
LSAT TECHNICAL REPORT SERIES

- **Summary of Self-Reported Methods of Test Preparation by LSAT Takers for Testing Years 2011–2012 Through 2013–2014**

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Executive Summary

This investigation of Law School Admission Test (LSAT) preparation patterns for the 2011–2012, 2012–2013, and 2013–2014 testing years represents a replication of earlier studies. As with the earlier studies, all analyses in this report are descriptive in nature, and no attempt is made to evaluate the effectiveness of the various test-preparation methods.

In this study, five types of analyses were performed. First, analyses comparing the response rate for each testing year were conducted to determine whether there were appreciable differences in response rates across these years, and to assess the extent to which response rates in this study differed from those reported in earlier studies. Second, analyses designed to compare respondents and nonrespondents in terms of mean age and mean LSAT score were conducted to determine the extent to which the respondents were typical of the entire testing population. Third, an evaluation of the utilization rates for the different methods of test preparation was carried out to assess the frequency of use of the different methods. Fourth, the extent to which test takers used multiple test-preparation methods was evaluated. Finally, users and nonusers were compared for each method in terms of mean LSAT score and mean age to evaluate the extent to which users of a particular method are different from nonusers.

Overall, the patterns of results for respondents and nonrespondents were consistent across testing years. In general, the mean LSAT score was higher for respondents than for nonrespondents, and the mean age was slightly higher for nonrespondents than for respondents. This relationship was similar to patterns reported in earlier studies. These results indicate that the respondents differed systematically from the nonrespondents, and caution should therefore be exercised in generalizing any of the findings of this study to the nonrespondents. However, the response rates for all of the testing years were so high that this represents only a very minor limitation in the interpretation of the results.

The patterns of usage for the various methods of test preparation varied slightly across testing years. Of the nine methods listed, self-study was the most popular method for all 3 testing years studied, and using a book not published by the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) was a close second. Official LSAC test-preparation materials and commercial test-preparation schools were also heavily used across testing years.

On average, respondents used two to three methods to prepare for the LSAT. For the 3 testing years covered by this report, more than 40% of the respondents for each testing year reported using one testing method; 9–22% of the respondents reported using two, three, or four methods.

The most significant finding in the analysis of users versus nonusers of each method was that LSAT scores were higher for respondents indicating the use of the sample test available on LSAC’s website; official LSAC test-preparation materials; non-LSAC books; commercial test-preparation schools; and self-study methods. LSAT score means were lower for respondents reporting the use of sample questions available on LSAC’s website; undergraduate institution test-preparation courses; other preparation; and no preparation.

This study reached the following conclusions:

- Overall response rates were consistent across the 3 testing years.
- Female test takers were slightly more likely to respond than were male test takers.
- Members of the American Indian/Alaska Native and Caucasian racial/ethnic subgroups had the highest response rates (89–90%) for the 2011–2012 testing year. Members of the Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander subgroup had the highest response rate (95%) for the 2012–2013 testing year, while those who chose Multiple Races/Ethnicities had the highest response rate (91%) for the 2013–2014 testing year. Those not indicating their race/ethnicity were least likely to respond to the question regarding methods of test preparation.
- Those who are not fluent in English were less likely to respond than were those who are fluent in English.
- Respondents tended to be, on average, approximately 6 months younger than nonrespondents and tended to score 0–1 points higher on the LSAT than did nonrespondents.
- Self-study was the most popular method for all 3 study years, and non-LSAC books was the second most popular method. Official LSAC test-preparation materials and commercial test-preparation schools were also heavily used across testing years.
- Relatively few test takers reported using undergraduate institution test-preparation courses or other preparation.
- Female test takers reported using more methods of preparation than did male test takers.
- Puerto Rican test takers and test takers not fluent in English tended to use fewer methods of test preparation than did other subgroups.
- Respondents indicating multiple races/ethnicities reported using a high number of methods. Members of the African American, Asian, Canadian Aboriginal, and Caucasian subgroups also consistently reported using a high number of test-preparation methods across the 3 testing years.
- Users of the sample questions available on LSAC’s website, undergraduate institution test-preparation courses, other preparation, or no preparation tended to have lower scores than nonusers of these methods.
- Users of the sample test available on LSAC’s website, official LSAC test-preparation materials, commercial test-preparation schools, non-LSAC books, and self-study tended to have higher scores than did nonusers of these methods.
- Users of the sample questions available on LSAC’s website, sample test available on LSAC’s website, official LSAC test-preparation materials, other preparation, or no preparation tended to be older than nonusers of these methods, whereas users of non-LSAC books, commercial test-preparation schools, undergraduate institution test-preparation courses, and self-study tended to be younger than nonusers. The smallest age differences were observed between respondents using official LSAC test-preparation materials and self-study.

Introduction

This study summarizes self-reported test-preparation methods for Law School Admission Test (LSAT) takers for the 2011–2012, 2012–2013, and 2013–2014 testing years. From a list of nine possible test-preparation methods, test takers were asked to select the method(s) they had used to help them prepare for the test. Eight earlier reports summarized test-preparation methods (Evans, Sweeney, & Reese, 2011; Evans, Thornton, & Reese, 2008; McKinley, 1993; Thornton & Reese, 2000; Thornton, Reese, & Pashley, 1998; Thornton, Suto, & Reese, 2003, 2005; Wightman, 1990). The results observed in the current study will be compared to those reported in these earlier studies.

As with the earlier studies, all analyses reported here are descriptive summary statistics. No attempt has been made to provide information on the effectiveness of using the various methods of test preparation.

Methods

Data Collection

For this study, data were analyzed for 3 consecutive LSAT testing years beginning with the 2011–2012 academic testing year. Each testing year begins with the June administration and ends with the February administration. For example, the 2011–2012 testing year includes the June 2011, October 2011, December 2011, and February 2012 administrations. With the exception of the June administration, each of the administrations consists of a Saturday testing day and an alternate testing day for Saturday Sabbath observers. In this report, those who tested at the Saturday and the Saturday Sabbath observer administrations were combined and treated as a single group. Those taking the test at foreign test centers were excluded from this report, as was the TSI/Aboriginal Australian subgroup, whose sample size was too small for meaningful interpretation. Note that the Spanish LSAT was offered at test centers in Puerto Rico for the first time in February 2014. The 420 test takers who opted to take the Spanish LSAT were not included in this study since the test-preparation options available in Spanish were slightly different from those available in English.

A survey asking test takers to identify the test-preparation methods they used from among a list of possible methods was included on half of the answer sheets for the testing years covered by this report. The answer sheets containing this survey were alternated with answer sheets containing a different survey to ensure that a random sample of test takers received each. The survey instructions clearly state that test-taker participation is voluntary and that all data will be used for summary research purposes only.

Within the survey, the following nine methods of test preparation were available for selection:

1. Studying the free sample questions available on LSAC’s website.
2. Taking the free sample LSAT available on LSAC’s website.
3. Working through official LSAT PrepTests, ItemWise, and/or other LSAC test-preparation products.
4. Using LSAT preparation books or software not published by LSAC.
5. Attending a commercial test-preparation or coaching course.
6. Attending a test-preparation or coaching course offered through an undergraduate institution.
7. Self-study.
8. Other preparation.
9. No preparation.

Test takers who did not check a method were assumed not to have used that method. Test takers who checked one or more methods in addition to indicating that they used no preparation methods were assumed to have used the other marked methods, and their selection of the last method was ignored. Test takers who did not select any of the nine methods listed were considered to be nonrespondents.

Test takers were also asked to provide information on their racial/ethnic background, gender, age, and language proficiency. Test takers were permitted to choose more than one race/ethnicity category, resulting in the category “Multiple Races/Ethnicities.” Those who chose not to respond to the optional demographic questions were included in the respective “No Response” subgroups.

Analyses

Five types of analyses were performed. The first type of analysis was carried out to determine the response rate for each testing year. The goal of these analyses was to identify any significant differences in response rates across testing years and to assess the extent to which response rates in this study differ from those reported in earlier studies.

The second type of analysis consisted of comparisons of respondents and nonrespondents on two variables of interest. These analyses determined the extent to which the respondents were typical of the entire testing population. These analyses included: (1) analysis of subgroup representation in the respondent group, as reflected in subgroup response rates; and (2) computation of mean LSAT score and mean age for respondents and nonrespondents within gender, racial/ethnic, and language subgroups and for the total group. All analyses were repeated for each testing year.

The third type of analysis evaluated the utilization rates for the various methods of test preparation. Results are reported by racial/ethnic, gender, and language subgroups, and separately for each testing year.

The fourth type of analysis evaluated the extent to which test takers used multiple test-preparation methods. The percentage of test takers using each possible number of

methods used was computed. The results are again reported by racial/ethnic, gender, and language subgroups, and separately for each testing year.

The fifth and final type of analysis compared users and nonusers of each method in terms of mean LSAT score and mean age. These analyses evaluated the extent to which users of a particular method are different from nonusers. Results are reported separately for each testing year.

Results

Response Rates

Table 1 summarizes the response rates for the test-preparation questions and shows that response rates were consistent with a slightly upward trend across the 3 testing years. The average response rate calculated for this study (89.00%) was higher than the rate reported in the Wightman (1990 [74.8%]) study, and similar to those reported in the McKinley (1993 [86.07%]), Thornton et al. (1998 [90.97%]), Thornton and Reese (2000 [90.08%]), Thornton et al. (2003 [90.64%], 2005 [91.19%]), and Evans et al. (2008 [89.26%]), 2011 [88.09%]) studies.

TABLE 1
Response rates for the test-preparation questions

Testing Year	Total <i>N</i>	Received Questions	Respondents	Nonrespondents	Response Rate
2011–2012	129,833	62,578	54,938	7,640	87.79%
2012–2013	112,249	54,922	49,124	5,798	89.44%
2013–2014	104,968	50,603	45,551	5,052	90.02%

Respondents Versus Nonrespondents

Tables 2–4 summarize the results of the comparison of respondents and nonrespondents for the 2011–2012, 2012–2013, and 2013–2014 testing years. These tables show, for each subgroup, the number and percentages of respondents and nonrespondents along with their mean LSAT and mean age. Also shown are the differences in means between the two groups (respondents minus nonrespondents) for both LSAT score and test-taker age. Recall that the TSI/Aboriginal Australian subgroup was not included in these analyses due to their small sample size. Note also that the lower representation of Puerto Rican and Hispanic/Latino test takers for the 2013–2014 testing year compared the 2 earlier testing years reflects the absence of the 420 February 2014 test takers who opted to take the Spanish LSAT at the Puerto Rican test centers.

Looking specifically at the gender subgroups, female test takers had a higher response rate than male test takers, with approximately 89–91% of female test takers responding over the 3 testing years. Conversely, those who did not indicate their gender had the lowest response rates in the first 2 testing years. Among the racial/ethnic

subgroups, the American Indian/Alaska Native subgroup consistently had a response rate of over 90% for each testing year. Overall response rates increased over the course of the 3 testing years, with five racial/ethnic subgroups having a response rate of over 90% in 2013–2014. Other subgroups with consistently high response rates were those test takers indicating English as their dominant language (88–91%) and test takers reporting fluency in English (88–91%). For test takers who indicated their race/ethnicity, the Canadian Aboriginal subgroup was least likely to respond to the test-preparation question in the first 2 testing years (79.44% for 2011–2012 and 81.82% for 2012–2013) and the Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander subgroup was least likely to respond in the last testing year (85.45%). It is interesting to note that those not indicating their gender, race/ethnicity, dominant language, and English fluency were less likely to respond to the test-preparation question than were those who did identify themselves in these ways. The only exception to this was for the 2013–2014 test takers not indicating their gender.

Tables 2–4 show, for each testing year, the LSAT mean scores for each test-taker subgroup, along with the mean differences between respondent and nonrespondent LSAT scores. The difference in mean LSAT scores for the total group was 0.80 points for 2011–2012, 0.89 points for 2012–2013, and 0.72 points for 2013–2014. For most subgroups, the mean LSAT score was higher for respondents than for nonrespondents. This held true especially for the 2013–2014 testing year, where the mean LSAT score was higher for respondents than for nonrespondents for every racial/ethnic subgroup and all dominant language subgroups. It also held true for both male and female subgroups across all 3 testing years. The respondent/nonrespondent mean LSAT score differences for the Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander subgroup for the 2012–2013 and 2013–2014 testing years was quite high, but should be evaluated in light of the very small nonrespondent representation ($N = 4$ for 2012–2013 and $N = 8$ for 2013–2014). The mean LSAT difference between respondents and nonrespondents for those reporting they were not fluent in English was large at 4.40 points for 2013–2014 and 3.41 points for 2011–2012. However, the difference between respondents and nonrespondents for those reporting they were not fluent in English was -2.05 points for the 2012–2013 testing year. Fairly large differences were observed between respondents and nonrespondents, indicating a dominant language other than English for 2011–2012 (1.77 points) and 2012–2013 (1.76 points), and a slightly larger difference was observed for 2013–2014 (1.98 points). Respondents who reported that they were fluent in English had high response rates and responded slightly more often than did respondents who stated that they were not fluent in English. Test takers indicating English fluency responded at a similar rate of 88.18% in 2011–2012, 89.82% in 2012–2013, and 90.71% in 2013–2014. Those indicating they were not fluent in English responded at a rate of 83.63% in 2011–2012, 84.43% in 2012–2013, and 88.02% in 2013–2014.

Finally, the subgroup mean ages and the differences between the mean ages for respondents and nonrespondents are shown in Tables 2–4 for each testing year. The difference in mean age for the total group was 0.44 years for 2011–2012, 0.48 years for 2012–2013, and 0.45 years for 2013–2014, with nonrespondents being older than respondents for all 3 testing years.

TABLE 2
Comparison of respondents and nonrespondents: Academic year 2011–2012

Subgroup ^a	Respondents (R)				Nonrespondents (NR)				Differences (R–NR)	
	N	%	LSAT	Age	N	%	LSAT	Age	LSAT	Age
Gender										
Female	27,855	88.69	149.66	24.96	3,551	11.31	148.88	25.55	0.78	-0.59
Male	27,041	86.92	152.22	25.34	4,069	13.08	151.17	25.62	1.05	-0.28
No Response	42	67.74	155.98	23.88	20	32.26	157.30	24.80	-1.32	-0.92
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	6,073	85.50	142.25	27.41	1,030	14.50	141.84	28.40	0.41	-0.99
American Indian/AK Native	239	90.19	145.48	28.74	26	9.81	145.58	26.77	-0.10	1.97
Asian	5,163	87.15	153.03	24.34	761	12.85	152.21	24.40	0.82	-0.06
Canadian Aboriginal	85	79.44	146.09	28.74	22	20.56	145.41	28.23	0.68	0.51
Caucasian	34,069	88.76	153.00	24.78	4,315	11.24	152.51	25.02	0.49	-0.24
Hispanic/Latino	3,924	87.90	146.91	25.45	540	12.10	146.45	25.62	0.46	-0.17
Native HI/Other PI	83	83.84	146.06	27.34	16	16.16	145.00	28.44	1.06	-1.10
Puerto Rican	930	86.19	138.91	26.98	149	13.81	137.46	26.79	1.45	0.19
Multiple Races/Ethnicities	3,595	87.15	149.94	24.93	530	12.85	149.06	25.71	0.88	-0.78
No Response	777	75.58	155.44	24.13	251	24.42	155.54	25.75	-0.10	-1.62
Dominant Language										
English	50,854	88.24	151.19	25.07	6,778	11.76	150.33	25.52	0.86	-0.45
Other	3,139	86.76	145.74	26.58	479	13.24	143.97	26.82	1.77	-0.24
No Response	945	71.16	153.61	24.23	383	28.84	154.10	25.16	-0.49	-0.93
Fluent in English										
Yes	53,671	88.18	150.95	25.14	7,191	11.82	150.04	25.58	0.91	-0.44
No	281	83.63	136.86	28.17	55	16.37	133.45	29.11	3.41	-0.94
No Response	986	71.45	153.55	24.23	394	28.55	153.82	25.15	-0.27	-0.92
Total	54,938	87.79	150.92	25.14	7,640	12.21	150.12	25.58	0.80	-0.44

^aThe TSI/Aboriginal Australian subgroup was excluded from this study due to small sample size.

TABLE 3

Comparison of respondents and nonrespondents: Academic year 2012–2013

Subgroup ^a	Respondents (R)				Nonrespondents (NR)				Differences (R–NR)	
	N	%	LSAT	Age	N	%	LSAT	Age	LSAT	Age
Gender										
Female	24,946	90.47	149.71	25.03	2,629	9.53	148.91	25.42	0.80	-0.39
Male	24,144	88.46	152.15	25.27	3,149	11.54	150.90	25.80	1.25	-0.53
No Response	34	62.96	154.18	25.21	20	37.04	158.20	25.75	-4.02	-0.54
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	5,378	88.01	142.46	27.50	733	11.99	141.51	28.88	0.95	-1.38
American Indian/AK Native	222	90.98	146.50	28.14	22	9.02	144.91	30.55	1.59	-2.41
Asian	4,809	89.20	152.72	24.49	582	10.80	151.01	24.74	1.71	-0.25
Canadian Aboriginal	99	81.82	144.74	28.18	22	18.18	146.27	27.82	-1.53	0.36
Caucasian	30,050	89.97	153.08	24.75	3,350	10.03	152.29	25.10	0.79	-0.35
Hispanic/Latino	3,666	88.83	146.26	25.64	461	11.17	146.39	25.66	-0.13	-0.02
Native HI/Other PI	77	95.06	146.53	28.36	4	4.94	137.75	28.50	8.78	-0.14
Puerto Rican	782	90.61	139.36	26.38	81	9.39	138.56	26.20	0.80	0.18
Multiple Races/Ethnicities	3,380	90.52	150.07	24.88	354	9.48	150.21	24.86	-0.14	0.02
No Response	661	77.76	154.74	24.50	189	22.24	154.57	25.42	0.17	-0.92
Dominant Language										
English	45,328	89.82	151.22	25.08	5,136	10.18	150.25	25.53	0.97	-0.45
Other	2,915	89.25	145.46	26.51	351	10.75	143.70	27.14	1.76	-0.63
No Response	881	73.91	153.07	24.27	311	26.09	153.30	25.52	-0.23	-1.25
Fluent in English										
Yes	47,988	89.82	150.95	25.15	5,441	10.18	149.95	25.60	1.00	-0.45
No	244	84.43	135.13	28.70	45	15.57	137.18	28.51	-2.05	0.19
No Response	892	74.09	153.32	24.03	312	25.91	153.11	25.63	0.21	-1.60
Total	49,124	89.44	150.91	25.15	5,798	10.56	150.02	25.63	0.89	-0.48

^aThe TSI/Aboriginal Australian subgroup was excluded from this study due to small sample size.

TABLE 4
Comparison of respondents and nonrespondents: Academic year 2013–2014

Subgroup ^a	Respondents (R)				Nonrespondents (NR)				Differences (R–NR)	
	N	%	LSAT	Age	N	%	LSAT	Age	LSAT	Age
Gender										
Female	23,469	90.67	149.60	24.95	2,414	9.33	148.88	25.34	0.72	-0.39
Male	22,039	89.33	152.16	25.47	2,633	10.67	151.26	25.93	0.90	-0.46
No Response	43	89.58	154.35	25.77	5	10.42	149.20	26.00	5.15	-0.23
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	5,166	89.84	142.20	27.47	584	10.16	140.66	28.45	1.54	-0.98
American Indian/AK Native	178	90.36	146.43	28.39	19	9.64	143.42	28.84	3.01	-0.45
Asian	4,512	88.78	153.36	24.52	570	11.22	151.61	24.72	1.75	-0.20
Canadian Aboriginal	83	89.25	148.00	27.25	10	10.75	147.00	30.10	1.00	-2.85
Caucasian	26,504	90.55	152.96	24.82	2,766	9.45	152.56	25.07	0.40	-0.25
Hispanic/Latino	3,457	90.33	146.16	25.54	370	9.67	145.36	25.75	0.80	-0.21
Native HI/Other PI	47	85.45	145.98	29.15	8	14.55	140.00	30.25	5.98	-1.10
Puerto Rican ^b	689	90.78	139.91	26.54	70	9.22	139.67	28.57	0.24	-2.03
Multiple Races/Ethnicities	3,562	91.12	149.91	24.99	347	8.88	148.88	25.61	1.03	-0.62
No Response	1,353	81.46	154.89	24.77	308	18.54	153.61	26.06	1.28	-1.29
Dominant Language										
English	40,259	90.79	151.06	25.17	4,084	9.21	150.23	25.52	0.83	-0.35
Other	2,716	89.84	146.33	26.34	307	10.16	144.35	27.28	1.98	-0.94
No Response	2,576	79.58	152.19	24.49	661	20.42	152.10	25.67	0.09	-1.18
Fluent in English										
Yes	42,655	90.71	150.83	25.23	4,367	9.29	149.92	25.63	0.91	-0.40
No	213	88.02	139.40	28.12	29	11.98	135.00	28.62	4.40	-0.50
No Response	2,683	80.35	151.94	24.50	656	19.65	152.09	25.62	-0.15	-1.12
Total	45,551	90.02	150.84	25.20	5,052	9.98	150.12	25.65	0.72	-0.45

^aThe TSI/Aboriginal Australian subgroup was excluded from this study due to small sample size.

^bThe 420 test takers who took the Spanish LSAT in February 2014 were excluded from this study.

Methods Utilization

Analyses were carried out to determine the extent to which the various methods of test preparation were used. This was accomplished by tallying the percentage of respondents indicating that they used a particular method. At this point, no attempt was made to identify respondents who had used only one particular method. That is, a respondent was counted among those using a method even if that respondent used other methods as well.

Tables 5–7 show, for both the total group and each subgroup, the percentage of respondents indicating their utilization of each method of test preparation. A very small percentage of the total group of respondents (2.16% for 2011–2012, 2.18% for 2012–2013, and 1.87% for 2013–2014) indicated that they used no preparation (Method 9). Of the methods listed, self-study (Method 7) was the most popular method for all 3 study years, and non-LSAC books (Method 4) were the second most popular method. Official LSAC test-preparation materials (Method 3) and commercial test-preparation schools (Method 5) were also heavily used across testing years.

Aside from no preparation (Method 9) or other preparation (Method 8), undergraduate institution test-preparation courses (Method 6) were the least used preparation method, at 6.74% for 2011–2012, 6.47% for 2012–2013, and 6.90% for 2013–2014. For the most-used method, self-study (Method 7), African American, Asian, and those reporting Multiple Races/Ethnicities consistently reported high use of this method for all 3 testing years. Members of the Canadian Aboriginal and Caucasian subgroups were also consistently high users of self-study. Puerto Rican respondents were unlikely to report the use of self-study in 2011–2012 (42.90%), 2012–2013 (45.27%), and 2013–2014 (44.99%). The reported use of non-LSAC books ranged from a low of 27.66% for Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander respondents to a high of 47.22% for Caucasian respondents in 2013–2014. In the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 testing years, the use of non-LSAC books was reported least often by Puerto Rican respondents (30.32% and 31.33%, respectively), whereas their use was reported most often again by Caucasian respondents (47.75% and 46.15%, respectively).

It is also notable that Puerto Rican respondents and those indicating that they were not fluent in English were the most likely groups to report having used no preparation (recall that this study excludes those who took the February 2014 Spanish LSAT in Puerto Rico). For all 3 testing years, self-study (Method 7) was the test-preparation method most heavily used by those not fluent in English. Sample questions available on LSAC's website (Method 1), official LSAC test-preparation materials (Method 3), non-LSAC books (Method 4), and commercial test-preparation schools (Method 5) were also popular methods used by this subgroup. Puerto Rican respondents reported relatively frequent use of non-LSAC books (Method 4) and official LSAC test-preparation materials (Method 3), and most frequently reported use of self-study (Method 7). Female and male respondents reported using self-study (Method 7) most often, with both groups reporting a utilization rate of 53–55% across the 3 testing years. Both male and female respondents reported using non-LSAC books (Method 4) 42–46% of the time across the testing years. Male and female respondents reported official LSAC test-preparation materials (Method 3) as the third most often used method, but female respondents reported the use of this method more often than male respondents for all 3

testing years. In 2012–2013, 39.48% of female respondents reported using this method, while only 33.53% of male respondents reported using it. Over all testing years, female respondents reported higher use than male respondents within every test-preparation category with the exception of other preparation (Method 8) and no preparation (Method 9). Another exception was self-study (Method 7) only in 2012–2013, where female respondents reported slightly lower use than male respondents.

TABLE 5

Percentage of respondents using each method of test preparation: Academic year 2011–2012

Subgroup ^a	N	Method of Test Preparation								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gender										
Female	27,855	18.09	16.79	37.79	46.20	35.29	7.78	53.06	5.14	1.41
Male	27,041	16.10	14.51	32.59	43.00	29.31	5.67	52.75	5.81	2.93
No Response	42	16.67	21.43	33.33	35.71	28.57	7.14	40.48	7.14	2.38
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	6,073	19.41	15.28	33.48	42.83	28.50	10.01	53.56	6.16	1.70
American Indian/AK Native	239	17.99	13.81	30.13	43.51	21.76	3.35	50.63	4.18	6.69
Asian	5,163	14.80	15.55	38.04	36.99	34.03	5.00	57.47	4.42	1.63
Canadian Aboriginal	85	38.82	24.71	55.29	40.00	20.00	7.06	58.82	9.41	0.00
Caucasian	34,069	17.19	16.18	36.14	47.75	32.63	6.19	52.41	5.35	2.07
Hispanic/Latino	3,924	15.06	12.56	28.59	34.89	37.10	8.33	50.92	5.25	2.04
Native HI/Other PI	83	14.46	9.64	33.73	32.53	33.73	10.84	49.40	7.23	1.20
Puerto Rican	930	16.24	12.04	25.91	30.32	20.97	5.48	42.90	5.59	8.71
Multiple Races/Ethnicities	3,595	17.58	15.58	34.88	44.87	31.52	7.87	55.30	7.04	2.61
No Response	777	17.50	18.02	36.04	39.25	36.16	6.05	49.81	5.92	2.83
Dominant Language										
English	50,854	17.23	15.81	35.35	45.63	32.71	6.83	53.07	5.48	2.01
Other	3,139	15.83	13.28	32.88	29.05	25.45	5.61	51.23	5.22	4.30
No Response	945	15.03	16.30	36.08	41.90	35.56	5.71	49.10	5.71	3.07
Fluent in English										
Yes	53,671	17.18	15.69	35.24	44.77	32.38	6.78	53.05	5.46	2.11
No	281	13.17	9.25	28.11	23.84	17.08	6.05	40.57	8.19	8.90
No Response	986	14.60	16.43	36.31	42.09	34.38	5.17	48.17	5.07	3.04
Total	54,938	17.11	15.67	35.23	44.62	32.34	6.74	52.90	5.47	2.16

1 = sample questions available on LSAC's website, 2 = sample test available on LSAC's website, 3 = official LSAC test-preparation materials, 4 = non-LSAC books, 5 = commercial test-preparation schools, 6 = undergraduate institution test-preparation courses, 7 = self-study, 8 = other preparation, 9 = no preparation

^aThe TSI/Aboriginal Australian subgroup was excluded from this study due to small sample size.

TABLE 6

Percentage of respondents using each method of test preparation: Academic year 2012–2013

Subgroup ^a	N	Method of Test Preparation								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gender										
Female	24,946	18.39	17.55	39.48	44.71	35.47	7.56	52.75	5.52	1.33
Male	24,144	16.71	14.72	33.53	41.71	28.25	5.33	52.78	6.06	3.06
No Response	34	17.65	11.76	38.24	41.18	20.59	11.76	55.88	11.76	0.00
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	5,378	20.32	15.60	34.05	40.31	26.70	10.45	53.22	6.56	2.01
American Indian/AK Native	222	20.27	15.77	31.53	45.05	17.57	4.50	58.56	7.21	2.25
Asian	4,809	15.60	15.28	38.10	36.29	33.23	4.41	57.64	4.85	1.50
Canadian Aboriginal	99	26.26	18.18	45.45	42.42	25.25	9.09	59.60	9.09	0.00
Caucasian	30,050	17.51	16.70	38.12	46.15	32.46	5.81	52.00	5.70	2.10
Hispanic/Latino	3,666	15.00	13.48	29.92	34.94	35.54	8.78	50.05	5.70	2.15
Native HI/Other PI	77	27.27	20.78	38.96	40.26	28.57	12.99	58.44	5.19	1.30
Puerto Rican	782	18.41	13.81	27.37	31.33	20.20	5.50	45.27	5.24	8.18
Multiple Races/Ethnicities	3,380	18.67	16.92	34.05	43.85	33.25	6.78	55.92	7.01	2.57
No Response	661	16.19	15.13	35.10	42.06	32.98	5.45	52.95	4.69	3.33
Dominant Language										
English	45,328	17.68	16.37	36.84	44.26	32.36	6.53	52.82	5.83	2.03
Other	2,915	16.88	13.55	32.49	28.51	24.67	5.83	52.42	5.25	4.39
No Response	881	14.19	13.51	35.41	39.39	32.69	5.56	51.31	5.68	2.61
Fluent in English										
Yes	47,988	17.64	16.23	36.64	43.39	31.97	6.47	52.85	5.79	2.15
No	244	16.39	9.43	22.54	20.08	14.75	6.56	49.59	7.79	6.97
No Response	892	14.13	14.01	35.76	41.14	33.41	6.17	49.33	5.27	2.35
Total	49,124	17.57	16.15	36.55	43.24	31.91	6.47	52.77	5.79	2.18

1 = sample questions available on LSAC's website, 2 = sample test available on LSAC's website, 3 = official LSAC test-preparation materials, 4 = non-LSAC books, 5 = commercial test-preparation schools, 6 = undergraduate institution test-preparation courses, 7 = self-study, 8 = other preparation, 9 = no preparation

^aThe TSI/Aboriginal Australian subgroup was excluded from this study due to small sample size.

TABLE 7

Percentage of respondents using each method of test preparation: Academic year 2013–2014

Subgroup ^a	N	Method of Test Preparation								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gender										
Female	23,469	19.33	18.37	40.40	45.87	34.35	8.04	54.84	5.83	1.30
Male	22,039	17.44	15.94	34.99	42.09	27.86	5.70	54.79	6.73	2.49
No Response	43	25.58	27.91	44.19	41.86	16.28	2.33	72.09	4.65	2.33
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	5,166	21.51	17.02	34.77	40.28	27.29	9.02	55.23	6.91	1.59
American Indian/AK Native	178	17.42	12.92	33.71	40.45	19.10	6.74	54.49	7.30	3.93
Asian	4,512	15.87	15.91	40.07	37.39	31.67	4.85	61.24	4.19	1.40
Canadian Aboriginal	83	14.46	13.25	48.19	43.37	19.28	9.64	50.60	3.61	3.61
Caucasian	26,504	18.57	17.76	39.07	47.22	31.77	6.44	54.09	6.13	1.80
Hispanic/Latino	3,457	16.40	14.43	32.14	35.46	33.24	10.27	50.94	6.36	1.53
Native HI/Other PI	47	14.89	10.64	25.53	27.66	25.53	12.77	48.94	14.89	4.26
Puerto Rican ^b	689	17.85	12.77	27.00	31.64	23.66	6.68	44.99	5.81	6.39
Multiple Races/Ethnicities	3,562	18.44	18.30	37.54	46.15	32.73	7.30	57.69	8.00	2.30
No Response	1,353	18.26	18.92	37.40	41.98	30.16	4.73	54.40	8.57	3.03
Dominant Language										
English	40,259	18.62	17.43	38.22	45.34	31.57	7.00	54.90	6.32	1.78
Other	2,716	18.48	15.39	35.64	29.31	25.33	6.52	55.96	5.15	2.72
No Response	2,576	15.26	15.64	33.31	39.29	31.41	5.78	52.48	6.64	2.41
Fluent in English										
Yes	42,655	18.60	17.35	38.14	44.45	31.32	6.97	55.04	6.23	1.81
No	213	21.13	13.15	26.76	25.82	13.62	6.57	50.70	5.16	7.51
No Response	2,683	15.36	15.24	33.02	38.99	30.60	5.78	51.84	6.97	2.39
Total	45,551	18.42	17.20	37.79	44.04	31.19	6.90	54.83	6.27	1.87

1 = sample questions available on LSAC's website, 2 = sample test available on LSAC's website, 3 = official LSAC test-preparation materials, 4 = non-LSAC books, 5 = commercial test-preparation schools, 6 = undergraduate institution test-preparation courses, 7 = self-study, 8 = other preparation, 9 = no preparation

^aThe TSI/Aboriginal Australian subgroup was excluded from this study due to small sample size.

^bThe 420 test takers who took the Spanish LSAT in February 2014 were excluded from this study.

Number of Methods Used

In addition to examining the percentage of test takers using each individual test-preparation method, analyses were performed to examine the extent to which test takers were using multiple test-preparation methods. Tables 8–10 summarize the results of these analyses for each testing year. These tables show, for the total group and for each subgroup, the percentage of respondents indicating how many methods of test preparation they used (0 through 8). Also shown is the mean number of methods used for each subgroup. Across the 3 testing years, the use of one test-preparation method was the most commonly reported number for the total group (>40 %) for each testing year. This result was followed by the reported use of two (approximately 22%), three (approximately 18–19%), and four (approximately 9–10%) test-preparation methods. The remaining portion of the total group reported using five to eight methods of preparation at rates of approximately 5% or less.

Examining the subgroup results in Tables 8–10, it is notable that the majority of respondents in every subgroup reported using only one method of test preparation. Across all 3 testing years, the Canadian Aboriginal test takers for the 2011–2012 testing year reported the highest mean number of test-preparation methods (2.54). This racial/ethnic subgroup also reported the next highest number, in 2012–2013, along with those who did not respond to the gender question in 2013–2014 (2.35 methods). Female respondents consistently reported using more preparation methods than male respondents, with an average of 2.20 methods for 2011–2012, 2.21 methods for 2012–2013, and 2.27 methods for 2013–2014. The Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander subgroup reported using 2.32 methods in the 2012–2013 testing year, and those indicating multiple races/ethnicities also had a high mean number of test-preparation methods used during the 2013–2014 testing year (2.26 methods). Test takers with English as their dominant language and those fluent in English reported using, on average, more than two methods of test preparation.

For the 2011–2012 testing year, the lowest mean number of reported methods used was observed for those not fluent in English (1.46 methods). For the 2012–2013 testing year, the mean number for this subgroup was 1.47 methods; this increased to 1.63 methods for the 2013–2014 testing year. Puerto Rican respondents also reported low mean numbers of methods used (1.59 in 2011–2012, 1.67 in 2012–2013, and 1.70 in 2013–2014). In addition, Puerto Rican respondents were more likely than most racial/ethnic subgroups to report using no method across all testing years (8.71% in 2011–2012, 8.18% in 2012–2013, and 6.39% in 2013–2014). Those not fluent in English also were more likely than other groups to report using no preparation.

Respondents who did not indicate their gender showed an upward trend in the number of test-preparation methods used, increasing from 1.90 methods in 2011–2012 to 2.09 in 2012–2013 and 2.35 in 2013–2014. Those indicating a language other than English as their dominant language consistently reported a low number of test-preparation methods (1.79 in 2011–2012, 1.80 in 2012–2013, and 1.92 in 2013–2014).

TABLE 8

Frequency distribution of number of test-preparation methods used: Academic year 2011–2012

Subgroup ^a	Percentage Using Each Possible Number of Test-Preparation Methods									Mean
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Gender										
Female	1.41	38.36	24.14	19.30	10.34	4.79	1.36	0.28	0.02	2.20
Male	2.93	46.16	20.61	16.33	8.30	4.20	1.19	0.21	0.06	2.00
No Response	2.38	59.52	16.67	7.14	4.76	4.76	2.38	0.00	2.38	1.90
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	1.70	43.09	22.79	17.22	9.16	4.48	1.14	0.36	0.07	2.09
American Indian/AK Native	6.69	42.68	26.36	12.97	7.11	2.93	0.84	0.42	0.00	1.85
Asian	1.63	45.77	20.53	17.47	8.23	4.51	1.53	0.25	0.08	2.06
Canadian Aboriginal	0.00	32.94	23.53	18.82	12.94	5.88	4.71	1.18	0.00	2.54
Caucasian	2.07	40.64	22.75	18.43	9.94	4.64	1.28	0.21	0.03	2.14
Hispanic/Latino	2.04	48.60	21.84	16.08	6.65	3.39	1.20	0.18	0.03	1.93
Native HI/Other PI	1.20	54.22	15.66	13.25	12.05	3.61	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.92
Puerto Rican	8.71	53.12	19.89	10.22	5.05	2.47	0.43	0.11	0.00	1.59
Multiple Races/Ethnicities	2.61	40.11	22.81	18.30	9.18	5.09	1.47	0.36	0.06	2.15
No Response	2.83	45.05	19.18	15.96	10.68	4.38	1.03	0.51	0.39	2.09
Dominant Language										
English	2.01	41.55	22.58	18.15	9.52	4.58	1.32	0.25	0.03	2.12
Other	4.30	52.44	20.07	12.52	6.21	3.50	0.73	0.13	0.10	1.79
No Response	3.07	43.81	20.32	17.99	9.74	3.60	0.74	0.32	0.42	2.05
Fluent in English										
Yes	2.11	42.11	22.41	17.88	9.39	4.54	1.29	0.25	0.04	2.11
No	8.90	56.94	22.42	7.83	1.07	1.42	0.71	0.36	0.36	1.46
No Response	3.04	43.81	21.60	17.95	8.72	3.45	1.01	0.10	0.30	2.02
Total	2.16	42.21	22.39	17.83	9.33	4.50	1.28	0.24	0.04	2.10

^aThe TSI/Aboriginal Australian subgroup was excluded from this study due to small sample size.

TABLE 9

Frequency distribution of number of test-preparation methods used: Academic year 2012–2013

Subgroup ^a	Percentage Using Each Possible Number of Test-Preparation Methods									Mean	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Gender											
Female	1.33	38.55	23.40	19.59	10.32	5.16	1.36	0.24	0.04	2.21	
Male	3.06	46.21	20.65	16.20	8.21	4.18	1.19	0.24	0.05	1.99	
No Response	0.00	50.00	20.59	14.71	2.94	8.82	2.94	0.00	0.00	2.09	
Race/Ethnicity											
African American	2.01	42.62	23.39	17.66	8.63	4.22	1.13	0.28	0.06	2.07	
American Indian/AK Native	2.25	45.95	21.17	17.12	8.56	3.15	1.8	0.00	0.00	2.00	
Asian	1.50	46.54	20.88	16.34	8.09	4.76	1.50	0.25	0.15	2.05	
Canadian Aboriginal	0.00	35.35	25.25	18.18	13.13	6.06	2.02	0.00	0.00	2.35	
Caucasian	2.10	40.97	22.05	18.60	9.73	4.95	1.32	0.23	0.04	2.14	
Hispanic/Latino	2.15	48.72	21.11	15.96	7.28	3.46	1.01	0.30	0.00	1.93	
Native HI/Other PI	1.30	36.36	29.87	10.39	9.09	10.39	1.30	1.30	0.00	2.32	
Puerto Rican	8.18	50.00	20.33	13.04	5.63	2.30	0.26	0.26	0.00	1.67	
Multiple Races/Ethnicities	2.57	39.20	22.49	18.61	10.92	4.73	1.27	0.18	0.03	2.16	
No Response	3.33	42.81	23.45	14.83	9.38	4.84	1.06	0.15	0.15	2.05	
Dominant Language											
English	2.03	41.70	22.12	18.21	9.52	4.84	1.29	0.24	0.05	2.13	
Other	4.39	51.25	20.48	13.79	6.07	2.71	1.06	0.14	0.10	1.80	
No Response	2.61	45.06	23.50	16.57	7.49	3.06	1.25	0.45	0.00	1.98	
Fluent in English											
Yes	2.15	42.18	22.05	17.99	9.35	4.72	1.28	0.24	0.05	2.11	
No	6.97	61.48	15.98	10.66	2.87	2.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.47	
No Response	2.35	44.96	23.88	16.14	7.40	3.59	1.23	0.45	0.00	1.99	
Total	2.18	42.32	22.05	17.92	9.28	4.68	1.28	0.24	0.05	2.10	

^aThe TSI/Aboriginal Australian subgroup was excluded from this study due to small sample size.

TABLE 10

Frequency distribution of number of test-preparation methods used: Academic year 2013–2014

Subgroup ^a	Percentage Using Each Possible Number of Test-Preparation Methods									Mean
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Gender										
Female	1.30	37.04	22.95	20.38	10.96	5.47	1.64	0.23	0.05	2.27
Male	2.49	45.04	20.17	17.30	8.82	4.48	1.37	0.23	0.09	2.06
No Response	2.33	39.53	16.28	18.60	9.30	13.95	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.35
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	1.59	42.49	21.91	18.37	9.64	4.34	1.34	0.29	0.04	2.12
American Indian/AK Native	3.93	46.07	24.16	15.73	3.37	4.49	1.69	0.00	0.56	1.92
Asian	1.40	43.99	21.03	17.80	9.26	4.81	1.44	0.13	0.13	2.11
Canadian Aboriginal	3.61	40.96	20.48	24.10	6.02	4.82	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.02
Caucasian	1.80	39.34	21.56	19.83	10.36	5.33	1.48	0.24	0.05	2.21
Hispanic/Latino	1.53	47.30	22.16	15.48	8.42	3.67	1.10	0.20	0.14	1.99
Native HI/Other PI	4.26	55.32	19.15	10.64	2.13	4.26	4.26	0.00	0.00	1.81
Puerto Rican ^b	6.39	53.41	18.87	10.89	6.97	2.47	0.87	0.00	0.15	1.70
Multiple Races/Ethnicities	2.30	36.89	22.46	19.88	10.70	5.08	2.39	0.25	0.06	2.26
No Response	3.03	42.13	20.69	16.56	9.16	6.28	1.85	0.30	0.00	2.14
Dominant Language										
English	1.78	39.85	21.80	19.45	10.17	5.13	1.52	0.23	0.06	2.19
Other	2.72	50.55	19.85	13.84	7.51	3.68	1.47	0.22	0.15	1.92
No Response	2.41	47.32	20.42	15.45	8.54	4.31	1.32	0.19	0.04	2.00
Fluent in English										
Yes	1.81	40.40	21.67	19.16	10.07	5.06	1.52	0.23	0.07	2.18
No	7.51	53.99	20.19	9.39	5.63	1.88	1.41	0.00	0.00	1.63
No Response	2.39	47.97	20.57	15.28	7.94	4.32	1.27	0.22	0.04	1.98
Total	1.87	40.91	21.60	18.89	9.92	5.00	1.51	0.23	0.07	2.17

^aThe TSI/Aboriginal Australian subgroup was excluded from this study due to small sample size.

^bThe 420 test takers who took the Spanish LSAT in February 2014 were excluded from this study.

Users Versus Nonusers

To examine the extent to which users and nonusers of each method of test preparation differed, mean age and mean LSAT scores were tabulated for respondents using each method. Note that for the purpose of these analyses, “users” of a particular method were not limited to respondents using only that method.

Tables 11–13 summarize the results of the user-versus-nonuser comparisons for each testing year. The tables show for the total group the number of respondents indicating that they used each method of test preparation, as well as the LSAT score and age means for users and nonusers of each method. Differences between mean LSAT scores and mean age (users – nonusers) are also reported in these tables.

For all 3 testing years, the mean LSAT score was higher for users than for nonusers of the sample test on LSAC’s website (Method 2), official LSAC test-preparation methods (Method 3), non-LSAC books (Method 4), commercial test-preparation schools (Method 5), and self-study (Method 7). The smallest mean absolute LSAT score difference (0.66 points) for 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 (0.66 and 0.75, respectively) was found between users and nonusers of self-study (Method 7). For all 3 testing years, large differences in mean LSAT scores favoring nonusers were observed for the use of an undergraduate institution test-preparation course (Method 6) and those reporting the use of no preparation (Method 9). For those indicating the use of an undergraduate institution test-preparation course, the differences in mean LSAT scores between users and nonusers were 3.10 points, 3.19 points, and 3.07 points for 2011–2012, 2012–2013, and 2013–2014, respectively. Similarly, those indicating the use of no preparation (Method 9) demonstrated mean LSAT score differences of 2.90, 2.75, and 3.47 points for 2011–2012, 2012–2013, and 2013–2014, respectively. Therefore, those reporting the use of no preparation scored approximately 2.8–3.5 points lower than those who used any method. Additionally, a large score difference was observed for those using official LSAC test-preparation materials (Method 3), with users scoring an average of over 2.00 points higher than nonusers for each testing year.

Highest mean LSAT scores were also attained for those reporting the use of non-LSAC books (Method 4) and commercial test-preparation schools (Method 5). The lowest mean LSAT scores across all 3 years were attained for test takers who reported using an undergraduate institution test-preparation course (Method 6), as well as for those who reported using no preparation (Method 9).

For all 3 testing years, the mean age was consistently highest for those who reported using no preparation (Method 9) followed by those who reported using the sample questions on LSAC’s website (Method 1). The average age of respondents using no preparation (Method 9) was greater than the average age of those using any method of preparation, with a difference of 2.22 years in 2011–2012, 2.28 years in 2012–2013, and 2.55 years in 2013–2014. Respondents reporting the use of official LSAC test-preparation methods (Method 3) were observed to have the smallest mean age difference (0.02 years in 2012–2013), with the average age of users being slightly more than the average age of nonusers. Users of official LSAC test-preparation materials (Method 3) were observed to have the smallest mean age difference (0.09 years) for the 2013–2014 testing year, with users being younger on average.

TABLE 11

Comparison of method users and nonusers: Academic year 2011–2012

Method	N		LSAT Mean			Age Mean		
	Users	Nonusers	Users	Nonusers	Diff.	Users	Nonusers	Diff.
1	9,399	45,539	150.20	151.07	-0.87	26.32	24.90	1.42
2	8,609	46,329	152.26	150.68	1.58	25.74	25.03	0.71
3	19,352	35,586	152.29	150.18	2.11	25.28	25.07	0.21
4	24,513	30,425	151.95	150.10	1.85	24.84	25.39	-0.55
5	17,768	37,170	152.52	150.16	2.36	24.10	25.64	-1.54
6	3,705	51,233	148.03	151.13	-3.10	24.65	25.18	-0.53
7	29,060	25,878	151.24	150.58	0.66	25.05	25.24	-0.19
8	3,004	51,934	149.47	151.01	-1.54	25.94	25.10	0.84
9	1,186	53,752	148.09	150.99	-2.90	27.31	25.09	2.22

1 = sample questions available on LSAC's website, 2 = sample test available on LSAC's website, 3 = official LSAC test-preparation materials, 4 = non-LSAC books, 5 = commercial test-preparation schools, 6 = undergraduate institution test-preparation courses, 7 = self-study, 8 = other preparation, 9 = no preparation

TABLE 12

Comparison of method users and nonusers: Academic year 2012–2013

Method	N		LSAT Mean			Age Mean		
	Users	Nonusers	Users	Nonusers	Diff.	Users	Nonusers	Diff.
1	8,629	40,495	150.24	151.05	-0.81	26.19	24.93	1.26
2	7,935	41,189	152.15	150.67	1.48	25.53	25.07	0.46
3	17,957	31,167	152.31	150.10	2.21	25.16	25.14	0.02
4	21,239	27,885	152.13	149.99	2.14	24.83	25.39	-0.56
5	15,677	33,447	152.27	150.28	1.99	24.21	25.59	-1.38
6	3,178	45,946	147.93	151.12	-3.19	24.58	25.19	-0.61
7	25,923	23,201	151.27	150.52	0.75	25.03	25.28	-0.25
8	2,845	46,279	149.76	150.98	-1.22	26.09	25.09	1.00
9	1,070	48,054	148.22	150.97	-2.75	27.38	25.10	2.28

1 = sample questions available on LSAC's website, 2 = sample test available on LSAC's website, 3 = official LSAC test-preparation materials, 4 = non-LSAC books, 5 = commercial test-preparation schools, 6 = undergraduate institution test-preparation courses, 7 = self-study, 8 = other preparation, 9 = no preparation

TABLE 13

Comparison of method users and nonusers: Academic year 2013–2014

Method	N		LSAT Mean			Age Mean		
	Users	Nonusers	Users	Nonusers	Diff.	Users	Nonusers	Diff.
1	8,392	37,159	150.13	151.00	-0.87	26.17	24.99	1.18
2	7,837	37,714	152.07	150.59	1.48	25.51	25.14	0.37
3	17,212	28,339	152.23	150.00	2.23	25.15	25.24	-0.09
4	20,060	25,491	152.10	149.85	2.25	24.80	25.52	-0.72
5	14,208	31,343	152.35	150.16	2.19	24.24	25.64	-1.40
6	3,144	42,407	147.98	151.05	-3.07	24.51	25.26	-0.75
7	24,976	20,575	151.28	150.31	0.97	25.06	25.38	-0.32
8	2,854	42,697	149.73	150.92	-1.19	25.88	25.16	0.72
9	854	44,697	147.44	150.91	-3.47	27.71	25.16	2.55

1 = sample questions available on LSAC's website, 2 = sample test available on LSAC's website, 3 = official LSAC test-preparation materials, 4 = non-LSAC books, 5 = commercial test-preparation schools, 6 = undergraduate institution test-preparation courses, 7 = self-study, 8 = other preparation, 9 = no preparation

Discussion

Caveats

In evaluating the results reported here, there are several considerations that the reader should bear in mind. First, since test takers are free to choose whether or not to answer the test-preparation questions, the data analyzed for this study represent a self-selected sample. Even though the response rates for the testing years studied here were very high, those who chose to answer the test-preparation questions may have differed in some systematic way from those who chose not to answer the questions. Given the nature of the sample, one should exercise caution in drawing any conclusions from the results reported here.

A second consideration to keep in mind is that approximately 50% of the LSAT answer sheets contained questions not related to test preparation. Because those who did not receive the test-preparation questions were selected at random, these test takers should not differ in any systematic way from the remainder of the group. Nevertheless, one should take this difference in sampling into consideration when evaluating these results.

Third, the nature of the analyses carried out here precludes any conclusions regarding causation. The observation that those who reported using a particular test-preparation method obtained higher LSAT scores than those who reported that they did not use that method does not imply that the method alone resulted in their higher score. It is just as likely that those test takers would have performed better regardless of the method of preparation they chose. In order to attribute any LSAT score advantages to a particular method, an experiment would have to be designed wherein test takers are assigned at random to different test-preparation methods. Such an experiment was not carried out here.

Finally, it should be noted that the race/ethnicity descriptions used in this study may not be precise enough in some cases. For example, the race/ethnicity categories of Asian and Hispanic/Latino are very broad and may include test takers with a variety of cultural and language backgrounds.

Summary of Findings

For each of the categories of analysis carried out, many findings were consistent across the testing years studied. The following is a summary of some of these key findings:

Response Rates

The average response rate observed for the 3 testing years of this study (89.00%) was higher than the rate reported in the Wightman (1990 [74.8%]) study, and similar to those reported in the McKinley (1993 [86.07%]), Thornton et al. (1998 [90.97%]), Thornton and Reese (2000 [90.08%]), Thornton et al. (2003 [90.64%], 2005 [91.19%]), Evans et al. (2008 [89.26%]), and Evans et al. (2011 [88.09%]) studies.

The highest response rates across testing years were observed for the female subgroup, those fluent in English, and those who reported that English was their dominant language. For several racial/ethnic subgroups, there were also high response rates (over 90%) in certain testing years.

Based on the observations discussed in this report and giving appropriate consideration to the caveats identified, the following conclusions may be drawn with regard to response rates:

- Overall response rates were very consistent across the 3 testing years, with a maximum difference in response rate of 2.23% between the highest and lowest years.
- Female test takers were more likely to respond than were male test takers.
- Members of the American Indian/Alaska Native and Caucasian racial/ethnic subgroups had the highest response rates (89–90%) for the 2011–2012 testing year. Members of the Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander subgroup had the highest response rate (95%) for the 2012–2013 testing year, while those who chose Multiple Races/Ethnicities had the highest response rate (91%) for the 2013–2014 testing year. Those not indicating their race/ethnicity were least likely to respond.
- Respondents who reported not being fluent in English were less likely to respond to the test-preparation question than were those who reported being fluent in English.

Respondents Versus Nonrespondents

Although there were some exceptions, consistent patterns regarding respondents and nonrespondents were observed over the testing years studied here. Among test takers indicating their demographic information, the mean LSAT score was consistently higher for respondents than for nonrespondents. This result was also observed by the Wightman (1990), McKinley (1993), Thornton et al. (1998), Thornton and Reese (2000), Thornton et al. (2003, 2005), and Evans et al. (2008, 2011) studies. The mean age was consistently higher for nonrespondents than for respondents. This was again similar to the pattern reported in previous studies.

Some general conclusions with regard to respondents and nonrespondents may be drawn based on the results observed here:

- Respondents were, on average, approximately 6 months younger than nonrespondents.
- Respondents scored 0.72–0.80 LSAT points higher on average than nonrespondents.

Methods Utilization

Of the nine methods listed, self-study was the most popular method across the 3 years studied, and using non-LSAC books was a close second. Official LSAC test-

preparation materials and commercial test-preparation schools were also heavily used across testing years.

Based on the results observed here, some general conclusions regarding methods utilization may be drawn:

- Self-study was the most popular method across the 3 testing years studied.
- The sample questions and sample test available on LSAC's website, as well as official LSAC test-preparation materials, continue to be popular methods, especially among certain subgroups of the test-taking population.
- Relatively few test takers reported using undergraduate institution test-preparation courses or other preparation.

Number of Methods Used

On average, respondents used two to three methods of preparing for the LSAT, with means just slightly more than two. The most common number of methods tended to be one (selected by more than 40% of the respondents for each testing year), while typically 9–22% of the respondents reported using two, three, or four methods. Puerto Rican respondents as well as those who are not fluent in English tended to report relatively low numbers of methods used, as did respondents indicating that English was not their dominant language.

Some conclusions regarding the number of test-preparation methods used are as follows:

- Female test takers reported using more methods of preparation than did male test takers.
- Puerto Rican test takers and test takers not fluent in English reported using fewer methods of test preparation than did other subgroups.
- Members of the multiple races/ethnicities subgroup consistently reported using a high number of test-preparation methods for the 3 testing years. Canadian Aboriginal, Caucasian, African American, and Asian subgroups also indicated overall higher numbers of test-preparation methods.

Users Versus Nonusers

The most notable finding of the analyses of the users and nonusers of each test-preparation method is that respondents indicating that they used the sample test available on LSAC's website (Method 2), official LSAC test-preparation methods (Method 3), non-LSAC books (Method 4), commercial test-preparation schools (Method 5), and self-study (Method 7) tended to have higher LSAT scores than those reporting that they did not use these methods. Some general conclusions based on this category of analyses are as follows:

- Users of the sample questions available on LSAC's website, undergraduate institution test-preparation courses, other preparation, or no preparation tended to have lower LSAT scores than did nonusers of these methods.

- Users of the sample test on LSAC’s website, official LSAC test-preparation materials, commercial test-preparation schools, self-study, and non-LSAC books tended to have higher scores than did nonusers of these methods.
- Users of the sample questions and sample test on LSAC’s website, official LSAC materials, other preparation, or no preparation tended to be older than nonusers of these methods, whereas users of commercial test-preparation schools, undergraduate institution test-preparation courses, non-LSAC books, and self-study tended to be younger than nonusers. The smallest age differences were observed between respondents using official LSAC test-preparation materials and self-study.

Again, one should be cautious when interpreting these results, keeping in mind that these samples were self-selected. For example, respondents reporting the use of LSAC-published materials may on average score higher than respondents reporting the use of other preparation quite independently of the efficacy of these materials.

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