MAKING THE



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Problem Statement

Since 2001, states have been adopting and implementing varying state-wide assessments, including the ACT and SAT. Signing a contract with ACT inc. to administer the ACT had and continues to have two benefits in that it (i) provides students with an opportunity to take a college admissions test and (ii) encourages more students to consider college upon high school graduation. However, recently the SAT has been gaining more traction with the potential to outpace the ACT in participation. In this project, we <u>aim to analyse ACT and SAT</u> participation and scoring by state from 2017 and 2018 to better understand how we can improve ACT participation rates across states and whether increased participation in either test, does indeed show an uptick in high school graduates opting to go to college.

Background

- What is the ACT and why does it matter?
 - State wide test to replace and standardize the graduation requirements for high school juniors
- How was it marketed?
 - Give every student access to a college admissions test
 - Motivate more students to consider college upon graduation
- How many states require it?
 - 13 states require it
 - 8 others offer it as an option, at no extra cost to the student

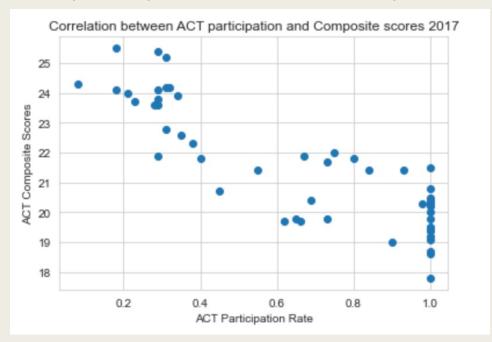
Background

- What is the SAT and why does it matter?
 - State wide test to replace and standardize the graduation requirements for high school juniors
 - Revised in 2016
- How was it marketed?
 - Better prepare students for the reading and writing standards expected at college level
 - Test-prep resources readily available
- How many states require it?
 - 20 states require it
 - 7 states offer it as an option, at no extra cost to the student

Background

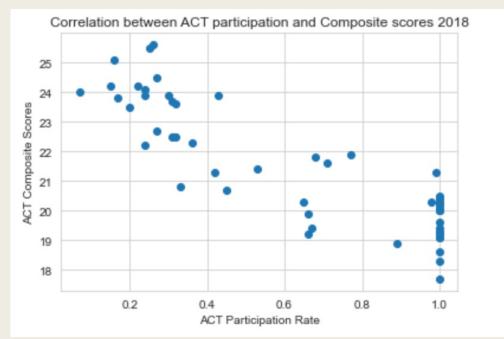
Over time, the move to make college admissions tests state-mandated has not only made access to tertiary education more equitable but has shown evidence suggesting that more students consider and enrol in college after graduating from high school.

ACT participation vs. mean composite scores 2017-2018



2017 ACT participation is <u>negatively</u> correlated with 2017 ACT mean composite score, r = -0.86.

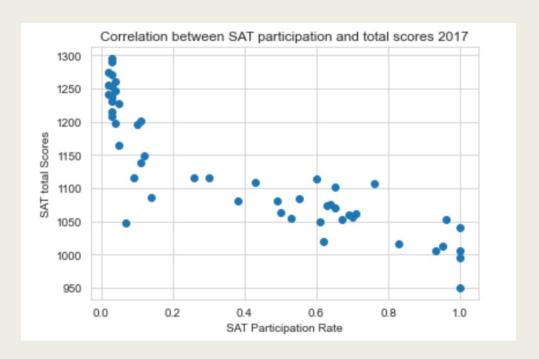
As predicted, higher participation = lower mean composite score.



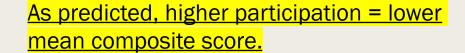
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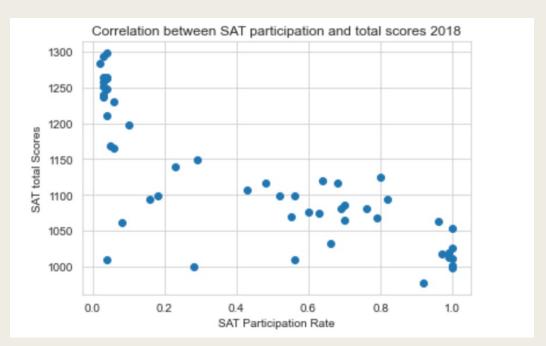
As predicted, higher participation = lower mean composite score.

SAT participation vs. mean total scores 2017-2018



2017 SAT participation is $\frac{\text{negatively}}{\text{negatively}}$ correlated with 2017 SAT mean total score, r = -0.87.

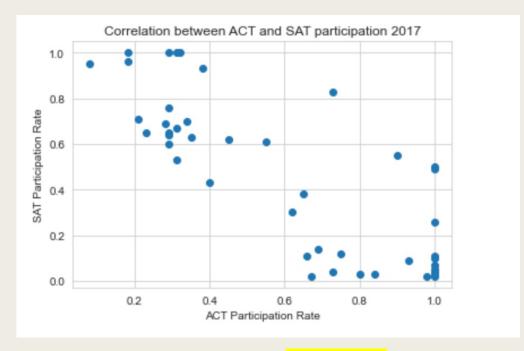




2018 SAT participation is $\frac{\text{negatively}}{\text{negatively}}$ correlated with 2018 SAT mean total score, r = -0.79.

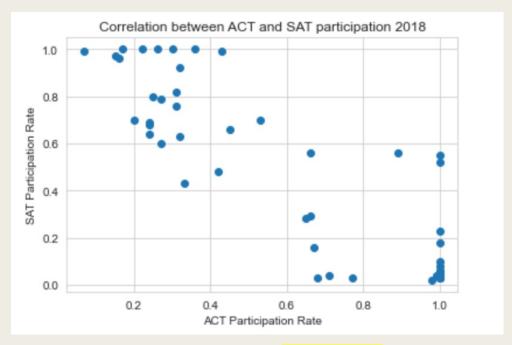
As predicted, higher participation = lower mean composite score.

ACT participation vs. SAT participation 2017-2018



2017 ACT participation is <u>negatively</u> correlated with 2017 SAT participation, r = -0.84

As predicted, higher participation in one test = lower participation in the other.



2018 ACT participation is $\frac{\text{negatively}}{\text{negatively}}$ correlated with 2018 SAT participation, r = -0.87

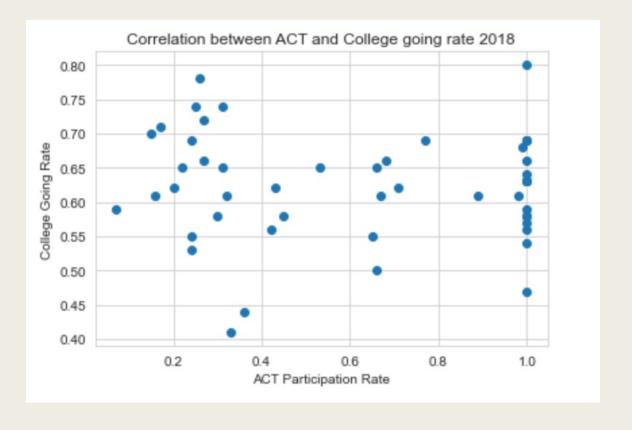
As predicted, higher participation in one test = lower participation in the other.

ACT participation vs. college going rate 2018

2018 ACT participation rate is $\frac{\text{negatively}}{\text{correlated with 2018 college going rate}}$ $\frac{\text{r} = -0.04.}{\text{r}}$

The relationship is <u>weak</u> but warrants further investigation.

Ideally a higher participation rate should be associated with a higher college going rate however the inverse is observed.



SAT participation vs. college going rate 2018

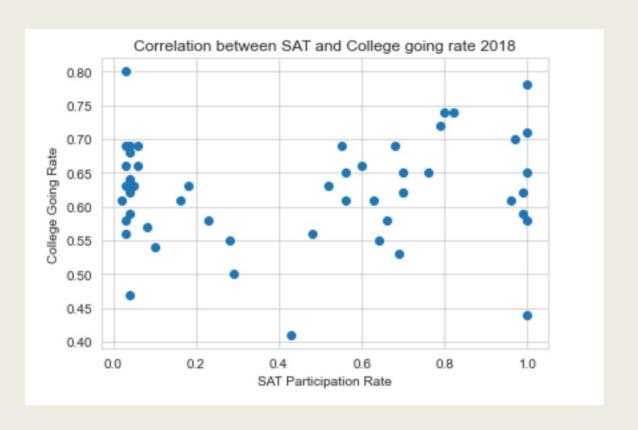
2018 ACT participation rate is positively correlated with 2018 college going rate, r = 0.11.

The relationship is weak but warrants further investigation.

Questions

Why does higher participation on the SAT seem to show higher college going rates?

Does the SAT help students feel better prepared for college hence a higher engagement in college going behaviour?



Conclusions & Recommendations

ACT inc. needs to focus on two objectives:

- 1. Persuade state boards, educators and students to endorse the efficacy of the ACT in preparing students for getting into college.
- 2. Persuade more states boards to draw contracts with the organisation.

Fun fact...

If you had taken my recommendations into consideration back then...

We wouldn't be seeing this:

- ACT participation rate 2020: 49%
- SAT participation rate 2020: 60%

THANK YOU