National Child Development Study
User Support Group

Working Paper
No 24

EARLY ADULT OUTCOMES OF TRUANCY

by

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This paper is based on work funded by the ESRC.

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JULY 1987

NCDSUSGWP24:AH;200787

National Child Development Study User Support Group Working Paper Series

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Acknowledgement

I am very grateful to Ken Fogelman for his help and advice.

Notes

1. Please do not quote or reproduce this paper without the permission of the author.
2. This project is funded by the ESRC.
3. This is a draft version and comments are welcome.

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1. Theoretical Framework

Much of the research into truancy has focussed on its causes and related behavioural problems in the children and adolescents concerned. The present project aims at examining a different aspect of this subject: the outcomes in later life associated with truancy.

The point of looking at outcomes is to understand causes. Competing explanations for truancy have focussed on personal characterists and maladjustment, on work-orientation and on the characteristics of schools and their curricula. Each explanation generates a range of hypotheses concerning the expected relationship between truancy and experiences after school. For example, if it is correct that truancy is an indication of more general maladjustment, then it can be hypothesised that there would be continued evidence of this in, for example, family relationships or on indices of mental health in early adulthood. If, on the other hand, truancy indicates a move towards the values of work and away from the values of the school, then those who had truanted from school would not be expected to have more difficulties than their peers in, for example, obtaining and keeping a job.

In addition, the relationship between truancy and subsequent

experience is of considerable interest in its own right, and its clarification could provide many insights into the most appropriate response, both within schools and at the policy level, to the problems of absenteeism from school.

Studies of this and related topics have to overcome the difficulty of clearly defining their central notion of truancy, as it combines an objective fact - absence - with subjective circumstances, i.e. intent, reasons, parental approval, which are far more difficult to ascertain. Several studies have in fact, taking these problems into account, focussed on 'persistent absenteeism' based on attendance records only, rather than truancy (1), while many of the others define it as 'absence for unacceptable reasons / without good cause'. The psychological concept of 'school phobia' or 'school refusal' was distinguished from truancy by some researchers (2).

Studies based on the National Child Development Study (NCDS), as the present one is, imply and utilise a sufficiently strong popular consensus as to what constitutes truancy, by letting teachers and parents assess the truancy of their children without imposing a conceptual definition. Information on pupils' attendance was also collected, which makes it possible to evaluate the outcomes of both truancy and absenteeism, and assess to what extent the assumption that they are largely synonymous is indeed valid.

Irrespective of which definition is used, outcomes of truancy appears to be a relatively under-researched topic, and such surveys as were carried out have yielded some conflicting findings.

In a study of causes and effects of persistent job changing, Cherry established low attendance as a good predictor for a subsequent unstable job record. This in turn was related to an increased likelihood of personal problems, but apart from less job satisfaction no occupational disadvantages were associated with persistent job changing and in particular, men who frequently changed jobs earned as much as stable workers (3).

Subsequently, in a longitudinal survey from age 8 to age 21 of 411 males in a working class area in London, Farrington found that truants tended to have an antisocial or deviant lifestyle after leaving school. They were more likely to have lower status jobs, unstable job histories, and be involved in antisocial activities (4).

These findings were confirmed by Robins and Ratcliffe, who investigated 235 black schoolboys from St. Louis, born between 1930 and 1934. In this study, truancy was inferred from poor attendance as revealed in school registers, and it is thus probably more appropriate to refer to persistent absenteeism

rather than truancy in this context. Persistently poor attendance was associated with dropping out of secondary education, and low earnings as an adult; high school absenteeism was strongly related to adult deviancy and, to a lesser degree, to psychological disturbances. These outcomes were predicted by absenteeism even when controlling for the effects of non-graduation and adolescent deviance. Absentees who did graduate from high school had better outcomes than those who dropped out. An interesting social outcome was a tendency towards 'assortative mating', i.e. marrying absentee girls, and producing absentee children. Again, absenteeism was also found to be associated with other forms of juvenile delinquency (5).

In a study of psychological outcomes, Tyrer and Tyrer found school refusal to be significantly correlated to adult neurotic illness, i.e. depression, anxiety and phobias, particularly for female respondents (6).

Gray, Smith and Rutter looked at school attendance and the first year of employment, and found that absentees tended to leave school without formal qualifications. They were subsequently likely to be in less skilled work, had an increased risk of unemployment, and a reduced chance of being in a job involving further training. This adverse effect of absenteeism on the first year of employment operated through low scholastic achievements rather than other, e.g. psychological, mechanisms:

for any given level of intelligence, possession of educational qualifications increased the likelihood of obtaining skilled work involving further training. Poor attenders had lower scholastic achievements, even when IQ, social class and other background variables were controlled for (7).

While there is thus some evidence to suggest that truancy and absenteeism are associated with certain subsequent occupational disadvantages, and personal problems, this is by no means a generally observed trend; more particularly, the findings of Cherry dispute those of Robins and Ratcliffe regarding lower earnings as an adult. Some association with juvenile delinquency and personal problems appears to be established, and a tendency to have less skilled jobs and an unstable job history, as results of low scholastic achievements and lack of qualifications.

Most of the research discussed here has focused on the occupational consequences of truancy. Educational and social outcomes, and references to mental health have so far been relatively neglected. Robins and Ratcliffe investigated some of these aspects, but it has to be seen whether these American findings are applicable here. Certainly, they appear to be to some extent contradictory to British findings, namely with regard to truants' income.

The present study aims therefore at examining a comprehensive range of early adult outcomes, comparing truants and non-truants, utilising the data collected in the National Child Development Study (NCDS), which surveyed some 15,000 respondents born between 3-9 March 1958 at ages 7, 11, 16 and 23. Areas studied will be employment, education, family life and mental health.

2. Design of Present Research

The NCDS collected an extensive amount of data on children's health, education, social background and family life. Later, exam results were included, as well as details of their occupations and careers, marriage and parenthood, and physical and mental health and illness. Information on school attendance and truancy is contained in various measures:

1) School Attendance Ratios at 7, 11, 14 and 15

These were computed as coefficients of attended half-day sessions divided by all possible sessions. In NCDS1 (7) and NCDS2 (11) this measure was based on the current school year up to completion of the questionnaire, whereas for NCDS3 (14 and 15) only the autumn term of the previous year and the current year respectively were evaluated, to standardise the period of time covered by this variable.

2) Teacher Ratings at 11 and 16

At 11 teachers indicated in the Bristol Social Adjustment Guide (BSAG) (8) whether truancy (and a range of other behavioural problems) was present for the child in question, without any rating of its seriousness, and at 16 as one item of the Rutter School Behaviour Scale (9) they were asked to indicate whether truancy, 'doesn't apply', 'applies somewhat' or 'applies certainly'.

3) Parental Ratings at 16

Parents were asked in the course of completing the Rutter Home Behaviour Scale (10) whether their child truanted 'never', 'occasionally' or 'at least once a week'. Also surveyed were the related topics of reluctance to go to school and absence due to ill health, both at 11 and 16.

4) Child's Self-Assessment at 16

Children were asked whether or not they had stayed away from school when they should have been there in the current year.

The information on early adult outcomes was obtained by interview in the course of the NCDS fourth follow-up at age 23.

The first stage of analysis has been to examine the inter-relationship among these measures, in an attempt both to cast more light on their different meanings, and to decide on a

composite truancy measure for use in subsequent analysis.

In the course of the project, the relationships will be explored between truancy and attendance and a wide range of outcomes. Multivariate analysis will then be used to attempt to establish the unique influence of truancy, by controlling for different levels of ability and background variables. However, this interim paper presents and discusses only the univariate relationships.

Attendance ratios, which did not distinguish between truancy and absence due to illness, were used throughout the analysis mainly as control measures. While there can be absence without truancy, there can be no truancy without absence, and as the lower attendance categories therefore contained truants as well as children absent for good reasons, any findings established for truants should be, to a lesser extent, corroborated for absentees in general.

3. Analytical Stages

3.1. Correlation of absence and truancy variables

The correlations of attendance ratios and truancy variables among themselves were evaluated by crosstabulation, separately for each sex.

It was found that regular attendance was more consistent over time than absenteeism, though there was some correlation between low attendance at age 14 and very low attendance at age 15, pointing to intensifying absenteeism in this age group. This is in line with the previous findings of Fogelman, Tibbenham and Lambert, also based on NCDS data (11), and those of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools (12).

Girls were generally more prone to be absent due to ill-health, and reluctant to go to school without actually truanting.

There was on the whole a fair correlation between teachers', parents' and children's truancy ratings. Parents appeared to understate children's truancy to a certain extent compared to teachers' ratings, particularly for girls.

As was seen for the attendance ratios over time, the truancy ratings for age 11 were not strongly related to those for age 15. This appears at first to contrast with the findings of Robins and Ratcliffe which stated a considerable correlation of early and late truancy. They found that truancy in high school (age 13 to 18) was strongly predicted by truancy in elementary school (age 5 to 13) and that only 13% of those with no truancy in elementary school became truant in high school, although the different age levels do not permit a direct comparison with our findings (13).

All ratings were negatively correlated to the attendance ratios, which tends to confirm their validity. This negative correlation was strongest in the case of teachers' ratings. Interestingly, the lowest attendance category, 'Less than 60%', tended to contain slightly fewer children said to truant than the next lowest category which might be due to chronically ill children or those kept at home for other reasons.

3.2. Correlation with selected outcomes

Each of the attendance and truancy variables was crosstabulated with selected outcomes, namely the social position of current or last job, and educational achievements, CSE and GCE, or SCE for Scottish respondents respectively, to evaluate their ability to differentiate between varying adult outcomes.

Generally, the truancy ratings did so more than the attendance ratios, which may be due to the fact that the latter don't account for reasons of absences, and that truancy, absence without good reason, is more commonly found in the lower ability ranges (14). Again, the very low attendance categories often diverge from the general relationships.

3.3. Composite measures by outcomes

Taking into account the correlations of truancy and absence variables with each other, and the selected outcomes, it was

decided to construct a composite truancy measure based on teachers' ratings, as these appeared to be most consistent and reliable throughout.

As there was little coherence in the truancy/absence correlations over time, i.e. between ages 7, 11 and 14/15, and as there was in any case no truancy measurement available for age 7, this stage was excluded from the analysis. The differences between relationships with attendance at ages 14 and 15 were small, with 15 being if anything more polarised, and again there was no separate truancy measurement for age 14. Thus, the final measures are based on age 11 and 15/16 only, for both truancy and attendance.

Accordingly, the composite truancy variable (TRUVAR) took four different values, based on the respective teachers' ratings:

'1' for 'truant at 11 and 16' (62 cases)
'2' for 'truant at 16 but not at 11' (2067 cases)
'3' for 'truant at 11 but not at 16' (41 cases)
'4' for 'not truant at 11 and 16' (8470 cases)

A composite absence variable (ABSVAR), based on the attendance ratios, was constructed in a similar way, with corresponding values, defining poor attendance at any age as less than 80% attendance. The four categories of ABSVAR were:

'1' for 'poor attendance at 11 and 15' (267 cases)

'2' for 'poor attendance at 15 but not at 11' (1598 cases)

'3' for 'poor attendance at 11 but not at 15' (255 cases)

'4' for 'good attendance at 11 and 15' (7446 cases)

As the total number rated as truanting at 11 but not at 16 (TRUVAR '3') was very small, just 41 cases, only 15 of which were girls, it was decided to omit this group from further evaluation. To facilitate comparison, the comparable category for ABSVAR was also excluded. Table 1 summarises the relationship between TRUVAR and ABSVAR, which, as can be seen, is reasonably strong and significant at the 0.0001 level.

Table 1: Truancy at 11 and 16 by Attendance at 11 and 15

	Number of Cases / Row % / Column %	ABSVAR: Absent at 11 and 15	Absent at 15	Not absent at 11 and 15	Row Total
TRUVAR	Truant at 11 and 16	14 27.5 6.1	24 47.1 1.7	13 25.5 .2	51 .6
	Truant at 16	141 8.4 61.8	815 48.5 56.4	724 43.1 10.5	1680 19.7
	Not truanting at 11 or 16	73 1.1 32.0	606 8.9 41.9	6128 90.0 89.3	6807 79.7
	Column Total	228 2.7	1445 16.9	6865 80.4	8538 100.0

Chi-square: 2053.32 (p<.0001)

The simple relationship of these two composite measures with a number of occupational, educational and personal/social outcomes has been examined. Continuous variables, like wages in first and current jobs, and total time and mean length of time in work or unemployed were evaluated as cumulative frequency graphs. The following variables were analysed:

* Social position of first and current or last job (Table 2 and Table 3)
* Current economic status (Table 4)
* Total time unemployed as % of economically active time (Fig 1)
* Number of full-time and part-time jobs (Table 5)
* Mean length of all jobs and total time employed (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3)
* Mean length of all unemployment spells and total time unemployed (Fig. 4 and Fig. 5)
* Job satisfaction in last and current job (Table 6 and Table 7)
* Pay per week in first and current job (Fig. 6 and Fig. 7)
* Weekly family income - adjusted for family size (Table 8)
* Educational achievements and qualifications (Table 9)
* Education, apprenticeship and training (Table 10)
* Current partnership status (Table 11)
* Type of current family unit (Table 12)
* Age at birth of first child (Table 13)
* Number of children in the family (Table 14)
* Depression (based on the Malaise Inventory) (Table 15)

* Smoking (Table 16)

* Frequency of Drinking (Table 17)

All outcomes were evaluated separately for male and female respondents, to control for possible sex-related differences which might obscure findings if the two groups were analysed together. As there are fewer female truants in the NCDS, as already noted in Fogelman and Richardson (15), some analyses of continuous variables in particular are based on truants at 16 versus non-truants only for the female subgroup, as the number of female truants at 11 and 16 was particularly few.

As was found for the original truancy ratings and attendance ratios, the TRUVAR correlations with various outcomes were generally more pronounced than the ABSVAR ones, i.e. the dichotomy truant versus non-truant was associated with a clearer differentiation of adult outcomes, and will therefore be emphasised in the following overview of findings. Tables and figures presenting the results of correlating ABSVAR with the above early adult outcomes can be obtained from the author on request.

Table 2: Social Position of First Job

MEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Professional		6 .7	168 5.3	174 4.3
Intermediate		27 3.3	371 11.7	398 9.9
Skilled and Semiskilled Non-Manual	3 10.0	65 7.9	694 22.0	762 19.0
Skilled Manual	9 30.0	448 54.7	1235 39.1	1692 42.2
Semiskilled Manual	10 33.3	165 20.1	483 15.3	658 16.4
Unskilled Manual	8 26.7	108 13.2	208 6.6	324 8.1
Column Total	30 .7	819 20.4	3159 78.8	4008 100.0

Chi-Square: 252.39 (p<.0001)

WOMEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Professional			64 1.8	64 1.5
Intermediate		14 2.2	482 23.6	496 11.9
Skilled and Semiskilled Non-Manual	1 10.0	306 49.0	2151 60.7	2458 58.9
Skilled Manual	1 10.0	78 12.5	294 8.3	373 8.9
Semiskilled Manual	8 80.0	217 34.8	527 14.9	752 18.0
Unskilled Manual		9 1.4	23 .6	32 .8
Column Total	10 .2	624 14.9	3541 84.8	4175 100.0

Chi-Square: 239.62 (p<.0001)

Table 3: Social Position of Current or Last Job

MEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Professional		4 .5	225 7.2	229 5.8
Intermediate	1 3.4	61 7.5	594 18.9	656 16.5
Skilled and Semiskilled Non-Manual		47 5.8	624 19.9	671 16.9
Skilled Manual	9 31.0	435 53.2	1178 37.6	1622 40.7
Semiskilled Manual	7 24.1	190 23.3	394 12.6	591 14.8
Unskilled Manual	12 41.4	80 9.8	120 3.8	212 5.3
Column Total	29 .7	817 20.5	3135 78.7	3981 100.0

Chi-Square: 394.74 (p<.0001)

WOMEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Professional			84 2.4	84 2.0
Intermediate	1 10.0	52 8.4	756 21.5	809 19.5
Skilled and Semiskilled Non-Manual	2 20.0	217 35.0	1857 52.7	2076 50.0
Skilled Manual		88 13.2	277 7.9	359 8.6
Semiskilled Manual	7 70.0	240 38.7	505 14.3	752 18.1
Unskilled Manual		29 4.7	43 1.2	72 1.7
Column Total	10 .2	620 14.9	3522 84.8	4152 100.0

Chi-Square: 339.37 (p<.0001)

Table 4: Current Economic Status

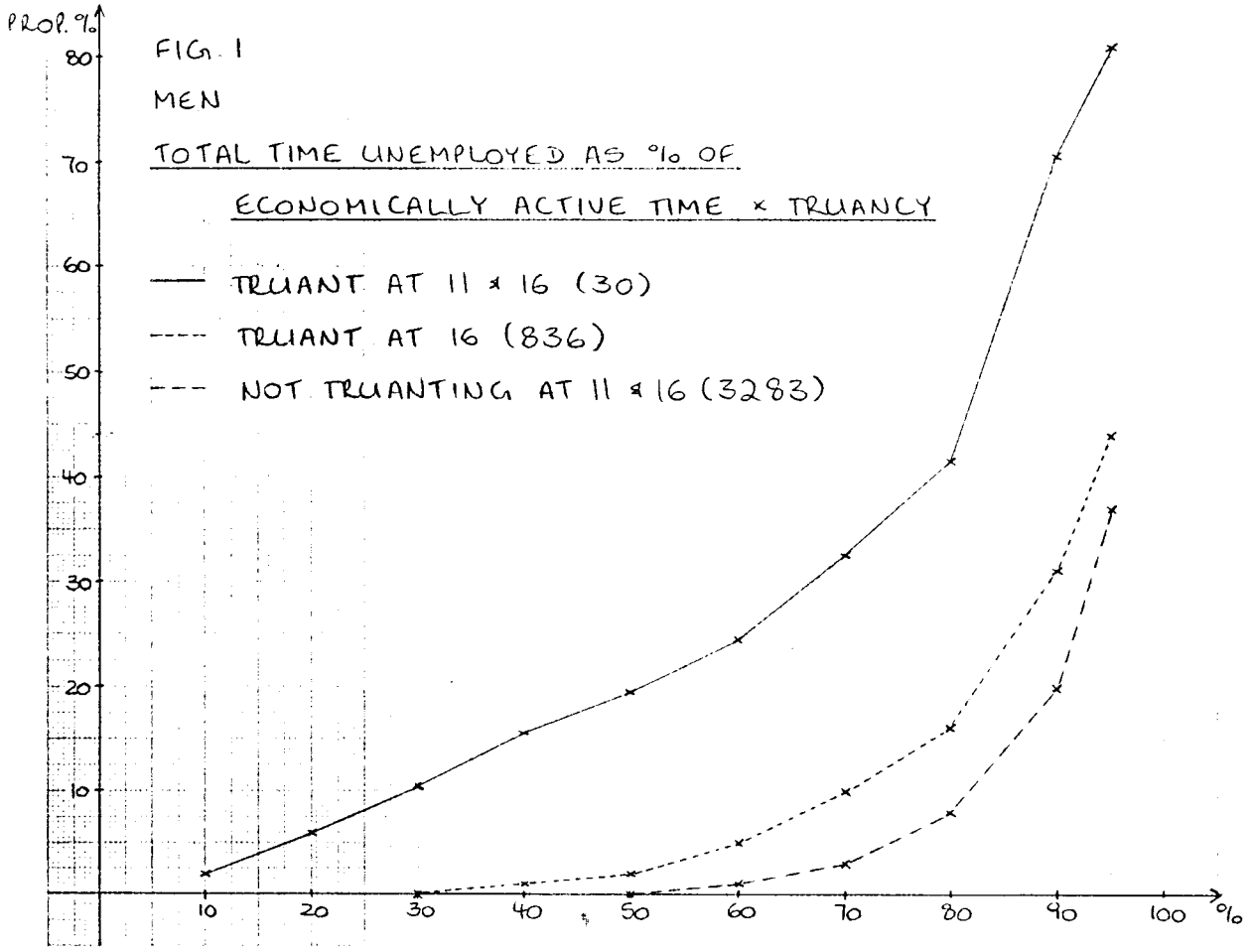
MEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Fulltime Education		8 .9	127 3.8	135 3.2
Fulltime Job	12 40.0	649 76.8	2794 84.0	3455 82.2
Parttime Job		7 .8	52 1.6	59 1.4
Job (Don't know whether fulltime or parttime)		4 .5	14 .4	18 .4
Unemployed	18 60.0	161 19.1	287 8.6	466 11.1
TOPS		2 .2	6 .2	8 .2
Out of Labour Force		14 1.7	45 1.4	59 1.4
Housework			1 .0	1 .0
Column Total	30 .7	845 20.1	3326 79.2	4201 100.0

Chi-Square: 164.72 (p<.0001)

WOMEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Fulltime Education		2 .3	64 1.8	66 1.6
Fulltime Job	3 30.0	226 35.5	2246 62.3	2475 58.2
Parttime Job		51 8.0	255 7.1	306 7.2
Job (Don't know whether fulltime or parttime)		1 .2	10 .3	11 .3
Unemployed	1 10.0	68 10.7	238 6.6	307 7.2
TOPS		1 .2	7 .2	8 .2
Out of Labour Force		17 2.7	75 2.1	92 2.2
Housework	6 60.0	270 42.5	712 19.7	988 23.2
Column Total	10 .2	636 15.0	3607 84.8	4253 100.0


PROP. %
FIG. 1
MEN
TOTAL TIME UNEMPLOYED AS % OF
ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE TIME × TRUANCY
TRUANT AT 11 & 16 (30)
TRUANT AT 16 (836)
NOT TRUANTING AT 11 & 16 (3283)
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
%

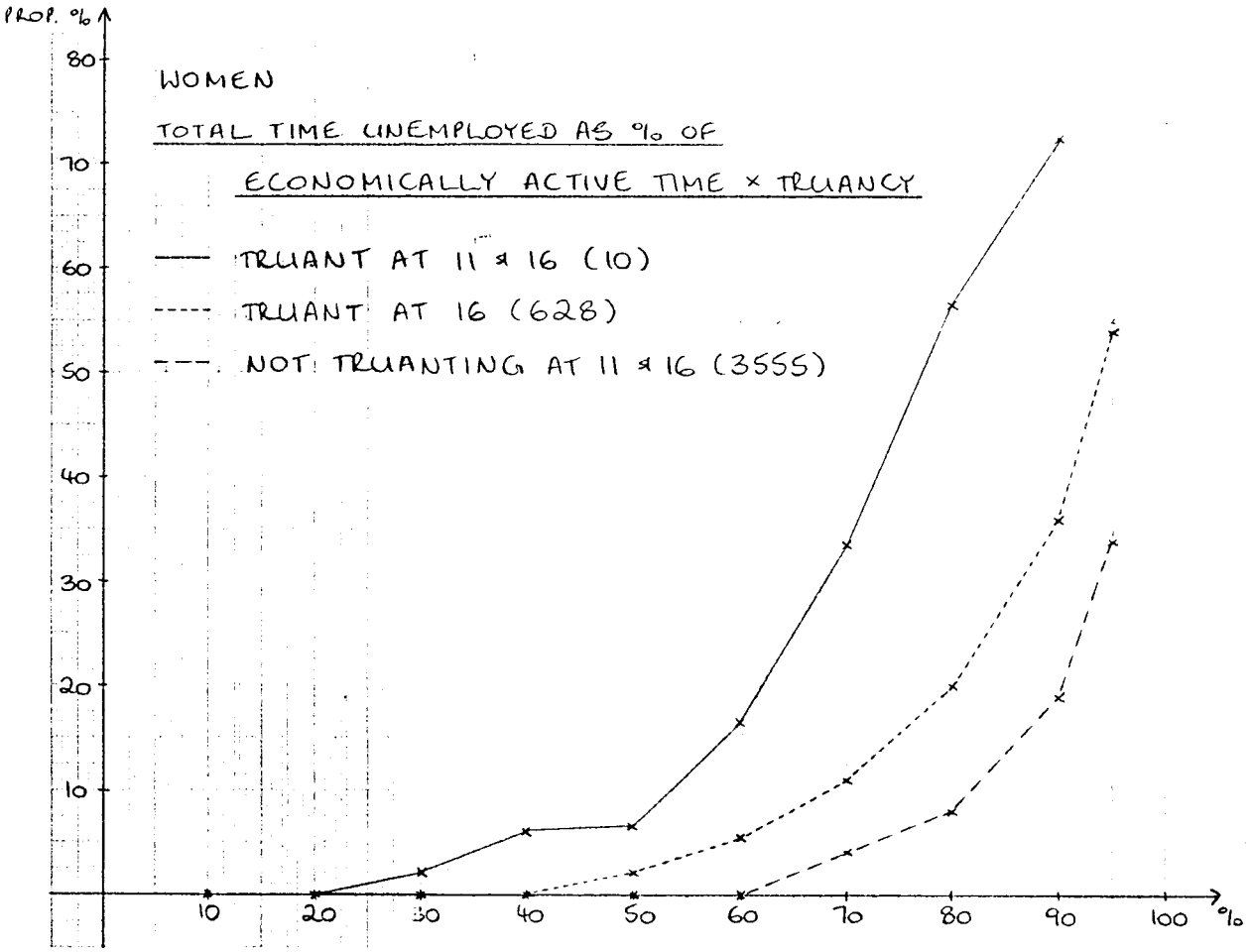

PROP. %
WOMEN
TOTAL TIME UNEMPLOYED AS % OF
ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE TIME × TRUANCY
TRUANT AT 11 & 16 (10)
TRUANT AT 16 (628)
NOT TRUANTING AT 11 & 16 (3555)
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
%

Table 5: Number of Fulltime and Parttime Jobs

MEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
None		1 .1	89 2.7	90 2.1
1		133 15.7	1088 32.6	1221 29.0
2-3	10 33.3	296 35.0	1402 42.0	1708 40.6
4-5	9 30.0	221 26.2	517 15.5	747 17.7
6-7	7 23.3	125 14.8	167 5.0	299 7.1
8 or more	4 13.3	69 8.2	74 2.2	147 3.5
Column Total	30 .7	845 20.1	3337 79.2	4212 100.0

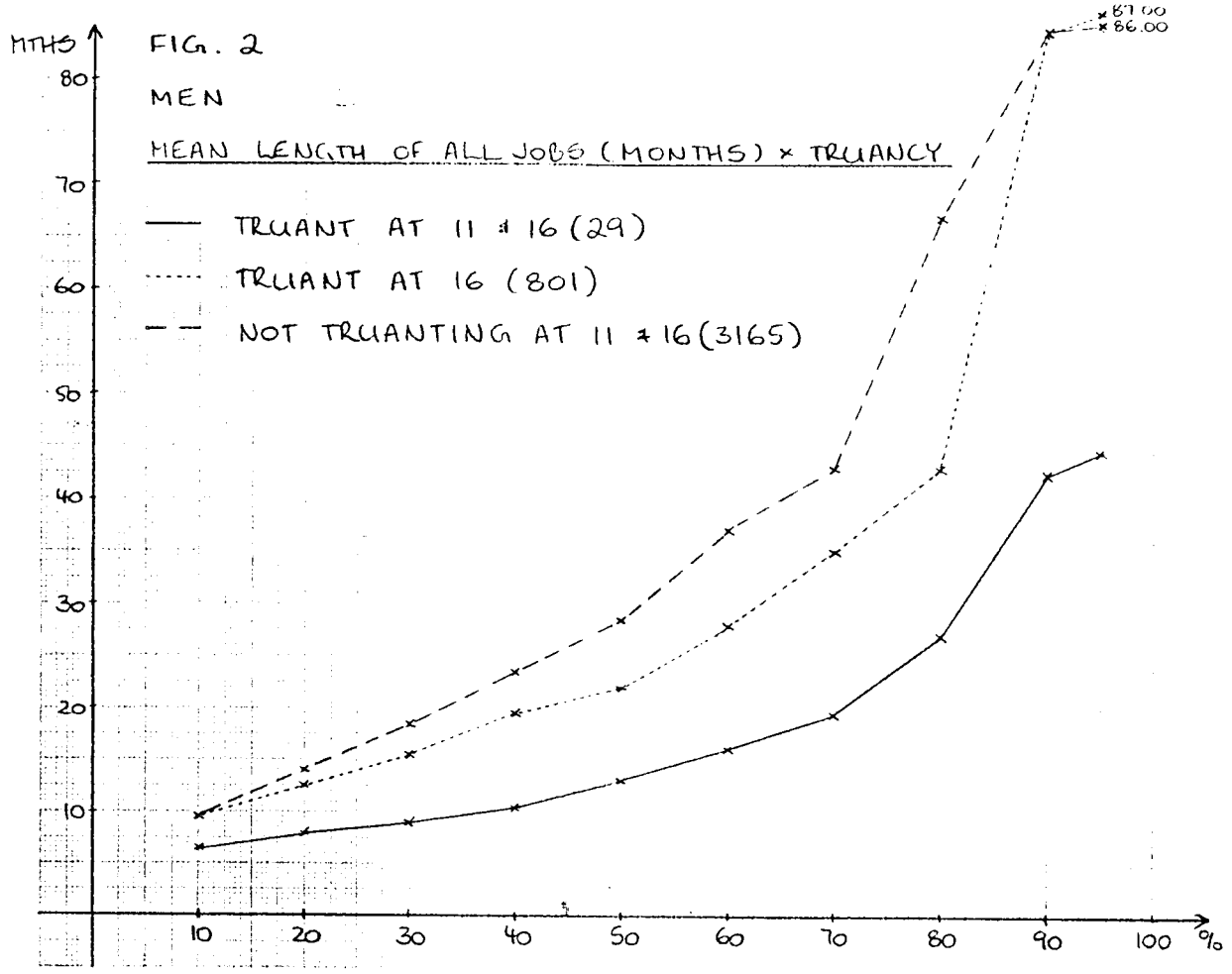
Chi-Square: 329.29 (p<.0001)

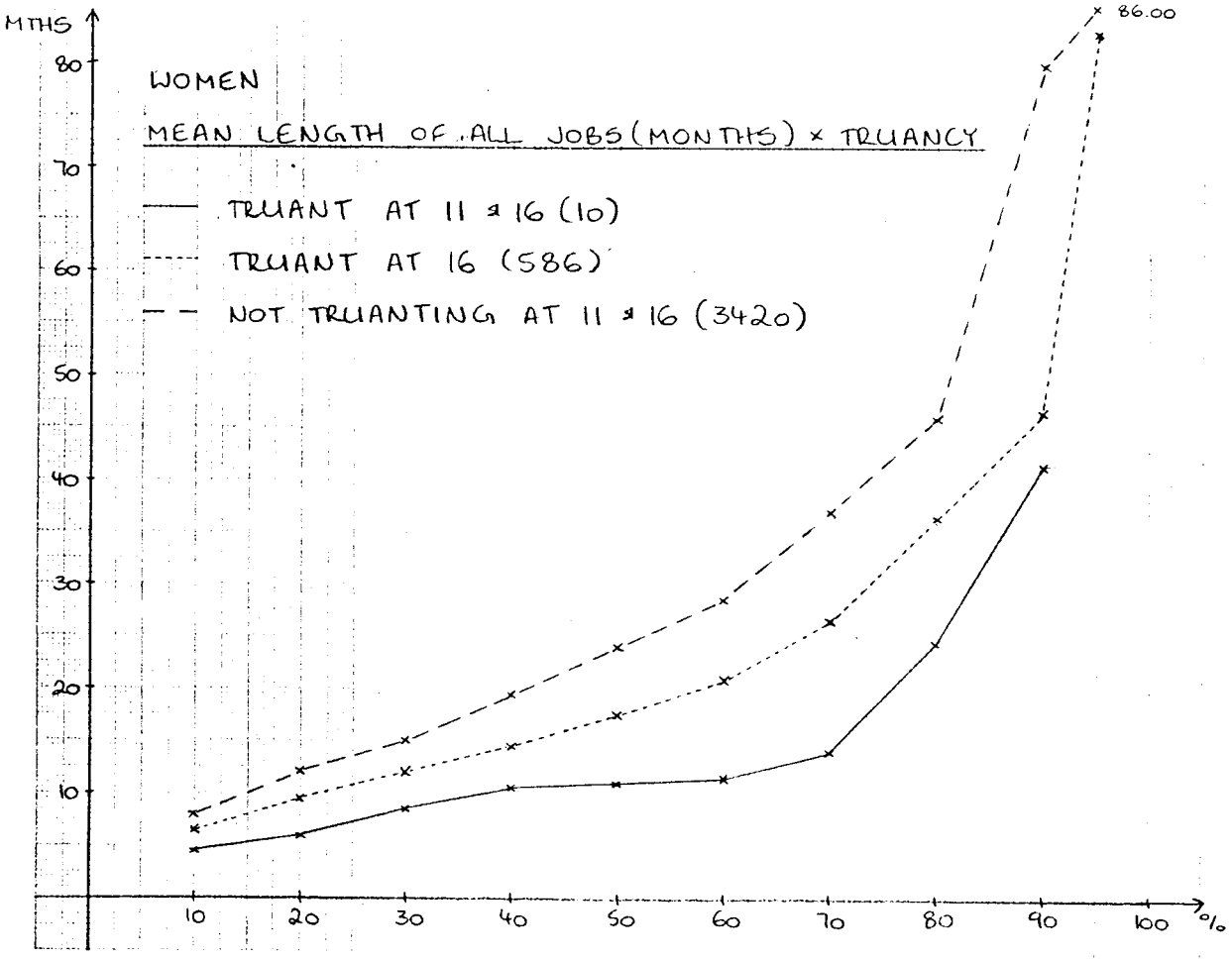
WOMEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
None		9 1.4	67 1.9	76 1.8
1	1 10.0	96 15.1	1082 29.9	1179 27.7
2-3	3 30.0	292 45.9	1588 43.9	1883 44.2
4-5	3 30.0	161 25.3	626 17.3	790 18.5
6-7	3 30.0	55 8.6	186 5.1	244 5.7
8 or more		23 3.6	66 1.8	89 2.1
Column Total	10 .2	636 14.9	3615 84.8	4261 100.0

Chi-Square: 95.64 (p<.0001)

FIG. 2


MTHS
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
MEN
MEAN LENGTH OF ALL JOBS (MONTHS) × TRUANCY
TRUANT AT 11 & 16 (29)
TRUANT AT 16 (801)
NOT TRUANTING AT 11 & 16 (3165)
87.00
86.00
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
%


MTHS
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
WOMEN
MEAN LENGTH OF ALL JOBS (MONTHS) × TRUANCY
TRUANT AT 11 & 16 (10)
TRUANT AT 16 (586)
NOT TRUANTING AT 11 & 16 (3420)
86.00
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
%

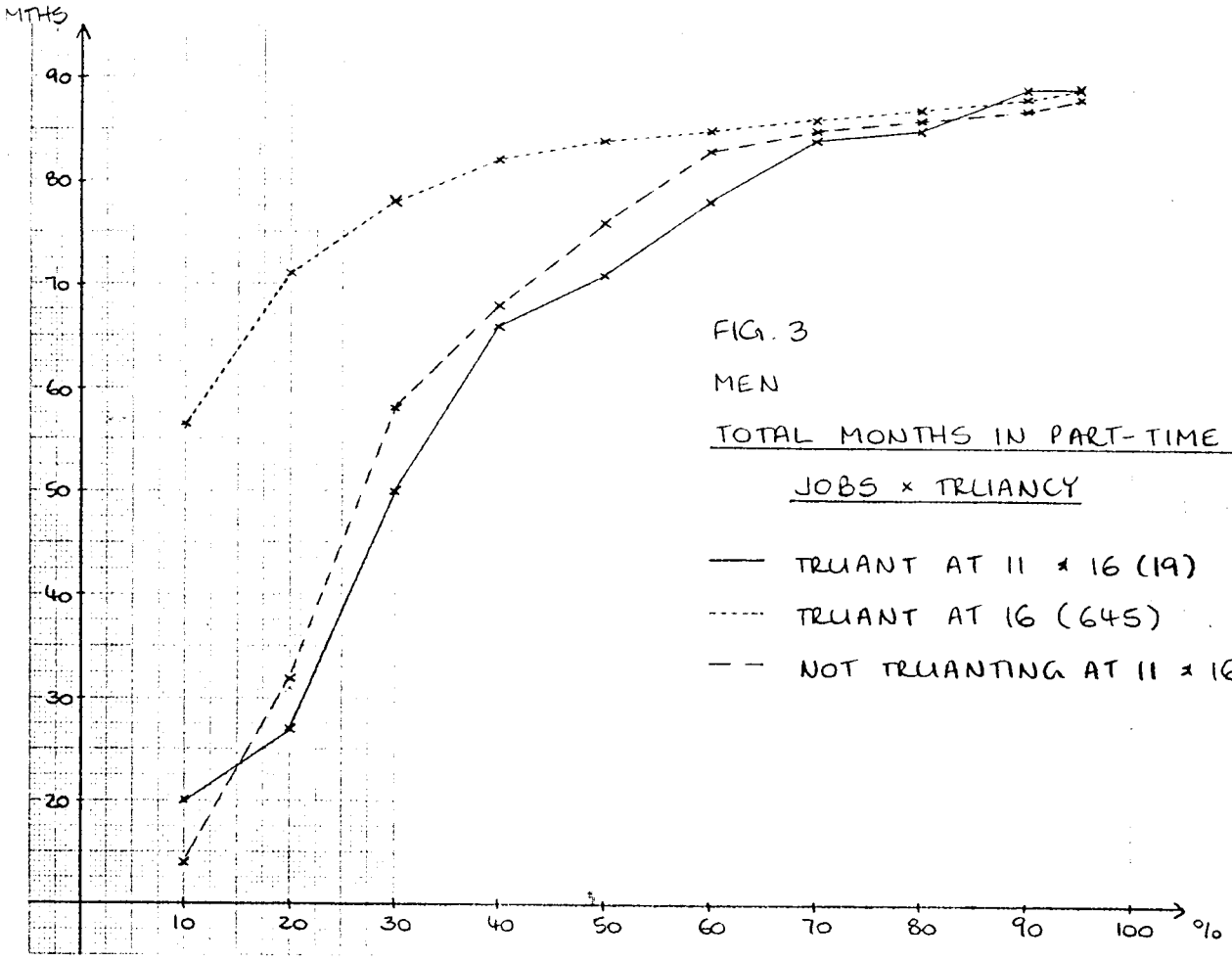


FIG. 3

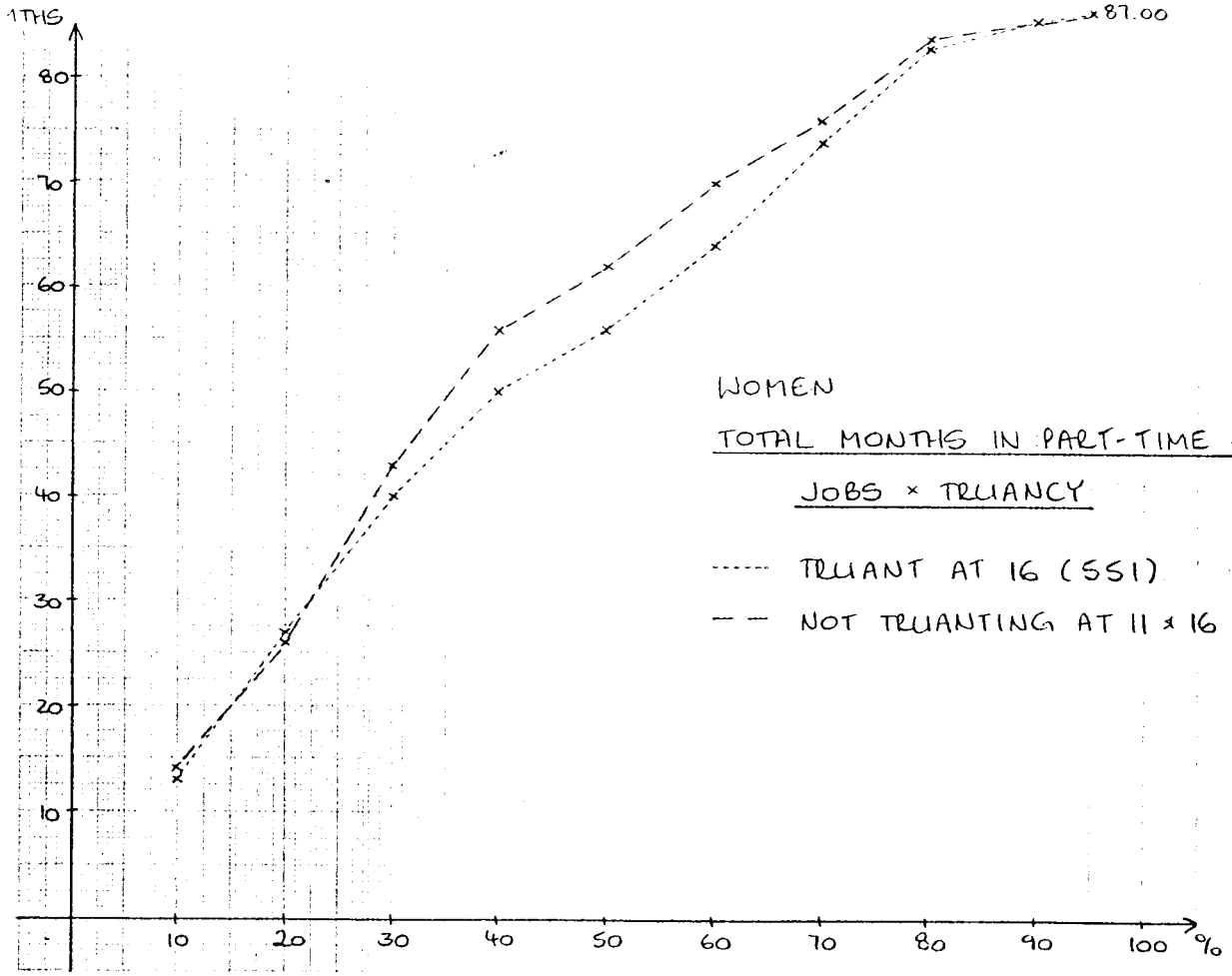
MEN

TOTAL MONTHS IN PART-TIME & FULL-TIME JOBS × TRUANCY

—— TRUANT AT 11 & 16 (19)

····· TRUANT AT 16 (645)

– – NOT TRUANTING AT 11 & 16 (3084)

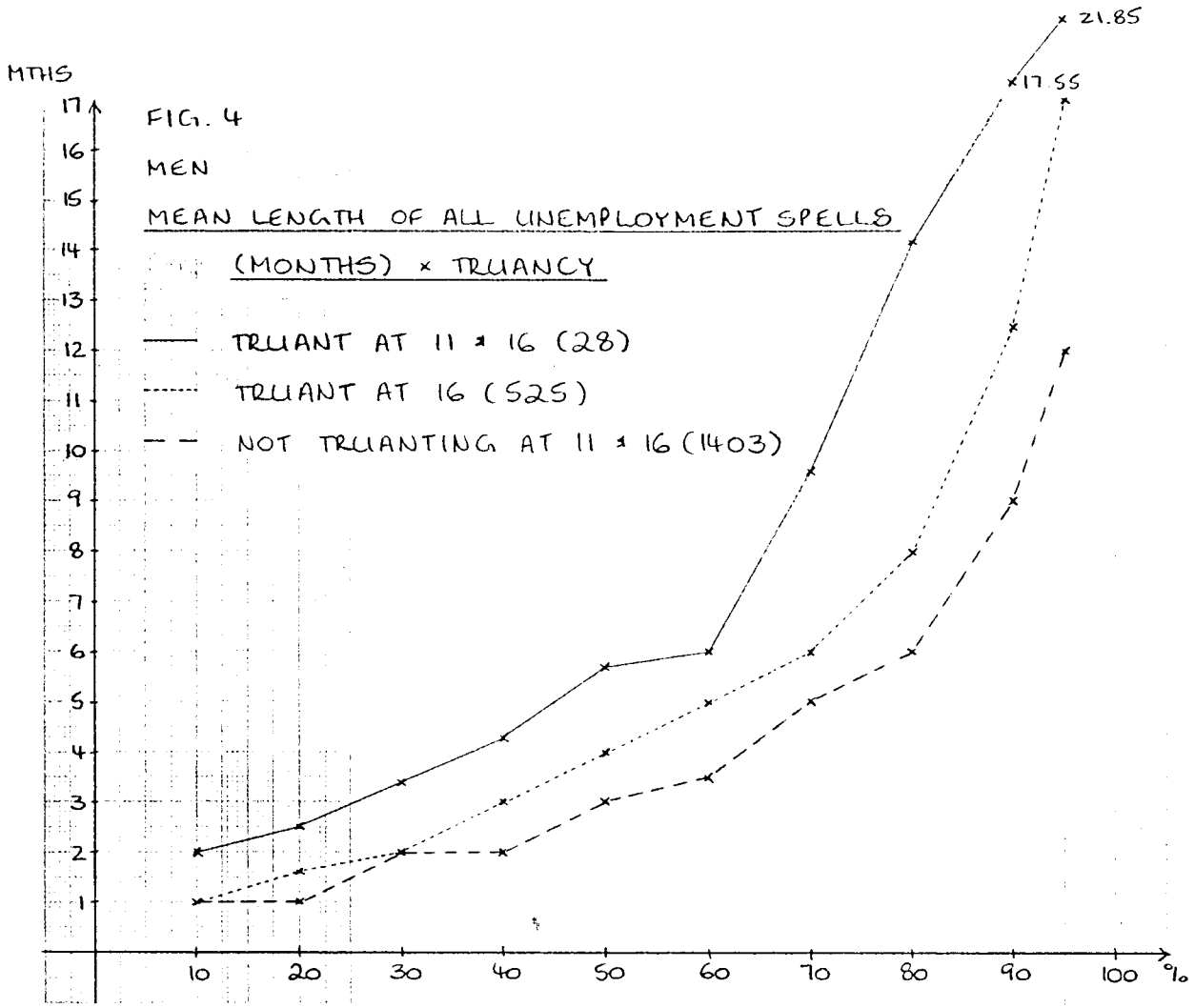


WOMEN

TOTAL MONTHS IN PART-TIME & FULL-TIME JOBS × TRUANCY

····· TRUANT AT 16 (551)

– – NOT TRUANTING AT 11 & 16 (3342)


MTHS
FIG. 4
MEN
MEAN LENGTH OF ALL UNEMPLOYMENT SPELLS
(MONTHS) × TRUANCY
TRUANT AT 11 & 16 (28)
TRUANT AT 16 (525)
NOT TRUANTING AT 11 & 16 (1403)
21.85
17.55
17
16
15
14
13
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
%

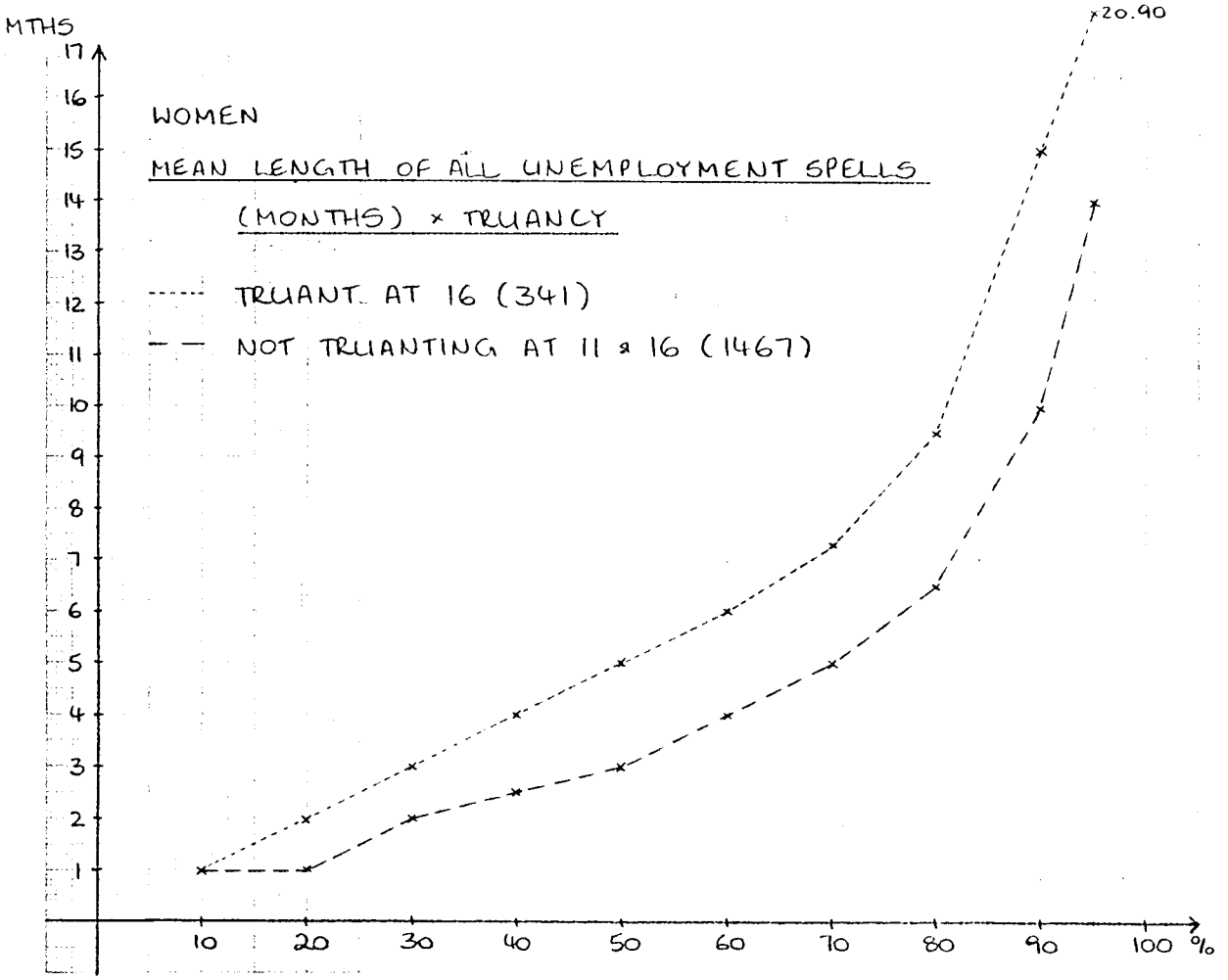
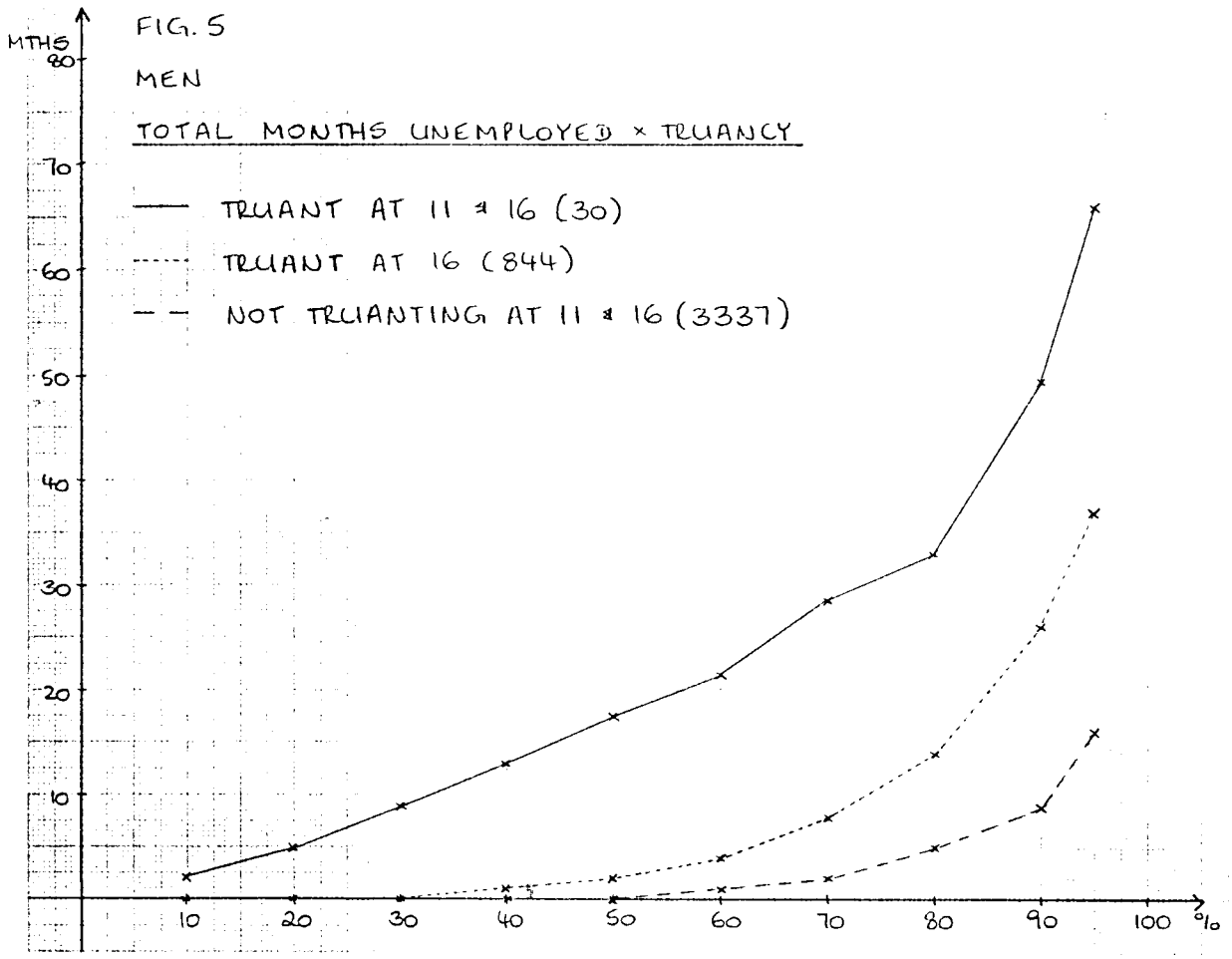

MTHS
WOMEN
MEAN LENGTH OF ALL UNEMPLOYMENT SPELLS
(MONTHS) × TRUANCY
TRUANT AT 16 (341)
NOT TRUANTING AT 11 & 16 (1467)
20.90
17
16
15
14
13
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
%

FIG. 5

MEN

TOTAL MONTHS UNEMPLOYED × TRUANCY



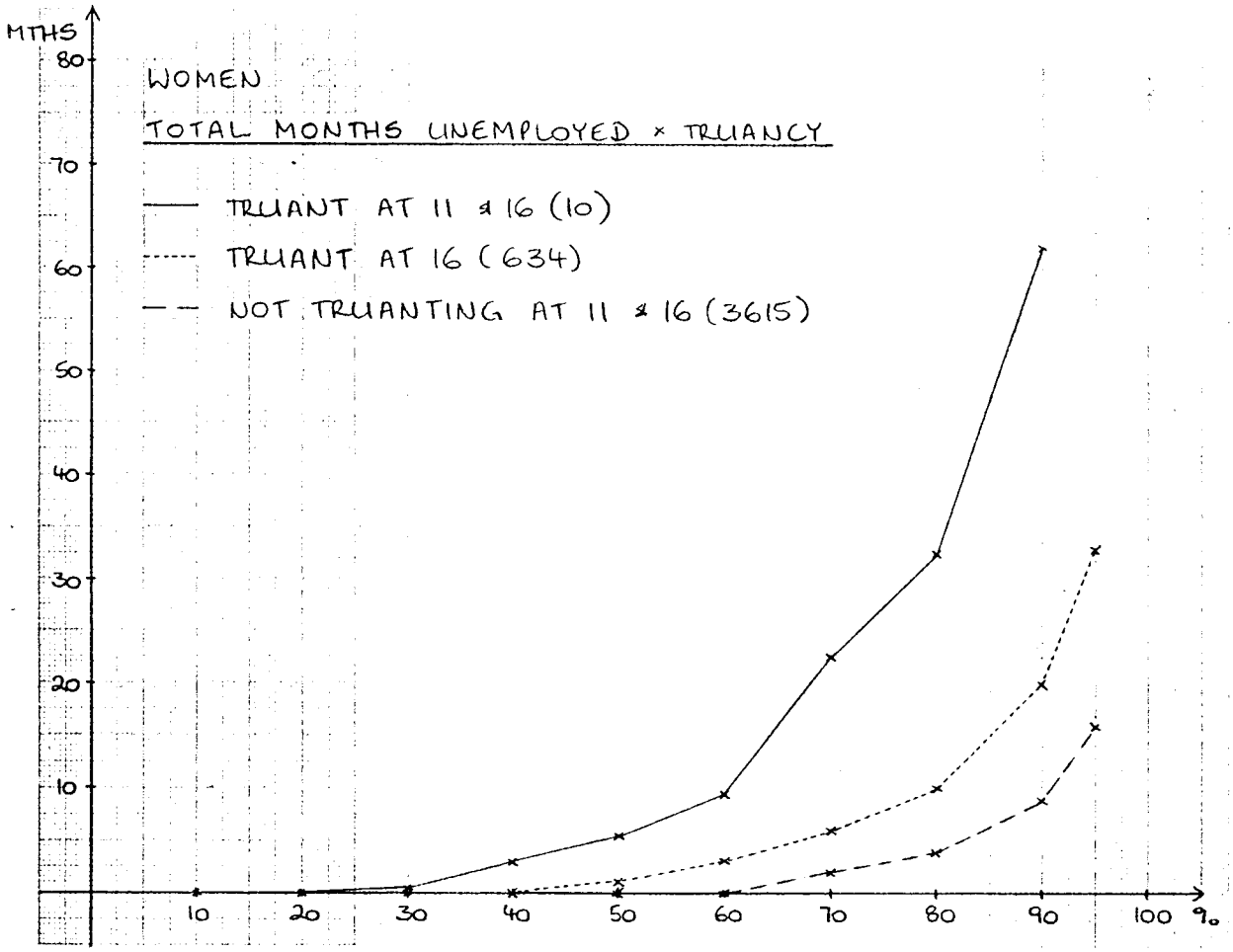


Table 6: Job Satisfaction in Last Job (not employed at present)

MEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Very Satisfied	2 11.1	37 20.4	57 15.1	96 16.7
Satisfied	9 50.0	72 39.8	148 39.3	229 39.8
Neither	3 16.7	17 9.4	43 11.4	63 10.9
Dissatisfied	2 11.1	38 21.0	89 23.6	129 22.4
Very Dissatisfied	2 11.1	17 9.4	39 10.3	58 10.1
Don't Know			1 .3	1 .2
Column Total	18 3.1	181 31.4	377 65.5	576 100.0

Chi-Square: 6.02 (p<.8136)

WOMEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Very Satisfied		94 26.9	305 29.6	399 28.7
Satisfied	5 71.4	172 49.3	482 46.7	659 47.5
Neither	1 14.3	28 8.0	64 6.2	93 6.7
Dissatisfied	1 14.3	38 10.9	138 13.4	177 12.8
Very Dissatisfied		17 4.9	39 3.8	56 4.0
Don't Know			4 .4	4 .3
Column Total	7 .5	349 25.1	1032 74.4	1388 100.0

Chi-Square: 9.47 (p<.4886)

Table 7: Job Satisfaction in Current Job

MEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Very Satisfied	7 58.3	171 25.9	746 26.0	924 26.1
Satisfied	3 25.0	316 47.8	1480 51.7	1799 50.8
Neither	2 16.7	67 10.1	262 9.1	331 9.4
Dissatisfied		76 11.5	289 10.1	365 10.3
Very Dissatisfied		31 4.7	82 2.9	113 3.2
Don't Know			6 .2	6 .2
Column Total	12 .3	661 18.7	2865 81.0	3538 100.0

Chi-Square: 18.88 (p<.0418)

WOMEN

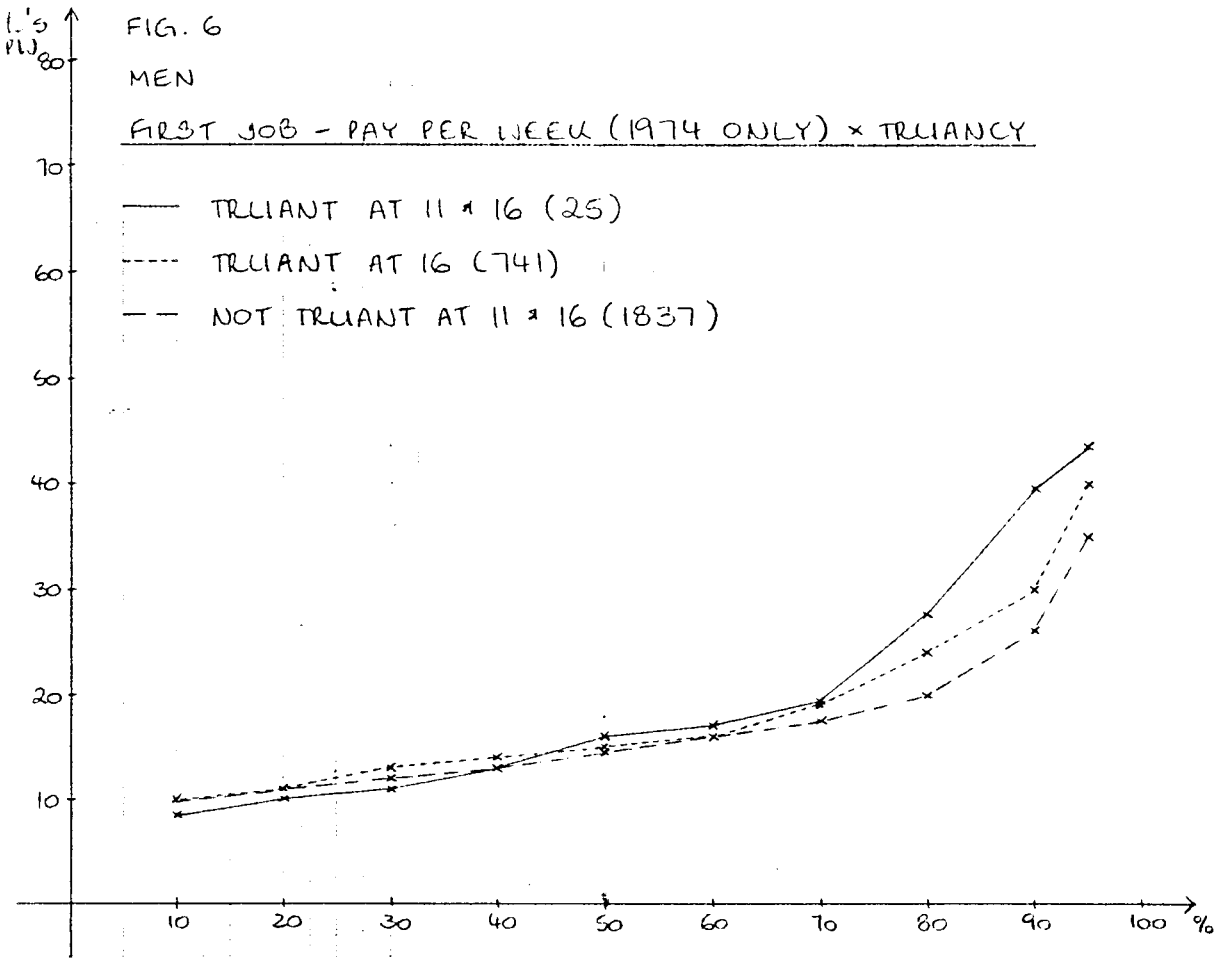
Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Very Satisfied	2 66.7	98 35.3	828 33.0	928 33.3
Satisfied		121 43.5	1237 49.3	1358 48.7
Neither		25 9.0	171 6.8	196 7.0
Dissatisfied	1 33.3	23 8.3	208 8.3	232 8.3
Very Dissatisfied		11 4.0	58 2.3	69 2.5
Don't Know			7 .3	7 .3
Column Total	3 .1	278 10.0	2509 89.9	2790 100.0

Chi-Square: 12.32 (p<.2639)

FIG. 6

MEN

FIRST JOB - PAY PER WEEK (1974 ONLY) × TRUANCY



WOMEN

FIRST JOB - PAY PER WEEK (1974 ONLY) × TRUANCY

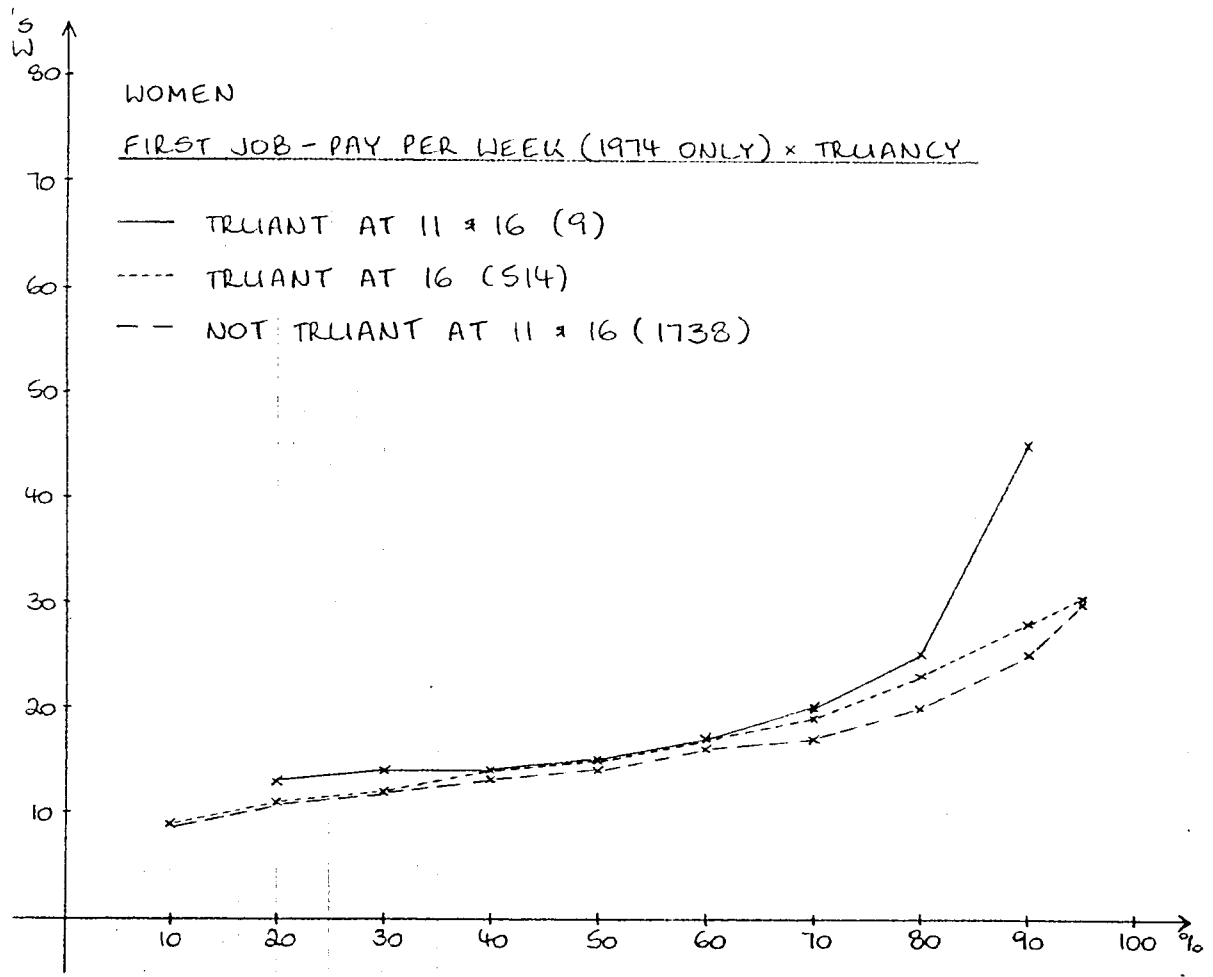
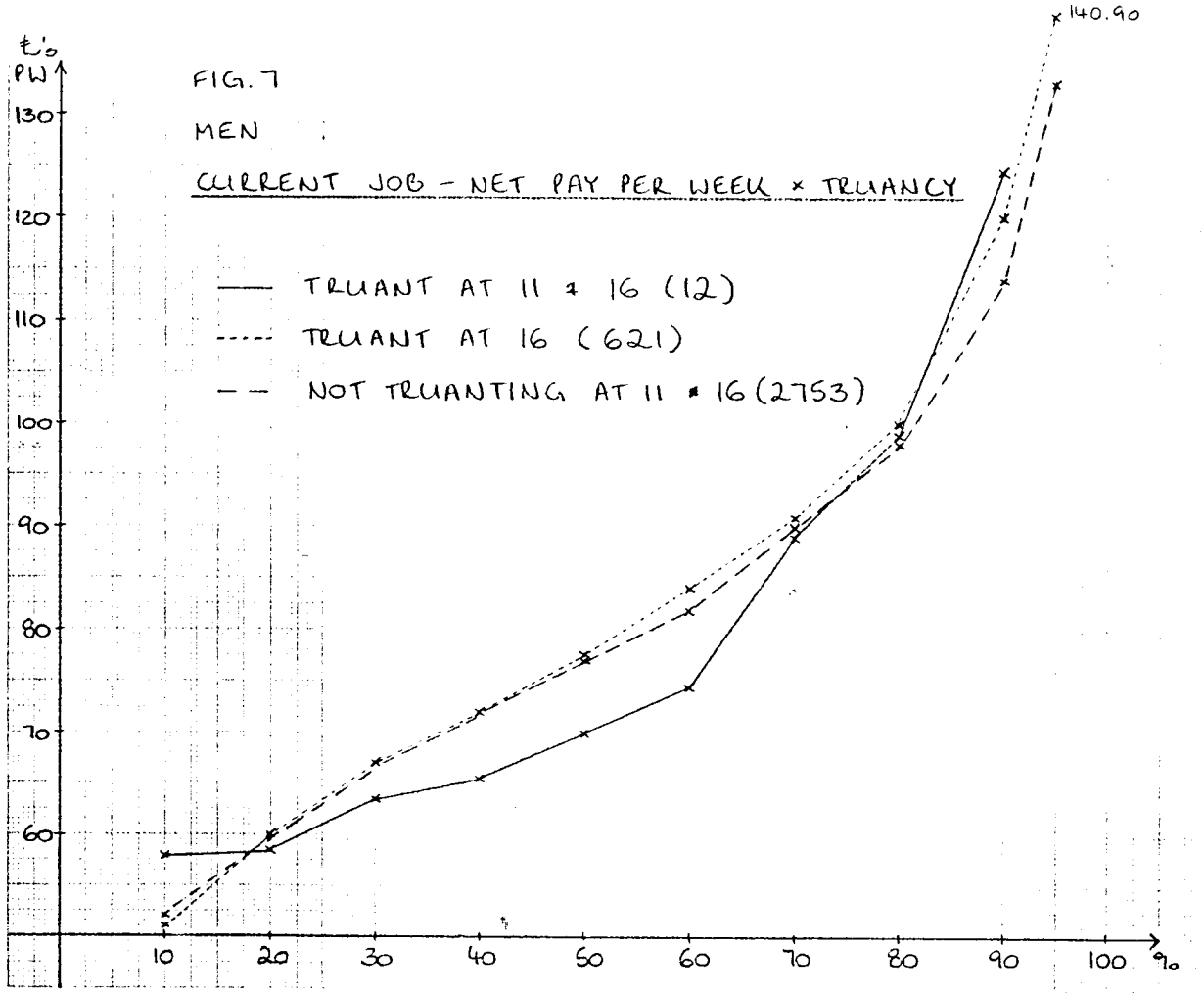


FIG. 7

MEN

CURRENT JOB - NET PAY PER WEEK × TRUANCY



WOMEN

CURRENT JOB - NET PAY PER WEEK × TRUANCY

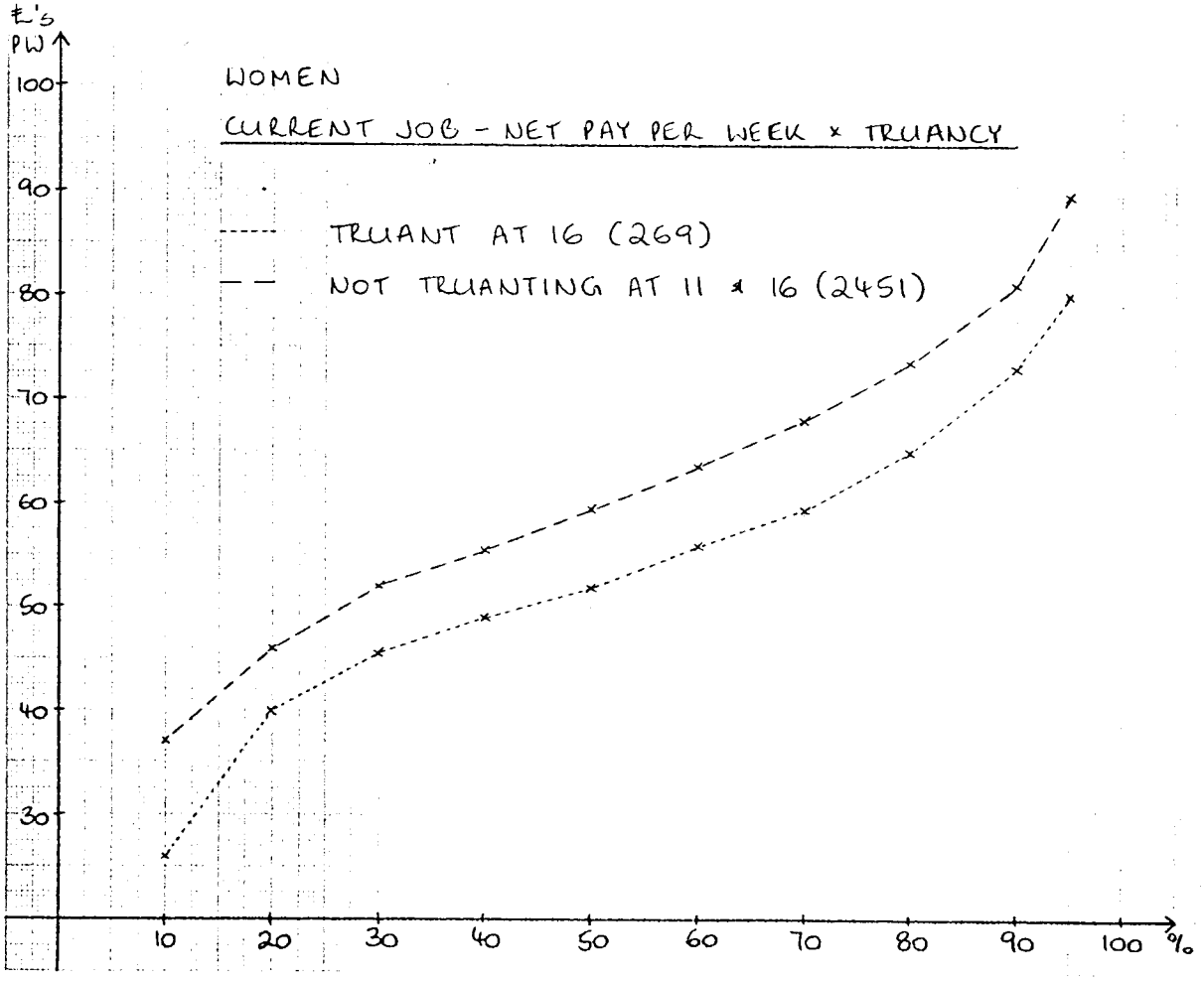


Table 8: Weekly Family Income (adjusted for family size)

MEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Up to £50	18 60.0	162 20.4	281 8.9	461 11.6
£51 - £75	2 6.7	102 12.8	323 10.3	427 10.8
£76 - £100	1 3.3	98 12.3	355 11.7	454 11.4
£101 - £125	4 13.3	109 13.7	538 17.1	651 16.4
£126 - £150	3 10.0	125 15.7	656 20.9	784 19.7
£151 - £200	1 3.3	135 17.0	707 22.5	843 21.2
£201 - £300	1 3.3	55 6.9	241 7.7	297 7.5
£301 or more		10 1.3	44 1.4	54 1.4
Column Total	30 .8	796 20.0	3145 79.2	3971 100.0

Chi-Square: 168.96 (p<.0001)

WOMEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Up to £50	3 30.0	173 28.0	425 12.2	601 14.6
£51 - £75	3 30.0	138 22.4	571 16.3	712 17.3
£76 - £100	1 10.0	114 18.5	548 15.7	663 16.1
£101 - £125	1 10.0	77 12.5	653 18.7	731 17.7
£126 - £150	2 20.0	62 10.0	589 16.9	653 15.8
£151 - £200		44 7.1	561 16.1	605 14.7
£201 - £300		9 5	124 3.5	133 3.2
£301 or more			22 .6	22 .5
Column Total	10 .2	617 15.0	3493 84.8	4120 100.0

Table 9: Educational Achievements and Qualifications

MEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Higher Degree			18 .5	18 .4
Degree		5 .6	476 14.3	480 11.4
HTEC, HNC, HND, etc		20 2.4	321 9.6	341 8.1
A-Levels		98 11.6	859 25.7	957 22.7
O-Levels	4 13.3	212 25.1	989 29.6	1205 28.6
CSEs or Similar		20 2.4	32 1.0	52 1.2
Apprenticeship	1 3.3	32 3.8	59 1.8	92 2.2
Other	1 3.3	31 3.7	51 1.5	83 2.0
None	24 80.0	428 50.7	532 15.9	984 23.4
Column Total	30 .7	845 20.1	3337 79.2	4212 100.0

Chi-Square: 669.62 (p<.0001)

WOMEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Higher Degree			8 .2	8 .2
Degree		1 .2	451 12.5	452 10.6
HTEC, HNC, HND, etc		12 1.9	328 9.1	340 8.0
A-Levels		10 1.6	483 13.4	493 11.6
O-Levels	2 20.0	164 25.8	1424 39.4	1590 37.3
CSEs or Similar	1 10.0	15 2.4	79 2.2	95 2.2
Apprenticeship		10 1.6	21 .6	31 .7
Other		9 1.4	39 1.1	48 1.1
None	7 70.0	415 65.3	782 21.6	1204 28.3
Column Total	10 .2	636 14.9	3615 84.8	4261 100.0

Chi-Square: 590.61 (p<.0001)

Table 10: Education, Apprenticeship, Training

MEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
None	11	181	266	458
	36.7	21.4	8.0	10.9
Stayed at school		2	10	12
		.2	.3	.3
Informal Training	6	103	171	280
	20.0	12.2	5.1	6.6
Training Course		13	44	57
(less than 14 days)		1.5	1.3	1.4
Just Apprenticeship	6	268	785	1059
	20.0	31.7	23.5	25.1
Apprenticeship and	3	95	445	543
Education or Training	10.0	11.2	13.3	12.9
Just Training	4	119	480	603
	13.3	14.1	14.4	14.3
Training and Education		21	413	434
		2.5	12.4	10.3
Just Education		43	722	765
		5.1	21.6	18.2
	30	845	3336	4211
Column Total	.7	20.1	79.2	100.0

Chi-Square: 385.27 (p<.0001)

WOMEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not Truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
None	7 70.0	232 36.5	541 15.0	780 18.3
Stayed at School		4 .6	21 .6	25 .6
Informal Training	2 20.0	159 25.0	511 14.1	672 15.8
Training Course (less than 14 days)		21 3.3	111 3.1	132 3.1
Just Apprenticeship	1 10.0	39 6.1	109 3.0	149 3.5
Apprenticeship and Education or Training		4 .6	61 1.7	65 1.5
Just Training		90 14.2	580 16.0	670 15.7
Training and Education		22 3.5	416 11.5	438 10.3
Just Education		65 10.2	1265 35.0	1330 31.2
Column Total	10 .2	636 14.9	3615 84.8	4261 100.0

Chi-Square: 360.20 (p<.0001)

Table 11: Current Partnership Status

MEN

Number of Cases Column %	Traunt at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Single	9 30.0	397 47.0	2028 60.8	2434 57.8
Separated, Divorced or Widowed	2 6.7	33 3.9	42 1.3	77 1.8
Married	15 50.0	363 43.0	1092 32.7	1470 34.9
Single and Cohabiting	4 13.3	41 4.9	162 4.9	207 4.9
Separated, Divorced or Widowed and Cohabitg		10 1.2	13 .4	23 .5
Column Total	30 .7	844 20.0	3337 79.2	4211 100.0

Chi-Square: 90.50 (p<.0001)

WOMEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Single	5 50.0	146 23.0	1347 37.3	1498 35.2
Separated, Divorced or Widowed		48 7.5	98 2.7	146 3.4
Married	4 40.0	378 59.4	1922 53.2	2304 54.1
Single and Cohabiting		44 6.9	208 5.8	252 5.9
Separated, Divorced or Widowed and Cohabiting	1 10.0	20 3.1	40 1.1	61 1.4
Column Total	10 .2	636 14.9	3615 84.8	4261 100.0

Chi-Square: 96.34 (p<.0001)

Table 12: Type of Current Family Unit

MEN

	Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
WITH CHILDREN	Single			1 .0	1 .0
	Separated, Divorced or Widowed			2 .1	2 .0
	Married	10 33.3	197 23.3	405 12.1	612 14.5
	Single and Cohabiting	2 6.7	16 1.9	35 1.0	53 1.3
	Separated, Divorced or Widowed and Cohabiting		5 .6	5 .1	10 .2
NO CHILDREN	Single	9 30.0	397 47.0	2027 60.7	2433 57.8
	Separated, Divorced or Widowed	2 6.7	33 3.9	40 1.2	75 1.8
	Married	5 16.7	166 19.7	687 20.6	858 20.4
	Single and Cohabiting	2 6.7	25 3.0	127 3.8	154 3.7
	Separated, Divorced or Widowed and Cohabiting		5 .6	8 .2	13 .3
	Column Total	30 .7	844 20.0	3337 79.2	4211 100.0

Chi-Square: 145.95 (p<.0001)

WOMEN

	Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
WITH CHILDREN	Single	3 30.0	29 4.6	54 1.5	86 2.0
	Separated, Divorced or Widowed		34 5.3	48 1.3	82 1.9
	Married	3 30.0	284 44.7	818 22.6	1105 25.9
	Single and Cohabiting		21 3.3	26 .7	47 1.1
	Separated, Divorced or Widowed and Cohabiting	1 10.0	13 2.0	17 .5	31 .7
NO CHILDREN	Single	2 20.0	117 18.4	1293 35.8	1412 33.1
	Separated, Divorced or Widowed		14 2.2	50 1.4	64 1.5
	Married	1 10.0	94 14.8	1104 30.5	1199 28.1
	Single and Cohabiting		23 3.6	182 5.0	205 4.8
	Separated, Divorced or Widowed and Cohabiting		7 1.1	23 .6	30 .7
	Column Total	10 .2	636 14.9	3615 84.8	4261 100.0

Chi-Square: 379.68 (p<.0001)

Table 13: Age at Birth of First Child

MEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Under 16 years				
16 years		2 .8	6 1.3	8 1.1
17-18 years	3 20.0	24 9.8	28 6.1	55 7.6
19-20 years	7 46.7	67 27.2	91 19.7	165 22.9
21-22 years	1 6.7	110 44.7	244 52.9	355 49.2
23 and over	4 26.7	43 17.5	92 20.0	139 19.3
Column Total	15 2.1	246 34.1	461 63.9	722 100.0

Chi-Square: 22.98 (p<.0034)

WOMEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Under 16 years		4 1.0		4 .3
16 years		21 5.3	22 2.2	43 3.1
17-18 years	2 28.6	98 24.9	182 18.5	282 20.4
19-20 years	3 42.9	132 33.5	244 14.8	379 27.4
21-22 years	1 14.3	116 29.4	388 39.5	505 36.5
23 and over	1 14.3	23 5.8	146 14.9	170 12.3
Column Total	7 .5	394 28.5	982 71.0	1383 100.0

Chi-Square: 40.40 (p<.0001)

Table 14: Number of Children in Family

MEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
None	18 60.0	637 75.4	2924 87.6	3579 85.0
1	4 13.3	146 17.3	321 9.6	471 11.2
2	5 16.7	52 6.2	86 2.6	143 3.4
3	3 10.0	10 1.2	6 .2	19 .5
Column Total	30 .7	845 20.1	3337 78.9	4212 100.0

Chi-Square: 166.81 (p<.0001)

WOMEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
None	3 30.0	257 40.4	2655 73.4	2915 68.4
1	2 20.0	205 32.2	625 17.3	832 19.5
2	5 50.0	139 21.9	290 8.0	434 10.2
3		33 5.2	43 1.2	76 1.8
4		2 .3	2 .1	4 .1
Column Total	10 .2	636 14.9	3615 84.8	4261 100.0

Chi-Square: 320.06 (P<.0001)

Table 15: Early Adult Depression (Malaise Score Categorised)

MEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Normal (0-7)	27 90.0	779 92.5	3240 97.2	4046 96.2
Depressed (8-24)	3 10.0	63 7.5	92 2.8	158 3.8
Column Total	30 .7	842 20.0	3332 79.3	4204 100.0

Chi-Square: 44.67 (p<.0001)

WOMEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Normal (0-7)	6 60.0	515 81.1	3275 90.8	3796 89.3
Depressed (8-24)	4 40.0	120 18.9	330 9.2	454 10.7
Total Column	10 .2	635 14.9	3605 84.8	4250 100.0

Chi-Square: 62.75 (p<.0001)

Table 16: Smoking

MEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Never	5 16.7	128 15.2	1067 32.0	1200 28.5
Given Up Smoking	3 10.0	166 19.7	1113 33.4	1282 30.5
Less than 10 cigarettes a day	1 3.3	68 8.1	216 6.5	285 6.8
10-19 cigarettes a day	8 26.7	188 22.3	396 11.9	592 14.1
20-29 cigarettes a day	7 23.3	220 26.1	445 13.3	672 16.0
30-39 cigarettes a day	3 10.0	46 5.5	71 2.1	120 2.9
Over 40 cigarettes a day	3 10.0	27 3.2	29 .9	59 1.4
Column Total	30 .7	843 20.0	3337 79.3	4210 100.0

Chi-Square: 315.40 (p<.0001)

WOMEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Never	1 10.0	93 14.6	1317 36.4	1411 33.1
Given Up Smoking	1 10.0	103 16.2	1038 28.7	1142 26.8
Less than 10 cigarettes a day		66 10.4	356 9.9	422 9.9
10-19 cigarettes a day	2 20.0	165 25.9	499 13.8	666 15.6
20-29 cigarettes a day	4 40.0	169 26.6	349 9.7	522 12.3
30-39 cigarettes	2 20.0	28 4.4	41 1.1	71 1.7
Over 40 cigarettes a day		12 1.9	14 .4	26 .6
Column Total	10 .2	636 14.9	3614 84.8	4260 100.0

Chi-Square: 371.72 (p<.0001)

Table 17: Frequency of Drinking

MEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Most Days	6 20.0	278 33.0	1060 31.8	1344 31.9
Once or Twice a Week	14 46.7	423 50.2	1682 50.4	2119 50.3
Less Often	3 10.0	64 7.6	291 8.7	358 8.5
Special Occasions	2 6.7	48 5.7	213 6.4	263 6.2
Never Drink	5 16.7	29 3.4	89 2.7	123 2.9
Column Total	30 .7	842 20.0	3335 79.3	4207 100.0

Chi-Square: 24.61 (p<.0061)

WOMEN

Number of Cases Column %	Truant at 11 and 16	Truant at 16	Not truanting at 11 and 16	Row Total
Most Days		45 7.1	377 10.4	422 9.9
Once or Twice a Week	2 20.0	271 42.6	1694 46.9	1967 46.2
Less Often	3 30.0	120 18.9	582 16.1	705 16.5
Special Occasions	4 40.0	157 24.7	749 20.7	910 21.4
Never Drink	1 10.0	43 6.8	212 5.9	256 6.0
Column Total	10 .2	636 14.9	3614 84.8	4260 100.0

Chi-Square: 20.94 (p<.0073)

4. Findings and Observations

4.1. Occupational and financial outcomes

On virtually all of the measures examined, there was a regular relationship between truancy and the outcomes, with the truants at 16 in an intermediate position between the non-truants and those truanting at 11 and 16. Sex-related differences in the relationships were relatively slight, which indicates that although the extent of truancy differs considerably between boys and girls (16), the subsequent outcomes are fairly similar. This confirms the recent findings by Reid, that male and female persistent absentees have more in common with each other than with good attenders (17).

Truants were much less likely to be in non-manual jobs of all kinds and more likely to be in semi-skilled and unskilled manual ones (Table 3). The generally observed differences between men and women, with men being relatively more likely to work in professional or manual jobs, and women in non-manual ones, are also found here, for truants and non-truants (18).

While total time in full-time and part-time jobs didn't differ much between truants and non-truants, the mean length of jobs was appreciably shorter for truants (Fig. 2). Truants tended to be unemployed for a longer total time with the mean length of all single unemployed spells also being longer. Accordingly,

there is a sizeable difference in the total time unemployed expressed as a proportion of the economically active time since completing education (Fig. 1). Looking at pay in first (Fig. 6) and current job (Fig. 7) there is generally little difference between truants and non-truants, with the exception of female respondents, who were truants at 16, earning somewhat less in their current job. However, with regard to weekly family income adjusted for family size (Table 8), truants were more likely to be in the lower income categories. This will be further discussed when looking at family formation in section 4.3.

It appears therefore that this study would support the previous findings of Cherry, of truants tending to have unstable job histories, but not lower earnings, rather than the contrasting findings of Robins and Ratcliffe. It also confirms Gray, Smith and Rutter's observation that truants have a higher risk of unemployment (19) (Table 4). As can be seen in Table 5, truants are likely to have relatively more jobs, which ties in with Cherry's observation that poor attendance is a predictor for a subsequent unstable job history (20). Unlike in Cherry's study however, which stated that frequent job changing was associated with less job satisfaction (21), we found that truants were on the whole not less satisfied with their work, either regarding current job (Table 7) or last job if they were not currently employed (Table 6).

4.2. Education and training

On the whole the proportion of respondents with qualifications was found to decrease with increasing truancy, and vice versa, with 80% (boys) and 70% (girls) of truants at 11 and 16 having no qualifications at all compared to 15.9% and 21.6% of non-truants of each sex (Table 9). Similarly, truants were less likely to have had any education or training since leaving school, and even among those who have had some post-school education or training, it is more likely to have been work-based rather than purely educational (Table 10).

These findings are very much in line with previous research (22). Further multivariate analysis is needed to control for different levels of ability, to clarify whether or not truancy and differences in educational achievements are both manifestations of lack of ability, rather than one being a cause of the other.

4.3 Personal and social outcomes

It was found that truants tended to be younger at the birth of the first child (Table 13), and had on average more children (Table 14). Regarding family status, truants were relatively more likely to be married with children, whereas non-truants had a higher proportion of respondents who were single without children or married without children (Table 12). There

appears to be a stronger emphasis for truants on having children and getting married, which is probably related to their social background, and perhaps in compensation for the occupational and educational disadvantages discussed above. As can be seen, there are relatively more truants in all 'with children' categories.

This may help explain the previous observations, that although truants' earnings are on the whole not less than those of non-truants, they have a higher proportion of respondents on a low weekly family income, as this measure takes into account family size.

Regarding smoking and drinking patterns, it was found that truants smoked on average more cigarettes per day than non-~~smokers~~ truants did (Table 16). There was little difference in frequency of drinking, truants drinking if anything slightly less often than non-truants (Table 17). A relatively slight difference in the proportion of heavy drinkers compared to a much more marked difference in the proportion of heavy smokers between truants and non-truants was previously reported by Farrington (23).

Truants were more likely to be classified as 'depressed' on their 'malaise' scores. This tendency was slightly more pronounced for girls (Table 15). A tendency towards

psychological disturbances correlated with truancy had previously been found for example by Farrington (24) and Robins and Ratcliffe (25), and more recently by the Medical Research Council's National Survey of Health and Development, which also confirms the observed differential between male and female respondents: 9.3% of male truants and 3.6% of non-truants were diagnosed as having a psychiatric disorder at age 36, compared to 26.8% of truant girls and 8.1% of non-truants respectively (26). This was similarly observed by Tyrer and Tyrer (27).

To conclude, the present study has already yielded several interesting findings. The general similarity of truants' and absentees' adult outcomes has been noted, but the fact that without exception truancy ratings differentiate more clearly between differing outcomes than attendance ratios did would challenge the assumption that truancy is largely synonymous with persistent absenteeism.

On the whole, differences in outcomes were more pronounced between truants and non-truants than between truant boys and girls. Generally, the preliminary findings appear to be in line with previous research. Our support for Cherry's findings on truants and adult earnings rather than for Robins and Ratcliffe's has already been noted.

After establishing with which adult outcomes truancy is correlated, it will now be necessary to control for extraneous factors to attempt to estimate the causal effect truancy has in this context, e.g. on educational achievements.

Notes and References

(1) See for example K. Reid, Truancy and School Absenteeism, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985.

(2) See for example P. Tyrer and S. Tyrer, 'School refusal, truancy and adult neurotic illness', in Psychological Medicine, 4, 1974, pp 416-421.

(3) N. Cherry, 'Persistent job changing - Is it a problem?', in Journal of Occupational Psychology, 49, 1976, pp 203-221.

(4) D. Farrington, 'Truancy, delinquency, the home and the school', in: L. Hersov and I. Berg (eds), Out of School, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 1980, pp 49-63.

(5) L.N. Robins and K.S. Ratcliffe, 'The long-term outcome of truancy', in Hersov and Berg, pp 65-83.

(6) Tyrer and Tyrer, op cit.

(7) G. Gray, A. Smith and M. Rutter, 'School attendance and the first year of employment', in Hersov and Berg, pp 343-370.

(8) K. Fogelman (ed), Growing Up in Great Britain, London Macmillian, 1983, pp 329-333.

(9) Fogelman, pp 118, 333.

(10) Fogelman, pp 118, 200, 333.

(11) K. Fogelman, A Tibbenham and L. Lambert, 'Absence from school: findings from the National Child Development Study', in Hersov and Berg, pp 25-26.

(12) Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools, Truancy and Behavioural Problems in Some Urban Schools, London: HMSO, 1978, p 9.

(13) Robins and Ratcliffe, p 69.

(14) See for example Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools, pp 32-33.

(15) K. Fogelman and K. Richardson, 'School attendance: some results from the National Child Development Study', in B. Turner (ed), Truancy, London: Ward Lock Educational, 1974, p 37.

(16) K. Reid, pp 14-15.

(17) K. Reid, pp 64-65, 125.

(18) See for example Ivan Reid, Social Class Differences in Britain (second edition), London: Grant McIntyre, 1981, pp 70-71.

(19) Gray, Smith and Rutter, p 364.

(20) Cherry, pp 206-207.

(21) Cherry, pp 208-209.

(22) See for example Gray, Smith and Rutter, pp 354-356.

(23) Farrington, pp 57-58.

(24) Farrington, pp 53-53, 56-57.

(25) Robins and Ratcliffe, pp 74-76.

(26) Figures reproduced by kind permission of the MRC National Survey of Health and Development, University College London.

(27) Tyrer and Tyrer, pp 418-419.

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N A T I O N A L C H I L D D E V E L O P M E N T S T U D Y

The National Child Development Study (NCDS) is a continuing longitudinal study which is seeking to follow the lives of all those living in Great Britain who were born between 3 and 9 March, 1958.

It has its origins in the Perinatal Mortality Survey (PMS). This was sponsored by the National Birthday Trust Fund and designed to examine the social and obstetric factors associated with the early death or abnormality among the 17,000 children born in England, Scotland and Wales in that one week.

To date there have been four attempts to trace all members of the birth cohort in order to monitor their physical, educational and social development. These were carried out by the National Children's Bureau in 1965 (when they were aged 7), in 1969 (when they were aged 11), in 1974 (when they were aged 16) and in 1981 (when they were aged 23). In addition, in 1978, details of public examination entry and performance were obtained from the schools, sixth-form colleges and FE colleges.

For the birth survey information was obtained from the mother and from medical records by the midwife. For the purposes of the first three NCDS surveys, information was obtained from parents (who were interviewed by health visitors), head teachers and class teachers (who completed questionnaires), the schools health service (who carried out medical examinations) and the subjects themselves (who completed tests of ability and, latterly, questionnaires). In addition the birth cohort was augmented by including immigrants born in the relevant week in the target sample for NCDS1-3.

The 1981 survey differs in that information was obtained from the subject (who was interviewed by a professional survey research interviewer) and from the 1971 and 1981 Censuses (from which variables describing area of residence were taken). Similarly, during the collection of exam data in 1978 information was obtained (by post) only from the schools attended at the time of the third follow-up in 1974 (and from sixth-form and FE colleges, when these were identified by schools). On these last two occasions case no attempt was made to include new immigrants in the survey.

All NCDS data from the surveys identified above are held by the ESRC Data Archive at the University of Essex and are available for secondary analysis by researchers in universities and elsewhere. The Archive also holds a number of NCDS-related files (for example, of data collected in the course of a special study of handicapped school-leavers, at age 18; and the data from the 5% feasibility study, conducted at age 20, which preceded the 1981 follow-up), which are similarly available for secondary analysis.

Further details about the National Child Development Study can be obtained from the NCDS User Support Group.