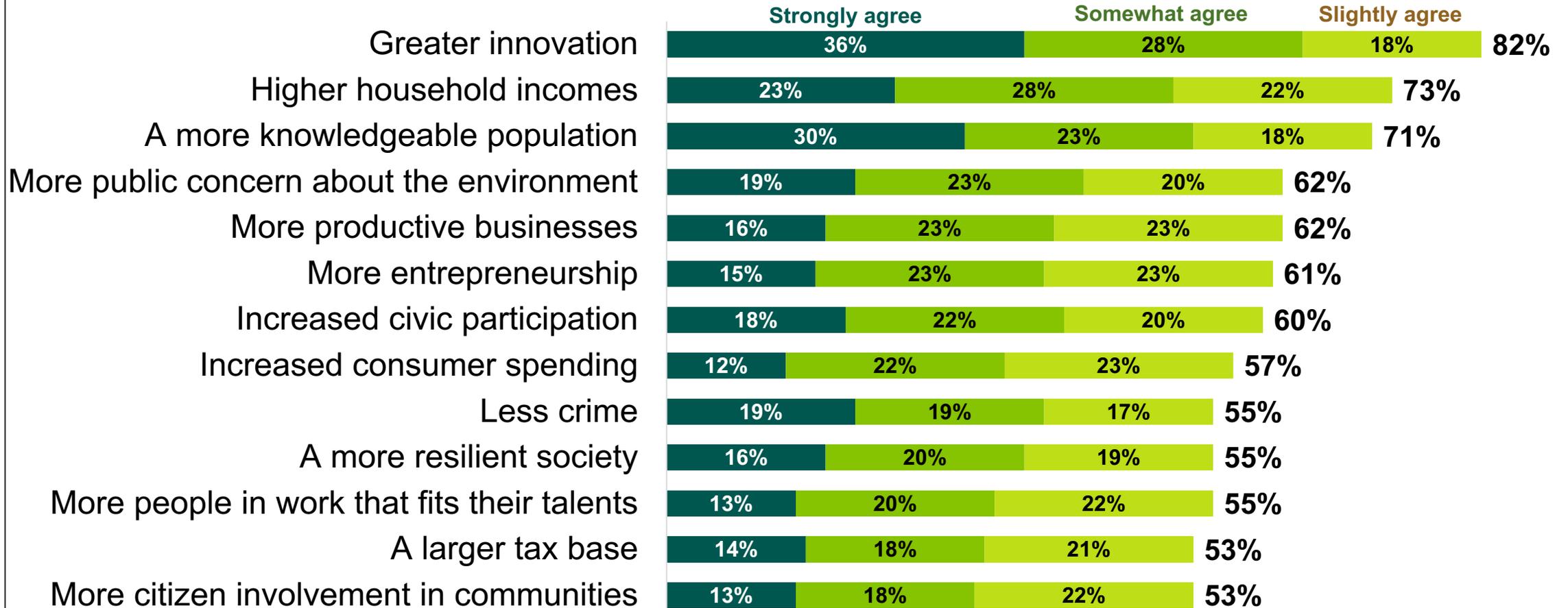


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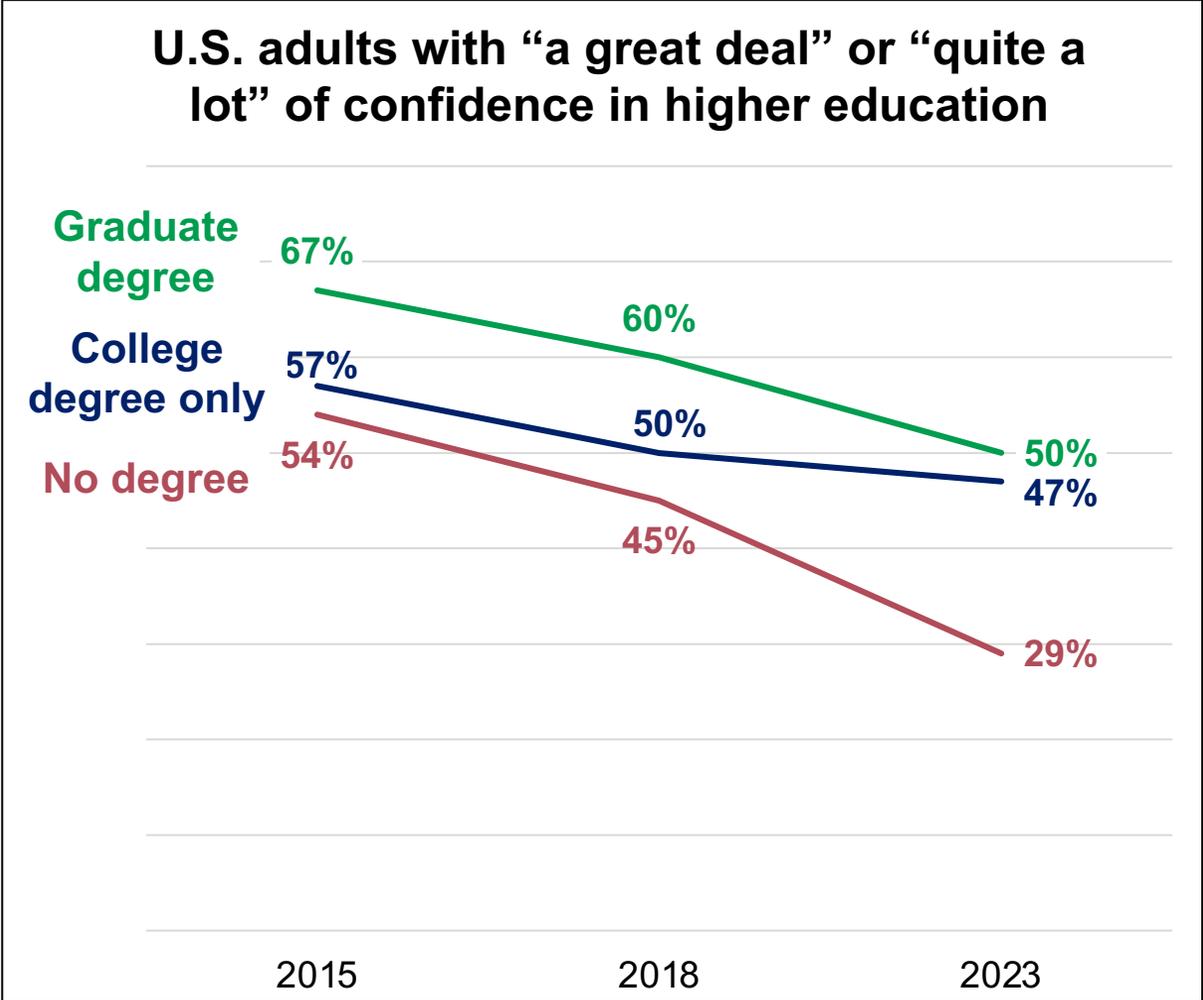
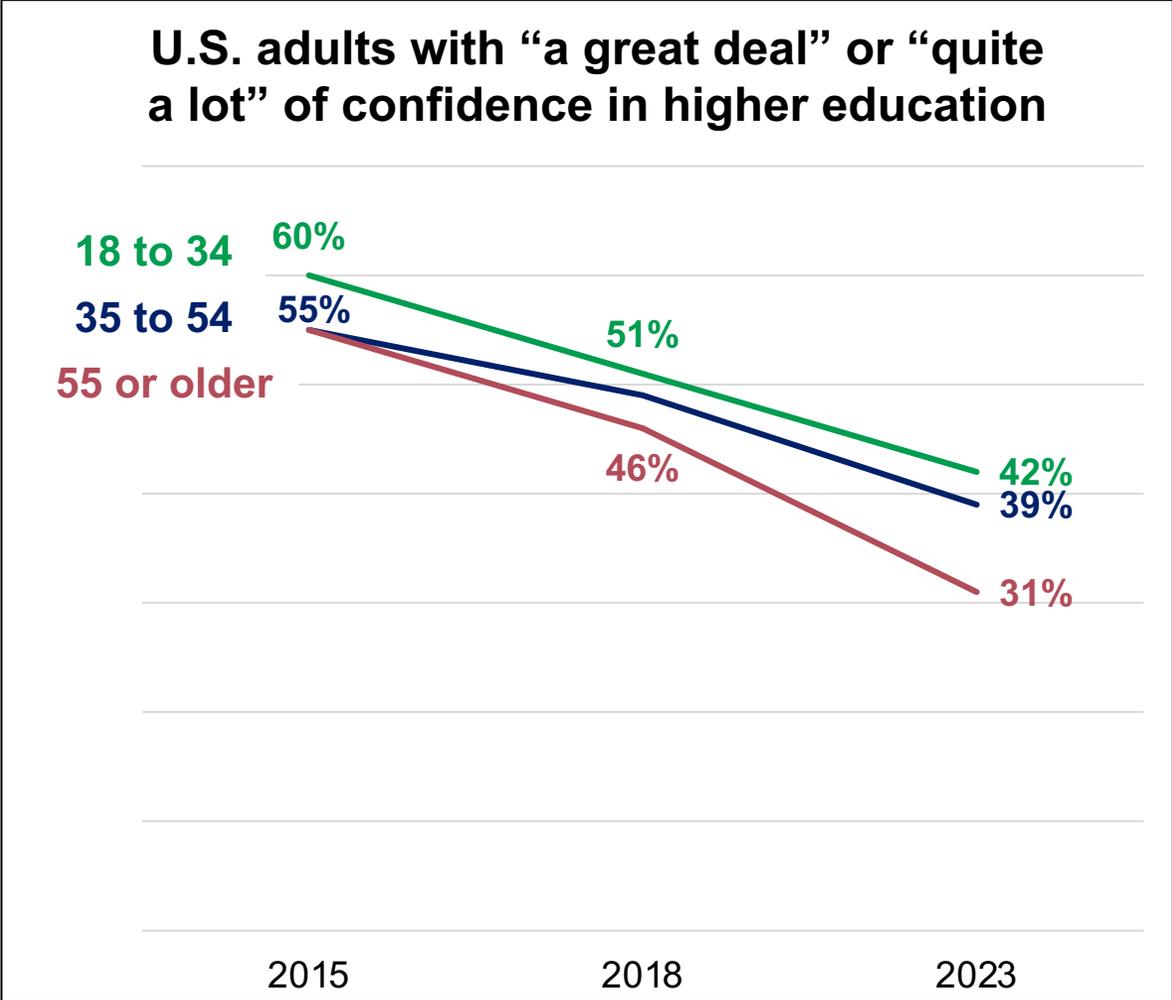


The public generally believes higher education benefits society

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that postsecondary education leads to each of the following outcomes in the U.S.

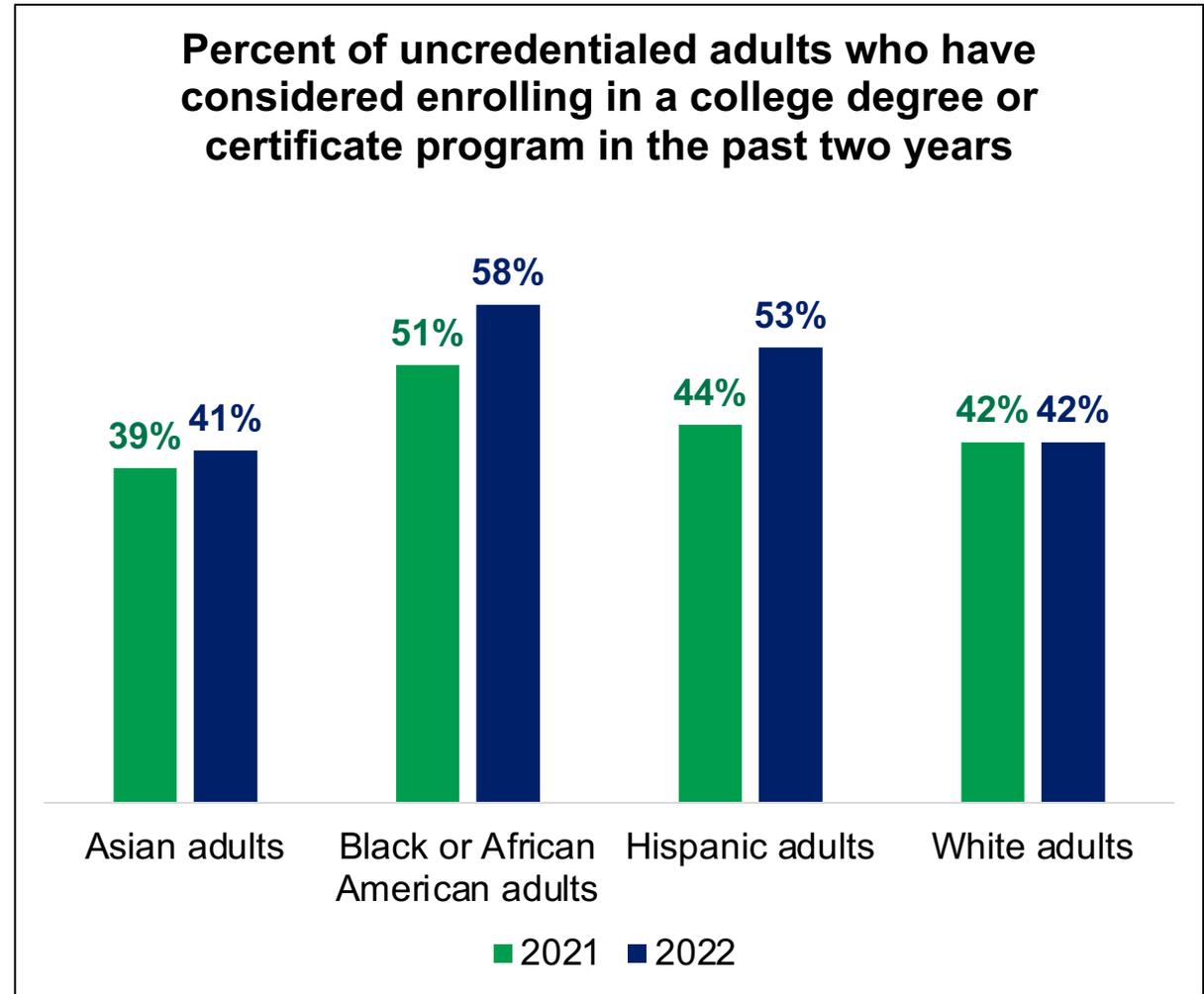
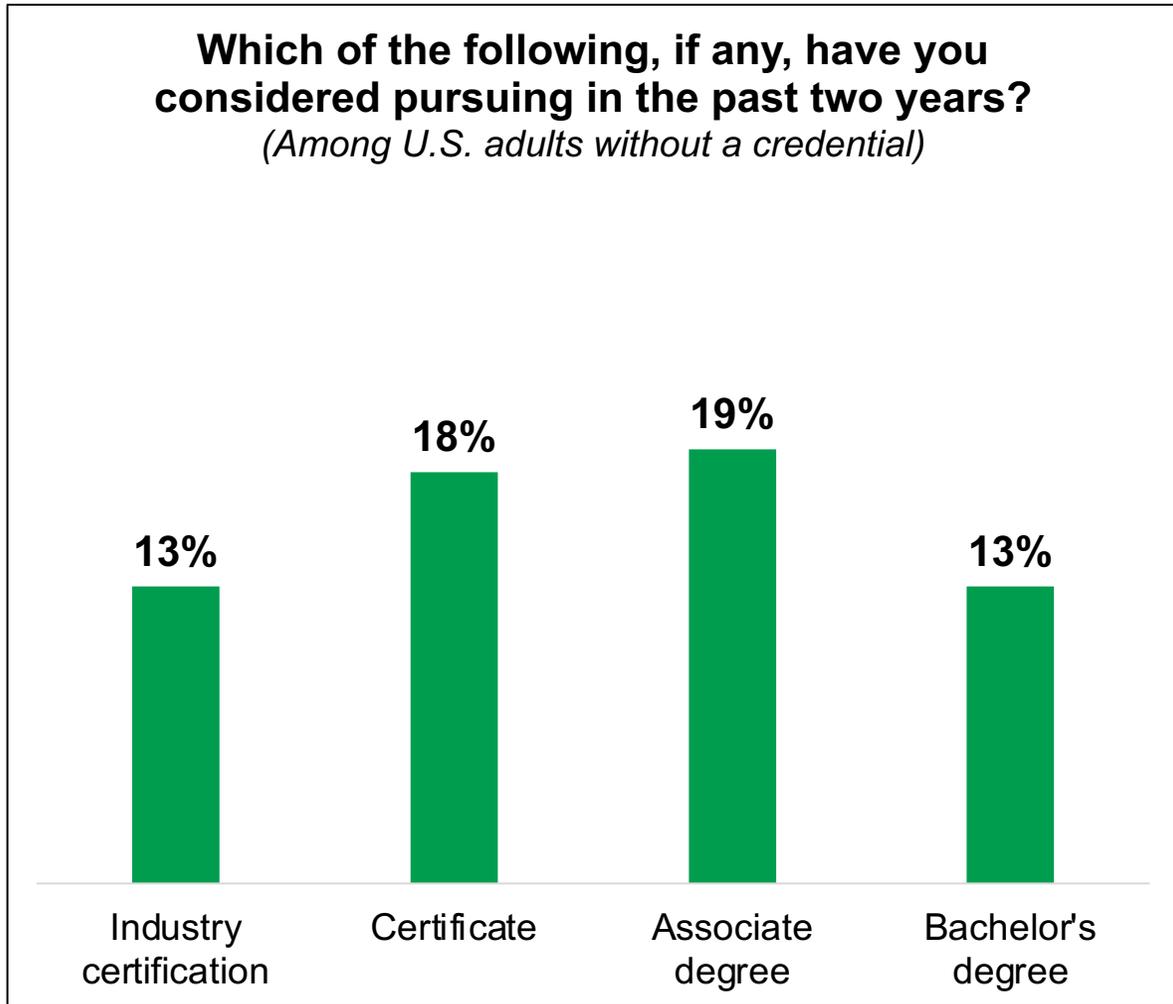


36% of U.S. adults express confidence in higher education; less than half of those with a bachelor's degree have much confidence



Barriers

Nearly half (47%) of adults without a postsecondary credential have considered obtaining one in the past two years



Among adults who are considering reenrolling in a postsecondary program, most say they are doing so to gain knowledge, personal fulfillment, or a higher-paying job

Which of the following are important reasons you are considering continuing your education?
Top 3 reasons among adults considering re-enrollment

64%



To obtain knowledge or skills.

57%



Personal fulfillment or achievement.

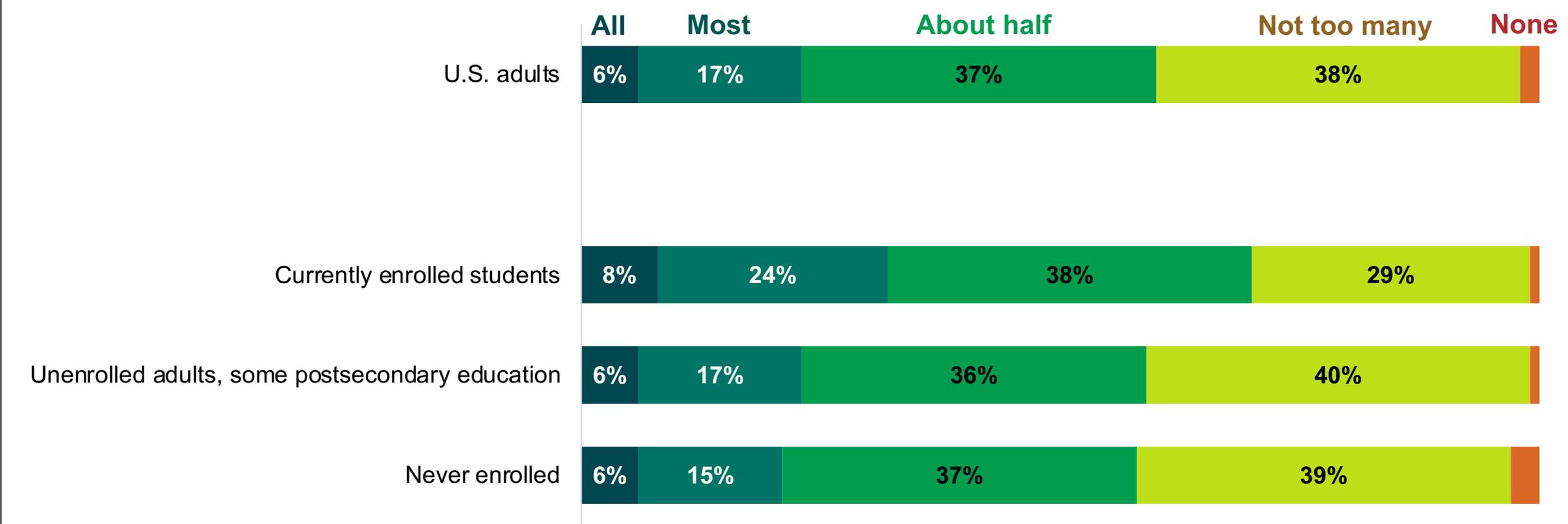
56%



It will help you get a higher-paying job.

Less than one-quarter (23%) of adults believe most people in the U.S. have access to quality, affordable postsecondary education

In your view, how many people in the U.S. have access to quality, affordable education after high school if they want it?



Cost is the most prevalent barrier to enrollment, but more than one in four unenrolled adults say employment and mental health are “very important” reasons they remain unenrolled

How important are each of the following as reasons why you are not currently enrolled [in a degree or certificate program]?

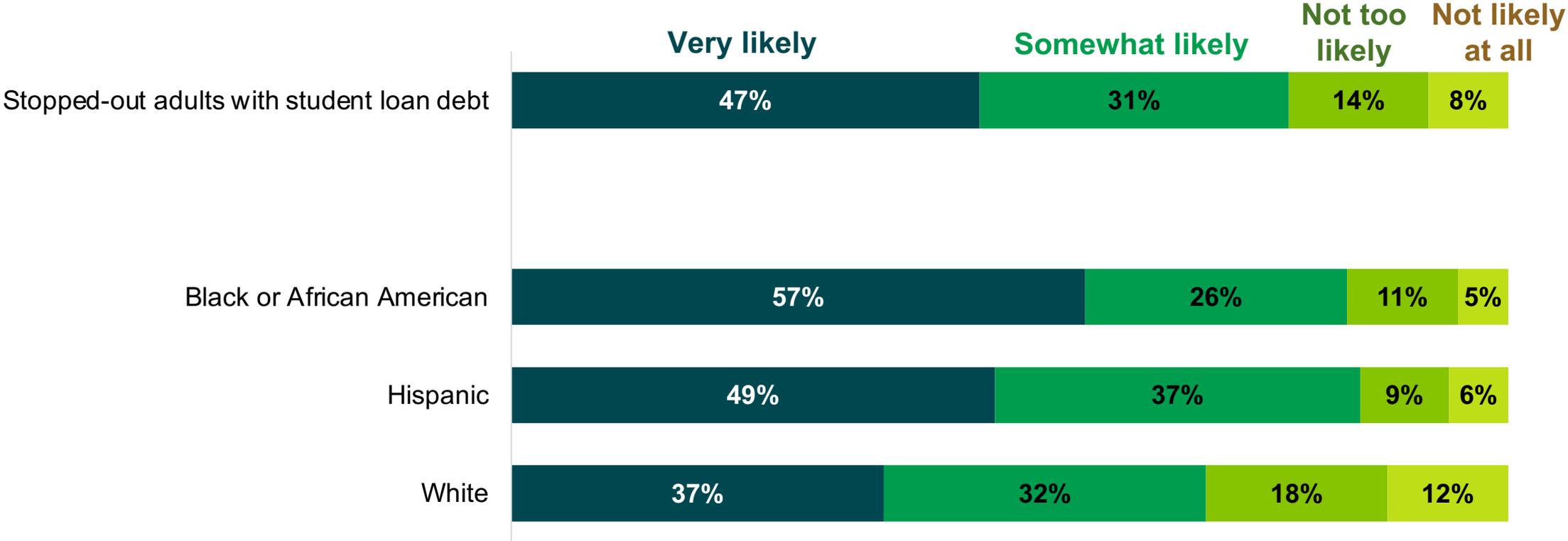
(Top 5 reasons reported, based on “Very important” percentages)



Nearly half (47%) of stopped-out adults – including 57% of Black adults – would reenroll in their program if some or all of their loans were forgiven

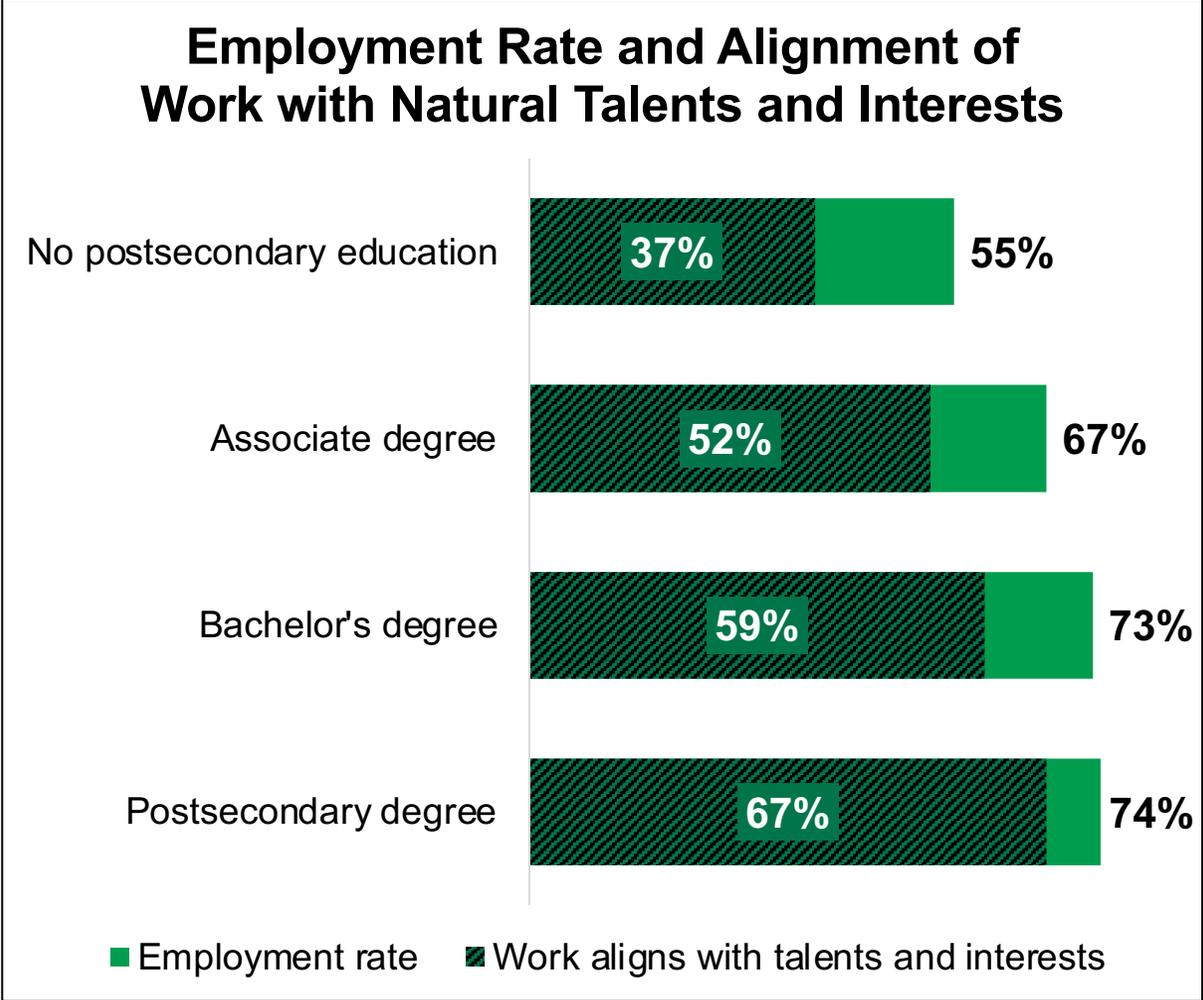
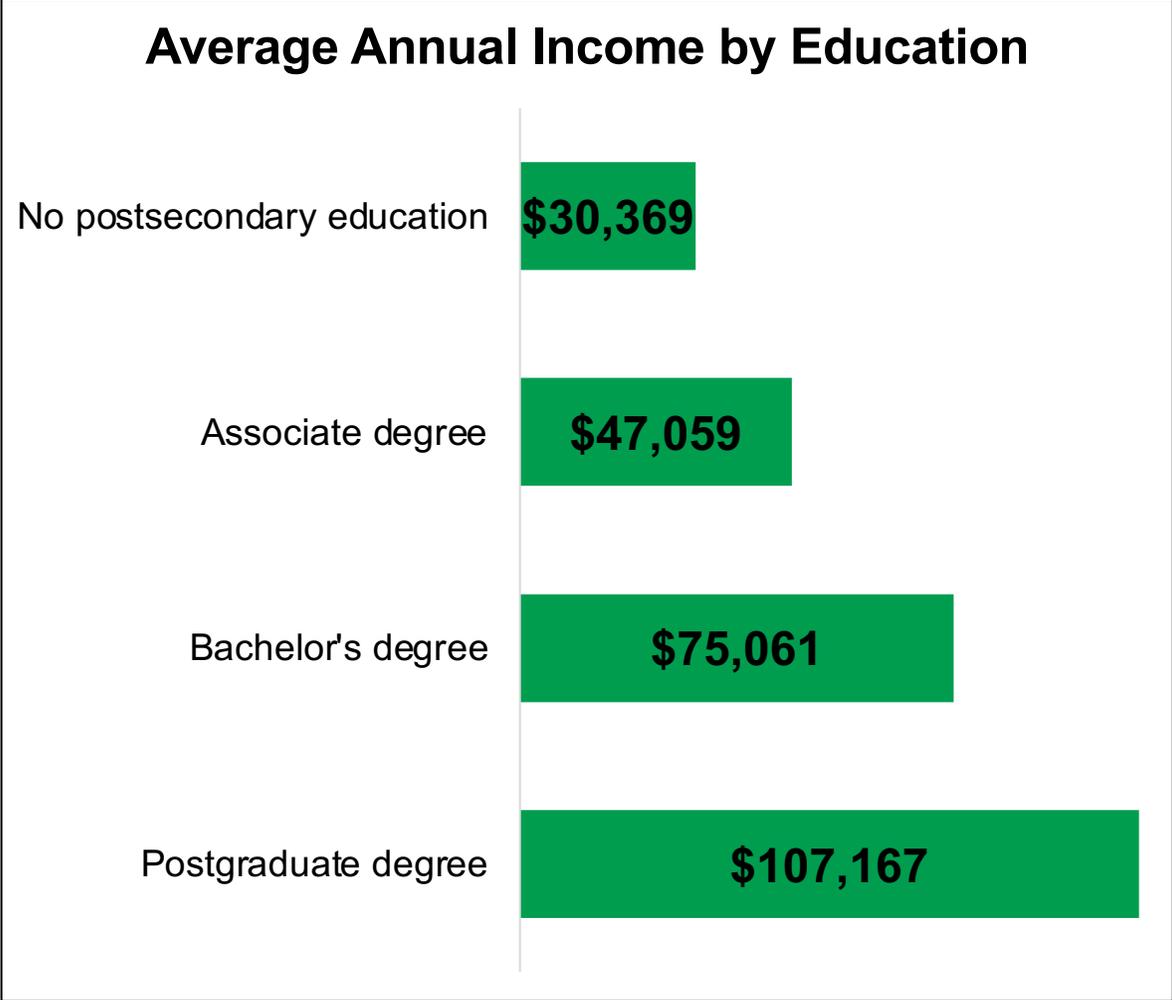
How likely would you be to reenroll if some or all of your current student loans were forgiven?

(Among adults who stopped out of a postsecondary program)

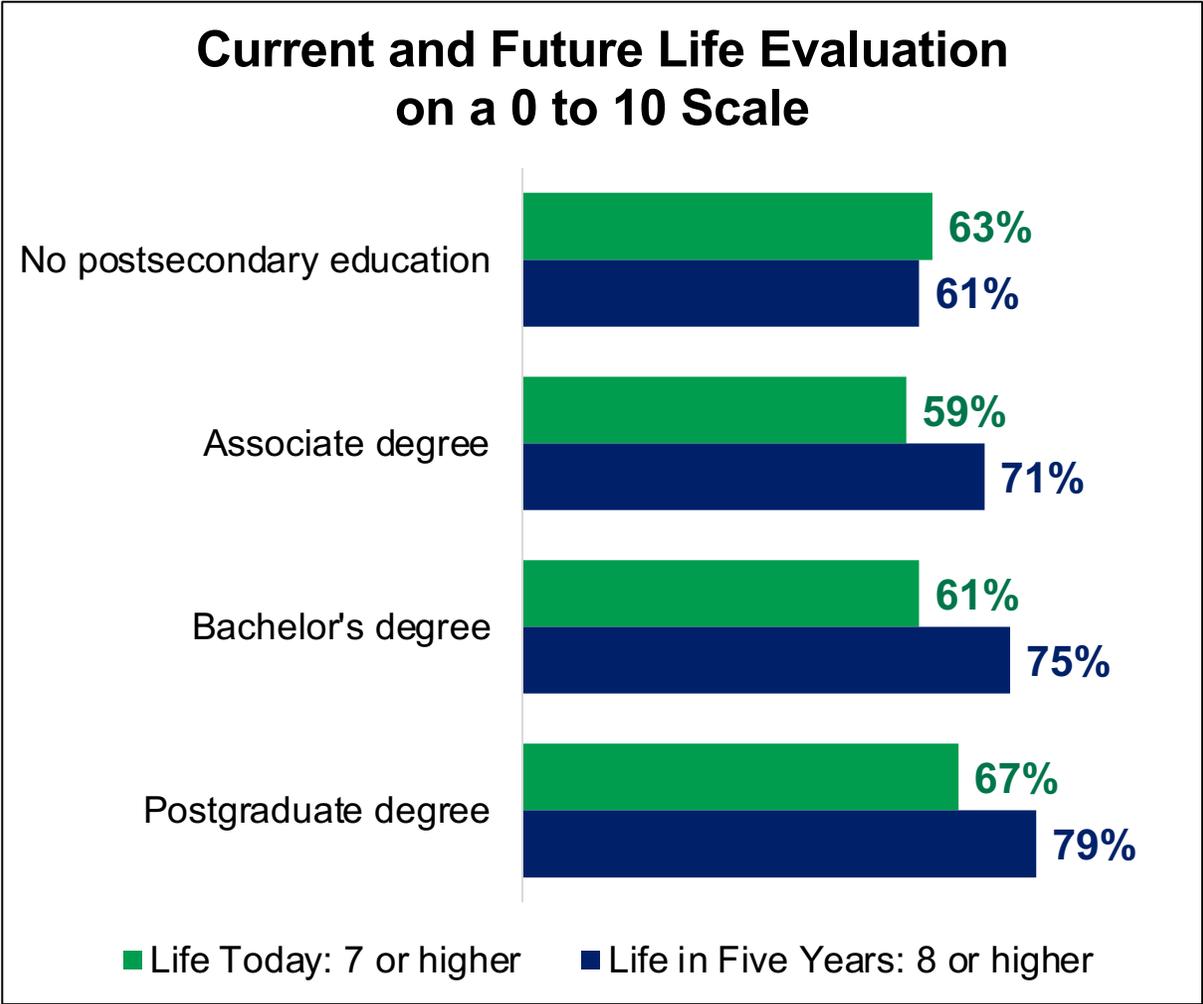
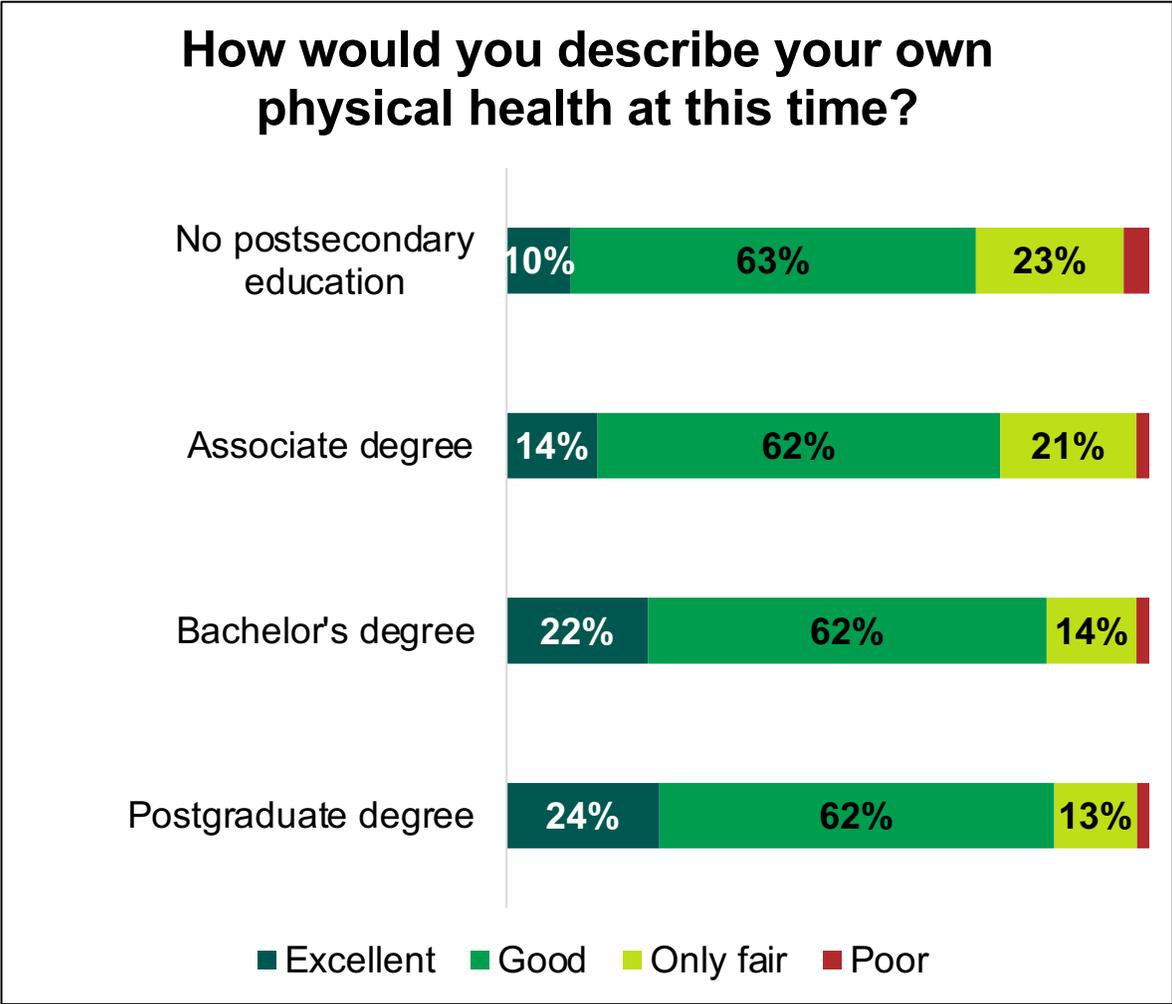


Improving Perceptions of Value

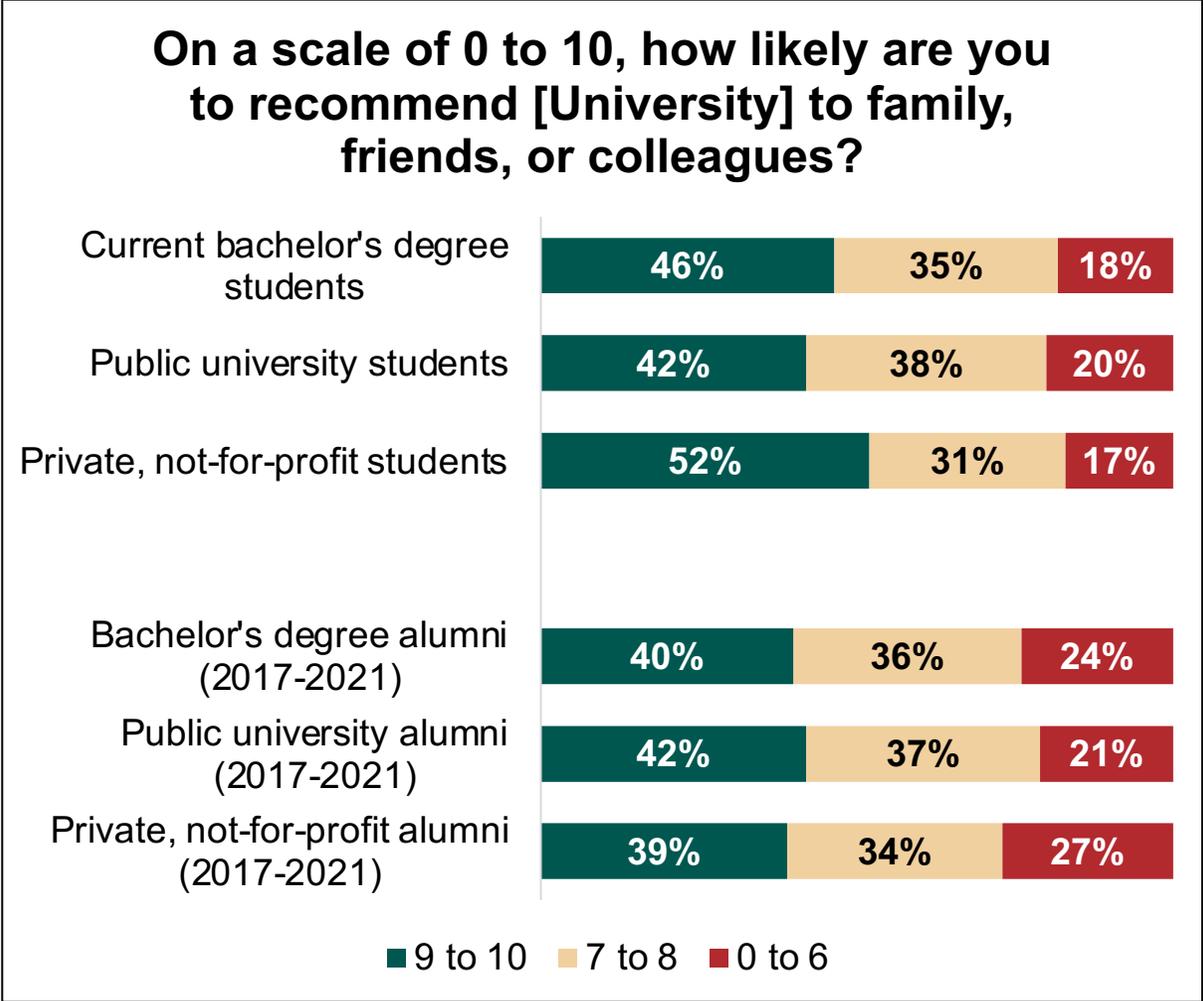
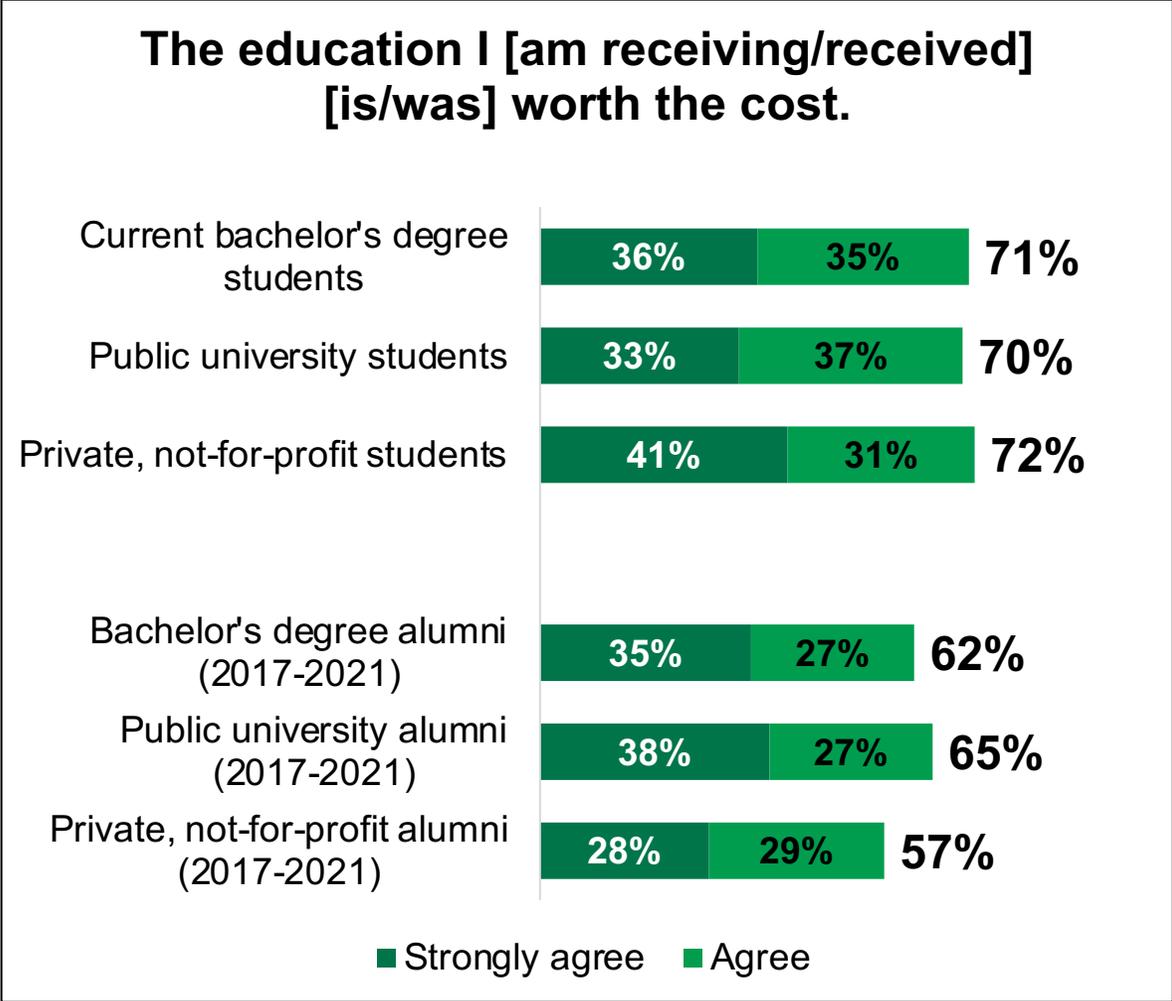
U.S. adults with a degree earn significantly more than those without a postsecondary education, and are more likely to be employed in roles that align with their interests



Increased postsecondary education has a significant impact on adults' future outlook and physical health



One remedy for declining enrollment and confidence: Help students acknowledge – and promote – the value of their degree



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