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**Should standardized tests be required for college admission?**

In the present era, the importance of education has been realized, progressively, around the world. The governmental bodies are playing their part for the establishment of educational institutes and creating awareness regarding the need for education, among the people. People, on the other side, are getting more interested in having an exceptional education to compete in the current and highly globalized environments. Due to an increase in the number of students, the sum of educational institutes has also been raised which made them competitive to deal with a vast pool of qualified students and provide them a quality education.

Like other countries, the college education in the United States has been made available to the talented and determined students who are capable of pursuing their education in the institutes with growing performance towards their academics. In order to discover the pool of exceptional students, educational institutes require a standardized test to filter the qualified students and offer them college admission. However, the educational opportunities are planned on fairgrounds without compromising the equality among the students. The purpose of standardized tests at the time of college admission actually evaluates the capability of students based on common matrices to test their readiness towards education at the college level (Atkinson).

The students take admission tests, mostly the SAT, as part of their applications to the college. A standardized test is designed and administered by the College Board containing a set of multiple-choice questions to examine the knowledge and ability of a student to pursue a college education. The SAT has been considered as an essential part of the admission process. In America, colleges offer admissions to undergraduates and graduate students on the basis of the results scored in the standardized test. The admission tests actually determine the qualification of a student in a college institution (Horn).

In college admission, the requisite of standardized tests has made the process easier for the admission officers. It has provided a common measure for the examination and evaluation of students before their admission which helps colleges to analyze the capabilities of students in order to consider them for their institutes. The standardized tests are also recognized as intelligence or achievement tests that facilitate the colleges with the pre-evaluation of the students on the basis of their learning capabilities and accomplishments made in a previous academic period which provides authentic grounds to predict the students’ eligibility to continue a college education. The tests also play their part in achieving the long-term goals for the success of the institution in terms of providing great results and capable graduates in the market (Hawkins).

The benefits of standardized testing are abundant. They not only cater to colleges in their selection and admission processes but also affect the student’s approach towards a college education. The standardized tests help pupils to objectively compare their skill level among different schools. The test is based on objective questions which cover most of the concepts learned by the students and enable them to compare appropriately. The standardized tests provide a standard of education to conform to in order to bring uniformity among the different levels of education in the institutions working in different states. The concept of a common standard in education fulfills fairness in the educational sector due to which no one feels discriminated against or treated with unfair matrices. Furthermore, the testing serves as a source of motivation for the students enabling them to gauge their potential as compared to their fellows in a certain academic field. They associate their performance in the test with the provided standard and determine where they lie in that particular field or academically. This helps them to know their level of knowledge and skill and motivates them to work hard, in order to achieve the benchmark. Through standardized testing, students come to know their weaknesses which facilitates them to find the field or subjects they are good at. It provides a means of self-assessment before opting for a particular field for future studies and applications. This boosts confidence in pupils that is essential for their success in the college as well as in career (Brown and Hattie). The standardized tests also minimize the achievement or opportunity gaps among the students belonging to diverse groups while attaining their education.

The application of standardized testing has become an essential need in the present world where there is a vast pool of students and a number of educational institutes. Although there are grading criteria in the schools which depict the academic performance of the students such as GPA (Grade Point Average) measuring standard in which the courses are given certain credits based on the course content. But the SAT or a standardized test is assumed as a more reliable and valued measuring tool for college admissions. This is due to the difference between the applications of the two tests. The GPA test enables the schools to examine the performance of the pupils within that particular institution, however, the standardized testing evaluates and compares the academic achievements of the students within the state or country. Standardized testing, thus, provides a neutral ground to measure students' potential (Wechsler).

Along with the numerous benefits of standardized testing to students and institutions, the controversial perceptions towards the system of standardized testing is highly questioned. Students serve their energies to succeed in these tests with high scores. The scores of standardized tests are considered necessary but do not portray complete details to determine the admission of the students in a college institution. The previous hard work and grades scored by the students are neglected and the only importance is given to the standardized test score. The other factors such as students’ academic grades and prospectus are also essential to be considered for qualifying college admission. Besides this, the deficiencies and limitations of the system also weaken the credibility of the standardized testing. This draws the attention of the parents and undergraduates and their disinclination towards the system. Moreover, these tests are considered too stressful for the pupils which lessens their enthusiasm towards a college education. Likewise, the tests are irrespective of accomplishing students’ learning goals in the long run (Walpole et al.).

The application of standardized testing has both advantages and disadvantages in the educational sector. The increasing popularity of standardized tests across the United States has made it a prerequisite for college admission. Despite its positive facets, this particular method does not prove it to be an adequate method of testing in certain circumstances. It incorporates stressful and pressurized conditions for students, the general questions do not directly link to the academic knowledge of a student, the involvement of kick-backs to succeed the test are all such factors which affect the test results and the reliability of the system. However, these shortcomings can be lessened by providing relevant training and test-specific exercises to the students which may boost students’ confidence as well as reduce the stress to perform well in the test. The College Board should also work on the weaknesses of standardized testing (Zwick).

In conclusion, the college admission process should not totally rely on standardized testing for determining students’ futures. In a student’s life, admission to a college is quite significant which directly impacts their career goals. For this reason, the practice of standardized testing should not be the only criteria for testing. Also, the educational sector needs a more reliable and authentic method to predict potential of students and their future accomplishments in order to implement a fair assessment program.

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