



Undergraduate Students' Primary Reasons for using the Academic Library and Its Impact on their Learning Outcomes and GPA

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ABSTRACT

The current research project aims to investigate the primary reasons that students use the library and measure how their use of the library impacts their learning outcomes and GPA. This study employs mixed methods approach: the quantitative method (survey), and the qualitative method (interview). In this poster presentation, preliminary findings from survey data will be reported. A total of 27 UIC undergraduate students participated in this study.

Key findings from the survey indicated:

- the top reason for using physical library space was studying alone
- the top reason for using online library was accessing library ebooks and journals.
- Most students indicated using the library spaces had a positive impact on their learning

The current research project is an example of ongoing assessment. This is beneficial for academic libraries to understand the potential impact of the academic library on students' success on an ongoing basis. This project also illustrates how other academic libraries can implement ongoing assessment programs to provide continual feedback related to the library's impact on students learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Since 2016, the University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC) Library has conducted a biannual student library use survey. The primary reason for conducting the student use survey was to examine if their use of the library has an impact on their academic success (GPA). The key findings from the quantitative data in the 2018 survey showed that student library visits and library space satisfaction were negatively associated with their GPA, whereas most students' use of library resources (e.g., journal articles and databases) was positively associated with their GPA (Scoulas & De Groote, 2019).

The current research project was to follow up with previous findings conducted by Scoulas and De Groote (2019), and investigate the primary reasons that students use the library and measure how their use of the library impacts their GPA. In addition to measuring the impact of students' library use on their learning outcomes, the authors adapted the Project Outcome for Academic Libraries (<https://acrl.projectoutcome.org>).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

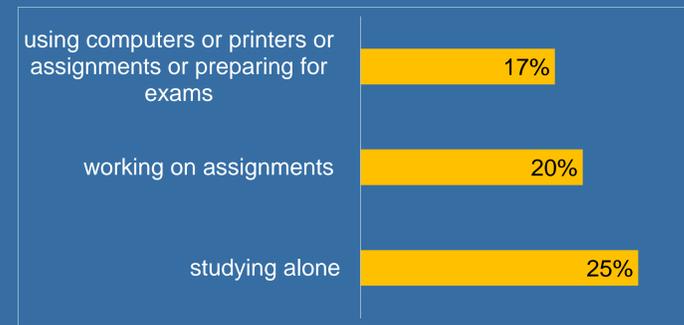
Project: The original research project uses a mixed-methods approach interviewing and surveying 50 undergraduate students at UIC. However, in the process of recruiting the participants, COVID-19 occurred, and the authors decided to stop interviewing and analyze the data that we collected prior to pandemic. This research project obtained approval from the Institution's IRB (#2019-0538).

Instrument: Twenty-two questions include primary reasons of using the University Library, frequency of using physical and online library, learning outcomes (knowledge, confidence, application, attitude) of library space use, of library instructions and of library website use, students feeling about the library, demographic questions such as ethnicity, age and gender etc. Learning outcomes for space, website and library instruction were adapted from ACRL Project Outcome Model (<https://acrl.projectoutcome.org>).

Participants: A total of 27 UIC undergraduate students participated in the study. For this conference session, the preliminary findings from the quantitative data will be shared.

RESULTS

Students Primary Reasons of Using the Library



Top Reason for using Online Library

More than half of students responded that top reason for using the online library was "accessing library e-books and journals etc to help me complete assignments" (58%).

Learning Outcomes of Spaces and introduction

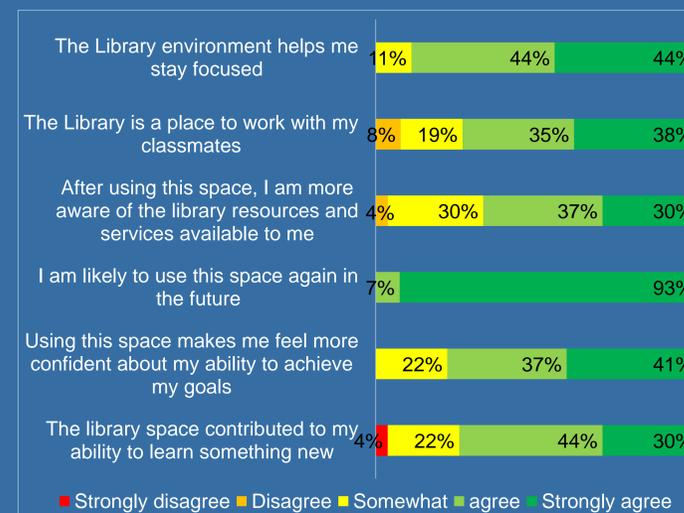


Figure 1. Learning outcomes for Library Space (n=27)

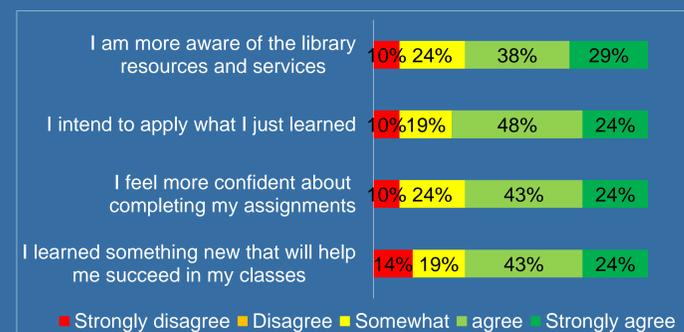


Figure 2. Learning outcomes for Library Instructions (n=21)

Results (Cont.)

Students Library Visits by GPA

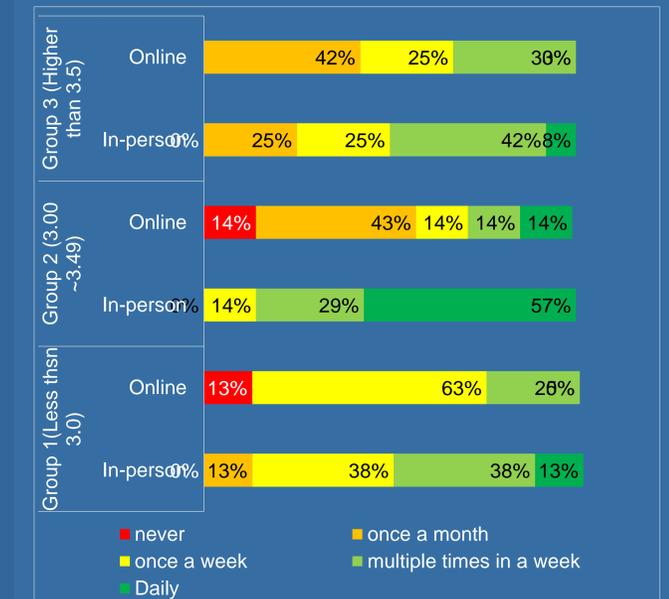


Figure 3. Students Library Visits (In person vs. Online) by GPA

The results indicated that Group 2 (between 3.0 and 3.49 GPA) was the primary users of library in-person visits. However, Group 3 (higher than 3.0 GPA) was the primary user of online library visits and had the largest percentage that used the online library most frequently.

Discussion & CONCLUSIONS

The findings from the current research project will be valuable for the University Library to demonstrate whether students' library space use has an impact on their learning beyond GPA. Additionally, the current research project is an example of ongoing assessment, which is beneficial for other academic libraries to understand the potential impact of the academic library on students' success, and to learn how an academic library can implement an ongoing assessment program to measure the library's impact on students learning.

Reference

1. Scoulas, J. M., & De Groote, S. L. (2019). The library's impact on university students' academic success and learning. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 14(3), 2–27. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ebli-02-2019-0017>
2. ACRL Project Outcome for Academic Libraries (2020, July 8). *Project Outcome* <https://acrl.projectoutcome.org/>