

LSAT TECHNICAL REPORT SERIES

- **Summary of Self-Reported Methods of Test Preparation by LSAT Takers for Testing Years 2008–2009 Through 2010–2011**

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Executive Summary

This investigation of Law School Admission Test (LSAT) preparation patterns for the 2008–2009, 2009–2010, and 2010–2011 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. Commercial test-preparation schools and official LSAC test-preparation materials 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 43% of the respondents for each testing year reported using one testing method; 8–23% 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 (1) the free sample LSAT in the *LSAT and LSDAS Information Book* or available on LSAC's website; (2) official LSAT *PrepTests*, *ItemWise*, and/or other LSAC test-preparation products; (3) LSAT preparation books or software *not* published by LSAC; (4) a commercial test-preparation or coaching course; and (5) self-study methods. LSAT score means were lower for respondents reporting the use of (1) sample questions in the *Information Book* and on LSAC's website, (2) undergraduate institution test-

preparation courses, (3) other preparation, and (4) 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 Native American and Caucasian racial/ethnic subgroups had consistent response rates of 90% or higher for the 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 testing years. Members of these same two subgroups also had the highest response rate for 2008–2009, although rates were slightly lower for this year than for the 2 later testing years. 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 6–9 months younger than nonrespondents and tended to score 1–2 points higher on the LSAT than did nonrespondents.
- Self-study was the most popular method across the testing years studied, and non-LSAC books were the second most popular preparation method.
- The *Information Book*, LSAC’s website, and 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 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.
- For the last 2 testing years, respondents indicating multiple race/ethnicities reported using a high number of methods. Members of the African American and Caucasian subgroups also consistently reported using a high number of test-preparation methods across the 3 testing years.
- Users of the sample questions in the *Information Book* or 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 in the *Information Book* or on LSAC’s website, materials published by LSAC, commercial schools, self-study, and non-LSAC books tended to have higher scores than did nonusers of these methods.
- Users of the *Information Book* or 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 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 non-LSAC books and self-study.

Introduction

This study summarizes self-reported test-preparation methods for Law School Admission Test (LSAT) takers for the 2008–2009, 2009–2010, and 2010–2011 testing years. From a list of nine possible preparation methods, test takers were asked to select the test-preparation method(s) they had used to help them prepare for the test. Six earlier reports summarized test-preparation methods for the June and September 1989 administrations (Wightman, 1990), the 1990–1991 testing year (McKinley, 1993), the 1991–1992 through 1996–1997 testing years (Thornton, Reese, & Pashley, 1998), the 1997–1998 through 1999–2000 testing years (Thornton & Reese, 2000), the 2000–2001 through 2002–2003 testing years (Thornton, Suto, & Reese, 2003), the 2003–2004 through 2004–2005 testing years (Thornton, Suto, & Reese, 2005), and the 2005–2006 through 2007–2008 testing years (Evans, Thornton, & Reese, 2008). 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 2008–2009 academic testing year. Each testing year begins with the June administration and ends with the February administration. For example, the 2008–2009 testing year includes the June 2008, October 2008, December 2008, and February 2009 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.

Test takers were asked to voluntarily report information on their LSAT answer sheets about how they prepared for the LSAT. The survey instructions clearly state that test-taker participation is voluntary and that all data will be used for summary research purposes only.

Note that the first two answer-sheet response choices on the survey were updated beginning with the 2010–2011 testing year, when the free sample questions and free sample LSAT became available on the website of the Law School Admission Council (LSAC). Within the survey, the following nine methods of test preparation were available for selection:

- (1) Studying the sample questions in the *LSAT and LSDAS Information Book* (referred to throughout this paper as the *Information Book*; June 2008–February 2010 testing years); or (2) studying the free sample questions available on LSAC’s website (June 2010–February 2011 testing year).
- (1) Taking the free sample LSAT in the *Information Book* (June 2008–February 2010 testing years); or (2) taking the free sample LSAT available on LSAC’s website (June 2010–February 2011 testing year).
- Working through official LSAT *PrepTests*, *ItemWise*, and/or other LSAC test-preparation products.
- Using LSAT preparation books or software *not* published by LSAC.
- Attending a commercial test-preparation or coaching course.
- Attending a test-preparation or coaching course offered through an undergraduate institution.
- Self-study.
- Other preparation.
- 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. Note that LSAC revised its method of race/ethnicity data collection beginning with the 2009–2010 testing year. The categories from which test takers may choose to describe themselves were updated. In addition, the category “Other” was dropped starting with this testing year. Test takers were also permitted to choose more than one race/ethnicity category, resulting in the category “Multiple Ethnicities.” Those who chose not to respond to the optional demographic questions are included in the respective “No Response” subgroups.

Analyses

Five different 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 are 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 across the 3 testing years. The average response rate calculated for this study (88.09%) was higher than the rates reported in the Wightman (1990 [74.8%]) and McKinley (1993 [86.07%]) studies and slightly lower than those reported in the Thornton et al. (1998 [90.97%]), Thornton & Reese (2000 [90.08%]), Thornton et al. (2003 [90.64%], 2005 [91.19%]), and Evans et al. (2008 [89.26%]) studies.

TABLE 1
Response rates for the test-preparation questions

Testing Year	Total <i>N</i>	Received Questions	Respondents	Nonrespondents	Response Rate
2008–2009	151,283	73,191	64,050	9,141	87.51%
2009–2010	171,236	81,369	71,645	9,724	88.05%
2010–2011	154,923	74,470	66,053	8,417	88.70%

Respondents Versus Nonrespondents

Tables 2–4 summarize the results of the comparison of respondents and nonrespondents for the 2008–2009, 2009–2010, and 2010–2011 testing years. These tables show, for each subgroup, the number and percentage 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.

Looking specifically at the different gender subgroups, female test takers tended to have a higher response rate than male test takers, with approximately 89% of female test takers responding for the 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 testing years and approximately 90% of female test takers responding in 2010–2011. Conversely, those

who did not indicate their gender had very low response rates across the testing years. This low response rate may be attributed to the very small sample sizes for this group, particularly for the 2008–2009 testing year. Among the racial/ethnic subgroups, the Caucasian subgroup had the highest response rate for the 2008–2009 (88.94%) and 2010–2011 (90.23%) testing years and displayed the second highest response rate (89.60%) for the 2009–2010 testing year. For 2009–2010, the Native American subgroup had the highest response rate (90.57%). Other subgroups with consistently high response rates were those test takers indicating English as their dominant language (88–90%) and test takers reporting fluency in English (88–90%). For test takers who indicated their race/ethnicity, the Puerto Rican subgroup was least likely to respond to the test-preparation question (79–83%).

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 1.60 points for 2008–2009, 1.45 points for 2009–2010, and 1.48 points for 2010–2011. For most subgroups, the mean LSAT score was higher for respondents than for nonrespondents. Across the 3 testing years, there was one exception in which the mean LSAT score for nonrespondents was consistently higher than for the respondents: This result was found for those not responding to the English fluency question. In 2008–2009 and 2009–2010, mean LSAT score differences between respondents and nonrespondents were larger for the Puerto Rican subgroup than for other subgroups. For 2010–2011, the largest subgroup difference was found in the Canadian Aboriginal subgroup. However, the sample sizes for this racial/ethnic subgroup were small, with only 12 nonrespondents in 2010–2011. The mean LSAT difference between respondents and nonrespondents for those reporting they were not fluent in English was large at 5.50 points for 2008–2009, 4.68 points for 2009–2010, and 4.31 for 2010–2011. Similarly, large differences were found between respondents and nonrespondents indicating a dominant language other than English for 2008–2009 (4.13) and 2009–2010 (3.18), but for 2010–2011, the mean LSAT difference was not as large (1.94). Respondents who reported that they were fluent in English had high response rates and responded more often than did respondents who stated that they were not fluent in English. In 2008–2009, 88.34% of those fluent in English responded, while those stating they were not fluent in English responded at a rate of 73.42%. Similarly, test takers indicating English fluency responded at a rate of 88.97% in 2009–2010 and 89.61% in 2010–2011. Those indicating they were not fluent in English responded at a rate of 78.83% in 2009–2010 and 80.05% in 2010–2011.

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 0.70 years for 2008–2009, 0.54 years for 2009–2010, and 0.71 years for 2010–2011. Thus, nonrespondents were older than respondents for all 3 testing years.

TABLE 2
Comparison of respondents and nonrespondents: Academic year 2008–2009

Subgroup	Respondents (R)				Nonrespondents (NR)				Differences (R – NR)	
	N	%	LSAT	Age	N	%	LSAT	Age	LSAT	Age
Gender										
Female	32,136	89.10	150.01	24.97	3,931	10.90	148.29	25.76	1.72	-0.79
Male	31,895	85.99	152.20	25.42	5,197	14.01	150.42	25.99	1.78	-0.57
No Response	19	59.38	160.05	24.21	13	40.63	156.62	26.00	3.43	-1.79
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	6,844	85.74	142.58	27.25	1,138	14.26	141.49	28.57	1.09	-1.32
Asian	5,685	85.18	152.41	24.79	989	14.82	152.14	25.41	0.27	-0.62
Canadian Aboriginal	96	80.67	147.31	27.73	23	19.33	145.74	27.57	1.57	0.16
Caucasian	41,794	88.94	153.06	24.87	5,195	11.06	151.91	25.30	1.15	-0.43
Hispanic/Latino	4,542	87.62	147.29	25.32	642	12.38	145.95	26.15	1.34	-0.83
Native American	426	87.84	148.27	28.32	59	12.16	147.80	29.37	0.47	-1.05
Puerto Rican	1,068	78.53	139.60	26.98	292	21.47	134.73	27.71	4.87	-0.73
Other	3,286	83.55	150.80	24.68	647	16.45	149.63	25.31	1.17	-0.63
No Response	309	66.45	156.05	23.64	156	33.55	154.44	25.54	1.61	-1.90
Dominant Language										
English	59,418	88.54	151.39	25.12	7,688	11.46	149.88	25.76	1.51	-0.64
Other	3,368	82.59	145.46	26.69	710	17.41	141.33	27.76	4.13	-1.07
No Response	1,264	62.98	152.96	24.69	743	37.02	153.54	25.44	-0.58	-0.75
Fluent in English										
Yes	61,406	88.34	151.15	25.19	8,103	11.66	149.41	25.83	1.74	-0.64
No	290	73.42	138.34	29.39	105	26.58	132.84	29.30	5.50	0.09
No Response	2,354	71.62	151.49	24.74	933	28.38	152.23	26.03	-0.74	-1.29
Total	64,050	87.51	151.11	25.19	9,141	12.49	149.51	25.89	1.60	-0.70

Note: For the 2008–2009 testing year, the Hispanic and Mexican American categories are combined and displayed as “Hispanic/Latino.” The “Other” category was no longer an option, beginning in June 2009. For the 2009–2010 testing year, the new categories of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and Asian are combined and displayed as “Asian.”

TABLE 3

Comparison of respondents and nonrespondents: Academic year 2009–2010

Subgroup	Respondents (R)				Nonrespondents (NR)				Differences (R – NR)	
	N	%	LSAT	Age	N	%	LSAT	Age	LSAT	Age
Gender										
Female	35,684	89.47	150.01	25.13	4,201	10.53	148.24	25.62	1.77	-0.49
Male	35,892	86.75	152.44	25.52	5,482	13.25	150.92	26.04	1.52	-0.52
No Response	69	62.73	156.86	24.25	41	37.27	156.59	25.85	0.27	-1.60
Ethnicity										
African American	7,583	86.52	142.69	27.49	1,181	13.48	141.11	28.91	1.58	-1.42
Asian	6,948	85.92	152.48	24.67	1,139	14.08	151.47	25.22	1.01	-0.55
Canadian Aboriginal	104	83.87	147.10	26.68	20	16.13	144.80	28.55	2.30	-1.87
Caucasian	46,157	89.60	153.08	25.04	5,356	10.40	152.17	25.31	0.91	-0.27
Hispanic/Latino	4,987	87.58	146.88	25.53	707	12.42	145.88	26.00	1.00	-0.47
Native American	336	90.57	147.40	27.47	35	9.43	145.74	28.74	1.66	-1.27
Puerto Rican	1,068	79.58	139.70	26.76	274	20.42	134.50	27.66	5.20	-0.90
Multiple	2,991	88.33	151.46	25.12	395	11.67	150.57	24.92	0.89	0.20
No Response	1,471	70.45	155.25	24.34	617	29.55	153.73	25.36	1.52	-1.02
Dominant Language										
English	66,131	89.21	151.51	25.27	8,002	10.79	150.05	25.75	1.46	-0.48
Other	3,838	83.31	145.58	26.74	769	16.69	142.40	27.95	3.18	-1.21
No Response	1,676	63.75	153.37	24.39	953	36.25	153.55	25.08	-0.18	-0.69
Fluent in English										
Yes	68,606	88.97	151.26	25.33	8,502	11.03	149.54	25.94	1.72	-0.61
No	350	78.83	138.41	28.18	94	21.17	133.73	29.29	4.68	-1.11
No Response	2,689	70.45	152.08	24.72	1,128	29.55	152.94	25.01	-0.86	-0.29
Total	71,645	88.05	151.23	25.32	9,724	11.95	149.78	25.86	1.45	-0.54

Note: For the 2008–2009 testing year, the Hispanic and Mexican American categories are combined and displayed as “Hispanic/Latino.” The “Other” category was no longer an option, beginning in June 2009. For the 2009–2010 testing year, the new categories of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and Asian are combined and displayed as “Asian.”

TABLE 4
Comparison of respondents and nonrespondents: Academic year 2010–2011

Subgroup	Respondents (R)				Nonrespondents (NR)				Differences (R – NR)	
	N	%	LSAT	Age	N	%	LSAT	Age	LSAT	Age
Gender										
Female	32,993	90.06	149.92	25.13	3,643	9.94	148.36	25.93	1.56	-0.80
Male	32,987	87.46	152.27	25.46	4,730	12.54	150.56	26.09	1.71	-0.63
No Response	73	62.39	156.79	24.79	44	37.61	153.75	24.48	3.04	0.31
Ethnicity										
African American	7,290	86.71	142.42	27.47	1,117	13.29	141.36	29.11	1.06	-1.64
Asian	6,269	86.17	152.64	24.65	1,006	13.83	151.44	24.97	1.20	-0.32
Canadian Aboriginal	102	89.47	147.48	28.99	12	10.53	140.58	35.25	6.90	-6.26
Caucasian	41,734	90.23	153.07	24.97	4,521	9.77	151.92	25.52	1.15	-0.55
Hispanic/Latino	4,483	88.20	146.96	25.54	600	11.80	145.98	26.05	0.98	-0.51
Native American	308	89.28	147.12	27.55	37	10.72	146.00	29.57	1.12	-2.02
Puerto Rican	944	83.39	139.70	27.12	188	16.61	136.02	27.19	3.68	-0.07
Multiple	3,862	89.13	150.41	25.02	471	10.87	149.11	25.52	1.30	-0.50
No Response	1,061	69.53	156.20	24.19	465	30.47	154.52	25.06	1.68	-0.87
Dominant Language										
English	60,776	89.85	151.35	25.23	6,868	10.15	149.72	26.01	1.63	-0.78
Other	3,642	84.56	145.91	26.86	665	15.44	143.97	27.40	1.94	-0.54
No Response	1,635	64.91	153.71	24.28	884	35.09	153.16	25.00	0.55	-0.72
Fluent in English										
Yes	63,115	89.61	151.12	25.30	7,317	10.39	149.40	26.09	1.72	-0.79
No	305	80.05	138.89	28.86	76	19.95	134.58	29.01	4.31	-0.15
No Response	2,633	72.00	152.09	24.83	1,024	28.00	152.40	25.26	-0.31	-0.43
Total	66,053	88.70	151.11	25.30	8,417	11.30	149.63	26.01	1.48	-0.71

Note: For the 2008–2009 testing year, the Hispanic and Mexican American categories are combined and displayed as “Hispanic/Latino.” The “Other” category was no longer an option, beginning in June 2009. For the 2009–2010 testing year, the new categories of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and Asian are combined and displayed as “Asian.”

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 (2.70% for 2008–2009, 2.66% for 2009–2010, and 2.64% for 2010–2011) 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) was the second most popular method. Commercial test-preparation schools (Method 5) and official LSAC test-preparation materials (Method 3) 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 6.15% for 2008–2009, 5.91% for 2009–2010, and 6.12% for 2010–2011. Between the two most used methods, self-study (Method 7) and non-LSAC books (Method 4), some interesting variation was found among the racial/ethnic subgroups. More than 52% of African Americans and more than 50% of Asian respondents reported use of self-study for all 3 testing years. This pattern also held true for those indicating multiple race/ethnicity during the last 2 testing years (>52%). Puerto Rican and Native American respondents were least likely to report the use of self-study in 2008–2009 (41.01% and 43.43%, respectively). Puerto Rican respondents were also least likely to report the use of self-study in 2009–2010 (43.35%) and 2010–2011 (44.49%). The reported use of non-LSAC books ranged from a low of 33.05% for Puerto Rican respondents to a high of 46.89% for Caucasian respondents in 2008–2009. In the 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 testing years, the use of non-LSAC books was reported least often by Puerto Rican respondents at 29.96% and 34.85%, respectively, whereas their use was reported most often by Native American respondents at 45.54% and 48.38%, respectively.

It is also notable that Puerto Rican respondents and those indicating that they were not fluent in English more frequently reported having used no preparation than did respondents reporting fluency in English. However, for respondents in these two subgroups who reported using any of the preparation methods, self-study (Method 7) and non-LSAC books (Method 4) were the most heavily used in 2008–2009. In 2009–2010, self-study (Method 7), sample questions in the *Information Book* (Method 1), LSAC test-preparation materials (Method 3), and commercial test-preparation schools (Method 5) were the most heavily used by those not fluent in English. In both 2009–2010 and 2010–2011, Puerto Rican respondents reported using self-study, non-LSAC books, and commercial test-preparation schools most frequently.

Female and male respondents reported using self-study (Method 7) most often, with both groups reporting a utilization rate of 48–53% across the 3 testing years. Both male and female respondents reported using non-LSAC books (Method 4) 40–46% of the

time across the testing years. Respondents reported commercial test-preparation schools as the third most often used method, but female respondents reported the use of this method more often than male respondents for all testing years. In 2010–2011, 37.23% of female respondents reported using this method, while only 30.31% 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).

TABLE 5

Percentage of respondents using each method of test preparation: Academic year 2008–2009

Subgroup	N	Method of Test Preparation								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gender										
Female	32,136	20.54	17.09	33.42	45.15	39.28	7.20	49.43	4.22	1.79
Male	31,895	17.74	14.35	29.32	42.05	32.43	5.10	48.15	4.87	3.61
No Response	19	31.58	31.58	47.37	42.11	26.32	0.00	42.11	5.26	10.53
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	6,844	25.29	19.10	31.49	39.39	29.84	9.07	52.31	5.51	2.03
Asian	5,685	18.56	15.43	32.84	36.24	39.31	4.80	50.89	3.76	2.27
Canadian Aboriginal	96	28.13	21.88	42.71	40.63	18.75	6.25	44.79	1.04	4.17
Caucasian	41,794	18.60	15.65	32.16	46.89	36.01	5.59	48.38	4.43	2.52
Hispanic/Latino	4,542	16.29	13.30	26.66	36.50	40.44	7.82	47.27	4.60	2.66
Native American	426	21.60	15.26	28.64	44.84	29.81	5.16	43.43	4.46	4.69
Puerto Rican	1,068	15.82	10.58	18.91	33.05	21.25	6.65	41.01	2.90	11.33
Other	3,286	19.08	15.06	29.40	36.76	40.05	7.43	48.33	5.84	3.90
No Response	309	16.50	17.15	30.42	41.75	39.48	2.91	50.81	5.18	4.21
Dominant Language										
English	59,418	19.13	15.89	31.67	44.57	63.86	6.23	49.04	4.56	2.50
Other	3,368	20.81	13.69	27.97	28.86	70.93	5.26	45.46	4.10	5.61
No Response	1,264	15.43	13.84	27.14	37.58	58.94	4.91	46.20	5.06	4.43
Fluent in English										
Yes	61,406	19.26	15.84	31.55	43.87	35.82	6.16	48.94	4.55	2.63
No	290	18.62	11.03	19.66	22.41	19.31	5.86	34.83	3.79	14.14
No Response	2,354	16.40	13.47	28.38	39.42	39.00	6.03	46.56	4.50	3.10
Total	64,050	19.15	15.73	31.38	43.61	35.87	6.15	48.79	4.54	2.70

Note: For the 2008–2009 testing year, the Hispanic and Mexican American categories are combined and displayed as “Hispanic/Latino.” The “Other” category was no longer an option, beginning in June 2009. For the 2009–2010 testing year, the new categories of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and Asian are combined and displayed as “Asian.”

1 = sample questions in the *Information Book* (June 2008–February 2010 testing years) and LSAC’s website (2010–2011 testing year), 2 = sample test in the *Information Book* (June 2008–February 2010 testing years) and LSAC’s website (2010–2011 testing year), 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 6

Percentage of respondents using each method of test preparation: Academic year 2009–2010

Subgroup	N	Method of Test Preparation								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gender										
Female	35,684	18.97	16.91	35.25	44.14	38.17	7.02	50.59	4.20	1.73
Male	35,892	16.27	13.98	30.49	40.94	31.45	4.82	48.96	4.68	3.58
No Response	69	13.04	14.49	28.99	36.23	30.43	4.35	39.13	1.45	10.14
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	7,583	23.63	18.13	29.88	38.15	31.10	8.44	52.12	5.20	2.11
Asian	6,948	16.70	13.86	33.51	35.35	38.28	4.69	52.53	3.38	2.04
Canadian Aboriginal	104	28.85	24.04	42.31	37.50	27.88	8.65	44.23	5.77	4.81
Caucasian	46,157	16.98	15.51	34.21	45.38	34.80	5.46	49.15	4.40	2.63
Hispanic/Latino	4,987	16.48	13.33	26.85	34.79	37.64	7.82	47.26	4.73	2.79
Native American	336	20.83	17.26	33.93	45.54	25.60	4.46	54.17	3.27	5.36
Puerto Rican	1,068	16.29	11.24	20.32	29.96	24.34	7.30	43.35	3.65	8.61
Multiple	2,991	17.18	16.28	33.30	44.90	33.87	6.22	52.86	5.02	3.18
No Response	1,471	14.75	14.34	30.46	39.90	39.63	5.03	50.24	5.03	2.86
Dominant Language										
English	66,131	17.58	15.60	33.26	43.53	64.86	5.90	49.95	4.45	2.53
Other	3,838	19.78	13.55	28.06	27.85	72.28	6.12	47.26	4.14	4.69
No Response	1,676	13.72	13.54	27.86	36.87	62.47	5.97	48.21	4.53	3.40
Fluent in English										
Yes	68,606	17.71	15.54	33.15	42.87	34.77	5.94	49.95	4.44	2.59
No	350	22.00	10.29	19.14	17.71	19.14	5.43	40.29	5.71	10.86
No Response	2,689	14.65	13.57	27.33	37.08	37.60	5.36	46.19	4.20	3.42
Total	71,645	17.61	15.44	32.86	42.53	34.80	5.91	49.77	4.44	2.66

Note: For the 2008–2009 testing year, the Hispanic and Mexican American categories are combined and displayed as “Hispanic/Latino.” The “Other” category was no longer an option, beginning in June 2009. For the 2009–2010 testing year, the new categories of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and Asian are combined and displayed as “Asian.”

1 = sample questions in the *Information Book* (June 2008–February 2010 testing years) and LSAC’s website (2010–2011 testing year), 2 = sample test in the *Information Book* (June 2008–February 2010 testing years) and LSAC’s website (2010–2011 testing year), 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 7

Percentage of respondents using each method of test preparation: Academic year 2010–2011

Subgroup	N	Method of Test Preparation								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gender										
Female	32,993	16.39	16.90	35.77	45.94	37.23	7.16	52.07	4.63	1.65
Male	32,987	14.32	13.82	30.15	42.64	30.31	5.09	50.56	5.24	3.62
No Response	73	13.70	15.07	32.88	42.47	24.66	1.37	42.47	4.11	6.85
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	7,290	17.26	14.14	31.76	40.91	29.07	8.94	52.07	6.08	2.03
Asian	6,269	14.13	15.58	34.44	35.89	37.07	4.98	54.09	3.94	2.34
Canadian Aboriginal	102	17.65	14.71	41.18	45.10	15.69	9.80	47.06	4.90	0.98
Caucasian	41,734	15.49	15.92	33.85	47.16	34.01	5.65	51.04	4.86	2.55
Hispanic/Latino	4,483	13.23	12.27	27.73	35.96	37.32	7.76	47.40	4.51	2.68
Native American	308	18.83	16.56	28.57	48.38	23.38	4.87	50.32	4.87	3.57
Puerto Rican	944	13.03	10.28	17.58	34.85	22.14	6.36	44.49	5.08	9.00
Multiple	3,862	15.46	15.46	33.27	44.98	34.21	6.63	54.04	5.72	3.31
No Response	1,061	13.57	17.25	32.99	44.20	34.87	3.11	52.97	4.62	3.68
Dominant Language										
English	60,776	15.41	15.52	33.22	45.31	65.92	6.20	51.37	4.98	2.51
Other	3,642	15.93	13.62	30.59	29.54	72.84	5.57	51.07	4.37	4.17
No Response	1,635	11.80	13.09	28.93	39.39	63.55	4.34	49.17	4.34	4.04
Fluent in English										
Yes	63,115	15.43	15.44	33.15	44.58	33.73	6.16	51.44	4.94	2.55
No	305	16.39	12.46	18.69	25.25	20.66	5.57	45.57	5.90	10.16
No Response	2,633	13.44	13.82	30.16	39.46	35.85	5.17	48.69	4.52	3.76
Total	66,053	15.35	15.36	32.96	44.29	33.76	6.12	51.30	4.93	2.64

Note: For the 2008–2009 testing year, the Hispanic and Mexican American categories are combined and displayed as “Hispanic/Latino.” The “Other” category was no longer an option, beginning in June 2009. For the 2009–2010 testing year, the new categories of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and Asian are combined and displayed as “Asian.”

1 = sample questions in the *Information Book* (June 2008–February 2010 testing years) and LSAC’s website (2010–2011 testing year), 2 = sample test in the *Information Book* (June 2008–February 2010 testing years) and LSAC’s website (2010–2011 testing year), 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

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 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 (>43%) for each testing year. This result was followed by the reported use of two (approximately 22%), three (approximately 16–17%), and four (approximately 8–9%) 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. Those who did not respond to the gender question for the 2008–2009 testing year reported the highest mean number of test-preparation methods (2.26), with Canadian Aboriginal test takers reporting the next highest number (2.19 in 2009–2010). However, the high mean for the Gender No Response category may be due to the fact that only 19 test takers fell into this group. Female respondents reported using an average of 2.16 methods for 2008–2009, 2.15 methods for 2009–2010, and 2.16 methods for 2010–2011. The African American subgroup reported using 2.12 methods in the 2008–2009 testing year, and those indicating multiple race/ethnicity also had a high mean number of preparation methods used during the last 2 testing years (2.10 methods). In the last 2 testing years, members of the African American, Caucasian, and multiple race/ethnicity subgroups consistently reported using a high number of test-preparation methods, although the mean number of reported methods used was 2.0 or higher for many subgroups. Test takers with English as their dominant language and those fluent in English also reported using, on average, more than two methods of test preparation.

For the 2008–2009 testing year, the lowest mean number of reported methods used was observed for those not fluent in English (1.36 methods). For the 2009–2010 testing year, the mean number for this subgroup increased slightly (1.40 methods), and it increased again (1.50 methods) for the 2010–2011 testing year. Puerto Rican respondents also reported low mean numbers of methods used (1.50 in 2008–2009, 1.56 in 2009–2010, and 1.54 in 2010–2011). In addition, Puerto Rican respondents were more likely than any other racial/ethnic subgroup to report using no method across all testing years (11.33% in 2008–2009, 8.61% in 2009–2010, and 9.00% in 2010–2011). 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 considerable variation from one testing year to the next on mean number of methods used. In 2008–2009, it was a notably high 2.26 methods, while in 2009–2010, it was a much lower 1.68 methods. In 2010–2011, it slightly increased to 1.77 mean methods. For the 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 testing years, the Gender No Response subgroup used no preparation at

rates of 10–11%, results similar to the high no-preparation rates within the Puerto Rican subgroup. In 2010–2011, this group used no preparation at a rate of only 6.85%. However, as previously noted, the variable means for the Gender No Response category may be due to the fact that only a small number of test takers fell into this group for each testing year. Those indicating a language other than English as their dominant language consistently reported a low number of test-preparation methods (1.75 in 2008–2009, 1.74 in 2009–2010, and 1.78 in 2007–2008).

TABLE 8

Frequency distribution of number of test-preparation methods used: Academic year 2008–2009

Subgroup	Percentage Using Each Possible Number of Test-Preparation Methods									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Mean
Gender										
Female	1.79	40.25	23.52	18.16	9.36	4.85	1.67	0.34	0.06	2.16
Male	3.61	48.49	20.00	14.45	7.45	4.10	1.52	0.28	0.10	1.94
No Response	10.53	31.58	21.05	10.53	10.53	15.79	0.00	0.00	0.08	2.26
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	2.03	43.07	21.90	16.77	9.06	5.07	1.50	0.50	0.09	2.12
Asian	2.27	47.28	20.86	15.06	7.77	4.50	1.85	0.28	0.12	2.02
Canadian Aboriginal	4.17	45.83	14.58	20.83	7.29	6.25	1.04	0.00	0.00	2.04
Caucasian	2.52	43.26	22.23	16.81	8.66	4.59	1.58	0.28	0.06	2.08
Hispanic/Latino	2.66	48.81	21.60	14.38	7.35	3.32	1.48	0.31	0.09	1.93
Native American	4.69	47.65	19.95	14.08	7.51	4.23	1.17	0.47	0.23	1.93
Puerto Rican	11.33	53.28	18.07	11.42	3.46	2.15	0.19	0.00	0.09	1.50
Other	3.90	46.32	19.32	15.43	8.13	4.05	2.25	0.43	0.18	2.02
No Response	4.21	44.01	18.77	17.48	8.74	5.50	1.29	0.00	0.00	2.04
Dominant Language										
English	2.50	43.76	22.00	16.60	8.58	4.56	1.62	0.32	0.07	2.07
Other	5.61	53.68	17.96	11.79	6.44	3.03	1.19	0.18	0.12	1.75
No Response	4.43	47.63	20.97	14.87	5.85	4.43	1.42	0.24	0.16	1.91
Fluent in English										
Yes	2.63	44.15	21.83	16.38	8.50	4.51	1.62	0.31	0.08	2.06
No	14.14	58.97	12.07	8.97	4.83	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.00	1.36
No Response	3.10	47.96	21.16	15.46	6.63	4.08	1.19	0.34	0.08	1.94
Total	2.70	44.35	21.76	16.31	8.41	4.48	1.60	0.31	0.08	2.05

Note: For the 2008–2009 testing year, the Hispanic and Mexican American categories are combined and displayed as “Hispanic/Latino.” The “Other” category was no longer an option, beginning in June 2009. For the 2009–2010 testing year, the new categories of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and Asian are combined and displayed as “Asian.”

TABLE 9

Frequency distribution of number of test-preparation methods used: Academic year 2009–2010

Subgroup	Percentage Using Each Possible Number of Test-Preparation Methods									Mean
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Gender										
Female	1.73	40.40	23.73	18.21	9.12	4.95	1.49	0.31	0.05	2.15
Male	3.58	49.08	20.23	14.26	7.19	3.90	1.43	0.26	0.08	1.92
No Response	10.14	50.72	14.49	14.49	5.80	4.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.68
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	2.11	44.76	21.97	16.08	8.14	5.02	1.49	0.37	0.07	2.07
Asian	2.04	48.65	20.84	14.46	7.70	4.53	1.41	0.23	0.13	1.98
Canadian Aboriginal	4.81	33.65	29.81	12.50	12.50	2.88	2.88	0.96	0.00	2.19
Caucasian	2.63	43.54	22.30	16.83	8.43	4.44	1.48	0.29	0.05	2.06
Hispanic/Latino	2.79	50.63	20.19	14.40	6.98	3.57	1.22	0.16	0.06	1.89
Native American	5.36	41.96	22.02	13.99	8.33	6.25	2.08	0.00	0.00	2.05
Puerto Rican	8.61	54.21	19.94	9.74	5.06	1.87	0.47	0.00	0.09	1.56
Multiple	3.18	41.06	23.20	17.59	7.79	5.18	1.74	0.23	0.03	2.10
No Response	2.86	46.57	21.21	15.57	8.29	3.33	1.56	0.41	0.20	1.99
Dominant Language										
English	2.53	44.07	22.14	16.56	8.32	4.55	1.49	0.28	0.06	2.05
Other	4.69	54.30	19.25	11.59	5.73	3.07	1.02	0.21	0.13	1.74
No Response	3.40	49.82	21.30	13.72	7.04	2.68	1.31	0.54	0.18	1.88
Fluent in English										
Yes	2.59	44.46	22.03	16.38	8.22	4.50	1.49	0.28	0.06	2.04
No	10.86	60.29	16.57	6.00	3.71	2.29	0.00	0.29	0.00	1.40
No Response	3.42	50.28	21.12	13.69	7.10	2.90	1.04	0.33	0.11	1.86
Total	2.66	44.76	21.97	16.23	8.15	4.42	1.46	0.28	0.06	2.03

Note: For the 2008–2009 testing year, the Hispanic and Mexican American categories are combined and displayed as “Hispanic/Latino.” The “Other” category was no longer an option, beginning in June 2009. For the 2009–2010 testing year, the new categories of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and Asian are combined and displayed as “Asian.”

TABLE 10

Frequency distribution of number of test-preparation methods used: Academic year 2010–2011

Subgroup	Percentage Using Each Possible Number of Test-Preparation Methods									Mean
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Gender										
Female	1.65	39.77	23.70	18.77	9.80	4.77	1.29	0.23	0.03	2.16
Male	3.62	47.89	20.56	15.38	7.52	3.67	1.04	0.27	0.05	1.92
No Response	6.85	45.21	24.66	16.44	1.37	5.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.77
Race/Ethnicity										
African American	2.03	45.87	22.21	16.50	8.34	3.59	1.14	0.26	0.05	2.00
Asian	2.34	47.66	20.19	15.33	8.12	4.79	1.31	0.21	0.05	2.00
Canadian Aboriginal	0.98	42.16	31.37	17.65	2.94	2.94	1.96	0.00	0.00	1.96
Caucasian	2.55	42.25	22.39	17.91	9.05	4.38	1.19	0.24	0.03	2.08
Hispanic/Latino	2.68	50.77	21.19	14.28	6.65	3.32	0.87	0.20	0.04	1.86
Native American	3.57	45.78	21.43	15.58	9.09	3.25	1.30	0.00	0.00	1.96
Puerto Rican	9.00	54.56	19.81	9.96	4.45	1.59	0.42	0.21	0.00	1.54
Multiple	3.31	40.47	23.56	17.35	8.96	4.45	1.35	0.41	0.13	2.10
No Response	3.68	42.32	22.81	16.31	9.43	4.43	0.47	0.47	0.09	2.04
Dominant Language										
English	2.51	43.14	22.31	17.43	8.82	4.31	1.19	0.25	0.04	2.06
Other	4.17	53.16	19.55	12.44	6.53	3.02	0.88	0.22	0.03	1.78
No Response	4.04	48.62	21.22	14.43	6.91	3.61	0.73	0.37	0.06	1.88
Fluent in English										
Yes	2.55	43.60	22.20	17.20	8.73	4.25	1.17	0.25	0.04	2.05
No	10.16	56.39	16.72	11.15	1.97	2.62	0.66	0.33	0.00	1.50
No Response	3.76	47.93	21.04	14.81	7.41	3.65	1.06	0.30	0.04	1.91
Total	2.64	43.83	22.13	17.08	8.65	4.22	1.16	0.25	0.04	2.04

Note: For the 2008–2009 testing year, the Hispanic and Mexican American categories are combined and displayed as “Hispanic/Latino.” The “Other” category was no longer an option, beginning in June 2009. For the 2009–2010 testing year, the new categories of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and Asian are combined and displayed as “Asian.”

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 in the *Information Book* or 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 difference (0.43) in LSAT scores for 2008–2009 was found between users and nonusers of self-study (Method 7). For 2009–2010, the smallest difference (0.57) was found between users and nonusers of the sample test in the *Information Book* (Method 2); the next smallest difference (0.59) was found between users and nonusers of self-study (Method 7). Alternately, for 2009–2010, sample questions from the *Information Book* (Method 1) had the smallest difference at 0.53, with nonusers scoring higher than users. For all 3 testing years, large differences in mean LSAT scores were observed for respondents reporting 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 3.14 points, 3.48 points, and 3.17 points for 2008–2009, 2009–2010, and 2010–2011, respectively, with nonusers scoring higher than users of this method. Similarly, those indicating the use of no preparation demonstrated mean LSAT score differences of 3.03, 3.31, and 2.74, for 2008–2009, 2009–2010, 2010–2011, respectively. Therefore, those reporting the use of no preparation scored approximately 2.7–3.3 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 2.06, 2.69, and 2.36 points higher than nonusers for each testing year.

For the 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 testing years, the highest mean LSAT scores were attained for those reporting the use of official LSAC test-preparation materials (Method 3), 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 in the *Information Book* (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 1.93 years in 2008–2009, 1.83 years in 2009–2010, and 2.02 years in 2010–2011. Respondents reporting the use of self-study (Method 7) were observed to have the smallest mean age difference (0.16 in 2008–2009 and 0.03 in 2009–2010) with the average age of users being slightly less than the average age of nonusers. In 2010–2011, users of official LSAC test-preparation materials (Method 3) were observed to have the smallest mean age difference (0.18), with users being older on average.

TABLE 11

Comparison of method users and nonusers: Academic year 2008–2009

Method	N		LSAT Mean			Age Mean		
	Users	Nonusers	Users	Nonusers	Diff.	Users	Nonusers	Diff.
1	12,265	51,785	149.82	151.41	-1.59	26.52	24.88	1.64
2	10,075	53,975	151.56	151.02	0.54	26.15	25.01	1.14
3	20,101	43,949	152.52	150.46	2.06	25.41	25.09	0.32
4	27,931	36,119	152.29	150.19	2.10	25.00	25.35	-0.35
5	22,972	41,078	152.71	150.21	2.50	24.27	25.71	-1.44
6	3,939	60,111	148.16	151.30	-3.14	24.44	25.24	-0.80
7	31,251	32,799	151.33	150.90	0.43	25.11	25.27	-0.16
8	2,911	61,139	149.97	151.16	-1.19	25.74	25.17	0.57
9	1,728	62,322	148.16	151.19	-3.03	27.07	25.14	1.93

1 = sample questions in the *Information Book* (June 2008–February 2010 testing years) and LSAC’s website (2010–2011 testing year),
 2 = sample test in the *Information Book* (June 2008–February 2010 testing years) and LSAC’s website (2010–2011 testing year), 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 2009–2010

Method	N		LSAT Mean			Age Mean		
	Users	Nonusers	Users	Nonusers	Diff.	Users	Nonusers	Diff.
1	12,618	59,027	149.75	151.55	-1.80	26.79	25.01	1.78
2	11,061	60,584	151.71	151.14	0.57	26.40	25.13	1.27
3	23,542	48,103	153.04	150.35	2.69	25.43	25.27	0.16
4	30,472	41,173	152.54	150.26	2.28	25.14	25.46	-0.32
5	24,930	46,715	152.68	150.46	2.22	24.37	25.83	-1.46
6	4,237	67,408	147.96	151.44	-3.48	24.61	25.37	-0.76
7	35,655	35,990	151.53	150.94	0.59	25.31	25.34	-0.03
8	3,178	68,467	149.97	151.29	-1.32	26.22	25.28	0.94
9	1,909	69,736	148.01	151.32	-3.31	27.11	25.28	1.83

1 = sample questions in the *Information Book* (June 2008–February 2010 testing years) and LSAC’s website (2010–2011 testing year),
 2 = sample test in the *Information Book* (June 2008–February 2010 testing years) and LSAC’s website (2010–2011 testing year), 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 2010–2011

Method	N		LSAT Mean			Age Mean		
	Users	Nonusers	Users	Nonusers	Diff.	Users	Nonusers	Diff.
1	10,141	55,912	150.66	151.19	-0.53	26.66	25.05	1.61
2	10,144	55,909	152.85	150.79	2.06	25.88	25.19	0.69
3	21,774	44,279	152.69	150.33	2.36	25.42	25.24	0.18
4	29,255	36,798	152.15	150.27	1.88	25.05	25.49	-0.44
5	22,298	43,755	152.54	150.38	2.16	24.29	25.81	-1.52
6	4,043	62,010	148.13	151.30	-3.17	24.49	25.35	-0.86
7	33,887	32,166	151.43	150.76	0.67	25.18	25.42	-0.24
8	3,257	62,796	149.51	151.19	-1.68	26.23	25.25	0.98
9	1,742	64,311	148.44	151.18	-2.74	27.26	25.24	2.02

1 = sample questions in the *Information Book* (June 2008–February 2010 testing years) and LSAC's website (2010–2011 testing year),
 2 = sample test in the *Information Book* (June 2008–February 2010 testing years) and LSAC's website (2010–2011 testing year), 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 here, many findings were consistent across the testing years studied. Some of these key findings are summarized here.

Response Rates

The average response rate observed for the 3 testing years of this study (88.09%) was higher than the average response rates observed in the earlier Wightman and McKinley studies (74.8% and 86.07%, respectively). The current response rate was, however, slightly lower than average rates reported in the Thornton et al. (1998

[90.97%]), Thornton & Reese (2000 [90.08%]), Thornton et al. (2003 [90.64%], 2005 [91.19%]), and Evans et al. (2008 [89.26%]) studies. The highest response rates across testing years were observed for the Caucasian subgroup, the female subgroup, those fluent in English, and those who reported that English was their dominant language.

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 1.19% between the highest and lowest years.
- Female test takers were more likely to respond than were male test takers.
- Members of the Native American and the Caucasian racial/ethnic subgroups had consistent response rates of 90% or higher for the 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 testing years. Members of these same two racial/ethnic subgroups also had the highest response rate for 2008–2009, although it was slightly lower than rates for the 2 later testing years. 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), and Thornton et al. (2003, 2005) studies (note that the Canadian Aboriginal category was not employed in the Wightman study). 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 6–9 months younger than nonrespondents.
- Respondents scored between 1.48 and 1.60 LSAT score 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. Commercial test-preparation schools and official LSAC test-preparation materials 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 *Information Book* and 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 test-preparation courses provided by undergraduate institutions or other preparation.

Number of Methods Used

On average, respondents used between two and 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 43% of the respondents for each testing year), while typically 8–23% 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 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 African American, Caucasian, and multiple race/ethnicity (last 2 testing years) subgroups consistently reported using a higher number of test-preparation methods for the 3 testing years.

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 in the *Information Book* or 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 in the *Information Book* and on LSAC's website, undergraduate institution test-preparation courses, other preparation, or no preparation tended to have lower LSAT scores than nonusers of these methods.
- Users of the sample test in the *Information Book* and on LSAC's website, materials published by LSAC, commercial test-preparation schools, self-study, and non-LSAC books tended to have higher scores than did nonusers of these methods.
- Users of the *Information Book* or 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 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 non-LSAC books 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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