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Success in Legal Education as Defined by Employment

Overview and Hypothesis

The study conducted by Marks and Moss (2016) aims to answer the question: what predicts law student success? They determine that the measure of success in law school is law school GPA. I would like to take a step further and see what a good predictor may be for post-graduation employment.

Mars and Moss suggests that LSAT scores are a good predictor of law school success. It would be interesting to explore if LSAT scores would be a good predictor for post law school employment as well. I am inclined to say that individuals with higher law school GPAs may be seen as more competitive to employers than those who have lower law school GPAs. Therefore, since LSAT scores are a strong predictor for law school GPA, it behooves me to assume that LSAT scores are a strong predictor for post law school employment as well.

Data and Measurement

I use two datasets to explore my claim. The source for both datasets is the same in which they are both collected and maintained by Analytix by AccessLex. The first dataset that I employ is the Admissions Dataset¹ which contains admission statistics for all accredited law schools between the years of 2011 and 2020. The second dataset is the Employment Dataset which contains the employment statistics for all accredited law schools between the years of 2010 and

¹ Downloadable at <https://analytix.accesslex.org/DataSet>

2019. These datasets were then merged with regard to the law school and graduation year for the purpose of analysis.

To explore LSAT scores being a predictor for employment, my main indicator for outcome will be employment. To normalize employment, I created a new variable, *percentEmployment*, which will tell us the percentage of law graduates who are hired. This variable takes the total number of law school graduates who are employed and divides it by the entire graduation class which will be my main dependent variable. My main predictor will be LSAT scores. I take into account the 50th percentile of LSAT scores using the variable, *lsat50*.

Analysis and Findings

Figure 1 shows a, possible, positive linear association between LSAT scores and employment. We see that the law school graduation classes with LSAT scores averaging 170 have an average of 98 percent employment rates. On the other hand, we see that the lowest LSAT scores average around a 134. The employment rates for these graduating classes average 51 percent.

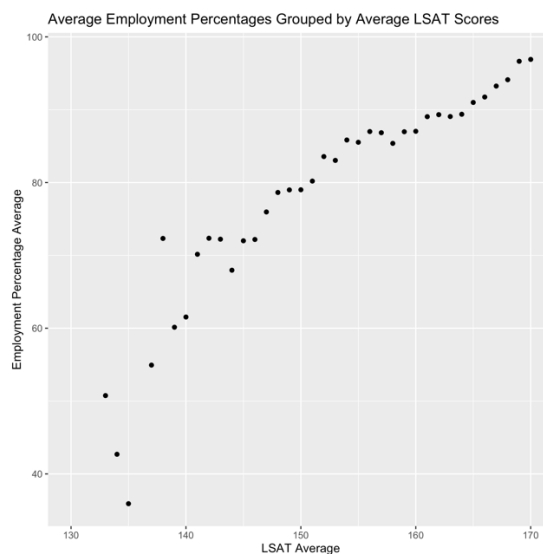


Figure 1. Average Employment Percentages Grouped by Average LSAT Scores

Pearson's product-moment correlation test tells us that there is strong and positive linear correlation between the average LSAT scores and the percent of graduates who are employed ($r = 0.924$). Furthermore, the p-value is much less than 0.05 ($p < 2.2e-16$); therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis that there is no correlation between these two variables.

Table 1 shows us that for every one-unit increase in LSAT scores we can expect the likelihood of employment, post-graduation, to increase by 1.174 percent. This prediction is very significant since the p-value is less than 0.01. Furthermore, the t-value is greater than 2 ($t = 14.876$) which also indicates the prediction's significance.

Looking at the constant, we can see that the estimate is at a value of -100.696. This is logically consistent in the fact that if an individual's LSAT score is 0, they can expect to not attend law school. Therefore, their likelihood for getting a job post-graduation will be near impossible.

Dependent variable:	
percentemployedavg	
lsat50	1.174*** (14.876)
Constant	-100.696*** (-8.289)
Observations	40
R2	0.853
Adjusted R2	0.850
Residual Std. Error	5.825 (df = 38)
F Statistic	221.282*** (df = 1; 38)
Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table 1. Linear Regression Model

Summary & Discussion

This exploration, though not conclusive, leads us to believe that LSAT are a good indicator for employment. There seems to be a positive correlation between LSAT scores and employment percentage. Furthermore, it seems that LSAT scores are a significant indicator for employment percentage.

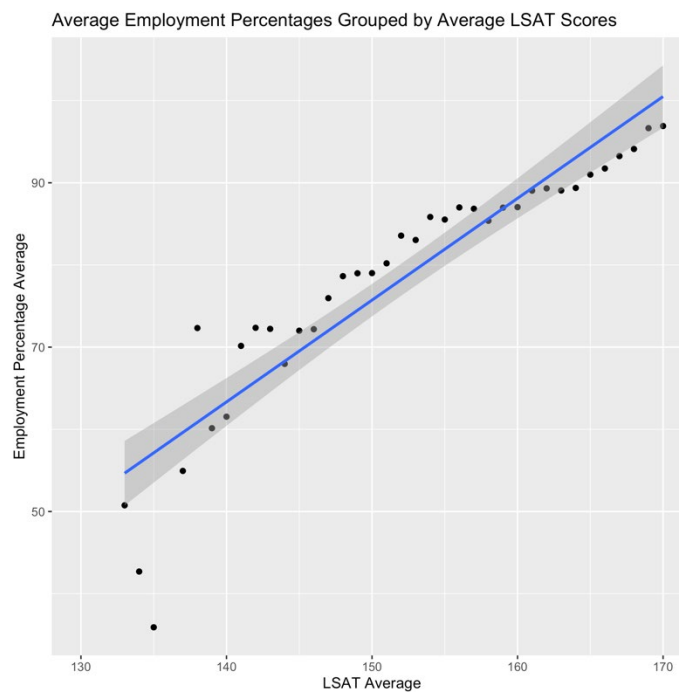


Figure 2: Visualizing Linear Regression for Average Employment Percentages Grouped by Average LSAT Scores