

MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003

REPORT BY GENDER

**BY
GRADUATE MANAGEMENT ADMISSION COUNCIL®
(GMAC®)**

**MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003
REPORT BY GENDER**

Table of Contents [TO BE FILLED IN ONCE EDITING IS COMPLETE]

3—Key Findings

4—Demographic Profile

6—Stage in Progress toward a Degree

6—Application Stage

6—When Respondents First Considered Graduate Business School

6—Application Behavior

7—Acceptance Rate among Applicants

7—Possible Reasons for Entering a Graduate Management Program

8—Potential Barriers to Graduate Management Education

8—Possible Reservations about Entering a Graduate Management Program

9—Life Priorities

10—Perceived Admission Difficulty

12—Perceptions of “Glass Ceiling”

13—Financing Graduate Management Education

13—Relative Importance of Costs Associated with Graduate Management Education

13—Planned Sources for Financing Graduate Management Education

14—Debt Owed from College Loans

14—GMAT Test-Taker Behavior

14—GMAT Test Taken

15—Test Preparation Materials Used

15—Other Tests Taken

15—Sources of Information

MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003 REPORT BY GENDER

Key Findings

The analysis by gender found few surprises, but did help us gain deeper insights into the behavior of men and women when it comes to pursuing graduate management education. A stepwise regression analysis¹ found twelve factors that can help predict the likelihood a prospective student will move towards applying to graduate business school.

If the respondent—

1. feels it will not be too difficult to be admitted into their graduate business school of choice
2. majored in business during undergraduate (or first university)
3. thinks a graduate management education will provide the specific skills they need to do their job and get ahead
4. thinks the degree will provide the professional credentials they need for advancement
5. disagrees with the statement that it will be too expensive in the short-term to be worthwhile
6. does not think it will require them to take on large financial debts
7. values wealth

This regression tells us that women are more likely to apply to graduate business school if they believe they have the background and experience to get admitted into graduate business school (items one and two), if they believe a graduate management degree is what they need to achieve their career goals (items three and four), and if they are able to finance their education or feel they will receive a return on their investment (items five, six, and seven).

Women were significantly more likely to believe the “glass ceiling” is very real in all industries, and most notably in the business and engineering industries. While this opinion may not be a predictor of whether women will apply to graduate business school, it may be influencing whether they consider graduate management education is a viable option for them before researching the degree and schools

Women were significantly more likely than men to indicate the following possible reservations about entering a graduate management program: it might be intimidating; it might be too stressful; it might require them to postpone marriage, having a child, or other personal plans; it might require more work experience than they felt they had; and it might severely limit the time they have for people who are important to them.

Men were significantly more likely than women to list the following possible reservations about attending business school: it might be too expensive in the short term to be worthwhile; it might require them to delay accepting attractive job opportunities; and it might require more time than they were willing to invest.

There were no differences in the way men and women rated the importance of their own families (spouses and/or children). There were significant differences in priorities of all other life aspects. Most notably, career and work was more important to men and relatives more important to women. Wealth and politics and public life were also significantly more important to men than to women. Financial security, friends and acquaintances, free time and relaxation, and religion were significantly more important to women.

¹ The complete stepwise regression analysis is located in the methodology section.

**MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003
REPORT BY GENDER**

Demographic Profile

There were significantly more women in the black/African American U.S. subgroup. Women respondents were significantly younger than men.

Men were significantly more likely than women to be working in the consulting and high-technology industries, women were significantly more likely than men to be working in the nonprofit/government and products and services industries.

Women respondents were more likely than men to have a household income between U.S. \$25,000 and \$75,000. Men were more likely to have a household income of less than U.S. \$25,000. Men were also more likely than women to live in a household of three or more people.

Women were significantly more likely than men to have an undergraduate or first degree in business/management/economics, humanities, or social science/law. Men were significantly more likely to have majored in engineering/computer science.

Men were significantly more likely to say they would pursue a program based on campus, whereas women were significantly more likely to indicate interest in program that offered a combination on-campus and off-campus courses. Men were significantly more likely to say that they intended to be full-time students; women were more likely to say they intended to be part-time students.

CLASSIFICATION BREAKDOWNS, BY GENDER²			
		Gender	
		Male	Female
		<i>n</i> = 1,993	<i>n</i> = 2,186
Major U.S. Subgroup	Native American Indian/Alaskan Native	1%	1%
	Asian American	7%	7%
	Black/African American	9%	17%
	White (non-Hispanic)	76%	67%
	Hispanic	7%	8%
Age (collapsed)	24 and under	21%	32%
	25–28	30%	30%
	29–32	22%	16%
	33 and over	27%	22%
Industry Groups (Respondents working full time)	Consulting	11%	9%
	Energy/Utilities	3%	2%
	Finance/Accounting	20%	22%
	Healthcare/Pharmaceutical	5%	8%
	High technology	23%	14%
	Manufacturing	8%	7%
	Nonprofit/Government	10%	17%
	Products and services	19%	23%
Household Income in U.S. Dollars (collapsed)	Under \$25,000	36%	30%
	\$25,000, but under \$75,000	39%	46%
	\$75,000 or more	26%	24%

² Based on information provided at the time of mba.com registration

**MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003
REPORT BY GENDER**

CLASSIFICATION BREAKDOWNS, BY GENDER²			
		Gender	
		Male	Female
		<i>n</i> = 1,993	<i>n</i> = 2,186
Household size (collapsed)	1	27%	34%
	2	24%	29%
	3 or more	48%	37%
Undergraduate/first degree major (collapsed)	Business/Management/Economics	45%	53%
	Fine arts	1%	2%
	Engineering/Computer science	31%	12%
	Humanities	5%	10%
	Science/Mathematics	9%	8%
	Social sciences/Law	7%	12%
	Other	2%	4%
Type of degree pursued	MBA or Masters in Science	75%	73%
	Masters of Accountancy	2%	5%
	Masters in Health Care Administration	1%	1%
	Masters of Public Administration	0%	1%
	Doctorate in Business	4%	2%
	Joint Degree—MBA & Engineering	2%	0%
	Joint Degree—MBA & Law	3%	4%
	Other Joint Degree	1%	2%
	Other Degree	9%	8%
Undecided	4%	4%	
How degree will be pursued	On campus	74%	67%
	Distance	2%	2%
	Online	2%	2%
	Some combination of the above	15%	20%
	Undecided	7%	8%
Type of student	Full-time student	59%	52%
	Part-time student	21%	28%
	Executive MBA student	8%	6%
	Undecided	12%	15%

**MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003
REPORT BY GENDER**

Stage in Progress toward a Degree

Application Stage

Respondents were asked to indicate their stage in the application process. At the time of the survey, women were significantly less likely than men to say they planned to apply to graduate business school. Instead, they were more likely to have applied already, to be unsure if they would apply, or to have decided they would not apply.

STAGE IN APPLICATION PROCESS, BY GENDER		
Have you applied?	Gender	
	Male	Female
	<i>n</i> = 6,001	<i>n</i> = 4,028
Yes	37%	39%
No, not yet, but I plan to	52%	47%
No, not yet, and I am not sure I will	10%	12%
No, I have decided not to apply to graduate business school	1%	3%
Total	100%	100%

When Respondents First Considered Graduate Business School

Respondents were asked how long they had been considering graduate business school. Men were significantly more likely than women to say they had been thinking about attending graduate business school for two years or longer.

WHEN RESPONDENTS FIRST CONSIDERED ATTENDING GRADUATE BUSINESS SCHOOL, BY GENDER		
	Gender	
	Male	Female
	<i>n</i> = 5,314	<i>n</i> = 3,445
Less than a year ago	27%	29%
One year, but less than two years ago	30%	33%
Two years ago or longer	43%	38%
Total	100%	100%

Application Behavior

Respondents who had applied to graduate business school were asked how many schools they had applied to and how many more they planned to apply to. Men were significantly more likely than women to have applied to more business schools (men had applied to an average of 2.2 schools, compared with 1.8 for women).

Men were also more likely to be planning to apply to more additional schools (an average of 1.3 additional schools, compared with 0.9 for women). The total average number of applications men said they would complete (actual plus planned) was 3.4. The total average number of applications women said they would complete (actual plus planned) was 2.7.

NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS, BY GENDER				
Gender		Actual	Planned	Total
	Valid <i>n</i>	Mean	Mean	Mean
Male	<i>n</i> = 2,220	2.2	1.3	3.4
Female	<i>n</i> = 1,551	1.8	0.9	2.7

**MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003
REPORT BY GENDER**

Acceptance Rate among Applicants

Respondents who had applied to graduate business school were asked if they had received any acceptances. Women were significantly less likely to have received two or more acceptances. They were most likely to have received one acceptance. The average acceptance rate (percent who have received an acceptance) for men was 62%, compared with 64% for women.

NUMBER OF ACCEPTANCES, BY GENDER		
	Gender	
	Male	Female
	<i>n</i> = 2,220	<i>n</i> = 1,551
None so far	27%	26%
1	51%	56%
2 or more	23%	18%
Total	100%	100%
Mean Percent Acceptances	62%	64%

Possible Reasons for Entering a Graduate Management Program

Respondents were asked to indicate the truth or falsehood of each of 17 possible reasons for deciding to enter a graduate management program—in their particular case. They rated the reasons on a 7-point scale, with +3 being true and -3 being false.

When compared with men, women were significantly more likely to cite the following possible reasons for deciding to enter a graduate management program:

- Allows them to remain marketable (competitive)
- Gives them a sense of personal satisfaction and achievement

Men were significantly more likely to cite the following possible reasons for deciding to pursue a graduate management program:

- Prepares them to start or manage their own business
- Allows them to build on their nonbusiness undergraduate degree
- Gives them a chance to gain valuable experience before reentering the job market
- Allows them to switch industries

**MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003
REPORT BY GENDER**

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR DECIDING TO ENTER A GRADUATE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, BY GENDER		
True (+3) or False (-3)	Gender	
	Male	Female
	<i>n</i> = 5,959	<i>n</i> = 3,991
	Mean	Mean
Gives me a sense of personal satisfaction and achievement	2.2	2.4
Allows me to remain marketable (competitive)	2.2	2.4
Develops my management knowledge and technical skills	2.3	2.3
Provides the professional credentials I need for advancement	2.2	2.3
Improves my long-term income and financial stability	2.3	2.3
Is an exciting challenge	2.0	2.1
Prepares me to get a good job in the business world	1.9	2.0
Provides the specific skills I need to do my job and get ahead	1.8	1.8
Provides the right connections for getting a good job in the short or long term	1.7	1.7
Increases my short-term earning power	1.0	1.1
Allows me to change from my current occupational area to a specific new one	1.2	1.1
Prepares me to start or manage my own business	1.1	0.9
Allows me to switch industries	1.1	0.9
Gives me a chance to gain valuable experience before reentering the job market	1.0	0.8
Is looked upon favorably by people who are important to me	0.8	0.8
Prepares me to seek international employment	1.1	0.6
Allows me to build on my nonbusiness undergraduate degree	0.4	0.2

Potential Barriers to Graduate Management Education

Possible Reservations about Entering a Graduate Management Program

Respondents were asked to indicate the truth or falsehood to them of a list of possible reservations about attending graduate business school. They rated each possible reservation on a 7-point scale, with +3 being true and -3 being false.

Women were significantly more likely than men to indicate the following possible reservations about entering a graduate management program: it might be intimidating; it might be too stressful; it might require them to postpone marriage, having a child, or other personal plans; it might require more work experience than they felt they had; and it might severely limit the time they have for people who are important to them.

Men were significantly more likely than women to list the following possible reservations about attending business school: it might be too expensive in the short term to be worthwhile; it might require them to delay accepting attractive job opportunities; and it might require more time than they were willing to invest.

**MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003
REPORT BY GENDER**

POSSIBLE RESERVATIONS ABOUT ENTERING A GRADUATE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, BY GENDER		
True (+3) or False (-3)	Gender	
	Male	Female
	<i>n</i> = 5,959	<i>n</i> = 3,001
	Mean	Mean
Requires me to take on large financial debts	0.7	0.8
Severely limits the time I have for people who are important to me	0.2	0.3
Is too stressful	-0.6	-0.3
Is too competitive	-0.5	-0.5
Requires me to postpone marriage, having a child, or other personal plans	-0.7	-0.5
Requires more work experience than I have now	-0.8	-0.6
Is too expensive in the short term to be worthwhile	-0.3	-0.6
Is intimidating	-1.0	-0.7
Requires me to delay accepting attractive job opportunities	-0.6	-0.9
Requires more time than I am willing to invest	-0.8	-0.9
Requires more energy than I am willing to invest	-1.0	-1.0

Life Priorities

Respondents rated the importance of nine aspects of life on a 5-point scale, with 5 indicating “extremely important” and 1 indicating “not at all important.” There were no differences in the way men and women rated the importance of their own families (spouses and/or children). There were significant differences in priorities of all other life aspects. Most notably, career and work was more important to men and relatives more important to women. Wealth and politics and public life were also significantly more important to men than to women. Financial security, friends and acquaintances, free time and relaxation, and religion were significantly more important to women.

IMPORTANCE OF ASPECTS OF LIFE, BY GENDER			
		Gender	
		Male	Female
		<i>n</i> = 5,959	<i>n</i> = 3,991
One's own family (spouse and/or children)	Extremely important	72%	74%
	Very important	20%	19%
	Somewhat important	5%	5%
	Not very/Not at all important	3%	3%
	Total	100%	100%
	Mean	4.6	4.6
Financial security	Extremely important	44%	47%
	Very important	47%	45%
	Somewhat important	9%	8%
	Not very/Not at all important	1%	0%
	Total	100%	100%
	Mean	4.3	4.4
Relatives	Extremely important	28%	44%
	Very important	40%	36%
	Somewhat important	25%	16%
	Not very/Not at all important	7%	4%
	Total	100%	100%

**MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003
REPORT BY GENDER**

IMPORTANCE OF ASPECTS OF LIFE, BY GENDER			
		Gender	
		Male	Female
		<i>n</i> = 5,959	<i>n</i> = 3,991
	Mean	3.9	4.2
Career and work	Extremely important	44%	34%
	Very important	48%	56%
	Somewhat important	8%	9%
	Not very/Not at all important	0%	0%
	Total	100%	100%
	Mean	4.4	4.2
Friends and acquaintances	Extremely important	27%	31%
	Very important	51%	50%
	Somewhat important	20%	18%
	Not very/Not at all important	3%	1%
	Total	100%	100%
	Mean	4.0	4.1
Free time and relaxation	Extremely important	23%	27%
	Very important	47%	48%
	Somewhat important	25%	22%
	Not very/Not at all important	5%	3%
	Total	100%	100%
	Mean	3.9	4.0
Wealth	Extremely important	22%	14%
	Very important	43%	37%
	Somewhat important	31%	41%
	Not very/Not at all important	5%	8%
	Total	100%	100%
	Mean	3.8	3.6
Religion	Extremely important	20%	22%
	Very important	19%	20%
	Somewhat important	24%	24%
	Not very/Not at all important	38%	34%
	Total	100%	100%
	Mean	3.0	3.2
Politics and public life	Extremely important	6%	4%
	Very important	27%	21%
	Somewhat important	42%	46%
	Not very/Not at all important	26%	29%
	Total	100%	100%
	Mean	3.1	3.0

Perceived Admission Difficulty

Respondents who applied to graduate business school and had not yet received an acceptance, those who planned to apply, and those who were uncertain whether they would apply were asked to indicate how difficult they felt it would be to gain admission to their school of choice. Men were significantly more likely than women to believe it would be very difficult to get into their school of choice.

**MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003
REPORT BY GENDER**

PERCEIVED ADMISSION DIFFICULTY, BY GENDER		
Difficulty in being admitted to business school of choice ("Uncertain" removed)	Gender	
	Male	Female
	<i>n</i> = 4,650	<i>n</i> = 3,185
Very difficult	18%	14%
Somewhat difficult	50%	52%
Not very difficult	23%	24%
Not at all difficult	9%	10%
Total	100%	100%
Mean	2.8	2.7

Respondents who thought that it would be very or somewhat difficult to gain admission to their school of choice were asked to predict the strongest potential barriers to admission. Women were more likely than men to believe that their scores on admissions tests, their employment history, and their level of participation in extracurricular activities would be barriers. Men were more likely than women to believe that their racial or ethnic background would be a barrier.

PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO ADMISSION (AMONG THOSE PERCEIVING ADMISSION TO BE "VERY" OR "SOMEWHAT" DIFFICULT), BY GENDER		
	Gender	
	Male	Female
	<i>n</i> = 3,158	<i>n</i> = 2,088
My scores on admissions tests	44%	57%
My financial resources	46%	46%
My undergraduate academic record	42%	40%
My employment history	23%	30%
My level of participation in extracurricular activities	23%	29%
Essays I might have to write for admissions	22%	24%
My age	19%	21%
Recommendations I might have to get	16%	16%
Interviews I might have to have for admissions	13%	14%
My racial or ethnic background	12%	7%
Other barrier	5%	5%
My gender	3%	4%
No barrier	4%	3%

**MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003
REPORT BY GENDER**

Perceptions of “Glass Ceiling”

Respondents were asked to indicate how real they feel the “glass ceiling” is in six industries. Women were significantly more likely to believe the “glass ceiling” is very real in all industries, and most notably in the business and engineering industries.

PERCEPTIONS OF "GLASS CEILING" BY GENDER			
		Gender	
		Male	Female
		<i>n</i> = 5,959	<i>n</i> = 3,991
Business	Very real	19%	41%
	Somewhat real	41%	39%
	Not very real	24%	13%
	Not at all real	16%	7%
	Total	100%	100%
	Mean	2.6	3.1
Education	Very real	8%	10%
	Somewhat real	12%	20%
	Not very real	27%	34%
	Not at all real	53%	36%
	Total	100%	100%
	Mean	1.7	2.0
Law	Very real	12%	25%
	Somewhat real	34%	45%
	Not very real	31%	22%
	Not at all real	23%	8%
	Total	100%	100%
	Mean	2.4	2.9
Medicine	Very real	8%	17%
	Somewhat real	23%	40%
	Not very real	35%	29%
	Not at all real	34%	14%
	Total	100%	100%
	Mean	2.1	2.6
Science	Very real	10%	24%
	Somewhat real	33%	46%
	Not very real	33%	22%
	Not at all real	24%	8%
	Total	100%	100%
	Mean	2.3	2.8
Engineering	Very real	22%	41%
	Somewhat real	44%	42%
	Not very real	21%	12%
	Not at all real	12%	5%
	Total	100%	100%
	Mean	2.8	3.2
All Professions	Mean	2.3	2.8

**MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003
REPORT BY GENDER**

Financing Graduate Management Education

Relative Importance of Costs Associated with Graduate Management Education

Respondents were asked to weight the relative importance of costs associated with pursuing a graduate management degree. Women considered the cost of tuition and books and the GMAT[®] exam higher by than did men, whereas men felt that the opportunity cost of lost earnings and housing and other out-of-pocket living costs were higher than did women.

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF COSTS IN DECISION TO PURSUE GRADUATE MANAGEMENT DEGREE, BY GENDER		
	Gender	
	Male <i>n</i> = 4,636	Female <i>n</i> = 3,170
	Mean	Mean
Tuition and books	38%	41%
Opportunity costs of lost earnings	20%	17%
Housing and other out-of-pocket living costs	22%	20%
Application fees of schools	13%	12%
Cost of the GMAT	7%	10%
Total	100%	100%

Planned Sources of Financing Graduate Management Education

Respondents who had applied or who planned to apply to graduate business school were asked what sources they planned to use to finance their education. Men were significantly more likely than women to indicate that they would rely on personal savings or support from parents; women were significantly more likely to indicate that employer reimbursement or a spouse's earnings would finance their education.

PLANNED SOURCES FOR FINANCING GRADUATE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION, BY GENDER		
	Gender	
	Male <i>n</i> = 5,314	Female <i>n</i> = 3,445
Loans	59%	58%
Grants, fellowships, scholarships, or government benefits (not a loan)	50%	51%
Personal earnings	49%	48%
Personal savings	55%	43%
Employer reimbursement or sponsorship	32%	34%
Support from parents	27%	25%
Spouse's (partner's) earnings	10%	14%
Other source	2%	2%

When asked to indicate which source would be their main source of financing their education, men were significantly more likely than women to indicate their personal savings.

**MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003
REPORT BY GENDER**

MAIN SOURCE OF FINANCING GRADUATE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION, BY GENDER		
	Gender	
	Male	Female
	<i>n</i> = 5,314	<i>n</i> = 3,445
Loans	34%	36%
Employer reimbursement or sponsorship	15%	17%
Grants, fellowships, scholarships, or government benefits	17%	17%
Support from parents	10%	10%
Personal savings	14%	9%
Personal earnings	10%	9%
Spouse's (partner's) earnings	1%	2%
Total	100%	100%

Debt Owed from College Loans

Respondents who had completed an undergraduate or first degree program were asked to indicate how much debt they owed from previous education (undergraduate or other graduate). Men were significantly more likely to have no debt from college loans.

DEBT OWED FROM COLLEGE LOANS, BY GENDER		
Debt from college loans for undergraduate or other graduate degree, in U.S. dollars (collapsed)	Gender	
	Male	Female
	<i>n</i> = 5,398	<i>n</i> = 3,453
None	71%	59%
Less than \$10,000	11%	14%
\$10,000, but less than \$20,000	9%	13%
\$20,000 or more	8%	14%
Total	100%	100%

GMAT Test-Taker Behavior

Number of GMAT Tests Taken

Respondents were asked about their plans to take the GMAT[®] exam. There were no significant differences between women and men on whether they had taken the GMAT[®] once or more than once, or haven't taken the GMAT exam and plan to, or do not plan to take the GMAT[®] exam. Of those respondents who had taken the GMAT[®] more than once at the time of the survey, men were significantly more likely than women to have taken it three times or more.

GMAT FREQUENCY AMONG THOSE TESTING MORE THAN ONCE, BY GENDER		
	Gender	
	Male	Female
	<i>n</i> = 615	<i>n</i> = 382
2	72%	77%
3 or more	28%	23%
Total	100%	100%

**MBA.COM REGISTRANTS SURVEY 2003
REPORT BY GENDER**

Test Preparation Materials Used

Respondents who had taken the GMAT® at the time of the survey were asked to indicate the types of test preparation they used. Men were significantly more likely than women to have used POWERPREP® software, provided by GMAC®. Women were significantly more likely than men to have reviewed sample questions on mba.com.

PREPARATION FOR THE GMAT, BY GENDER		
	Gender	
	Male <i>n</i> = 2,441	Female <i>n</i> = 1,663
Used test-preparation book(s) or software not from GMAC	67%	68%
Used POWERPREP software	71%	67%
Used <i>Official Guide for GMAT Review, 10th Ed.</i> , published by GMAC	46%	46%
Reviewed sample questions at GMAC mba.com Web site	28%	33%
Reviewed sample questions available on other Web sites	26%	24%
Attended formal test preparation or coaching courses	21%	23%
Reviewed GMAT Paper Tests from mba.com	18%	18%
Reviewed GMAT paper tests from other Web sites	17%	14%
Used Essay Insight essay preparation product from mba.com	10%	13%
GMAT preparation—other	5%	6%

Other Tests Taken

Respondents were asked to indicate any other standardized tests they had taken. Women were significantly more likely than men to have taken the Law School Admission Test (LSAT).

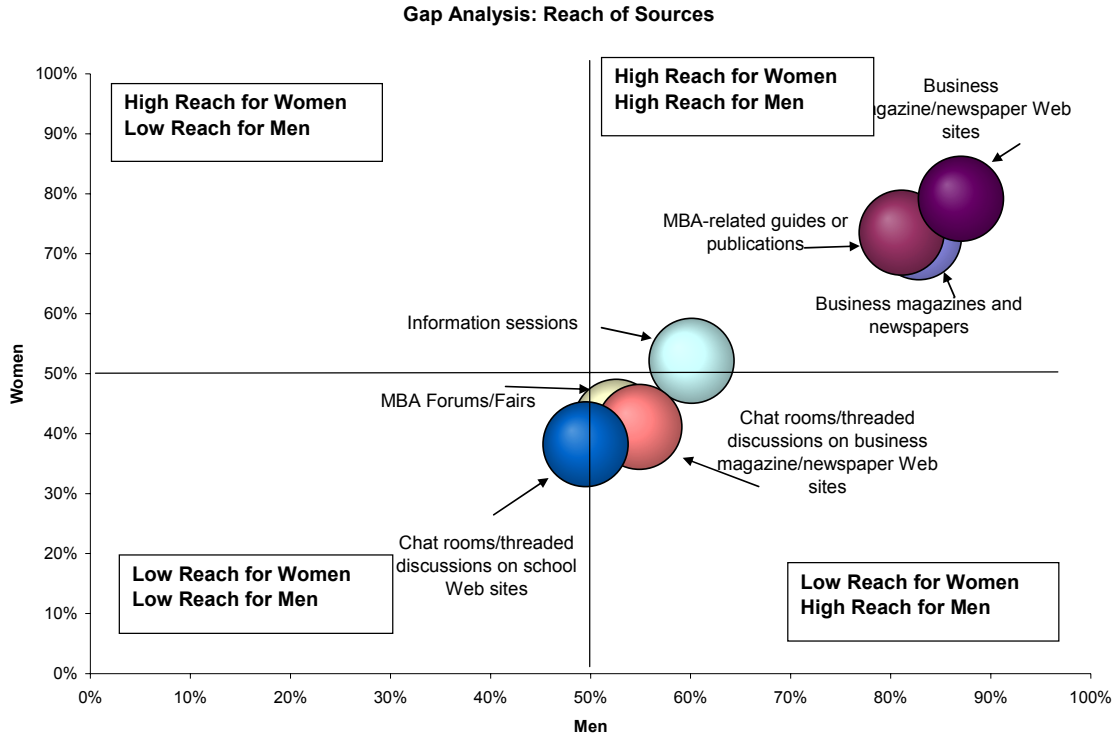
OTHER GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL TESTS BY GENDER		
	Gender	
	Male <i>n</i> = 6,001	Female <i>n</i> = 4,028
Graduate Record Examination (GRE)	18%	18%
Law School Admission Test (LSAT)	8%	12%
Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)	1%	1%
Other standardized test	11%	9%
None of the above tests	66%	65%

Sources of Information

Respondents were asked to indicate on a 5-point scale how valuable various online, printed, personal, and school sources had been in informing them about graduate management education and graduate business schools. A rating of 5 corresponds to “extremely valuable” and 1 corresponds to “not at all valuable.” Respondents could also select “not applicable” if they had not used the information source listed. The “not applicable” choice helped to determine the reach of the various sources.

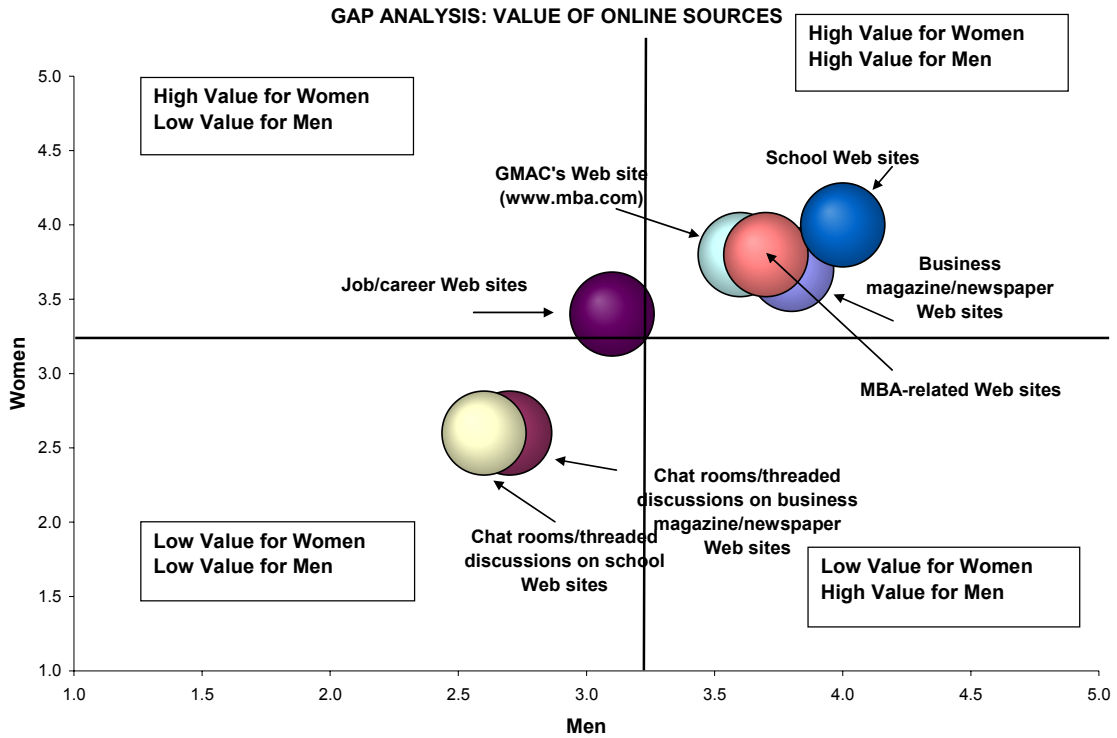
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With the exception of mba.com, all online sources reached men significantly more than women. All printed sources and school sources reached men significantly more than they reached women. With the exception of friends and family, all personal sources reached men significantly more than women, too. The following chart shows the most notable differences.



Women rated job/career Web sites and mba.com as significantly more valuable sources of information than men did. Men rated business magazine/newspaper Web sites and chat rooms/threaded discussions on business magazine/newspaper Web sites as significantly more valuable sources of information than did women.

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Women were slightly (but significantly) more likely to rate mentors or individuals in professional organizations as a more valuable source of information than were men.

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