

BACKGROUND

- High-stakes assessments significantly influence educational paths, professional opportunities, and quality of life (Eggan & Stobart, 2015).
- Performance can be affected by domain knowledge, intrapersonal factors (e.g., self-efficacy, motivation; Mislevy, 2018), and experiential elements (Weir, 2005).
- Testing organizations offer resources (e.g., practice tests) to improve item familiarity, which may also provide formative learning opportunities (Hazelton et al., 2021).
- Test anxiety and unfamiliarity with online testing environments are identified as potential distractions from the constructs being tested (Wise, 2018).
- Practice tests could mitigate construct-irrelevant factors (e.g., anxiety), improving test-taker attitudes towards (Messick, 1984).

MOTIVATION

Explore how preparation for the Duolingo English Test (DET) influences test-taker attitudes and outcomes, filling a gap in existing research.

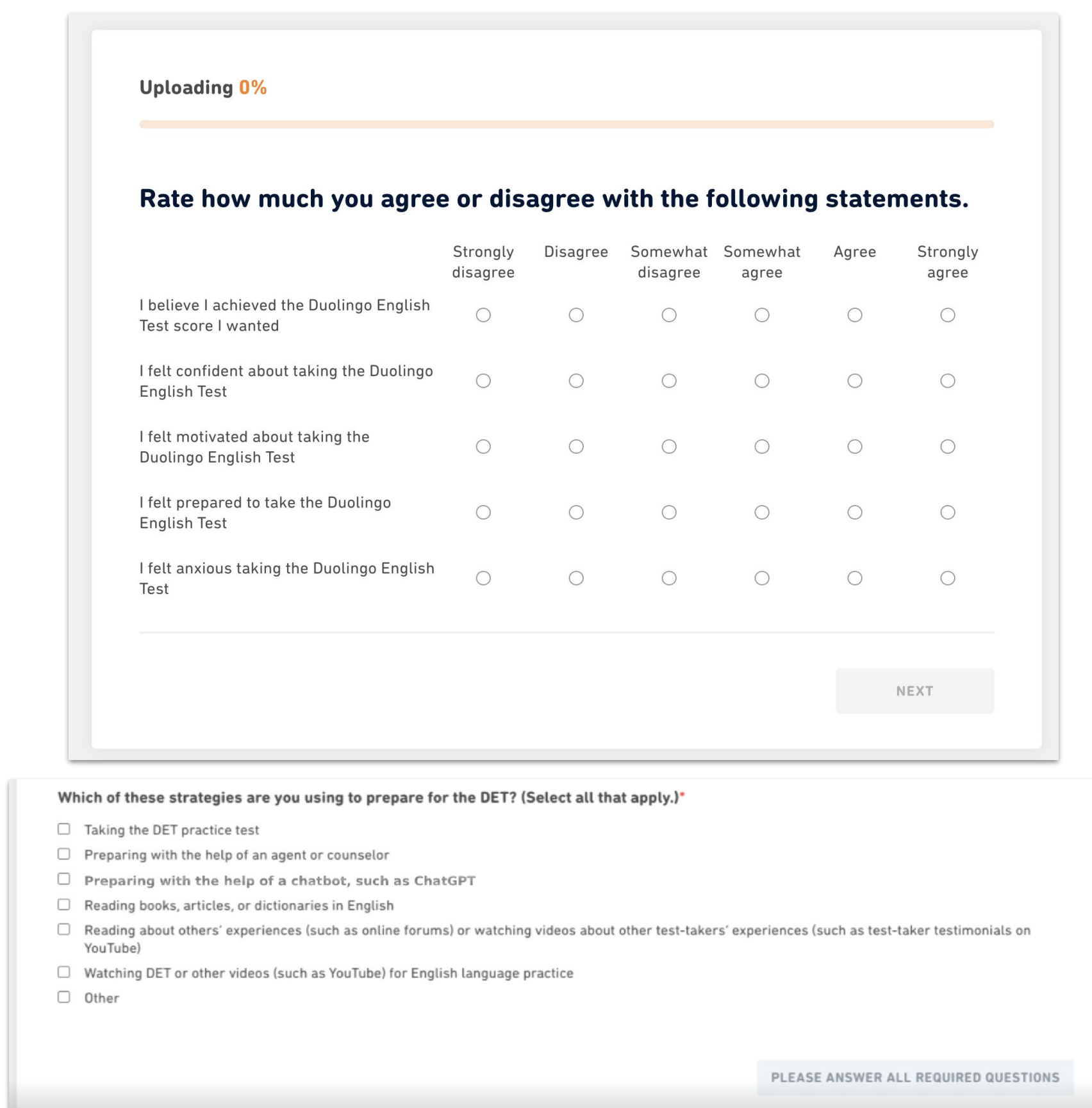
RESEARCH QUESTION

How do practice test (PT) use, prior certified test (CT) experience, and other test preparation strategies impact:

- test-taker attitudes about the test (preparedness, confidence, motivation)
- test-taker anxiety about the test
- test score outcomes

METHODS

- **Survey Design:** 7-item Likert survey plus multi-select item about preparation strategies



The screenshot shows a survey interface with a progress bar at the top indicating 'Uploading 0%'. Below the progress bar, there is a section titled 'Rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.' with a Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree'. The statements are:

- I believe I achieved the Duolingo English Test score I wanted
- I felt confident about taking the Duolingo English Test
- I felt motivated about taking the Duolingo English Test
- I felt prepared to take the Duolingo English Test
- I felt anxious taking the Duolingo English Test

Below the Likert scale, there is a multi-select item titled 'Which of these strategies are you using to prepare for the DET? (Select all that apply.)' with the following options:

- ☐ Taking the DET practice test
- ☐ Preparing with the help of an agent or counselor
- ☐ Preparing with the help of a chatbot, such as ChatGPT
- ☐ Reading books, articles, or dictionaries in English
- ☐ Reading about others' experiences (such as online forums) or watching videos about other test-takers' experiences (such as test-taker testimonials on YouTube)
- ☐ Watching DET or other videos (such as YouTube) for English language practice
- ☐ Other

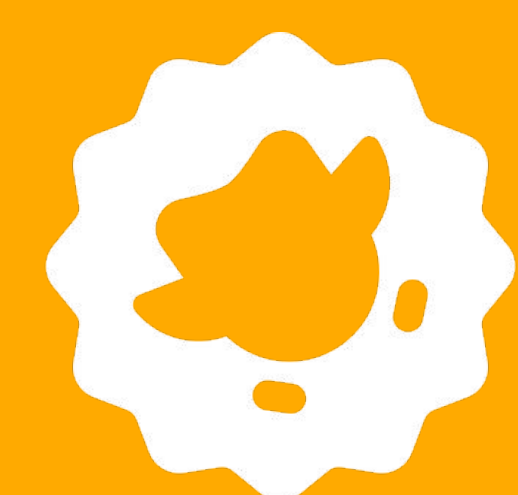
A 'NEXT' button is visible at the bottom right of the survey interface.

- **Data Collection Period:** Aug 29 to Sept 29, 2023
 - administered after both the practice test (PT) and certified test (CT)
- **Participants:** sample sizes
 - n = 28,321 (practice test)
 - n = 4,201 (certified test)
- **Analyses:** PT and CT data analyzed separately
 - For PT, examined relationship between number of prep methods and CT scores.
 - For CT, analyzed differences in survey responses and CT scores across cohorts based on prior CT/PT experiences

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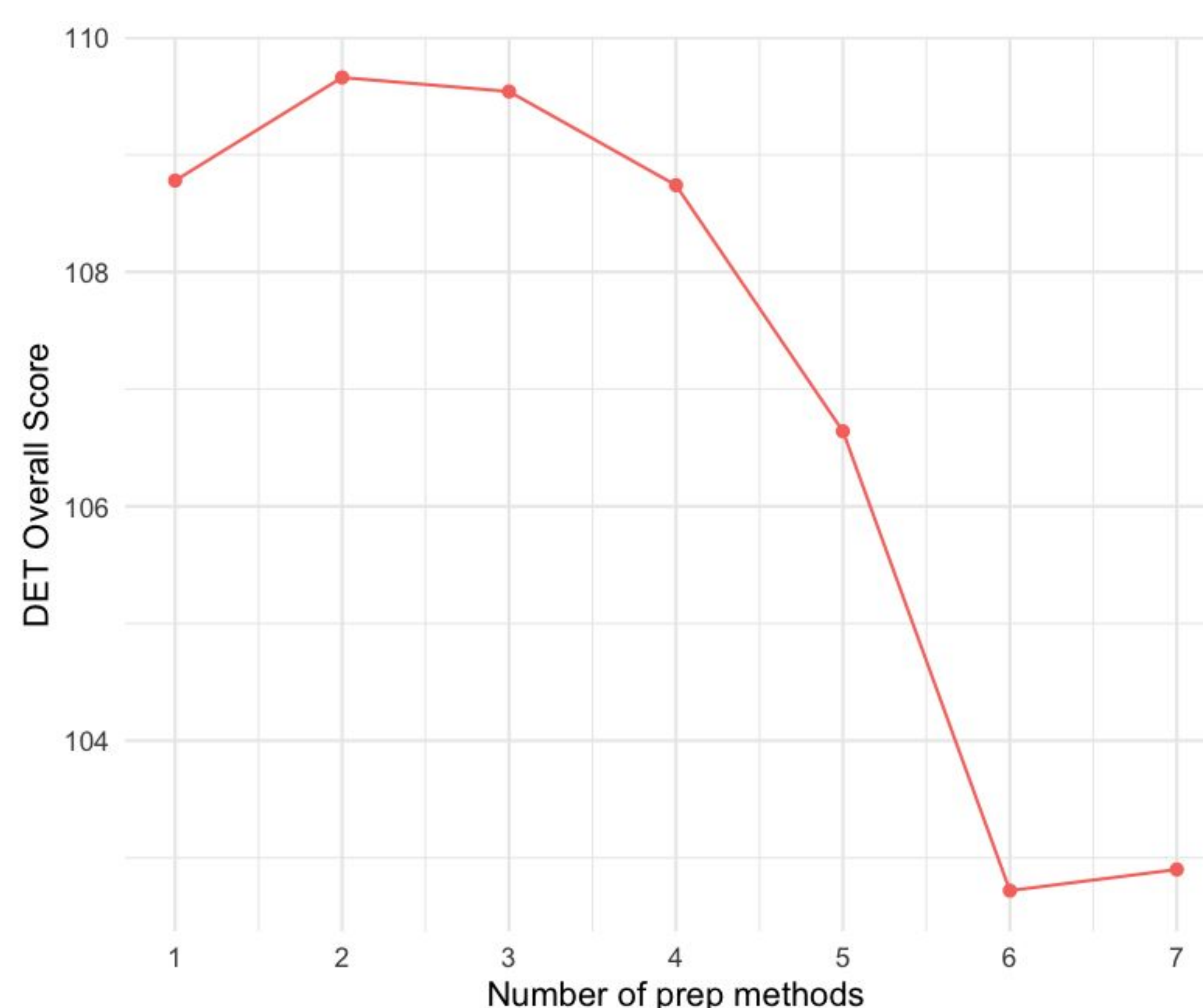


Test preparation, test-taker attitudes, and high-stakes outcomes

Steven Nydick, Ramsey Cardwell, Jill Burstein, Duolingo

# prep methods	n	p
1	8796	31.1
2	4545	16
3	4079	14.4
4	3135	11.1
5	1329	4.7
6	2176	7.7
7	1087	3.8

Test prep method count (# of methods)
and respondent count (n) and proportion
(p)

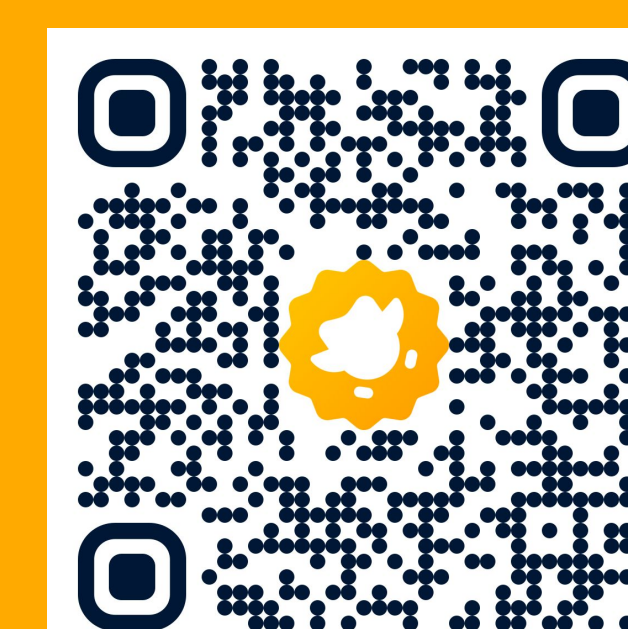


Average DET overall score by number
of test preparation methods reported

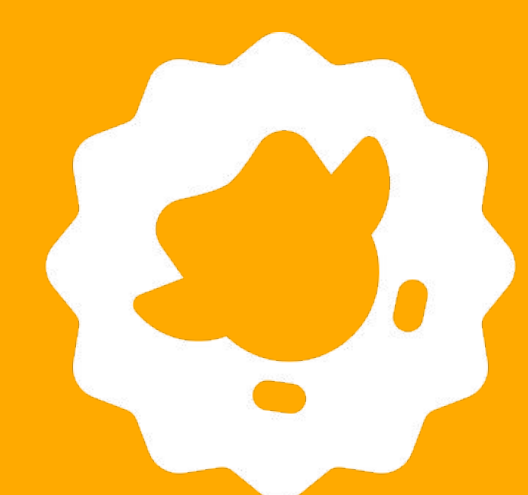
TAKEAWAYS (PREP METHODS)

- The majority of test takers reported using 3 or fewer prep methods
- Overall inverse relationship between number of test prep methods and DET score
 - Suggests lower-proficiency test takers realize they need more preparation

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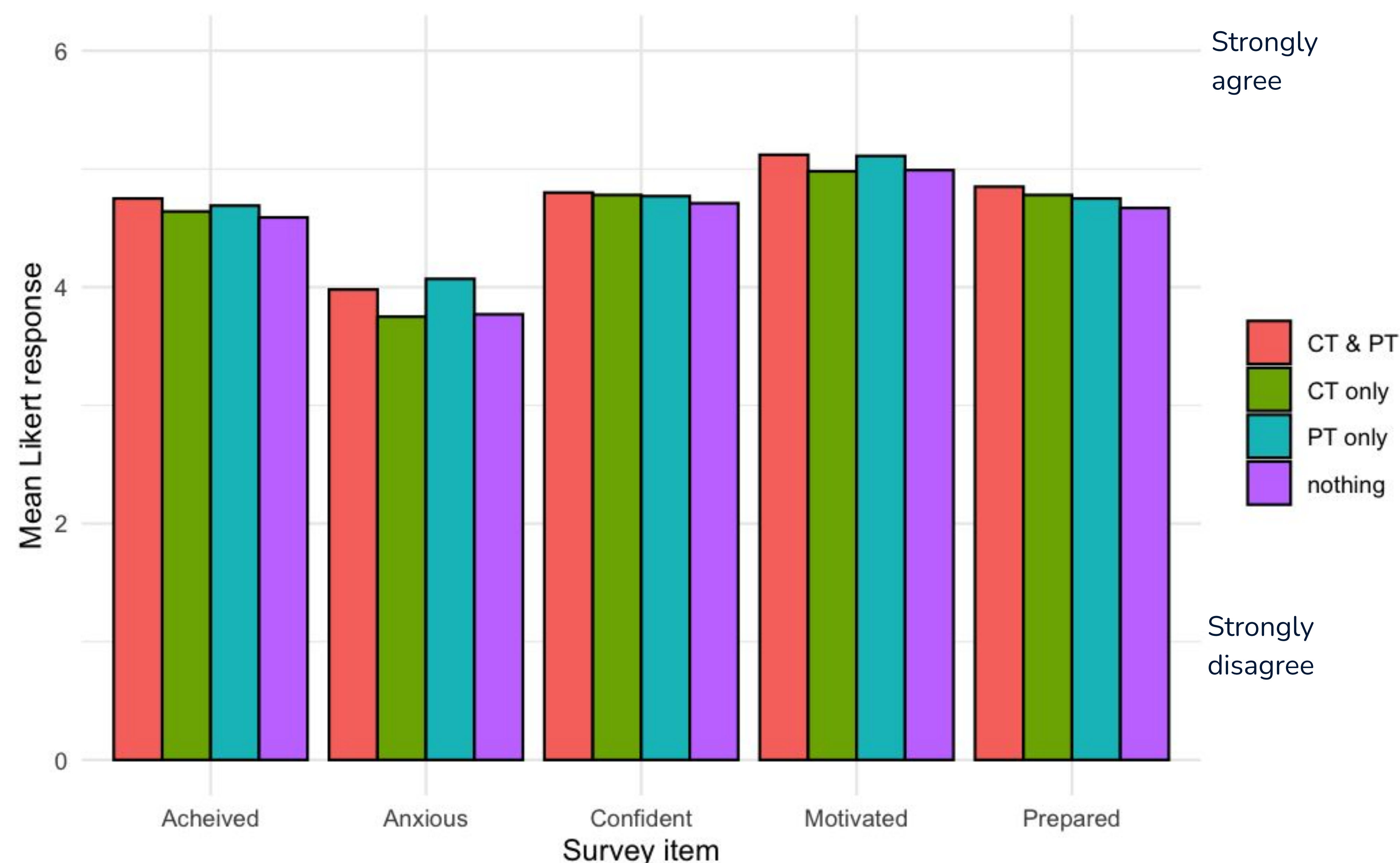
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TAKEAWAYS (ATTITUDES)

- Having taken the DET PT associated with more positive attitudes, but higher anxiety
- Suggests test takers might seek out practice resources to alleviate test anxiety
- Higher proficiency generally associated with more positive attitudes
- Suggests some self-awareness of proficiency



Mean response scores to survey items across cohorts. Cohorts defined by test taker experience prior to CT survey.

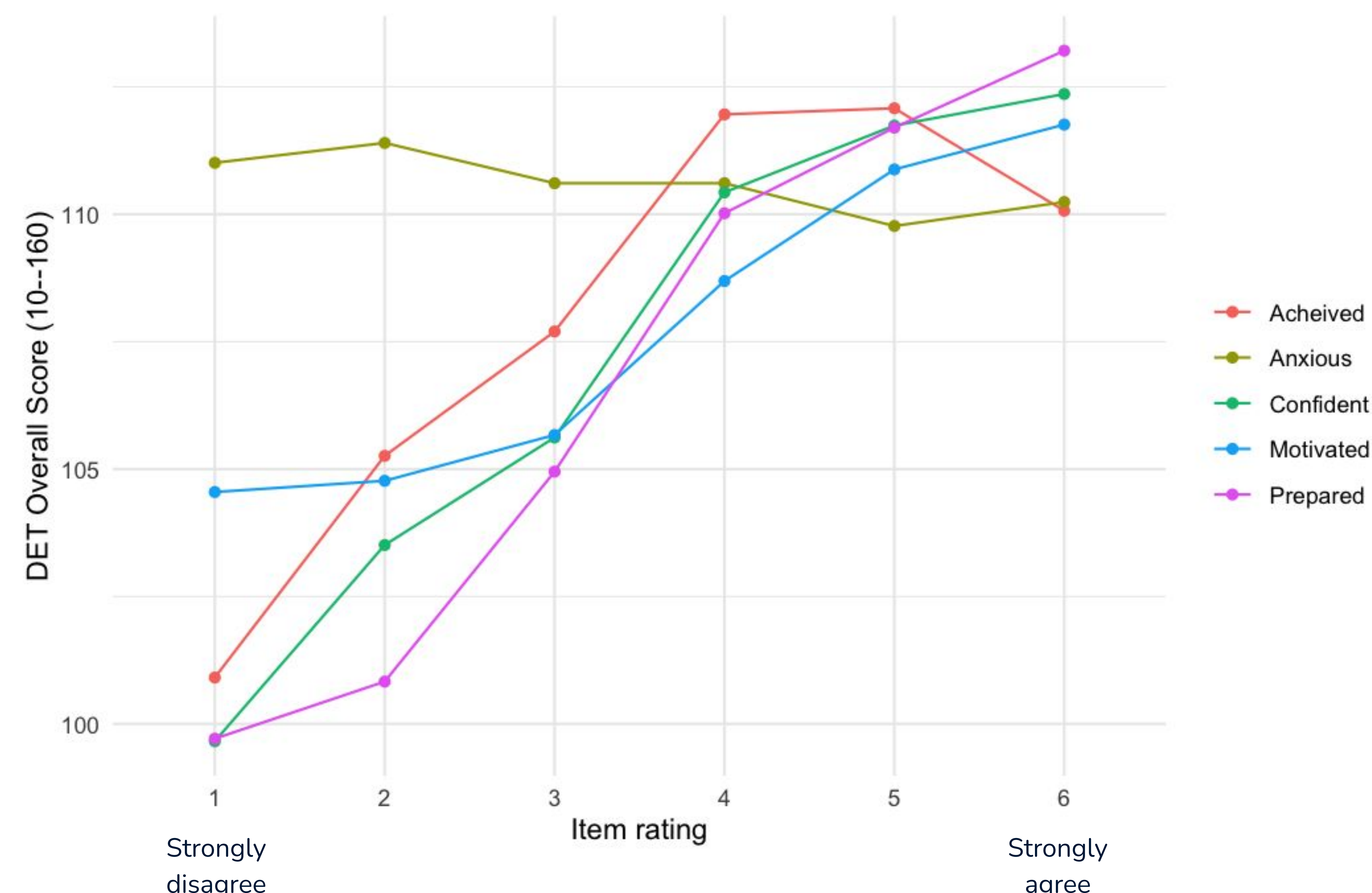
Cohorts:

- CT + PT = took CT & PT prior
- CT only = took CT prior
- PT only = took PT prior
- Nothing = took neither CT nor PT prior

Average DET score by response option across survey items

Response options:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Somewhat agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree



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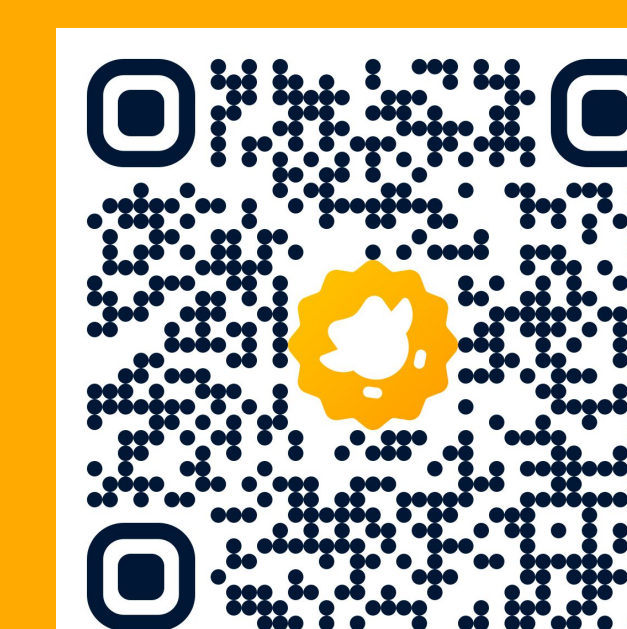
DISCUSSION

- Limitation: We cannot draw conclusions from findings
- Ideas for future work:
 - Comparable study, including interviews to better understand test-taker
 - testing goals
 - reasons for anxiety associated with practice test
 - most helpful aspect of practice test or other test prep
 - attitudes (e.g., What does it mean to you to feel prepared, motivated, etc; Do your attitudes help your outcomes?)
 - Explore statistical modeling
 - Can test taker attitudes predict DET outcomes?
 - Can test taker prep methods predict DET outcomes?

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