

Is it worth the effort?

Respondent record use on the British Household Panel Study

Heather Laurie, ISER, University of Essex
Nick Moon, GfK NOP Social Research, UK

Overview

- The study and the task
- The data sources
- The data
- The conclusions

The Study

- British Household Panel Study
- Longitudinal Survey, interviewing every adult in household
- Started in 1990
- Merged into Understanding Society in 2008
- Approx 12,000 individuals in 7,000 households

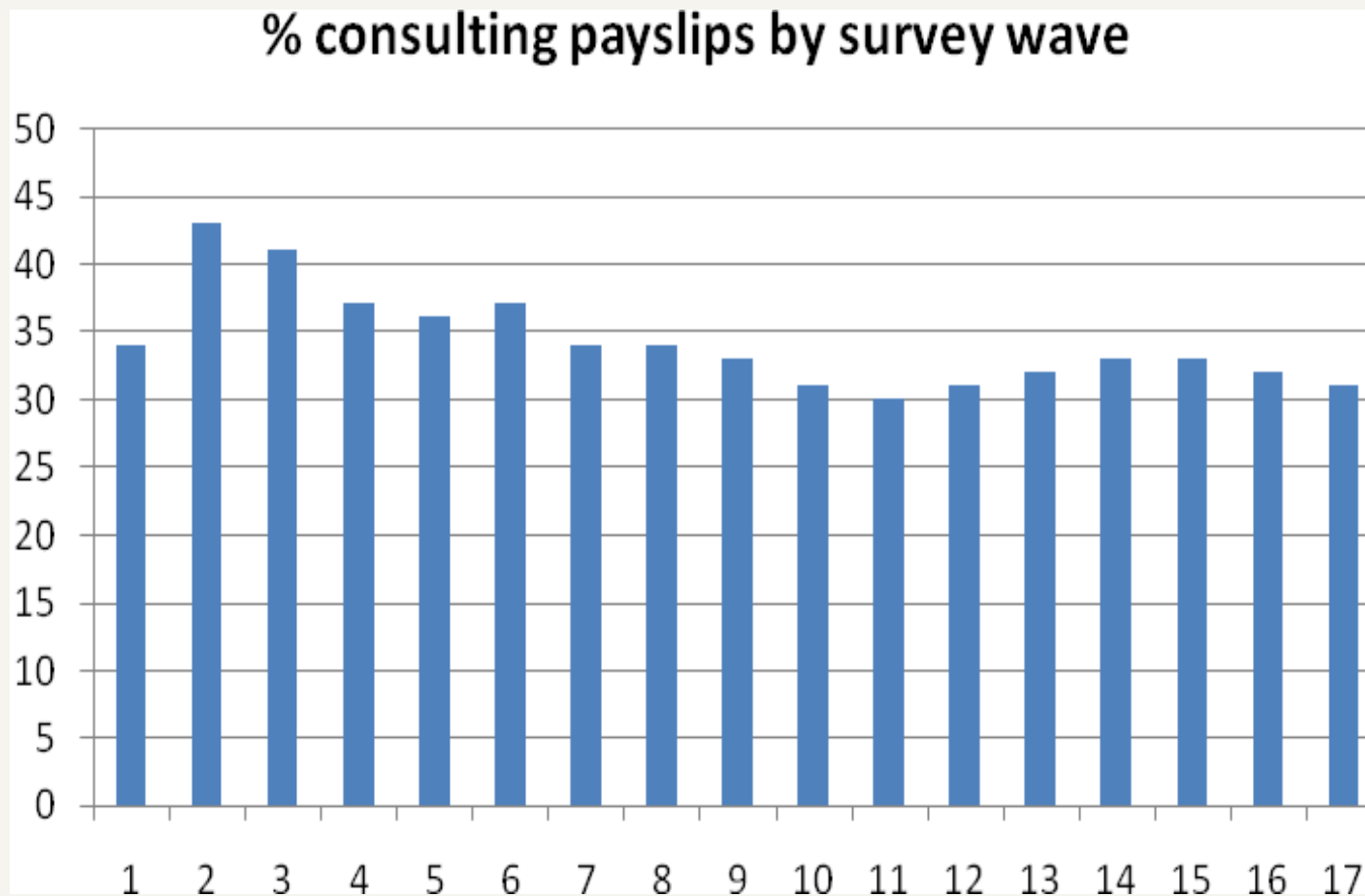
The records

- Specifically requested
 - Payslip
 - Recorded on data as used to get tax code
 - NB Respondent is asked to consult it, not to show it to interviewer
- Not specifically requested but often volunteered
 - Electricity bills
 - Gas bills
 - Rent statements
 - Benefit statements
 - Mortgage statements
 - Building Society books

The Survey

- All Wave 18 interviewers still on the GfK NOP books were sent a CAPI questionnaire
- About 100 questionnaires despatched
- 34 completed
 - GfK NOP not worked on BHPS for 2 years
 - Failure to win new contract upset many interviewers
- Results need to be treated with considerable caution

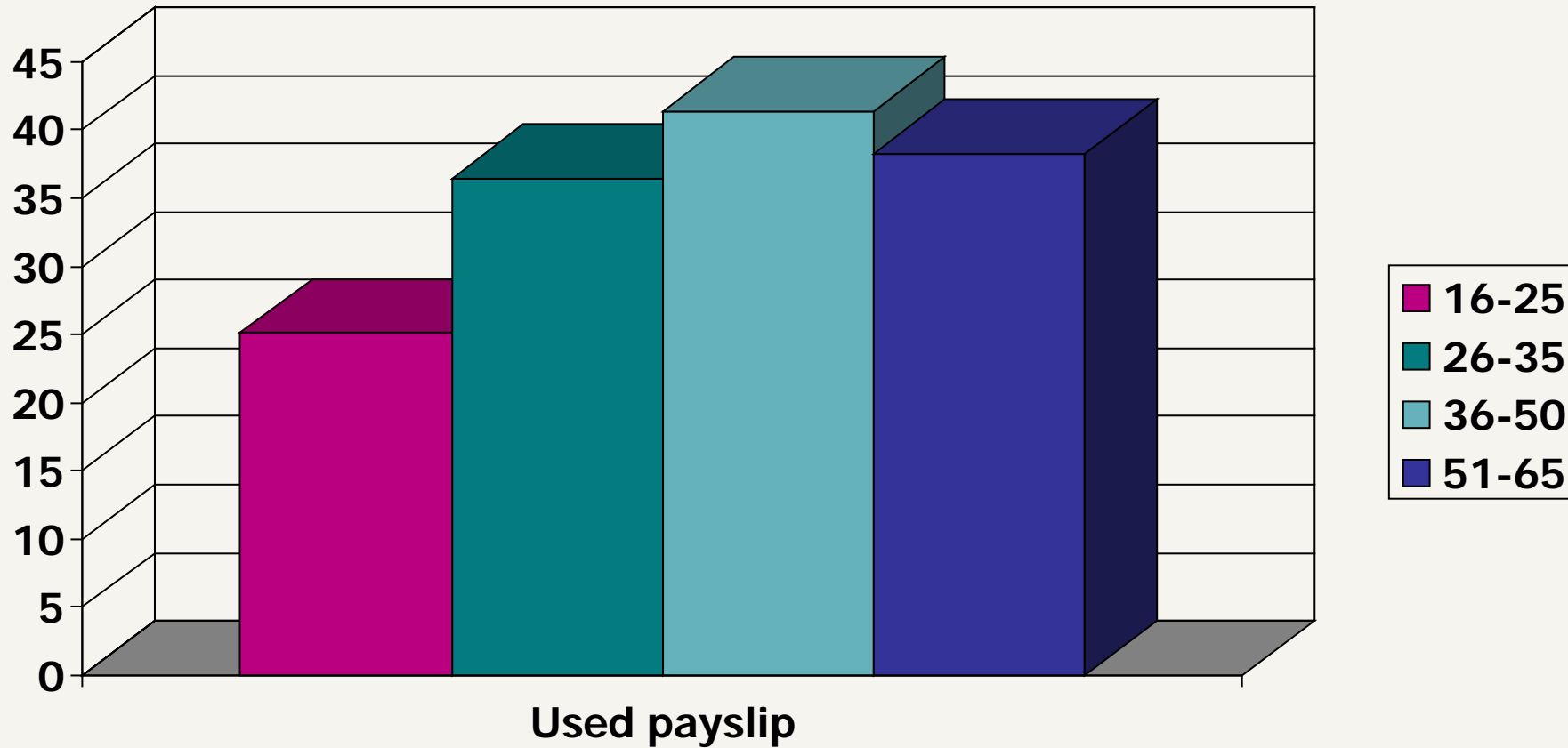
Extent of use of payslips



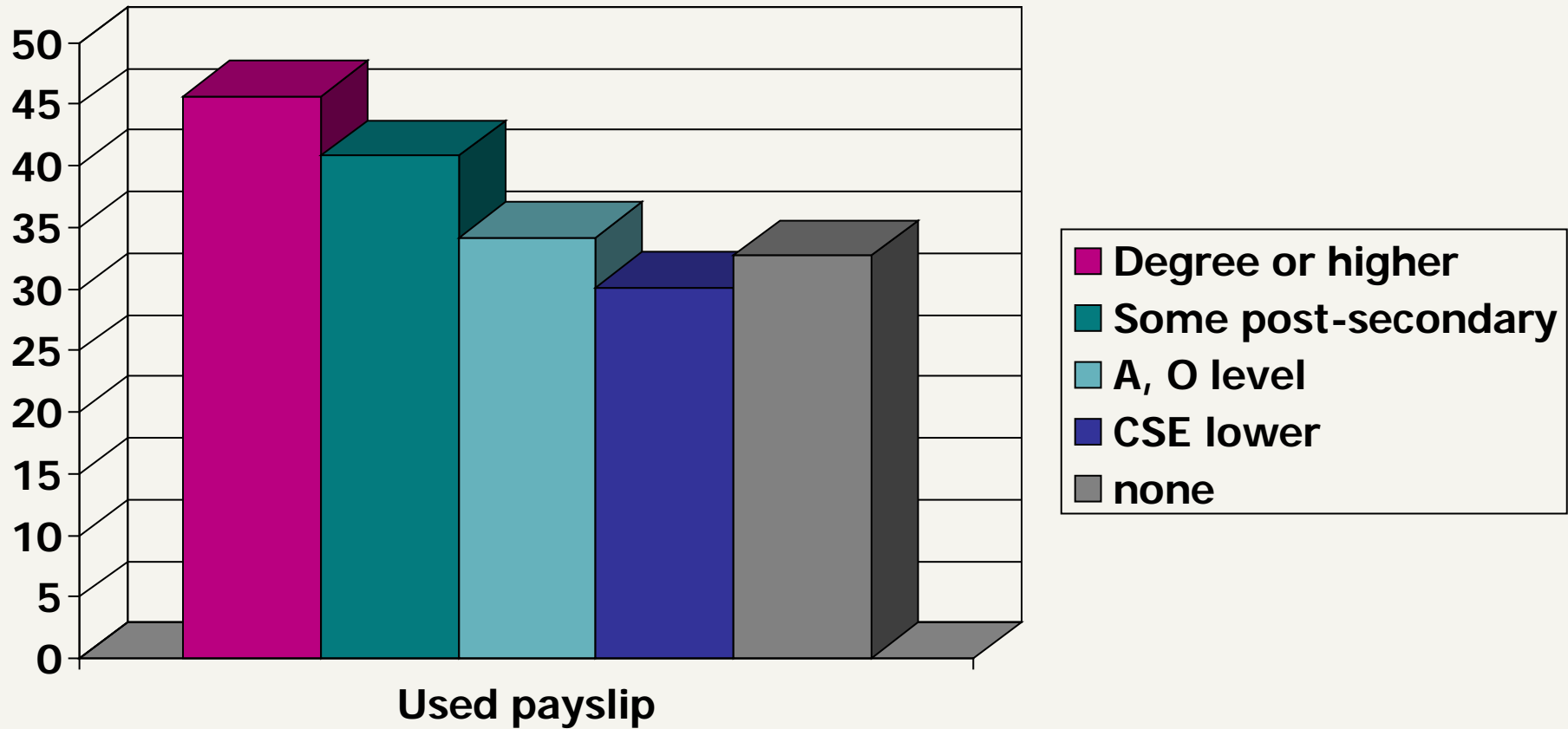
Use of other documents

- Interviewer survey suggests payslips, utility bills and benefits statements were used fairly evenly
- Bank statements used less often
- Reported use of payslips is broadly consistent with actual data

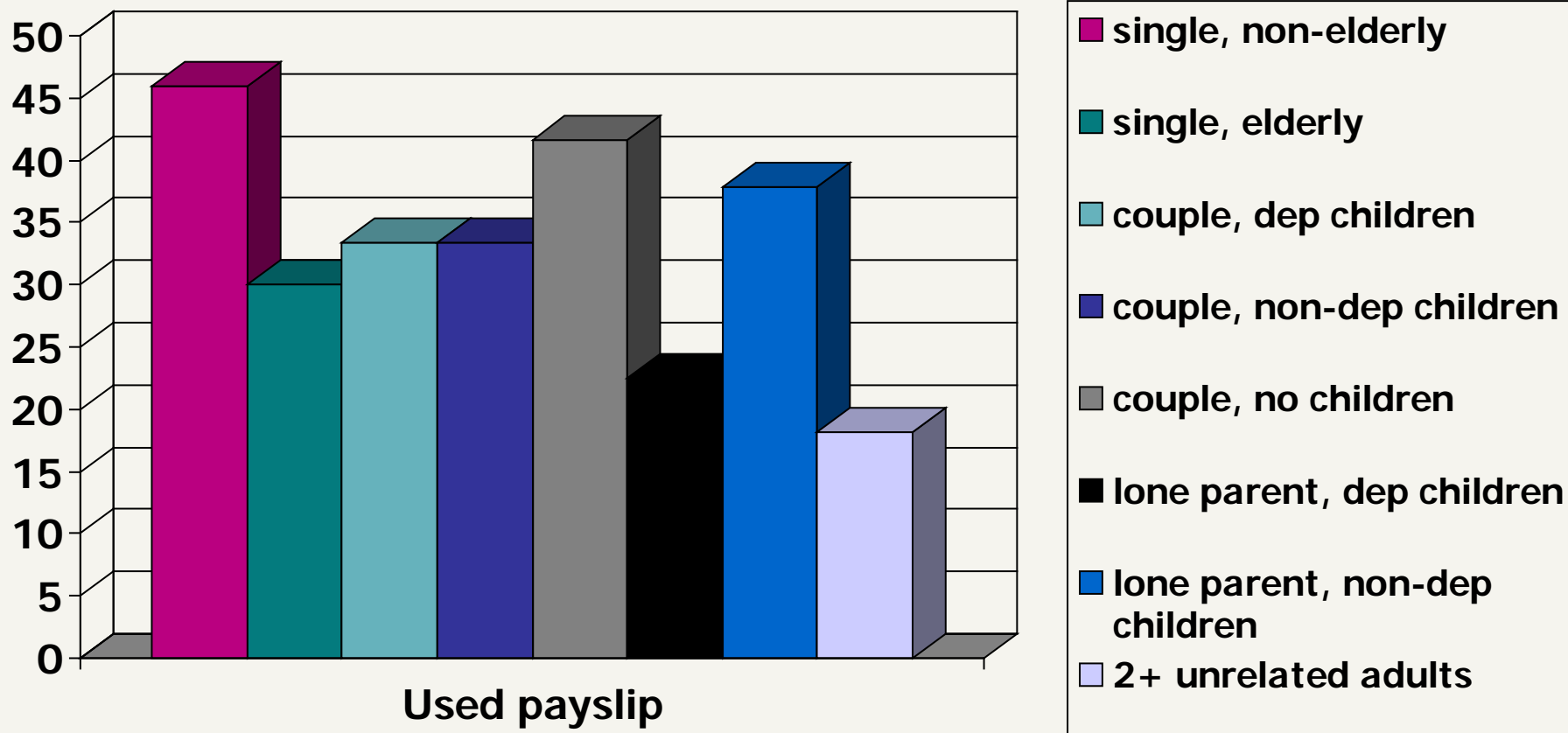
Older respondents more likely to consult payslip



More educated respondents more likely to consult payslip

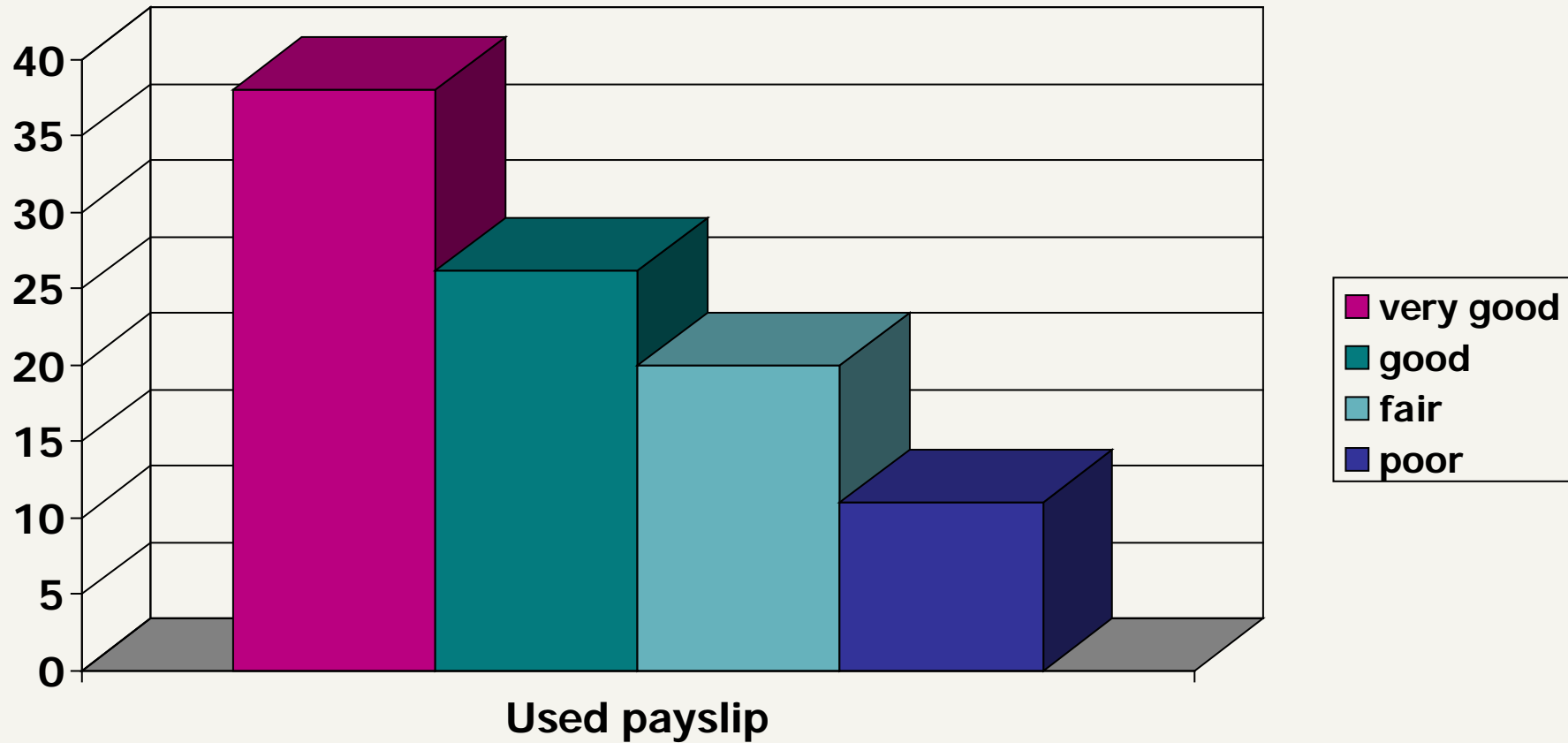


Larger households, especially those with children, less likely to consult payslip



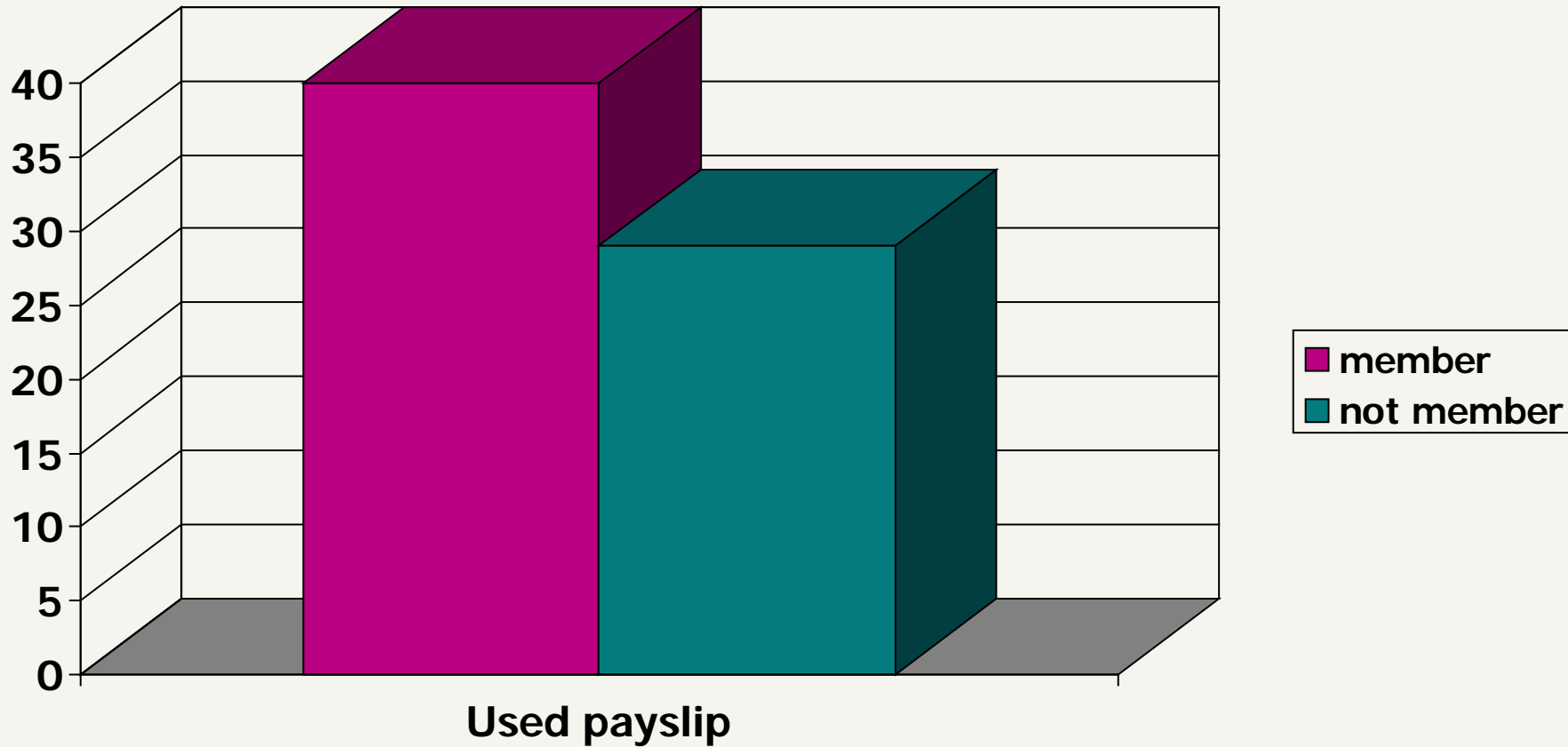
Larger households, esp with children may have more pressure on time

Not surprisingly, those rated as more cooperative by the interviewers were more likely to consult payslip



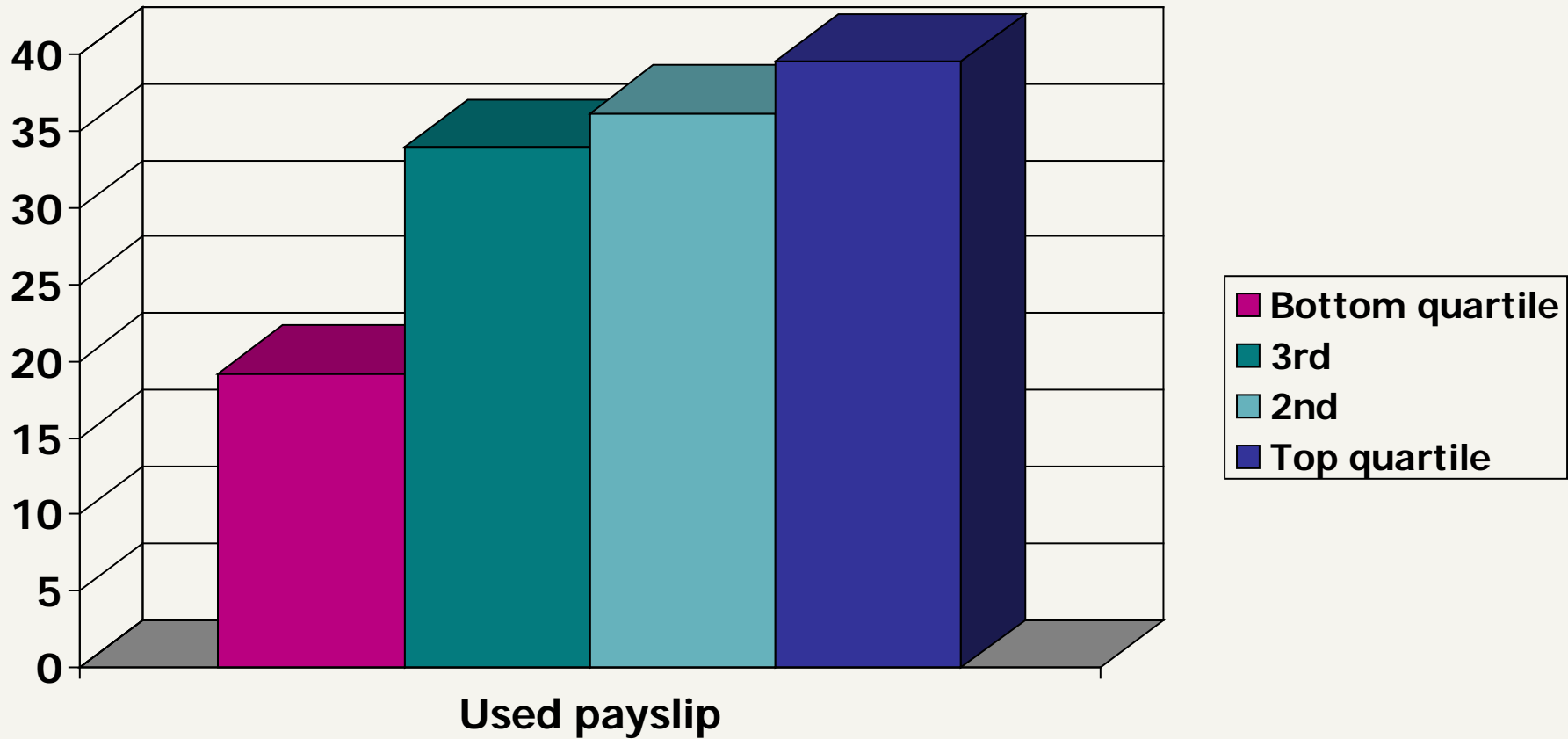
But use of payslip may be part of what makes the interviewer think they were cooperative

Members of organisations were more likely to consult payslip



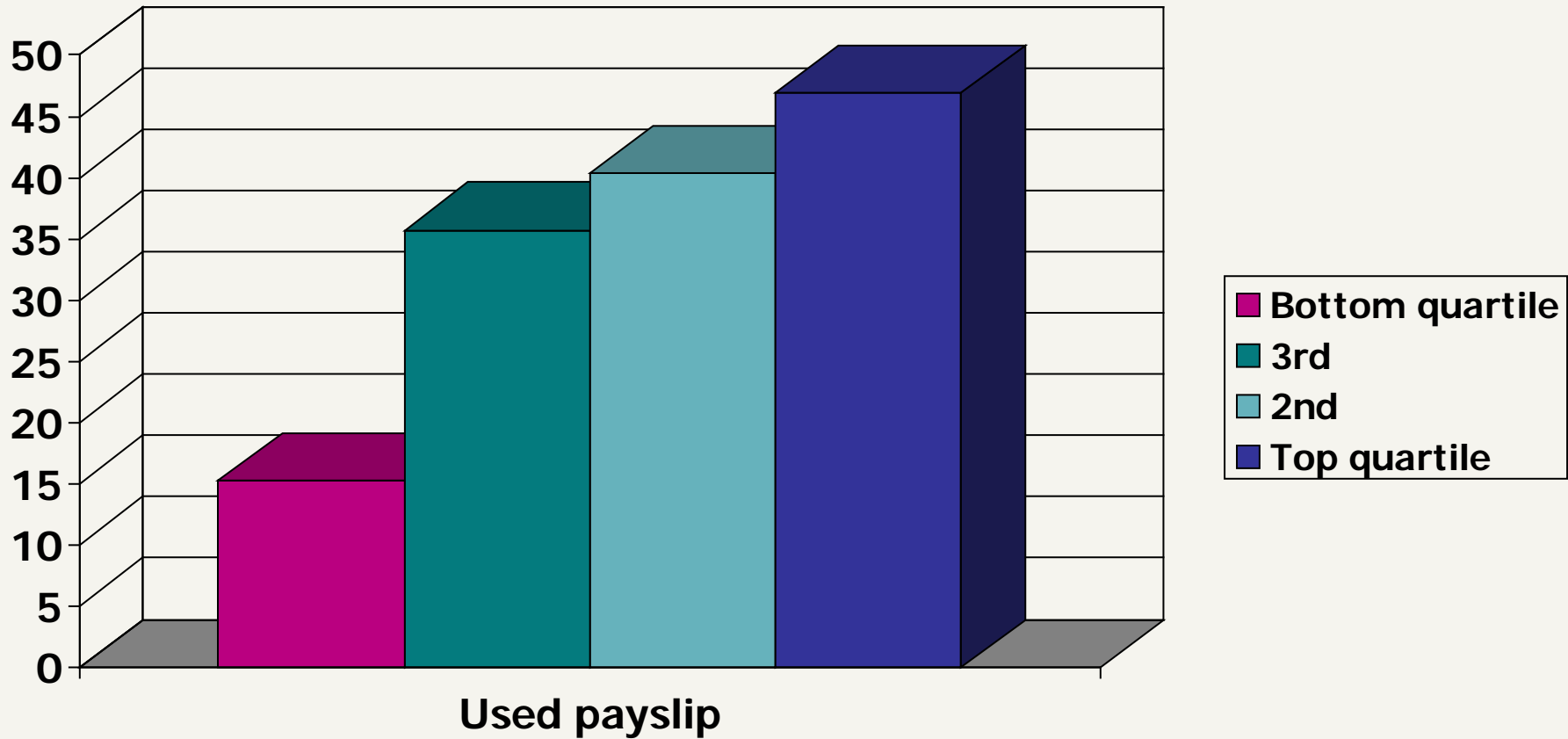
Membership = good citizens?

Higher income households more likely to consult payslip



Getting accurate data is probably more important for the lower income households

Higher earning respondents more likely to consult payslip

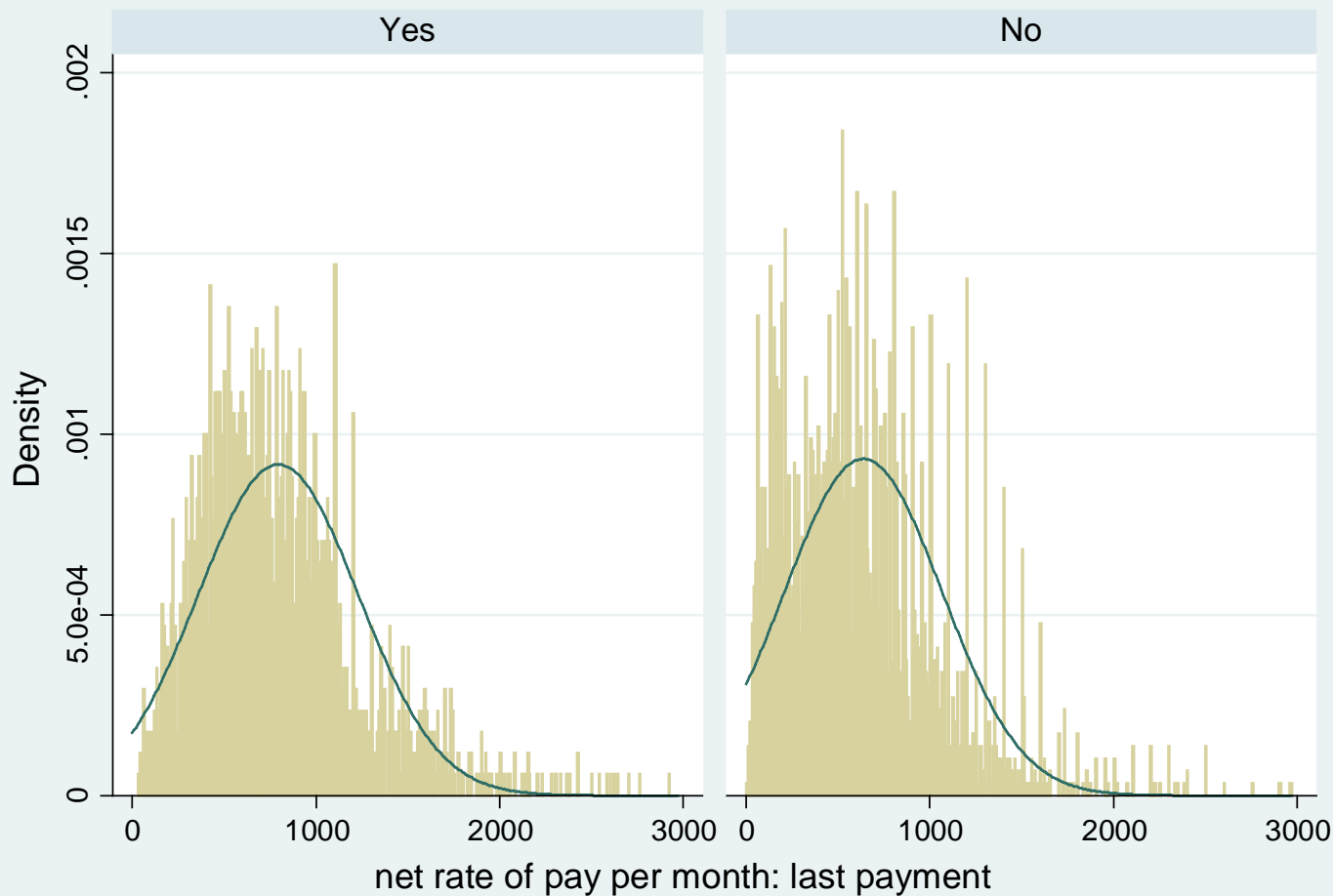


Any error is likely to be a greater proportion of the total

What is the impact on data quality?

- Problems with financial information
 - Heaping/rounding
 - Particular problem of leaping on longitudinal surveys
 - Going from one “heap” on one wave to a different one at the next one can give false picture of change
- Some rounding on gross pay but not net pay
 - People more aware of net pay
- Little impact on rounding of use of payslips
- But data more erratic when payslips not used

Distribution of net pay



Graphs by Payslip seen

Consistency of use of payslips

	Seen Wave 1	Not seen Wave 1
Seen Wave 2	70	33
Not seen Wave 2	30	67

	Seen Wave 2	Not seen Wave 2
Seen Wave 2	68	25
Not seen Wave 3	32	75

Similar figures over long term

	Seen Wave 1	Not seen Wave 1
Seen Wave 17	56	33
Not seen Wave 17	43	67

Respondents took it seriously

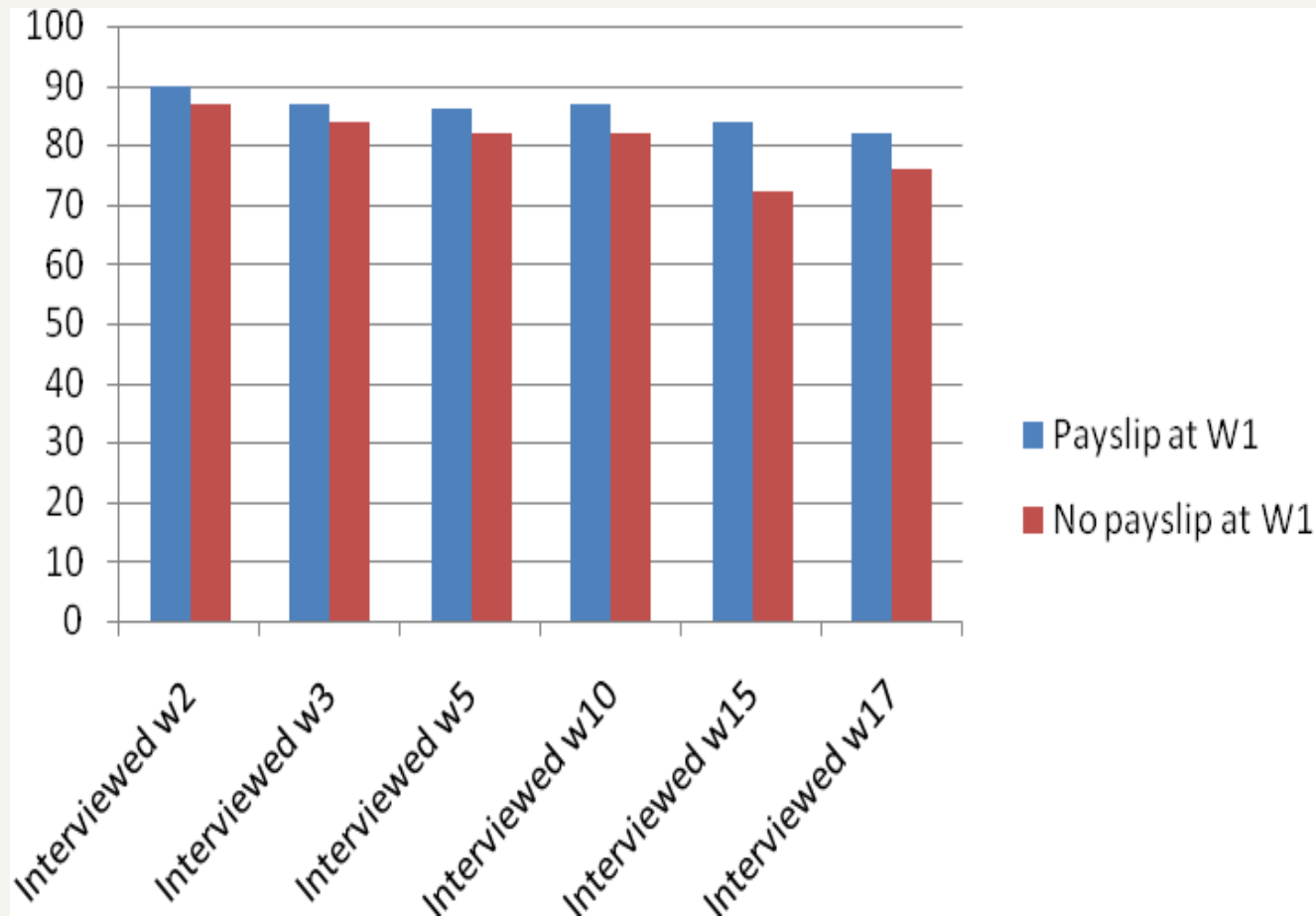
- 62% of interviewers said respondents always or usually had documents ready when they arrived
- Usually one member of the household took the lead in ensuring that the relevant documents for the whole household were available

Interviewers agree about consistency

Was it usually the same people each year who did this, or did it vary a lot from year to year?

Usually the same	91%
Varied a lot	9%

Strong correlation between use of payslips and long-term survey participation



Attrition

- No evidence that asking respondents to look at payslips causes increased attrition in later waves
- But this may just be because it is the more cooperative respondents who look at payslips
 - 32% said it was only the easiest to interview who had documents ready
 - 67% said it was mainly the easiest to interview
- No significant impact on length of interview:
 - 38% of interviewers said it made interview quicker, 24% slower and 38% about the same

Conclusions

- Encouraging respondents to refer to documents is likely to lead to the collection of better quality data at little risk to respondent cooperation