

Youth employment during school: results from two longitudinal surveys

Students who worked 20 or fewer hours per week during the school year were more likely to attend college; youths who worked a greater percentage of weeks during the school year worked more consistently when they reached ages 18 to 30

Donna S. Rothstein

According to a popular perception, youths work more today than in the past and their employment may not always lead to desirable consequences. The concern is that a young person's employment, particularly when the individual works many hours, may reduce study time, increase school lateness and absenteeism rates, and adversely affect grades. However, a youth's employment also may provide some positive benefits, teaching about workplace norms and responsibilities and helping to ease the person's subsequent transition from school to work full time. In addition, these costs and benefits associated with a person's working while young could have an impact on the individual's long-term educational and labor market outcomes.

The first part of this article compares the employment of today's youth with that of a youth cohort from nearly 20 years ago. It asks whether 15- and 16-year-olds are, in fact, more likely to work today and examines whether the likelihood of a young person's being employed while attending school varies across youths with different demographic characteristics. Also examined in this part is how the distribution of hours of work of 16-year-olds varies across the two cohorts. Data come from the first round of a new survey of youth—the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97)—and from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79). In the first round of each survey, 15- and 16-year-olds answered similar questions about their current em-

ployment status and hours of work. In addition, many demographic measures that may be associated with youths' decisions to work are similar across the two surveys.

The second part of the article looks at the relationship between the employment of 16- and 17-year-old youths attending school and their future academic and labor market outcomes—specifically, college attendance, weeks of work from ages 18 through 30, and number of jobs held from ages 18 through 30. Data are from the NLSY79, which has followed the lives of survey respondents for more than 20 years. As the NLSY97 cohort ages, researchers will be able to use that survey to study how today's school-enrolled youths' employment affects their long-term educational and labor market experiences.

Background

Youths may choose to work while they are enrolled in school for a variety of reasons. They may want to earn income to support their family, pay for personal expenses (for example, a car), or save for college. Parents may encourage youths to work because they believe that working will teach them responsibility and punctuality. In addition, youths (particularly those who are not bound for college) may want to obtain job experience that will assist them in their subsequent transition from school to work. A goal of the 1994 School-to-Work Opportunities Act is to strengthen the relation-

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ship between schooling and work. However, youths' employment may, in fact, decrease their time for completing homework, cause them to come to school tired and less focused on schoolwork, and, thus, adversely affect their academic achievement.

Many earlier studies that examined the impact of youth employment failed to take into account that the choice to work while attending school and the consequences of working are intertwined. Youths who choose to work may be systematically different from youths who do not work. In addition, youths who work a high number of hours may be different (even before they begin to work) from those who work a moderate number of hours. The differences may be related to observable characteristics, such as one's family background, or to unobservable characteristics, such as one's motivation. Thus, in itself, working while attending school may not be the cause of particular positive or negative consequences; rather, youths who choose to work may have some preexisting differences and would have had those outcomes anyway. This factor complicates any evaluation of the impact of youth employment.¹

A few recent studies by economists have attempted to account for potential underlying differences between youths who work and youths who do not work in analyzing the effects of employment on high school youths. Three studies in particular used the NLSY79. Gerald S. Oettinger found that intensive employment (in terms of either weeks or hours) during the school year has a negative impact on minority students' grade point averages.² Audrey Light, using a sample of male terminal high school graduates, examined the impact of high school employment on subsequent wages over a 9-year period and concluded that such employment has a positive effect on wages only for the first 6 years after graduation from high school.³ In contrast, Christopher J. Ruhm found that employment during high school has a positive impact on earnings 6 to 9 years after the student's senior year.⁴ Although both Ruhm and Light used NLSY79 data, they did so on different samples: Ruhm did not restrict his sample to those with no postsecondary education and included both male and female youths in his sample.

The article begins by looking at differences in characteristics of youths who worked while they were in school in 1979 and in 1997. It then examines the relationship between NLSY79 youths' employment and their long-term educational and labor market outcomes. As noted earlier, this relationship does not necessarily imply cause and effect.

Youth employment in 1979 and 1997

Data and variables. This section compares the employment of two groups of 15- and 16-year-olds born nearly 20 years apart. It uses two data sets that focus specifically on youth:

the NLSY79 and the new NLSY97. The NLSY79 consists of data on more than 12,000 youths aged 14 through 21 as of December 31, 1978. The NLSY97 data set has information on 9,000 youths aged 12 through 16 as of December 31, 1996. The discussion that follows uses information on the employment of 15- and 16-year-olds from the first interview year of each of the two surveys.⁵

In comparing youth employment over time, it is important to have a measure that is based on similar questions with the same reference period. This is possible with the NLSY79 and the NLSY97, because both cohorts received a section that consists of questions from the Current Population Survey (CPS) on their employment status and hours of work in the week prior to the interview. Only NLSY97 respondents who were aged 15 and older received these questions, while all NLSY79 youths received them. Thus, this measure can be constructed for 15- and 16-year-olds across both surveys.⁶ Because the focus in this article is on the employment of youths during the school term, only enrolled youths who were interviewed during the months of January through May are included in tabulations.

Studies have found that gender, race, ethnicity, family income, family structure, and maternal employment are predictors of the likelihood of a person's working while young.⁷ Similar measures of these factors were constructed across the two surveys, and the tables that follow tabulate youth employment by the various factors. For example, past studies have found that white males are more likely to work than other groups. Comparable measures of gender, race, and ethnicity can be formed for both cohorts. Grade might also be a factor. Holding age constant (at 15 or 16), being in a higher grade, perhaps with peers who are older and thus more likely to work, could increase the likelihood of a youth's working while he or she is in school.

Household income can have an ambiguous effect on the likelihood of working. On the one hand, those in households with lower income may be more likely to work because they need to help support their families. On the other hand, youths in low-income households may live in areas with less economic opportunity and have less access to transportation, decreasing the likelihood of their working. The NLSY79 contains a measure of family income in the year prior to the survey, and the NLSY97 has a measure of household income in the previous year. The two measures are fairly similar and are categorized into four income levels in the analysis that follows.

Maternal employment and family structure may affect the likelihood of youths' employment. Families in which the mother is employed may place a stronger emphasis on work among all household members. Both the NLSY79 and the NLSY97 have measures of whether the mother worked during the previous year. Measures of family structure are con-

structed as of the date of the interview for both cohorts.⁸

Youths who have engaged in certain behaviors may be more likely to work. For example, youths who have smoked cigarettes or used marijuana may be more anxious to enter the adult world, which includes working. Round 1 of the NLSY97 asked youths whether they had ever used marijuana or ever smoked a cigarette. The 1984 interview of the NLSY79 asked the age when the youth first smoked a cigarette and the year the youth first used marijuana. These questions are used to construct a measure of whether those who ever engaged in the behavior at issue did so by the date of their 1979 interview.⁹

The effect of having ever been suspended from school on the likelihood of working is ambiguous. On the one hand, youths who have received suspensions may enjoy school less than others and be more likely to want to enter the world of work. On the other hand, if potential employers check with the school as a reference, youths who have received suspensions may be less likely to be offered a job. The NLSY97 round-1 interview asked whether the youth had ever been suspended. In the 1980 interview, the NLSY79 asked for the number of times the youth had ever been suspended and the date of the most recent suspension. The questions are used to determine whether the youth had ever been suspended by the date of the 1979 interview.¹⁰

Employment of 15- and 16-year-olds. Are youths working more now than in the past? NLSY79 and NLSY97 data suggest that the answer is no. About equal percentages (25 percent to 26 percent) of 15-year-olds who were enrolled in school worked during the reference week—that is, the week prior to the NLSY79 and NLSY97 survey interviews. (See table 1.) The percentage of school-enrolled 16-year-olds who worked during the reference week was also nearly the same in the two survey years (36 percent and 38 percent; see table 2.)¹¹ There is a clear step up of more than 10 percentage points in the percent of youths working at age 15 to the percent working at age 16. In part, this may be due to legal restrictions on the types of work that 15-year-olds can perform. In addition, most youths may obtain a driver's license at age 16, which can increase their access to jobs and also motivate them to work to pay for the expenses of having a car.¹² The actual number of hours worked in the week prior to the interview among youths who did work were also fairly similar across the two cohorts (numbers not shown in table). The average was 10.6 for 15-year-olds in 1979 and 8.4 for 15-year-olds in 1997, a small decrease over time. Average hours of work per week were higher for 16-year-olds: 15.2 in 1979 and 14.6 in 1997.

Turning first to 15-year-olds, table 1 shows that the likelihood of a youth's working while in school varies by many background characteristics. The direction of many of the effects is similar across the two cohorts. For example, whites

were more likely to work than were blacks or Hispanics.¹³ Also, blacks were more than 40 percent more likely to work while in school in 1997 than in 1979. In both cohorts, youths in eighth grade or lower were less likely to work than youths in higher grades. Youths who had ever smoked were more likely to work than other youths. Youths in households with lower income were generally less likely to work, possibly because, as mentioned earlier, they may have lived in more depressed areas and have had less access to public transportation. The table also shows that youths in both types of two-parent families were more likely to work than those in female-parent families. Only in the NLSY97 sample were youths who had ever been suspended substantially less likely to work. In the NLSY79, 15-year-old female youths were less likely to work than their male counterparts, but the gender difference between the percent of youths working was not significant in the NLSY97.

Sixteen-year-old female youths were also significantly less likely to work than males were in the NLSY79, but not the NLSY97. (See table 2.) In both cohorts, whites were more likely to work than were blacks or Hispanics. Black 16-year-olds in 1997 were almost 40 percent more likely to work than in 1979. The school grade appears to matter for both cohorts: youths in the 11th grade were more likely to work than youths in the 10th grade. In the NLSY79 cohort only, youths who had ever smoked or used marijuana were significantly more likely to work. In both survey cohorts, youths in households with less than \$25,000 income were less likely to work, and in both cohorts, youths in households where the mother worked were more likely to work themselves.

The information in tables 1 and 2 suggests that young workers in 1979 and 1997 shared many characteristics. Particularly interesting are the hours of work among 16-year-olds in both cohorts.

Hours of work of 16-year-olds. In 1998, a National Research Council panel recommended that the number of hours of work for 16-year-olds during the school term be limited.¹⁴ The Fair Labor Standards Act imposes a maximum of 18 hours of work in a school week for 14- and 15-year-olds engaged in nonagricultural jobs.¹⁵ Although the National Research Council does not recommend a particular maximum number of hours for 16-year-olds, it does note that research indicates that working more than 20 hours per school week can have a negative impact on youths' academic outcomes. Table 3 shows that similar percentages of youths enrolled in school in the two cohorts worked more than 20 hours during the week prior to the survey (8.4 percent in the NLSY79 and 10.5 percent in the NLSY97).

As with the employment of 15- and 16-year-olds, gender differences are seen in hours of work in the NLSY79 cohort only. Male 16-year-olds in the NLSY79 were more likely to work more than 20 hours per week than were their female

Table 1. Percent of school-enrolled 15-year-olds who worked during the week prior to the interview,¹ National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), 1979 and 1997, by sex, race or Hispanic origin, grade in school, delinquent behavior, household income, family structure, and mother's work status

Characteristic	NLSY79	NLSY97
Total	25.2	25.8
Sex:		
Male	27.8	27.9
Female	22.4	23.7
Race or ethnicity:		
White	28.7	30.3
Black	10.6	15.3
Hispanic origin	15.0	17.1
Grade in school:		
Less than 9	20.1	15.0
9	21.5	25.8
10	29.2	29.5
Delinquent behavior:		
Ever suspended?		
Yes	24.4	18.5
No	25.4	28.7
Ever smoked a cigarette?		
Yes	28.9	28.3
No	21.0	23.2
Ever used marijuana?		
Yes	28.5	29.5
No	24.2	24.4
Household income (in 1996 dollars):		
Less than \$25,000	18.7	23.3
\$25,000–\$44,999	19.9	18.7
\$45,000–\$69,999	30.1	34.6
\$70,000 or more	28.4	30.1
Family structure and mother's work status:		
Two-biological-parent family	26.4	30.2
Two-parent family	34.4	26.5
Female-parent family	19.0	18.7
Not living with parent	12.9	18.3
Mother worked in previous calendar year?		
Yes	27.9	28.8
No	21.9	20.2

¹ The interview took place in any of the months from January through May, in 1979 or 1997.

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 14 to 21 years on December 31, 1978. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 12 to 16 on December 31, 1996.

Table 2. Percent of school-enrolled 16-year-olds who worked during the week prior to the interview,¹ National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), 1979 and 1997, by sex, race or Hispanic origin, grade in school, delinquent behavior, household income, family structure, and mother's work status

Characteristic	NLSY79	NLSY97
Total	36.4	38.4
Sex:		
Male	39.3	39.7
Female	33.6	36.9
Race or ethnicity:		
White	40.4	45.0
Black	17.8	24.5
Hispanic origin	26.1	29.7
Grade in school:		
Less than 10	23.8	19.1
10	29.5	37.1
11	43.3	48.0
Delinquent behavior:		
Ever suspended?		
Yes	40.7	37.4
No	35.7	38.8
Ever smoked a cigarette?		
Yes	39.8	40.8
No	31.9	35.2
Ever used marijuana?		
Yes	44.5	39.8
No	32.1	37.7
Household income (in 1996 dollars):		
Less than \$25,000	23.3	26.4
\$25,000–\$44,999	34.7	45.7
\$45,000–\$69,999	47.7	42.6
\$70,000 or more	42.8	40.9
Family structure and mother's work status:		
Two-biological-parent family	37.6	41.3
Two-parent family	42.8	42.3
Female-parent family	33.3	31.4
Not living with parent	16.6	24.4
Mother worked in previous calendar year?		
Yes	40.7	42.7
No	31.5	27.1

¹ The interview took place in any of the months from January through May, in 1979 or 1997.

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 14 to 21 years on December 31, 1978. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 12 to 16 on December 31, 1996.

counterparts. Female youths in the NLSY97 cohort were about 70 percent more likely to work more than 20 hours per week than female youths in the NLSY79 cohort. Racial differences in employment are found in both cohorts, with whites more likely than blacks to work more than 20 hours per week as well as between 1 and 20 hours per week.

In both cohorts, youths in the 11th grade were nearly twice

as likely to work more than 20 hours per week than youths in the 10th grade. With respect to delinquent behavior, youths in both cohorts who had ever been suspended were more likely to work 21 or more hours per week. In the NLSY79 cohort only, 16-year-olds who had ever smoked a cigarette were significantly more likely to work more than 20 hours per week, and those who had ever used marijuana were much more

Table 3. Hours worked per week by school-enrolled 16-year-olds in the week prior to the interview,¹ National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), 1979 and 1997, by sex, race or Hispanic origin, grade in school, delinquent behavior, household income, family structure, and mother's work status

Characteristic	NLSY79			NLSY97		
	0 hours	20 or fewer hours	21 or more hours	0 hours	20 or fewer hours	21 or more hours
Total	63.6	28.0	8.4	61.6	27.9	10.5
Sex:						
Male	60.7	28.4	10.9	60.3	29.1	10.7
Female	66.4	27.7	6.0	63.1	26.7	10.2
Race or ethnicity:						
White	59.6	31.1	9.3	55.0	32.7	12.3
Black	82.2	13.8	4.0	75.5	18.3	6.2
Hispanic origin	73.9	18.2	8.0	70.3	21.7	8.0
Grade in school:						
Less than 10	76.2	18.3	5.5	80.9	13.5	5.6
10	70.5	23.9	5.7	62.9	28.8	8.3
11	56.7	32.4	10.9	52.0	31.8	16.1
Delinquent behavior:						
Ever suspended?						
Yes	59.3	29.2	11.5	62.6	23.1	14.4
No	64.3	28.1	7.6	61.2	29.9	8.9
Ever smoked a cigarette?						
Yes	60.2	29.9	9.8	59.2	29.3	11.6
No	68.1	26.1	5.7	64.8	26.2	9.0
Ever used marijuana?						
Yes	55.5	34.4	10.1	60.2	27.8	12.0
No	67.9	24.9	7.3	62.3	28.0	9.6
Household income (in 1996 dollars)						
Less than \$25,000	76.7	20.5	2.8	73.6	18.7	7.7
\$25,000–\$44,999	65.3	25.7	9.0	54.3	35.1	10.6
\$45,000–\$69,999	52.3	35.8	11.9	57.4	29.0	13.5
\$70,000 or more	57.2	32.5	10.3	59.1	33.2	7.7
Family structure and mother's work status:						
Two-biological-parent family	62.4	28.6	9.0	58.7	31.4	9.9
Two-parent family	57.2	29.4	13.4	57.7	28.8	13.5
Female-parent family	66.7	27.2	6.0	68.6	21.7	9.6
Not living with parent	83.4	14.6	2.1	75.6	23.3	1.1
Mother worked in previous calendar year?						
Yes	59.3	32.0	8.7	57.3	31.5	11.3
No	68.5	22.4	9.1	72.9	20.1	6.9

¹ The interview took place in any of the months from January through May, in 1979 or 1997.

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) sur-

veyed male and female youths who were aged 14 to 21 years on December 31, 1978. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 12 to 16 on December 31, 1996.

likely to work between 1 and 20 hours per week. Also in the NLSY79 cohort only, youths in households with an annual income of less than \$25,000 were much less likely to work more than 20 hours per week than were youths in households with higher incomes. However, youths in households in the lower income category in both cohorts were generally less likely than youths in households with higher incomes to work between 1 and 20 hours per week. These results suggest that 16-year-olds in lower income households are not shouldering a larger burden of work hours than are 16-year-olds in households with higher incomes.

In sum, 15- and 16-year-olds were as likely to work while attending school in 1997 as they were nearly 20 years earlier,

according to information from the first interviews of the two surveys of youths. Youths also worked about the same average number of hours in 1997 as they did in 1979. In both cohorts, from age 15 to age 16, there is a significant increase in the percentage of youths working and the average number of hours they worked.

In both cohorts, the likelihood of working while young varies across numerous background characteristics. Many patterns of youth employment are similar for 15- and 16-year olds across both cohorts. In general, whites tend to be more likely to work than blacks or Hispanics. Also, youths in higher grade levels are more likely to be employed, as are youths who have participated in delinquent activities. Further,

youths in households with low income are less likely to work. Gender differences are found in the NLSY79 cohort only: male youths are more likely to be employed and to work more hours than female youths. An interesting result is also found with respect to race: blacks in the NLSY97 are more likely to work than blacks in the NLSY79 cohort.

Youth employment and long-term outcomes

Data. This section examines the relationship between the number of hours and weeks a 16- or 17-year-old works during school weeks and later outcomes in terms of college attendance, weeks worked each year, and the number of jobs held from ages 18 through 30. Data are from the NLSY79, a sample of more than 12,000 men and women born in the years 1957 through 1964. These individuals were first interviewed in 1979, when they were ages 14 to 22; they were interviewed annually through 1994 and are now surveyed biennially. The analysis that follows uses data for members of the sample who were born in 1962–64, for whom a week-by-week employment history is available from age 16 on.

In contrast to the previous section, in which youth work experience is defined for the week prior to the interview date, work experience in this section exploits the longitudinal nature of the NLSY79 data and is measured over school weeks while youths were ages 16 and 17.¹⁶ To differentiate between effects of the number of weeks worked and effects of the number of hours worked per week, youths' work behavior at ages 16 and 17 is divided into five mutually exclusive categories of intensity:

1. did not work during school weeks at age 16 or 17;
2. worked less than 50 percent of school weeks and averaged 20 or fewer hours of work per week;
3. worked less than 50 percent of school weeks and averaged more than 20 hours of work per week;
4. worked more than 50 percent of school weeks and averaged 20 or fewer hours of work per week;
5. worked more than 50 percent of school weeks and averaged more than 20 hours of work per week.¹⁷

The analysis that follows explores the association between youths' early work behavior and longer term educational and labor market experiences.¹⁸ The education outcome is whether the individual received some college education by age 30. Detailed work history data are used to create two employment outcome measures: percent of weeks of work from ages 18 through 30 and number of jobs held from ages 18 through 30.¹⁹ Note that this analysis of youth employment and longer term labor market and educational experiences cannot imply causality. Indeed, youths within each of the foregoing five categories may be systematically different from one another even before they begin working. However, the unique longitudinal NLSY79 data can provide valuable insights into the possible relationship between individuals' working while they are young and the outcomes they attain as adults.

Youth employment at ages 16 and 17. Eighty percent of youths worked at ages 16 and 17 at some point while school was in session. (See table 4.) About 41 percent of youths worked

Table 4. Work status during the school year of youths aged 16 to 17 years in 1978–82,¹ by sex, race or Hispanic origin, and family income

Age in 1978–82 and characteristic	Did not work	Worked 50 percent or less of school weeks		Worked more than 50 percent of school weeks	
		Averaged 20 or fewer hours per week	Averaged 21 or more hours per week	Averaged 20 or fewer hours per week	Averaged 21 or more hours per week
Total	20.0	19.6	18.0	22.0	18.8
Sex:					
Male	17.5	17.9	20.3	20.7	21.7
Female	22.5	21.3	15.6	23.4	15.9
Race or ethnicity:					
White	15.3	20.1	17.0	24.8	21.1
Black	40.8	19.2	20.4	10.3	8.4
Hispanic origin	26.0	17.8	24.6	14.4	16.5
Family income in 1979 (in 1996 dollars):					
Less than \$25,000	31.6	18.8	22.3	12.4	13.7
\$25,000 to \$44,999	23.6	19.3	17.0	19.7	18.8
\$45,000 to \$69,999	11.2	22.3	16.8	24.7	23.4
\$70,000 or more	11.4	21.2	14.8	33.8	17.9

¹Individuals aged 14 to 16 on December 31, 1978.

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 14 to 21 years on December

31, 1978. The table excludes individuals who turned 16 before 1978. Rows do not add to 100, due to the nonreporting of information on hours and weeks of work for a small number of working respondents.

more than half of all school weeks. These youths were fairly evenly split between averaging 20 or fewer hours per week and averaging more than 20 hours per week. The same was true of those who worked a relatively low percentage of school weeks (50 percent or less). Note that the work undertaken at ages 16 and 17 for this group born in 1962–64 occurred during 1978–82, a period that included the last 2 years of a business cycle expansion and both the 1980 and 1981–82 recessions.

Male youths were more likely than female youths to have worked during school weeks at ages 16 and 17 (83 percent and 78 percent, respectively). In addition, working male youths were more likely than female youths to average 21 or more hours per week.

White and Hispanic 16- and 17-year-olds were much more likely to have worked during school weeks (85 percent and 74 percent, respectively) than were blacks (59 percent). Hispanics were more likely to work a high average number of hours and a relatively low percentage of weeks, compared with whites and blacks. Whites were more likely to average a high number of hours per week and to work a relatively high percentage of weeks, compared with blacks and Hispanics.

Differences in 16- and 17-year-olds' work behavior while they were in school were also found with respect to family income categories. Youths in families with incomes of less than \$25,000 were less likely to work than youths in families in higher income categories. Youths in families with incomes of \$70,000 or more were more likely both to average a low number of hours per week and to work a high percentage of school weeks, compared with youths in lower family income categories.

Educational attainment at age 30. More than half of those who averaged 20 or fewer hours of work per school week at ages 16 and 17 had at least some college education by age 30. (See chart 1.) By contrast, by age 30, less than half of those who did not work at all or who worked more than 20 hours a week at ages 16 and 17 had attained at least some college education. These findings hold regardless of whether one worked more or less than 50 percent of school weeks, and the same pattern is also generally found for 30-year-old men and women separately. (See chart 2.)

The findings apply to whites as well (see chart 3), but the educational attainment of blacks and Hispanics is not as clearly related to the hours they worked at 16 and 17. With one exception, blacks who did not work at all at those ages were significantly less likely than blacks who did work to have at least some college education by age 30. The lone exception is the group that worked 50 percent or less of school weeks and averaged 21 or more hours per week. More than 60 percent of Hispanics who worked more than 50 percent of school weeks, but fewer than 20 hours a week, had some college education

by age 30, whereas much less than half of Hispanics in each of the other weeks-and-hours-of-work categories had any college education.

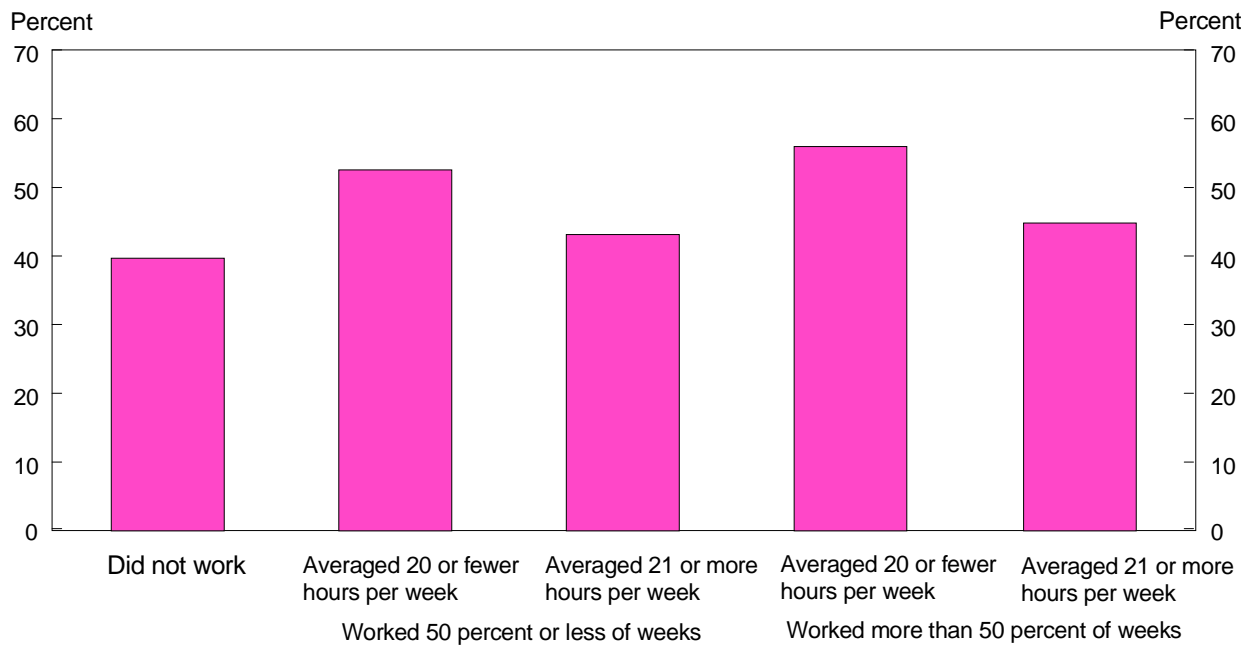
Work experience, ages 18 through 30. The NLSY79 collects extensive employment data from respondents. The analysis that follows uses this detailed work history information to examine the percentage of weeks worked by individuals over the years when they are aged 18 through 30. The analysis continues to focus on groups divided by hours and weeks of work undertaken by those attending school at ages 16 and 17.

The data show a general pattern: each step up in the percentage of school weeks worked at the aforementioned ages is associated with a step up in the percentage of weeks worked during the next 13 years, regardless of the category of hours worked per week. More specifically, individuals who did not work during school weeks at ages 16 and 17 worked 64 percent of weeks from ages 18 through 30 (see table 5), and those who worked 50 percent or less of school weeks at ages 16 and 17 worked an average of 74 percent of weeks from ages 18 to 30. The percentage was even higher (between 82 percent and 84 percent, depending on the category of hours worked per week) for youths who worked more than 50 percent of school weeks at those ages. This overall step-up pattern also holds over ages 18 through 30 for both men and women and regardless of race or ethnicity. Furthermore, the pattern essentially holds for the narrower age ranges of 18 to 22, 23 to 26, and 27 to 30. In general, the percentage of weeks worked rises from ages 18 to 22 to ages 23 to 26 and then remains steady at ages 27 to 30.

Tables in this article indicate that white youths tend to work more than black youths. Whites also typically work more weeks from ages 18 to 30 than do blacks, regardless of the number of hours or weeks they work while they are in school. The sole exception is that, for those individuals who worked more than 50 percent of school weeks and averaged 21 or more hours per week while they were young, there was no significant difference between the percentage of weeks worked by blacks and whites from ages 18 through 30.

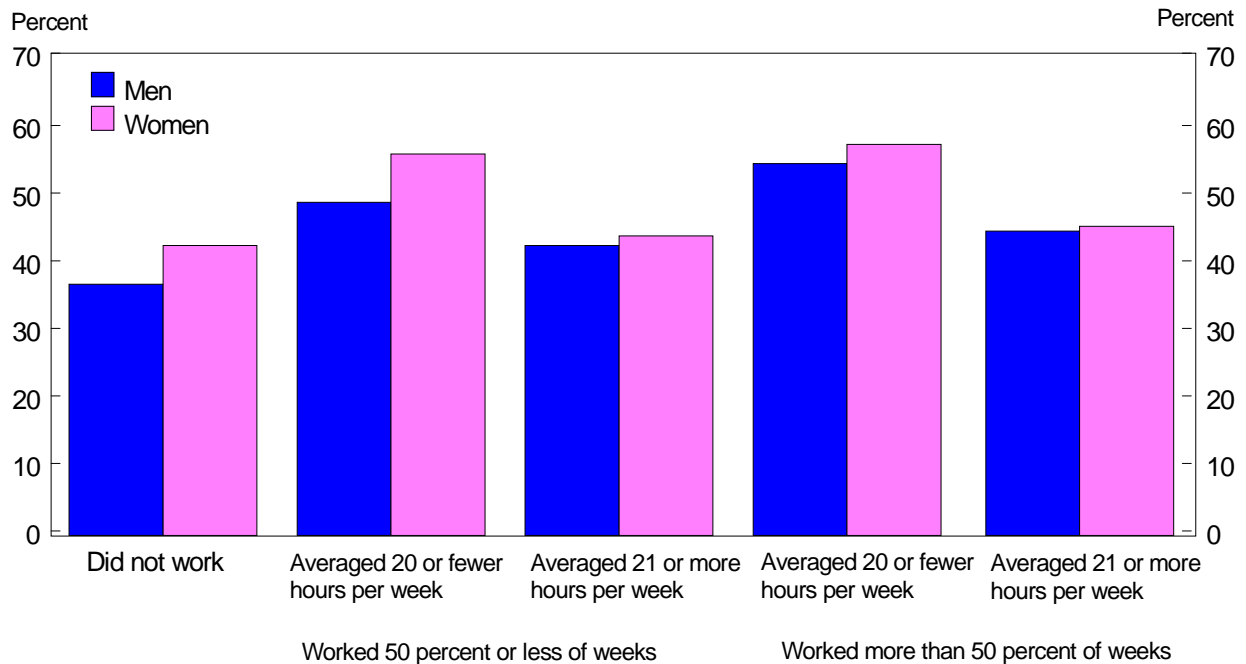
From ages 23 through 30, individuals who attained some college education by age 30 worked a higher percentage of weeks than did individuals with no college education. For those 18 through 22, however, the pattern was reversed, probably because individuals with some college education pursued their college careers during those years. The overall pattern that each step up in the number of school weeks a person worked at ages 16 and 17 is associated with a step up in the number of weeks that person worked when he or she was older generally holds for those in both the higher and lower educational groups. For individuals with some college, however, the percentage of weeks worked at ages 27 through 30

Chart 1. Percent of individuals with at least some college education at age 30, by average hours worked during school weeks at ages 16 and 17 in 1978–82



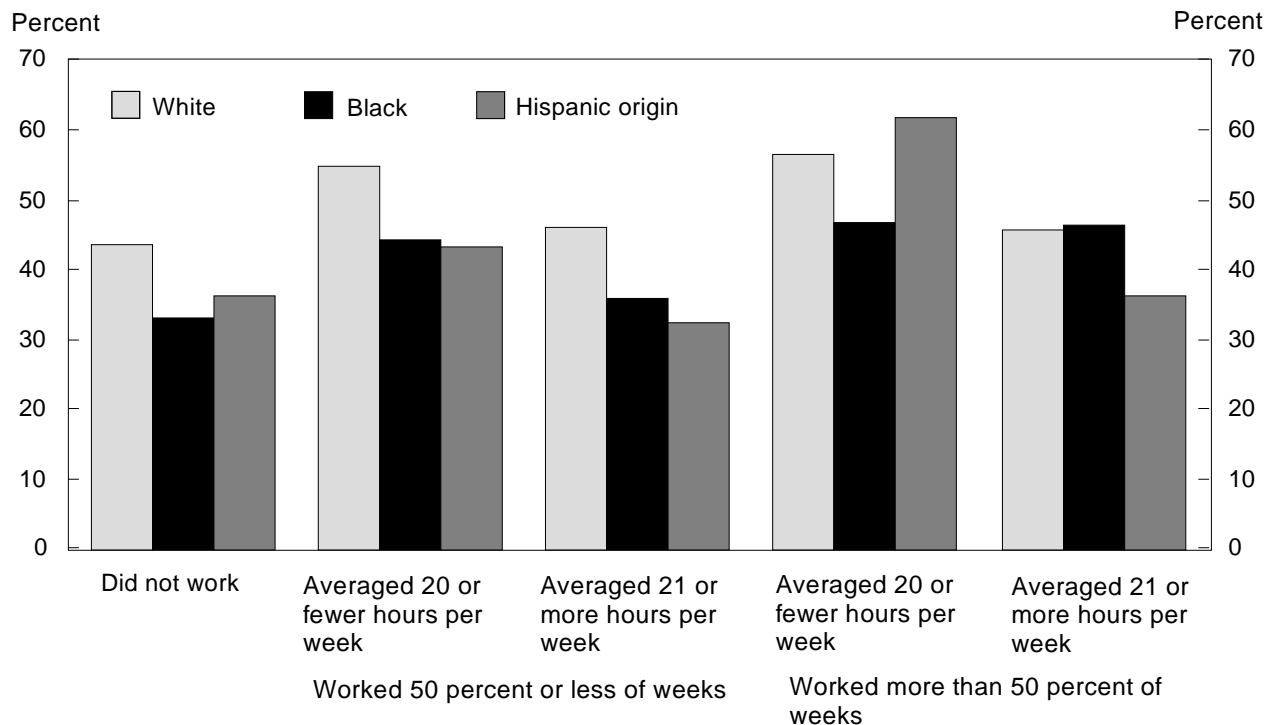
SOURCE: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979.

Chart 2. Percent of individuals with at least some college education at age 30, by average hours worked during school weeks at ages 16 and 17 in 1978–82, by sex



SOURCE: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979.

Chart 3. Percent of individuals with at least some college education at age 30, by average hours worked during school weeks at ages 16 and 17 in 1978–82, by race and Hispanic origin



SOURCE: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979.

differs little among those who had different work experiences while they were young.

Number of jobs held, ages 18 through 30. The analysis concludes with an examination of the number of jobs individuals held during various periods when they were aged 18 through 30. Again, individuals are grouped by hours and percent of school weeks worked at ages 16 and 17. Young workers tend to have a high level of job mobility during their early years in the labor market and thus hold a relatively high number of jobs. Early job mobility may represent job shopping and may be beneficial for a variety of reasons. For example, it can allow young workers to learn about different work environments. However, as workers age, they often have less job mobility, which may represent better matching between workers and their jobs.²⁰

From ages 18 through 30, individuals who did not work while they were 16 and 17 held a lower average number of jobs than persons who worked at those ages. (See table 6.) Although this relationship also held for the narrower range from age 18 to age 22, across the older age ranges, the number of

jobs was fairly similar across all categories of hours and weeks worked while the individual was young.

Men held an average of 8.9 jobs, and women held an average of 8.4 jobs, from ages 18 through 30. At ages 18 through 22, men and women held about the same number of jobs within all categories of hours and weeks of work while they were 16 and 17. From ages 27 to 30, however, men held a significantly higher number of jobs than women did within most of the categories.

Whites held more jobs (8.7) than did blacks or Hispanics (8.3 and 8.2, respectively) from ages 18 through 30. Whites also held more jobs from ages 18 to 22 than did blacks across the aforementioned work categories. However, from ages 27 to 30, whites generally held either the same or fewer jobs than blacks did within each category.

Individuals with at least some college education held 9.1 jobs from ages 18 through 30, in contrast to 8.2 jobs held by those with a high school or lower education level. Over those ages, within both education categories, individuals who did not work at ages 16 and 17 generally held a lower average number of jobs than those who worked during the school term at those ages.

Table 5. Percent of weeks employed by individuals aged 18 to 30 years in 1980–95, by age, education, sex, race or Hispanic origin, and percent of school weeks and number of hours worked at ages 16 and 17

Age in 1980–95 and characteristic	Total	Did not work	Worked 50 percent or less of school weeks		Worked more than 50 percent of school weeks	
			Averaged 20 or fewer hours per week	Averaged 21 or more hours per week	Averaged 20 or fewer hours per week	Averaged 21 or more hours per week
Total, 18 to 30 years in 1980–95	75.7	63.8	74.3	74.3	81.8	83.9
Sex:						
Men	81.3	70.1	79.6	78.1	87.1	89.0
Women	70.0	58.7	69.8	69.2	77.0	76.6
Race or ethnicity:						
White	78.1	67.7	75.7	76.5	82.5	83.9
Black	64.6	56.2	66.7	68.0	72.1	82.5
Hispanic origin	72.7	62.7	72.9	70.7	79.9	84.8
Education:						
High school or less	73.3	59.5	71.8	72.0	82.5	83.0
Some college or more	78.3	70.0	76.6	77.3	81.2	85.0
Total, 18 to 22 years in 1980–87	65.9	48.0	63.5	63.0	75.5	78.8
Sex:						
Men	69.2	52.8	64.6	65.0	76.7	83.0
Women	62.5	44.1	62.5	60.2	74.5	73.1
Race or ethnicity:						
White	68.9	52.0	65.6	64.7	76.6	78.8
Black	51.3	40.0	51.4	58.9	60.3	75.7
Hispanic origin	62.8	47.9	63.5	58.6	74.4	82.0
Education:						
High school or less	67.4	48.4	65.3	65.2	80.7	81.2
Some college or more	64.2	47.2	61.9	60.1	71.5	76.0
Total, 23 to 26 years in 1985–91	80.5	70.5	79.8	80.1	85.0	87.1
Sex:						
Men	86.5	78.0	85.7	84.0	90.3	92.8
Women	74.5	64.6	74.8	74.9	80.4	79.3
Race or ethnicity:						
White	82.8	74.7	81.1	82.4	85.7	87.2
Black	70.6	62.2	74.6	74.2	77.1	85.9
Hispanic origin	76.5	69.1	74.2	76.7	79.9	87.5
Education:						
High school or less	76.2	64.4	75.3	75.9	82.8	84.8
Some college or more	85.2	79.8	83.7	85.6	86.7	89.9
Total, 27 to 30 years in 1989–95	80.8	73.2	79.7	80.1	85.0	85.8
Sex:						
Men	88.2	80.4	88.7	85.3	93.5	91.5
Women	73.4	67.6	72.0	73.1	77.3	77.8
Race or ethnicity:						
White	82.8	76.8	80.7	82.7	85.5	86.0
Black	71.7	66.2	74.1	71.0	78.2	86.2
Hispanic origin	78.2	71.7	79.8	76.7	82.5	84.8
Education:						
High school or less	76.4	66.3	74.8	75.1	83.7	83.5
Some college or more	85.7	83.4	84.0	86.8	85.9	88.7

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 14 to 21 years on December 31, 1978.

The table excludes individuals who turned 16 before 1978.

Table 6. Number of jobs held by individuals aged 18 to 30 years in 1980–95, by age, education, sex, race or Hispanic origin, and percent of school weeks and number of hours worked at ages 16 and 17

Age in 1980–95 and characteristic	Total	Did not work	Worked 50 percent or less of school weeks		Worked more than 50 percent of school weeks	
			Averaged 20 or fewer hours per week	Averaged 21 or more hours per week	Averaged 20 or fewer hours per week	Averaged 21 or more hours per week
Total, 18 to 30 years in 1980–95	8.6	7.7	9.0	9.2	8.8	8.4
Sex:						
Men	8.9	8.3	9.3	9.3	8.8	8.8
Women	8.4	7.2	8.8	9.1	8.8	7.9
Race or ethnicity:						
White	8.7	8.1	9.1	9.3	8.7	8.4
Black	8.3	7.4	8.5	9.3	8.7	9.0
Hispanic origin	8.2	6.2	9.5	8.4	9.5	8.6
Education:						
High school or less	8.2	7.1	8.9	9.2	8.0	8.1
Some college or more	9.1	8.5	9.1	9.3	9.5	8.9
Total, 18 to 22 years in 1980–87	4.5	3.5	4.7	4.7	4.9	4.6
Sex:						
Men	4.5	3.7	4.7	4.7	4.9	4.6
Women	4.4	3.4	4.7	4.7	5.0	4.5
Race or ethnicity:						
White	4.6	3.9	4.8	4.8	5.0	4.6
Black	3.7	3.0	4.1	4.4	4.3	4.2
Hispanic origin	4.2	2.8	5.0	4.3	5.0	4.5
Education:						
High school or less	4.1	3.2	4.4	4.6	4.5	4.3
Some college or more	4.8	4.0	4.9	4.8	5.3	5.0
Total, 23 to 26 years in 1985–91	3.0	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0
Sex:						
Men	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.2
Women	2.8	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.6
Race or ethnicity:						
White	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.9
Black	2.9	2.7	3.0	3.1	2.8	3.2
Hispanic origin	2.8	2.4	3.0	2.7	3.1	3.0
Education:						
High school or less	2.7	2.5	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.8
Some college or more	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.2
Total, 27 to 30 years in 1989–95	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.3	2.8	2.9
Sex:						
Men	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.4	2.9	3.2
Women	2.8	2.8	2.9	3.2	2.7	2.6
Race or ethnicity:						
White	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.3	2.7	2.9
Black	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.4	3.2	3.5
Hispanic origin	2.9	2.4	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.0
Education:						
High school or less	3.0	2.8	3.3	3.4	2.7	3.0
Some college or more	3.0	3.1	2.9	3.3	2.9	2.9

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 14 to 21 years on December 31, 1978.

The table excludes individuals who turned 16 before 1978.

In sum, 80 percent of youths born in 1962–64 worked at some point during the school term while they were ages 16 and 17. Youths who worked an average of 20 or fewer hours per school week were more likely to have at least some college education by age 30 than those who did not work or those who averaged more than 20 hours of work per school week. In addition, the data show an interesting pattern with respect to a person’s work experience while he or she was young and the person’s later employment experience: each step up in the percentage of school weeks worked while the individual was young is associated with a step up in the percentage of weeks

the person worked from ages 18 through 30, regardless of the amount of hours per week the person worked while he or she was young. As noted throughout this article, without controlling for other factors that can influence the longer term outcomes—in particular, the characteristics of those who choose to work (and of those who choose to work more intensively) during high school—the findings do not imply that youth employment caused those outcomes. However, they do afford an insight into the possible relationship between youth employment and longer term educational and labor market outcomes. □

Notes

¹ See Christopher J. Ruhm, “Is High School Employment Consumption or Investment?” *Journal of Labor Economics*, October 1997, pp. 735–76; and National Research Council, *Protecting Youth at Work* (Washington, National Academy Press, 1998), for extensive reviews of the literature on the impact of youth employment. In general, the literature shows mixed results regarding whether youth employment affects academic outcomes. It does, however, generally suggest that working while enrolled in school positively affects subsequent labor market outcomes.

² Gerald S. Oettinger, “Does High School Employment Affect High School Academic Performance?” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, October 1999, pp. 136–51.

³ Audrey Light, “High School Employment, High School Curriculum, and Post-school Wages,” *Economics of Education Review*, June 1999, pp. 291–309.

⁴ Ruhm, “Is High School Employment Consumption or Investment?”

⁵ The years 1979 and 1997 both saw an upturn in the economy. Economic expansion peaked in 1979, just prior to the 1980 recession. Another strong economic expansion had 1997 in its midst. Note that, subsequent to the release of round-1 NLSY97 data, some duplicate observations were discovered. The NLSY97 round-1 sample size then fell from 9,022 to 8,984. Sample weights at the time this article was begun were based on all 9,022 observations, and tabulations in the article use the full round-1 sample. Also, tabulations based on data in both surveys use round-1 sampling weights, thereby ensuring that the data are nationally representative of each youth cohort.

⁶ Most youths surveyed in the NLSY97 had not yet turned 17, so their employment is not examined. Both the NLSY79 and the NLSY97 contain detailed, week-by-week employment histories. However, these are available for the younger NLSY79 respondents only from age 16 forward and for the NLSY97 respondents only from age 14 forward. At this point, there is not much age overlap in the histories across the two surveys. However, the next section uses the employment histories in the NLSY79 solely to examine the relationship between youth employment and long-term outcomes.

⁷ Mark Schoenhals, Marta Tienda, and Barbara Schneider, “The Educational and Personal Consequences of Adolescent Employment,” *Social Forces*, December 1998, pp. 723–62, provide a brief summary of the literature on the subject.

⁸ Family structure is defined as five mutually exclusive categories: (1) families with two biological parents or two adoptive parents (called, for simplicity, two-biological-parent families), (2) families with one biological parent and one step- or adoptive parent (called simply two-parent families), (3) families with one female biological parent and no other parent (female-parent families), (4) families with one male biological parent and no other parent (male-parent families), and (5)

families consisting of children living with foster parents, grandparents and no parents, or other relatives and no parents; families of children living in group quarters; and other family arrangements (all lumped together as children not living with parents). Due to the small sample size of male-parent families, the tables that follow exclude that category.

⁹ If, for example, the youth was 15 years old at the date of the interview, he or she is considered to have ever smoked if smoking occurred by age 14 or younger. If the youth used marijuana before 1979, he or she is considered to have ever used marijuana. In the NLSY97, youths answered the smoking and marijuana questions in a special self-administered section. Youths in the NLSY79 were asked these questions directly by the interviewer.

¹⁰ The NLSY79 suspension variable is constructed as follows: if the most recent suspension occurred before the 1979 interview, the youth is considered to have ever been suspended. If the most recent suspension occurred on or after the 1979 interview and the youth had been suspended only one time, then the youth is considered not to have ever been suspended. Otherwise, if the youth received more than one suspension (two suspensions) and the most recent one occurred in 1979 (1980), then the youth is considered to have ever been suspended.

¹¹ CPS data show an actual decline in employment-to-population ratios of youths between the late 1970s and the late 1990s, as well as a significantly lower percentage of youths working than the NLSY97 data depict. The difference may be due to the CPS data containing mostly proxy responses for the youths, while the NLSY surveys are answered by the youths themselves. (See “A Comparison of CPS and NLSY97 Information about Youth Employment,” *Report on the Youth Labor Force*, Appendix to Chapter 4 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, November 2000), pp. 47–51.)

¹² Neither survey asks the youths whether they own or have access to a car.

¹³ In all tables and charts in this article, the racial and Hispanic origin groups are mutually exclusive. Totals include American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Asians and Pacific Islanders, not shown separately.

¹⁴ *Protecting Youth at Work* (National Research Council, 1998).

¹⁵ States, however, may adopt more or less stringent standards than the Fair Labor Standards Act imposes. However, when both the Federal Act and State laws apply, the Act requires the use of the more stringent standard. (See National Research Council, *Protecting Youth at Work*, for details on State standards.)

¹⁶ The expression “while youths were ages 16 and 17” refers to the 2-year period between the youth’s 16th and 18th birthdays. School weeks are weeks other than those in June, July, or August, the last week in December, and the first week in January. If a youth dropped out or graduated from high school at age 17, only those

school weeks prior to that event are used in employment calculations. Youths who dropped out or graduated from high school at age 16 are excluded from the analysis.

¹⁷ Hours are averaged over school weeks in which the youth worked and are defined according to the following methodology: Survey respondents report the usual number of hours they worked per week as of each job's termination date (or as of the interview date for ongoing jobs). Hours reported for each job are then filled in back to the job's starting date. Thus, a total number of hours worked across all jobs is reported for each week a youth worked. Hours per week are then averaged over the number of weeks the youth worked at ages 16 and 17 during the school year (prior to dropping out or graduating from school). Given this methodology, work hours from other periods (for example, during the summer, after the youth turned 18, and after the youth dropped out or graduated from school) are sometimes filled back into school-year weeks. This can lead to an overstatement of the average

number of hours worked. On average, about one-third (32 percent) of weeks worked at ages 16 and 17 during the school year were filled back with hours from another period: 8 percent with summer hours, 15 percent with information on hours worked after the youth turned 18, and 9 percent with information on work hours from other periods, such as times subsequent to dropping out or graduating from school.

¹⁸ See also *Report on the Youth Labor Force*.

¹⁹ All results are weighted by using the 1996 survey weights (the latest year's data available when this analysis began) that correct for oversampling, nonresponse to the interview, and permanent attrition from the survey. When weighted, the data represent all persons living in the United States in 1978 and born between 1962 and 1964.

²⁰ For a further discussion of the topic, see *Work and Family: Jobs Held and Weeks Worked by Young Adults*, Report 827 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, August 1992).

Table 1. Percent of school-enrolled 15-year-olds who worked during the week prior to the interview,¹ National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), 1979 and 1997, by sex, race or Hispanic origin, grade in school, delinquent behavior, household income, family structure, and mother's work status

Characteristic	NLSY79	NLSY97
Total	25.2	25.8
Sex:		
Male	27.8	27.9
Female	22.4	23.7
Race or ethnicity:		
White	28.7	30.3
Black	10.6	15.3
Hispanic origin	15.0	17.1
Grade in school:		
Less than 9	20.1	15.0
9	21.5	25.8
10	29.2	29.5
Delinquent behavior:		
Ever suspended?		
Yes	24.4	18.5
No	25.4	28.7
Ever smoked a cigarette?		
Yes	28.9	28.3
No	21.0	23.2
Ever used marijuana?		
Yes	28.5	29.5
No	24.2	24.4
Household income (in 1996 dollars)		
Less than \$25,000	18.7	23.3
\$25,000–\$44,999	19.9	18.7
\$45,000–\$69,999	30.1	34.6
\$70,000 or more	28.4	30.1
Family structure and mother's work status:		
Two-biological-parent family	26.4	30.2
Two-parent family	34.4	26.5
Female-parent family	19.0	18.7
Not living with parent	12.9	18.3
Mother worked in previous calendar year? ...		
Yes	27.9	28.8
No	21.9	20.2

¹ The interview took place in any of the months from January through May, in 1979 or 1997, as the case may be.

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 14 to 21 years on December 31, 1978. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 12 to 16 on December 31, 1996.

Table 2. Percent of school-enrolled 16-year-olds who worked during the week prior to the interview,¹ National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), 1979 and 1997, by sex, race or Hispanic origin, grade in school, delinquent behavior, household income, family structure, and mother's work status

Characteristic	NLSY79	NLSY97
Total	36.4	38.4
Sex:		
Male	39.3	39.7
Female	33.6	36.9
Race or ethnicity:		
White	40.4	45.0
Black	17.8	24.5
Hispanic origin	26.1	29.7
Grade in school:		
Less than 10	23.8	19.1
10	29.5	37.1
11	43.3	48.0
Delinquent behavior:		
Ever suspended?		
Yes	40.7	37.4
No	35.7	38.8
Ever smoked a cigarette?		
Yes	39.8	40.8
No	31.9	35.2
Ever used marijuana?		
Yes	44.5	39.8
No	32.1	37.7
Household income (in 1996 dollars)		
Less than \$25,000	23.3	26.4
\$25,000–\$44,999	34.7	45.7
\$45,000–\$69,999	42.8	40.9
Family structure and mother's work status:		
Two-biological-parent family	37.6	41.3
Two-parent family	42.8	42.3
Female-parent family	33.3	31.4
Not living with parent	16.6	24.4
Mother worked in previous calendar year?		
Yes	40.7	42.7
No	31.5	27.1

¹ The interview took place in any of the months from January through May, in 1979 or 1997, as the case may be.

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 14 to 21 years on December 31, 1978. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 12 to 16 on December 31, 1996.

Percent of school-enrolled 16-year-olds who worked during the week prior to the interview,¹ National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), 1979 and 1997, by sex, race or Hispanic origin, grade in school, delinquent behavior, household income, family structure, and mother's work status

Characteristic	NLSY79	NLSY97
Total	36.4	38.4
Sex:		
Male	39.3	39.7
Female	33.6	36.9
Race or ethnicity:		
White\	40.4	45.0
Black	17.8	24.5
Hispanic origin	26.1	29.7
Grade in school:		
Less than 10	23.8	19.1
10	29.5	37.1
11	43.3	48.0
Delinquent behavior		
Ever suspended?		
Yes	40.7	37.4
No	35.7	38.8
Ever smoked a cigarette?		
Yes	39.8	40.8
No	31.9	35.2
Ever used marijuana?		
Yes	44.5	39.8
No	32.1	37.7
Household income (in 1996 dollars)		
Less than \$25,000	23.3	26.4
\$25,000-\$44,999	34.7	45.7
\$45,000-\$69,999	42.8	40.9
Family structure and mother's work status:		
Two-biological-parent family	37.6	41.3
Two-parent family	42.8	42.3
Female-parent family	33.3	31.4
Not living with parent	16.6	24.4
Mother worked in previous calendar year?		
Yes	40.7	42.7
No	31.5	27.1

¹ The interview took place in any of the months from January through May, in 1979 or 1997, as the case may be.

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 14 to 21 years on December 31, 1978. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 12 to 16 on December 31, 1996.

Table 3. Hours worked per week by school-enrolled 16-year-olds in the week prior to the interview,¹ National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), 1979 and 1997, by sex, race or Hispanic origin, grade in school, delinquent behavior, household income, family structure, and mother's work status

Characteristic	NLSY79			NLSY97		
	Hours worked per week					
	0	20 or fewer	21 or more	0	20 or fewer	21 or more
Total	63.6	28.0	8.4	61.6	27.9	10.5
Sex:						
Male	60.7	28.4	10.9	60.3	29.1	10.7
Female	66.4	27.7	6.0	63.1	26.7	10.2
Race or ethnicity:						
White	59.6	31.1	9.3	55.0	32.7	12.3
Black	82.2	13.8	4.0	75.5	18.3	6.2
Hispanic origin	73.9	18.2	8.0	70.3	21.7	8.0
Grade in school:						
Less than 10	76.2	18.3	5.5	80.9	13.5	5.6
10	70.5	23.9	5.7	62.9	28.8	8.3
11	56.7	32.4	10.9	52.0	31.8	16.1
Delinquent behavior:						
Ever suspended?						
Yes	59.3	29.2	11.5	62.6	23.1	14.4
No	64.3	28.1	7.6	61.2	29.9	8.9
Ever smoked a cigarette?						
Yes	60.2	29.9	9.8	59.2	29.3	11.6
No	68.1	26.1	5.7	64.8	26.2	9.0
Ever used marijuana?						
Yes	55.5	34.4	10.1	60.2	27.8	12.0
No	67.9	24.9	7.3	62.3	28.0	9.6
Household income (in 1996 dollars)						
Less than \$25,000	76.7	20.5	2.8	73.6	18.7	7.7
\$25,000–\$44,999	65.3	25.7	9.0	54.3	35.1	10.6
\$45,000–\$69,999	52.3	35.8	11.9	57.4	29.0	13.5
\$70,000 or more	57.2	32.5	10.3	59.1	33.2	7.7
Family structure and mother's work status:						
Two-biological-parent family	62.4	28.6	9.0	58.7	31.4	9.9
Two-parent family	57.2	29.4	13.4	57.7	28.8	13.5
Female-parent family	66.7	27.2	6.0	68.6	21.7	9.6
Not living with parent	83.4	14.6	2.1	75.6	23.3	1.1
Mother worked in previous calendar year?						
Yes	59.3	32.0	8.7	57.3	31.5	11.3
No	68.5	22.4	9.1	72.9	20.1	6.9

Table 4. Work status during the school year of youths aged 16 to 17 years in 1978–82, by sex, race or Hispanic origin, and family income¹

Age in 1978–82 and characteristic	Did not work	Worked 50 percent or less of school weeks		Worked more than 50 percent of school weeks	
		Averaged 20 or fewer hours per week	Averaged 21 or more hours per week	Averaged 20 or fewer hours per week	Averaged 21 or more hours per week
Total	20.0	19.6	18.0	22.0	18.8
Sex:					
Male	17.5	17.9	20.3	20.7	21.7
Female	22.5	21.3	15.6	23.4	15.9
Race or ethnicity:					
White	15.3	20.1	17.0	24.8	21.1
Black	40.8	19.2	20.4	10.3	8.4
Hispanic origin	26.0	17.8	24.6	14.4	16.5
Family income in 1979 (in 1996 dollars):					
Less than \$25,000	31.6	18.8	22.3	12.4	13.7
\$25,000 to \$44,999	23.6	19.3	17.0	19.7	18.8
\$45,000 to \$69,999	11.2	22.3	16.8	24.7	23.4
\$70,000 or more	11.4	21.2	14.8	33.8	17.9

¹Individuals aged 14 to 16 on December 31, 1978.

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 14 to 21 years on

December 31, 1978. The table excludes individuals who turned 16 before 1978. Rows do not add to 100, due to the nonreporting of information on hours and weeks of work for a small number of working respondents.

Table 5. Percent of weeks employed by individuals aged 18 to 30 in 1980–95, by age, education, sex, race or Hispanic origin, and percent of school weeks and number of hours worked at age 16 and 17

Age in 1980–95 and characteristic	Total	Did not work	Worked less than or equal to 50 percent of school weeks		Worked more than 50 percent of school weeks	
			Averaged 20 or fewer hours per week	Averaged 21 or more hours per week	Averaged 20 or fewer hours per week	Averaged 21 or more hours per week
Total, 18 to 30 in 1980–95	75.7	63.8	74.3	74.3	81.8	83.9
Sex:						
Men	81.3	70.1	79.6	78.1	87.1	89.0
Women	70.0	58.7	69.8	69.2	77.0	76.6
Race or ethnicity:						
White	78.1	67.7	75.7	76.5	82.5	83.9
Black	72.7	62.7	72.9	70.7	79.9	84.8
Education:						
High school or less	73.3	59.5	71.8	72.0	82.5	83.0
Some college or more	78.3	70.0	76.6	77.3	81.2	85.0
Total, 18 to 22 in 1980–87	65.9	48.0	63.5	63.0	75.5	78.8
Sex:						
Men	69.2	52.8	64.6	65.0	76.7	83.0
Women	62.5	44.1	62.5	60.2	74.5	73.1
Race or ethnicity:						
White	68.9	52.0	65.6	64.7	76.6	78.8
Black	51.3	40.0	51.4	58.9	60.3	75.7
Hispanic origin	62.8	47.9	63.5	58.6	74.4	82.0
Education:						
High school or less	67.4	48.4	65.3	65.2	80.7	81.2
Some college or more	64.2	47.2	61.9	60.1	71.5	76.0
Total, 23 to 26 in 1985–91	80.5	70.5	79.8	80.1	85.0	87.1
Sex:						
Men	86.5	78.0	85.7	84.0	90.3	92.8
Women	74.5	64.6	74.8	74.9	80.4	79.3
Race or ethnicity:						
White	82.8	74.7	81.1	82.4	85.7	87.2
Black	70.6	62.2	74.6	74.2	77.1	85.9
Hispanic origin	76.5	69.1	74.2	76.7	79.9	87.5
Education:						
High school or less	76.2	64.4	75.3	75.9	82.8	84.8
Some college or more	85.2	79.8	83.7	85.6	86.7	89.9
Total, 27 to 30 in 1989–95	80.8	73.2	79.7	80.1	85.0	85.8
Sex:						
Men	88.2	80.4	88.7	85.3	93.5	91.5
Women	73.4	67.6	72.0	73.1	77.3	77.8
Race or ethnicity:						
White	82.8	76.8	80.7	82.7	85.5	86.0
Black	71.7	66.2	74.1	71.0	78.2	86.2
Hispanic origin	78.2	71.7	79.8	76.7	82.5	84.8
Education:						
High school or less	76.4	66.3	74.8	75.1	83.7	83.5
Some college or more	85.7	83.4	84.0	86.8	85.9	88.7

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 14 to 21 years on

December 31, 1978.

The table excludes individuals who turned 16 before 1978.

Table 6. Number of jobs held by individuals aged 18 to 30 in 1980–95, by age, education, sex, race or Hispanic origin, and percent of school weeks and number of hours worked at age 16 and 17

Age in 1980–95 and characteristic	Total	Did not work	Worked less than or equal to 50 percent of school weeks		Worked more than 50 percent of school weeks	
			Averaged 20 or fewer hours per week	Averaged 21 or more hours per week	Averaged 20 or fewer hours per week	Averaged 21 or more hours per week
Total, 18 to 30 in 1980–95	8.6	7.7	9.0	9.2	8.8	8.4
Sex:						
Men	8.9	8.3	9.3	9.3	8.8	8.8
Women	8.4	7.2	8.8	9.1	8.8	7.9
Race or ethnicity:						
White	8.7	8.1	9.1	9.3	8.7	8.4
Black	8.3	7.4	8.5	9.3	8.7	9.0
Hispanic origin	8.2	6.2	9.5	8.4	9.5	8.6
Education:						
High school or less	8.2	7.1	8.9	9.2	8.0	8.1
Some college or more	9.1	8.5	9.1	9.3	9.5	8.9
Total, 18 to 22 in 1980–87	4.5	3.5	4.7	4.7	4.9	4.6
Sex						
Men	4.5	3.7	4.7	4.7	4.9	4.6
Women	4.4	3.4	4.7	4.7	5.0	4.5
Race or ethnicity						
White	4.6	3.9	4.8	4.8	5.0	4.6
Black	3.7	3.0	4.1	4.4	4.3	4.2
Hispanic origin	4.2	2.8	5.0	4.3	5.0	4.5
Education:						
High school or less	4.1	3.2	4.4	4.6	4.5	4.3
Some college or more	4.8	4.0	4.9	4.8	5.3	5.0
Total, 23 to 26 in 1985–91	3.0	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0
Sex:						
Men	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.2
Women	2.8	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.6
Race or ethnicity:						
White	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.9
Black	2.9	2.7	3.0	3.1	2.8	3.2
Hispanic origin	2.8	2.4	3.0	2.7	3.1	3.0
Education:						
High school or less	2.7	2.5	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.8
Some college or more	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.2
Total, 27 to 30 in 1989–95	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.3	2.8	2.9
Sex:						
Men	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.4	2.9	3.2
Women	2.8	2.8	2.9	3.2	2.7	2.6
Race or ethnicity:						
White	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.3	2.7	2.9
Black	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.4	3.2	3.5
Hispanic origin	2.9	2.4	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.0
Education:						
High school or less	3.0	2.8	3.3	3.4	2.7	3.0
Some college or more	3.0	3.1	2.9	3.3	2.9	2.9

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) surveyed male and female youths who were aged 14 to 21 years on December 31, 1978.

The table excludes individuals who turned 16 before 1978.

