

The Impact of Library Usage on UC Students' Academic Performance

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Abstract

A library is a collection of literary documents or records kept for reference or borrowing; many students regard the library as a place for researching and reading books. Many factors of library usage play an imperative part in determining students' performance at school; thus, it is important to study and evaluate the impact for further understanding the relationship between the library and students. This research was undertaken because many researchers haven't focused on the library's role in developing countries. Subsequently, this research set out to examine the impact of the school library on student achievement at The University of Cambodia. Additionally, we also investigated the impact of library usage on students' academic performance as well as their approach to studying. The study used a questionnaire as a research tool for data collection. A total of one hundred copies of the questionnaire were given randomly to students who use the library at The University of Cambodia. The findings of the research showed that there is a notable association between library usage and students' academic performance. The results of our analysis further advocated the library provides several benefits to students and affects the way they approach their studies. Exploring this study of library is the first major step toward achieving further understanding of the overall impact of the library towards students as a whole, and helps make way for more comprehensive future research in this area.

I. Introduction

1. Background of the study

Academics is a very important step in student life. Every student needs to improve his/her performance to become better and achieve greater academic prospects. There are many things for students to do in order to improve their performance. One of those things that they can do is going to a library. According to Longman Dictionary 6th Edition, "A library is a room or building containing books that can be looked at or borrow." A library is very good place for every person especially students. It is not only a place to read books but a library is a place for students to do many activities that are related to their studies. They can go to read books, find new information, have group meetings and many other things.

Generally students never realize the importance of the library. Subsequently, a majority of students rarely know how to use the library to read its fullest potential, which makes the library underutilized. Many students only go to the library to meet up with their friends and discuss things that are not related to their lessons or information that they looking for. In a modern educational system which information and its sources are very important for the success and academic achievement of the students, it is compulsory that students understand and take advantage of the benefits that a library can provide. When they realize those benefits, the way that they approach their studies could be greatly impacted, and consequently their academic experience as well.

Cambodia's educational system is similar to others. Libraries play a major role as a provider of reliable and beneficial information here, just as in other countries. At the same time due to late development of the country, many students are having trouble comprehending the concept of a modern library. One way to mitigate this problem is to encourage the students to embrace using the library in their academic studies and explaining its benefits.

For this project, four students from The University of Cambodia (UC) conducted research under the topic "the Impact of the Academic Library on Students." And the objectives of this research are to know how the library has changed the way UC students approach their studies and the benefits that they perceive from using the library. One hundred students from term 1 to term 11 who are studying at The University of Cambodia were randomly chosen to complete the survey.

2. Problem Statement and research questions

Because some students don't find the library very useful or don't know how to use the library effectively, this research will examine why this is and aims to find ways to show students the importance of using the library. To conduct this research, the following questions need to be addressed:

1. How has the library changed the way UC students approach their studies?
2. What do UC students perceive as benefits of using the library?
3. To what extent are UC students' study habits affected by using the library?

II. Literature Review

1. Definition of a library

An academic library is a library that is attached to a higher education institution which serves two complementary purposes to support the school's curriculum, and to support the research of the university faculty and students. There are some opinions surrounding the meaning of library. Rudy Leon, an Associate Director of Research Services and Learning Spaces at the University of North Carolina, gave her opinion about the meaning of library as the following "I believe the library is the beating heart of campus, by which I mean that at its most perfect, the library is the nexus of student learning and research, of faculty research for scholarship, and teaching." Ryn Lewis, Masters of Library and Information Science, said that "more than any other facility or program in the school the library function as the place to extend student education beyond the required curriculum." Chris Bourg, a Stanford's Assistant University Librarian for Public Services, has recently given an important keynote address titled "Beyond Measure: Valuing Libraries" at the Acquisitions Institute 2013. He said that "my professional librarianship philosophy from librarians who serve in different capacities and work in different types of libraries, there are common themes that arise, most frequently instruction, success and intellectual freedom" (Bonfield, 2012).

2. Significance of the academic library

An academic library is a place where students can search for more information that they need for their studies. It plays a role in improving students' academic performance. Many researchers said libraries are very important in many ways based on their point of views. "More than just books and banks of computers, libraries are still places where individuals gather to explore, interact, and imagine" (Morris, 2011). "People may go to

the library looking mainly for information, but they find each other there” (Putnam, 2003). The library provides opportunities for children and adults alike, the library arts programs range from the simplest of crafts to the finest of fine arts (Picturing America for Public Libraries, 2011).

“The library has a role to model the value of the information mosaic built-up over time and across cultures. Other than the library, there is no agency of government that has a wide knowledge of the social significance of the accumulated resources of knowledge in the public domain” (Alan, E. S., 2002).

3. Library usage leads to better school performance

Reading is one of most important academic skills. Reading is the ability to understand words contained in a document and make use of the knowledge for personal growth and development (Dadzie, 2008). This implies making meaning out of recorded information either printed or non-printed in the life of an individual. People read for different reasons and purposes, some of which include reading for pleasure, leisure, relaxation, information, and for knowledge. According to Palani (2012), a reading habit is an essential and important aspect for creating a literate society in the world. It shapes the personality of an individual and it helps an individual to develop their thinking methods and creating new ideas. A good study habit leads to a good academic performance. For an excellent performance, there is the need for the student to form good reading and study habits. “A library, more than any other place, provides an ideal environment and vital information resources for students to develop and sustain good study habits necessary for excellent performance in academic works. Thus, it is imperative for the students to cultivate good study habits that will equip them for excellent performance in their academic work through the use of a school’s library” (Jato, Ogunniyi and Olubiyo, 2014).

Libraries are the sources of reliable information and play an important role in improving students’ performance in the university. They are critically important in helping researchers to exploit the full benefits and opportunities of the networked world, including such developments as open access and social media (A RIN and RLUK report, 2011). Using the information that we get from books in the library is more reliable than the source that we take from the Internet. Furthermore, libraries provides a good environment for researchers. At school a library is a place that provides a quiet, well-lit study place and environment that is good for mental concentration for students.

4. Students' perspectives on the library

While many researchers and analysis talk only about the library, there are a few studies that provide perspectives from students themselves on the library. In July of 2015, CENGAGE published the results of a Student Engagement Insights study: why students go to the library (blog.cengage.com). This survey of over 3,000 college students found that there are top four reasons that college students go to the library. (1) study alone: 77% of students head to the library to focus on their studies by themselves, (2) use the online databases: More than half (51%) of the students said that they're at the library to use the online databases, and a good portion of their research work is completed at the library, (3) use references: 39% of students stated that they use the reference materials such as encyclopedias, specialized publications, indexes, or other references that aren't available in electronic formats and (4) meet their study group: More than one third (34%) of student visit the library for group work because the simplicity of having a central place to meet that's not their own homes and the convenience of accessing nearby scholarly and reference materials (*ibid.*).

Another study released by the Gensler seemed to support CENGAGE study's findings. According to Gensler's Student Perspectives on the Library analysis, a survey of 1,200 US students carried out by Mark Thaler and Tim Pittman, the most important resource provided by today's library is quiet place. It remained important for future libraries as well. A related issue that Gensler found out is that students visit academic libraries more often to access digital resources. Students reported a preference for digital resources and integrated technology over book collections. Based on the results of these studies, a conclusion reached is that that many students think of a library as a quiet place and prefer it for individual studying. Additionally, according to students, libraries are about more than just books. A majority of the students also use digital resources and reference materials in library, and they continue to seek library spaces as the place to complete their individual and teamwork.

Overall, many survey and studies concerning library like CENGAGE and Gensler took place in developed countries. There is a lack of an in-depth evaluation of the effects that a library has on students in developing countries, and whether it's the same or different to those developed countries.

III. Research Methodology

1. Research design

We chose a quantitative approach, and we used a questionnaire to get the data from participants. Our questionnaire was designed to survey library users to see how much time they usually spend in the library and determine how the library usage improves their academic performance at The University of Cambodia depending on their gender and term. The introduction of our questionnaire began with asking participants for their gender, age, term, and major. The first part of our questionnaire asked for students' information about how often they visit the library, who they go with and how satisfied they are with the library. The second part of the questionnaire was to know how the library plays a role in the academic study for students, and we also want to generate their input towards the library usage. For instance, the library is a place where they can look for reliable information for their research, the library helps them to read more, and understand the lessons better. In the third part of our questionnaire, we provided two open questions to participants in order to know what the benefits are for them after visiting the library. Additionally, we also included suggestions and complaints at the last part of our questionnaire to know what students dislike and how students want the library to improve in the future.

2. Data collection

The data on UC library usage were collected through giving a questionnaire to 100 participants. Our questionnaires were designed in English and we're only doing the survey for International track students. All the participants were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. We spent about a week to collect our data at the UC academic library.

3. Analysis method

We used Microsoft Excel to analyze the data that we collected from participants. We used computers and resorted to using hand-written calculation and analysis. For the first and second part of the questionnaire, we sorted participants by gender and term in order to analyze the different impacts on students' performance between males and females after using the library. As for the open-ended questions, we used content analysis and calculated the answers into percentages. After we put them into group, we analyzed the data and made a conclusion based on those responses.

IV. Findings and Data Analysis

1. Findings

Part I of the survey was designed to determine general patterns of library usage of participants. Questions 1, 2 and 3 tried to establish how many times per week the participants go to the library, whether they go alone or with friends, and the amount of time they spend in each session at the library. Through the responses of the participants, we gathered the following data. For question 1, 73% of the students go to the library 1-3 times per week, while 18 percent of them go 4-6 times per week and 6 percent only go more than 6 times per week. 3 percent of students left no answer. As for question 2, a majority of the students which accounted for 74 percent go to the library with friends, which left only 26 percent of students who answered that they go alone. Whereas question 3 is concerned, 36 percent of the students spend less than 1 hour in library, 56 percent spend up to 1-3 hours, and no students spend more than 3 hours in the library.

Questions 4, 5, 6 and 7 in the part I of the questionnaire try to further understand the activities of student inside the library as well as their satisfaction level regarding using the library. The results began to fluctuate in this part. Question 4 asked why students visited the library, and 41 percent of the student chose learning/researching as the main purpose, while a whopping 49 percent chose multiple reasons that included research/ learning, looking for jobs, accessing books, leisure/general enjoyment, and accessing the Internet.

For question 5, 85 percent of students agree that the librarians help in finding the material they need; only 15 percent said no. Question 6 and 7 try to evaluate the quality of the library and satisfaction level of students. For question 6, the quality existing in library received following responses from the students, 34 percent agreed that there is a good stock of different kinds of books, and 24 percent said that there was good seating and reading places. 5 percent thought the newspapers and magazines were current, and 8 percent used the online database and internet, while another 28 percent chose more than one option. 3% did not answer. And finally for the last question in part I, only 16 percent feel highly satisfied with the library, while 46 percent of total population feel satisfied with the library. 28 percent feel moderately satisfied, with only 2 percent and 5 percent respectively feeling dissatisfied and highly dissatisfied with the library.

In part II of the questionnaire find out the extent that the library can help improve the learning experience and academic performance of students. We asked the participants to show their ratings through a scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. We have generated mix of responses which can be found in Table 1. As seen from the Table, most students had a positive reaction towards the library.

Table 1: Response by gender to question 6-9

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6	Using the library helps me read more	14%	61%	21%	3%	1%
7	Using the library helps me improve my academic performance	16%	51%	20%	10%	3%
8	The library helps me understand my lessons better	8%	43%	36%	12%	1%
9	The library is the place for reliable sources for your research	18%	49%	28%	4%	1%

The results from the open-ended questions in part III aimed to know about the benefits, the impact of using library, and the suggestions about what students want library to improve in order to facilitate them when using the library. 47% out of 100 students claimed that the first benefit from visiting the library is to get more knowledge, while 35% of students agreed on the fact that the library is good place for reading. 25% of students claimed that the library is a place that they could have more books for their studies, and another 14% of students visited the library to get access to the Internet; while 12% of participants visited the library in order to read books and improve their skills. 11% of participants remarked that the library is a place of reliable information for their research or lessons. And the remaining 6% of participants went to the library in order to make new friends who love studying.

Question number 2 asked about the impact of library on students' performances. The result that we get from 100 participants are 7% of students left with No comment, while 23% of participants responded with

No; and 70% of students responded with Yes. However, only 24% of students who responded by saying Yes provided their reasons to the question. 10% out of 24% of positive mentioned that the library helps the way they learn and provides good materials such as different kinds of books. 4% of positive said the library helps expand and improve their knowledge. The other 5% of participants provided a reason that library encourages them to read and study more, while the other 5% claimed library is a good place with a good environment which helps them to feel good about their studies.

Question number 3 aimed to deal with what students dislike about the library. Amongst 100 participants, 52% of students responded with no complaints or suggestions for the library, which indicated that they are satisfied with the library, while 48% of students come up with suggestions for the library. 16% of students suggested the library to provide more books, while 3% of students requested for new materials for research. 7% of students suggested the library to be well-organized, so they can easily find the books they need. 6% of students complained about the speed of Internet in the library, so their suggestion is to improve the speed of the Internet. Only 1% of students ask the library to allow them to take some food in to the library; the other 3% of students requested the library to be open longer. Lastly, 3% of participants complained about the discipline of other people who make noise in the library.

2. Data analysis

After we received our data, we wanted to further analyze the data by the characteristics of the respondents. In question 1, we attempted to find out if there are any differences related to how often do different groups of students visit the library. We sorted the respondents by gender. For female students, we found out that 77.59% of them visit the library 1-3 times per week, while 12.06% and 6.7% of them go to library 4-6 times per week and more than 6 times per week respectively. For males, the result seems to be similar to those of female respondents, 65% of male visit 1-3 times per week, 27.5% visit 4-6 times per week, only 5% visit more than 6 times per week. We can see that there is not much difference in how many times both genders of students visit the library, with result of 1-3 times per week being the most common among the two genders. However, when we turn to question 3 which asked about how much time the students spend in the library per session, we find something quite interesting. Results show that 29.31% of female respondents spent less than one hour in the library per session,

whereas 60.34% spent 1-3hours, and only 10.34% spent more than 3 hours. In contrast, 47.5% of male spent less than 1 hour per session in library, another 47.5% spent 1-3 hours per session, and merely 5% spent more than 3 hours per session. We can clearly see that females tended to stay in the library longer than men.

In the second part, for question 1 we wanted to know whether how the library affected the way student approach their studies by asking whether they agree that Library is the first place that they go when they need to find more information. We focused on the response of both different genders of student. For females, 20.69% strongly agreed that the library is the first place for finding information, 48.27% agreed, 22.41% thought it is average, while 8.62% disagreed. For males, 27.5% strongly agreed, 42.5% agreed, 15% thought it is passable and another 15% disagreed. We noticed a great percentage of population both genders of students would go to the library to find information and no one strongly disagreed with that. When we focused on the term difference of students, the results do not seem to be too different. For terms I-V, 25% strongly agreed, 50% agreed, 21.88% were neutral, while 3.12% disagreed. For terms VI-XI, 22.06% strongly agreed, 44.12% agreed, and 19.12% thought it is normal, while 14.71% disagreed. All data from both term differences of students seem to complement each other until it reaches the point where terms VI-XI students disagree more on the library as being the first place they go to find information.

For question 7, we tried to understand the perception of students on whether using the library helps improve their performance the academic performance. For females, the results show that 13.79% of them strongly agreed that their academic improved due to library, while 48.27% agreed to the statement, while 29.31% thought that it is so-so, only remaining 8.62% disagreed. The males responded with 20% strongly agreeing, 55% agreeing, 5% taking a neutral stand, and the remaining 12.5% and 7.5% disagreeing and strongly disagreeing respectively. Overall, males tended to rate library usage as the reason for improving academic performance higher then females. We wanted to know whether the difference in term affected the result, so we divided the group of participants from different term into two term categories, I-V and VI-XI. We generated the following results, for terms I-V, 18.75% strongly agreed to library usage improving academic performance, 50% agreed to that, 25% was neutral, while only 6.24 disagreed and strongly disagreed. As for terms VI-XI, 14.71% strongly agreed, 51.47 agreed, 17.65% was neutral, interestingly 13.24% of them

disagreed, while 2.94% strongly disagreed. This clearly shows that even the positive results were closely related; term VI-XI students seem to be more negative than term I-V students that the library helps with their academic performance.

Finally, in open questions 1, we wanted all the students to express their opinions of what they perceive as the benefits received by using library. For the results that we got from the first question is 47% out of 100 students claimed that the first benefits from visiting the library is to get more knowledge, while 35% of students agreed on the fact that library is good place for reading. 25% of students claimed that the library is a place that they could have more books for their study, the other 14% of students visited the library to get access to the Internet, while 12% of participants visited library in order to read books and improve their skills. Only 11% of participants thought the library is a place of reliable information for their research or lessons. And the remaining 6% of participants went to the library in order to make new friends who love studying. Thus we can conclude that two major benefits that library can provide to students are to obtain extra knowledge, and act as a good place for reading.

Table 2: Response by gender to question 1&2 (part I)

		Female	Male
Q1	1---3 time	77.59%	65%
	4---6 times	12.06%	27.50%
	More than 6 times	6.70%	5%
Q2	Less than 1 hour	29.31%	47.50%
	1---3 hours	60.34%	47.50%
	More than 3 hours	10.34%	5%

Table 3: Response by gender to questions 1&7 (part II)

		Female	Male
Q1	Strongly Agree	20.69%	27.5%
	Agree	48.27%	42.50%
	Neutral	22.41%	15%
	Disagree	8.62%	15.00%
	Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0.00%
Q7	Strongly Agree	13.79%	20%
	Agree	48.27%	55%
	Neutral	29.31%	5%
	Disagree	8.62%	12.50%
	Strongly Disagree	0%	7.50%

Table 4: Response by term of participants to questions 1 & 7 (part II)

		Term I--- V	Term VI--- XI
Q1	Strongly Agree	25.00%	22.06%
	Agree	50.00%	44.12%
	Neutral	21.88%	19.12%
	Disagree	3.12%	14.71%
	Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0.00%
	Strongly Agree	18.75%	14.71%

Q7	Agree	50.00%	51.47%
	Neutral	25.00%	17.65%
	Disagree	3.12%	13.24%
	Strongly Disagree	3.12%	2.94%

Table 5: Overall response to open question 1 (part III)

Benefits provided by library	Participants' response
Get more knowledge	47%
Good place for reading	35%
More books for study	25%
Access to internet	14%
Read book to improve skill	12%
Reliable information for research	11%
Make new friends	6%

V. Discussion

The goal of this study was to determine the benefits of using the academic library for students at The University of Cambodia. Moreover, we also investigated the impact of library usage on the students' academic performance and well as their approach to study. Our study suggests that the library greatly improves the academic performance of students since most students respond positively to that. Subsequently students also listed down many benefits that library provides with extra knowledge and good reading place. Their approach to studying altered a bit since a good portion of the students consider the library to be the primary place for finding information. Notably, students shared the positive influences of the library on their studies such as encouraging them to read, providing a good place and quiet environment, and helping expand their knowledge with good reading materials.

We explored deeper into the data to find possible relationships; however, our results revealed only little significance difference among the diverse

perception of students based on gender and term. There is not much difference to how often both genders of students visit the library; however, females tend to stay in library longer than men. Additionally, when we focused on term difference of students, terms VI-XI student disagree more than term I-V student on considering the library as the first place they go to find information.

VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

According to the findings of the study, a good portion of students at The University of Cambodia seem to use the library to some extent and are aware of the benefits provided to their studies as well as academic performance. They also seem to prefer to study or conduct group meetings in the library due to its suitable environment. Generally, they also are greatly satisfied with the way library operates and the information that can be found there that can greatly improve their studies.

Even though the research results look convincing, it was conducted in a short period of time with a small sample size; thus it cannot be taken to speculate that all of the students of The University of Cambodia or all other universities would react and share similar responses to the impact of the library on them. Nevertheless, this research serves as a guide and helps raise the attention for more future research on such an underrated topic that has always been overlooked by researchers especially in developing countries.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Topic: “Impacts of Academic Library on Students’ Performance in University in Cambodia.” Research Questions

1. How have the library changed the way UC student approach their studies?
2. What do UC students perceive as benefits of using academic library?
3. To what extent are UC students’ academic performance affected by academic library usage?

Questionnaire

Dear participants, we are conducting a survey on library users to see how much time students usually spend in the library, what they mostly do there, and most importantly is how library usage improve students’ academic performance at the University of Cambodia. We would like to ask to complete this questionnaire and it should only take up to 5minutes.

Gender:

Male

Female

Age:

Term:

Major

Part I

Please, Tick one of the following options provided:

1. How many times per week do you visit library?

1-3 times per week

4-6 times per week

More than 6 times per week

2. Do you usually visit library with friends?

Yes

No

3. How much time you spend in library per session?

Less than 1 hour.

1-3 hours.

More than 3 hours.

4. What are you purposes of visiting library? (You can tick more than one)

For learning/research

Looking for job

Access books

Leisure/general enjoyment

Access to internet

Check information from varied sources Other

5. Do the librarians help you in finding the books and reading materials you need?

Yes

No

6. Please tick the right option that applied to what your library consists of.

Newspaper and magazines from most of current publishers.

Good stock of different kind of books.

Good seating and reading space.

Online database and internet availability.

7. How satisfied are you with the library?

Highly dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Moderately satisfied

Satisfied

Highly satisfied

Part II

Please, tick as applicable to the activities from strongly agree to strongly disagree in the column below:

Activities	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Library is the first place that I go when I need to find information for my study.					
2. I can concentrate more on the lessons when I'm in the library.					
3. I love studying in group in the library.					
4. I love to do my assignment in the library.					
5. There is a lot of relevant information to my study in the library.					
6. Using library helps me read more.					
7. Using library helps me improve my academic performance.					
8. Library helps me understand my lessons better.					
9. Library is the place for reliable sources for your research.					

Part III

Please, answer the following questions.

1. What are the benefits that you think you get from using library?
2. Does library impact the way you approach your study?
3. Please mention if you have any suggestion or complaints.

Thank you for taking time to fill in this questionnaire!

Appendix B

Table 6: Responses to part I of questionnaire

1	How many times per week do you visit library?	1---3 times	73%
		4---6 times	18%
		More than 6 times	6%
2	Do you usually visit library with friends?	Yes	74%
		NO	26%
3	How much time you spend in library per session?	Less than 1 hour	36%
		1---3 hours	56%
		More than 3 hours	8%
4	What are you purposes of visiting library?	For learning/research	41%
		Looking for job	1%
		Access books	2%
		general enjoyment	3%
		Access to internet	2%
		More than one	1%
		Other	49%
N.A	1%		
5	Do the librarians help you in finding the books and reading materials you need?	Yes	85%
		No	15%
6	Please tick the right option that applied to what your library consists of	Newspapers and magazines from most of	5%
		Good stock of different kind	34%
		Good seating and reading	24%
		Online database and internet	8%
		More than one	28%
		N.A	1%
7	How satisfied are you with the library?	Highly dissatisfied	5%
		Dissatisfied	2%
		Moderately satisfied	28%
		Satisfied	46%
		Highly satisfied	16%
		N.A	3%

Table 7: Response to part II of questionnaire

Part I		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Library is the first place that I go when I need to find information for my study	23%	46%	20%	11%	0%
2	Library is the place for reliable sources for your research	13%	63%	18%	4%	1%
3	I love studying in group in the library	10%	34%	38%	13%	5%
4	I love to do my assignment in the library	12%	42%	36%	7%	3%
5	There is a lot of relevant information to my study in the library	13%	48%	33%	5%	1%
6	Using library helps me read more	14%	61%	21%	3%	1%
7	Using library helps me improve my academic performance	16%	51%	20%	10%	3%
8	Library helps me understand my lessons better	8%	43%	36%	12%	1%
9	Library is the place for reliable sources for your research	18%	49%	28%	4%	1%

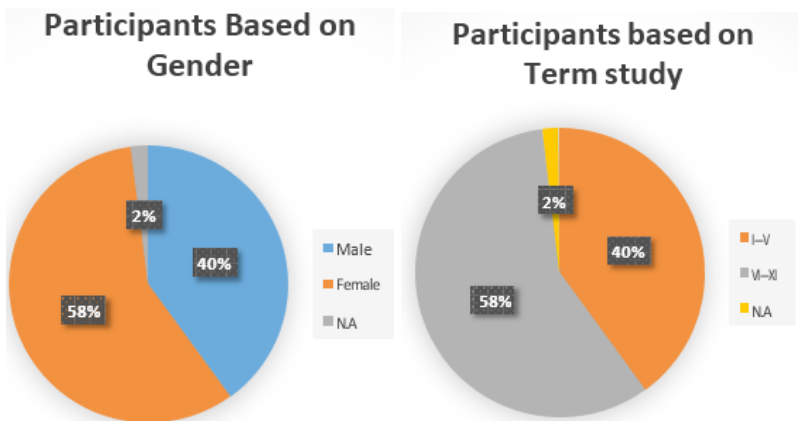


Figure 1 and 2: Total participants

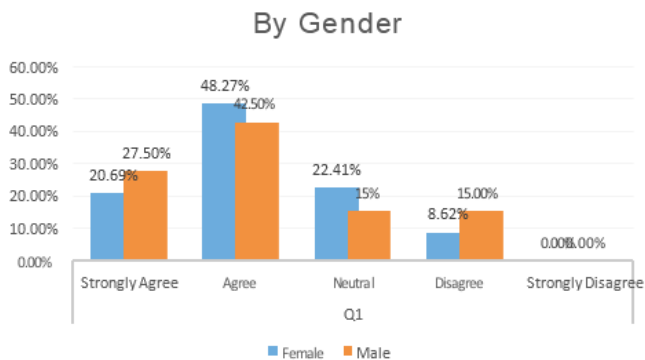


Figure 3: Library is the first place that I go when I need to find information for my study (Gender)

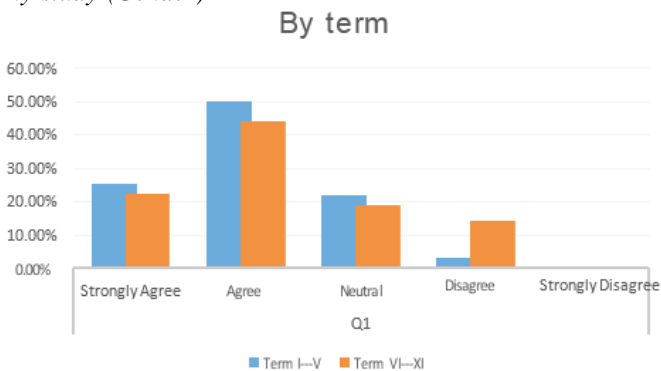


Figure 4: Library is the first place that I go when I need to find information for my study (Term)

BY GENDER

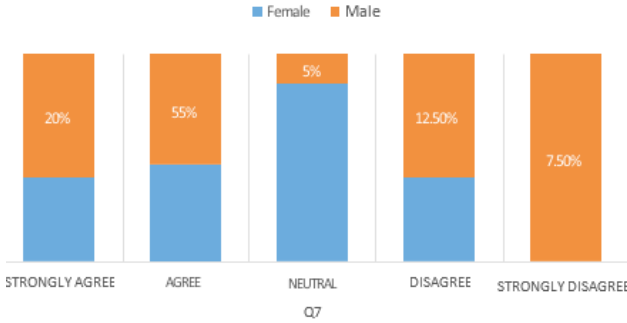


Figure 5: Using library help me improve my academic performance (Gender)

BY TERM

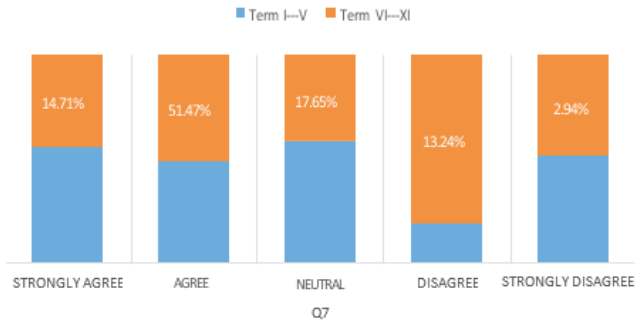


Figure 6: Using library help me improve my academic performance (Term)