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MBA Student Library Collaboration: Progress and Pitfalls.

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PROGRESS & PITFALLS:
Business Students and Library Collaboration

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STUDENT PROJECT

STUDENTS & THEIR CLASS

Four MBA Students
Liangqi Liu, James Savory, Wenjun Song and Zhihan Yu – MBA accounting students who had no background in market research.

Marketing 540
The graduate course introduces major research techniques currently employed by major corporations in the U.S. The class addresses problem formulation, research design, questionnaire construction, data collection, multivariate data analysis techniques and report writing.

FIRST STEPS

The Approach
MBA accounting students approached the Libraries to be their "client" for their elective Marketing class. Jill Dixon, Science Library Coordinator, and Colleen Hailey, Business Subject Librarian, agreed to represent the Libraries.

First Meeting
The students discussed their proposal to seek a correlation between study time in the Libraries and course grades. Librarians Dixon and Hailey felt dubious about the theme.

Back to the Drawing Board
The proposal is evaluated by the Libraries and their Marketing professor as being difficult, time consuming, complex, and not the type of information needed to improve library services.

Second Meeting
Students met with Librarians Dixon and Hailey to revise survey. Librarians discovered that students have little knowledge of library services or resources. Students refined survey to provide a "better understanding of the typical user and his or her perceptions of Binghamton University Libraries."
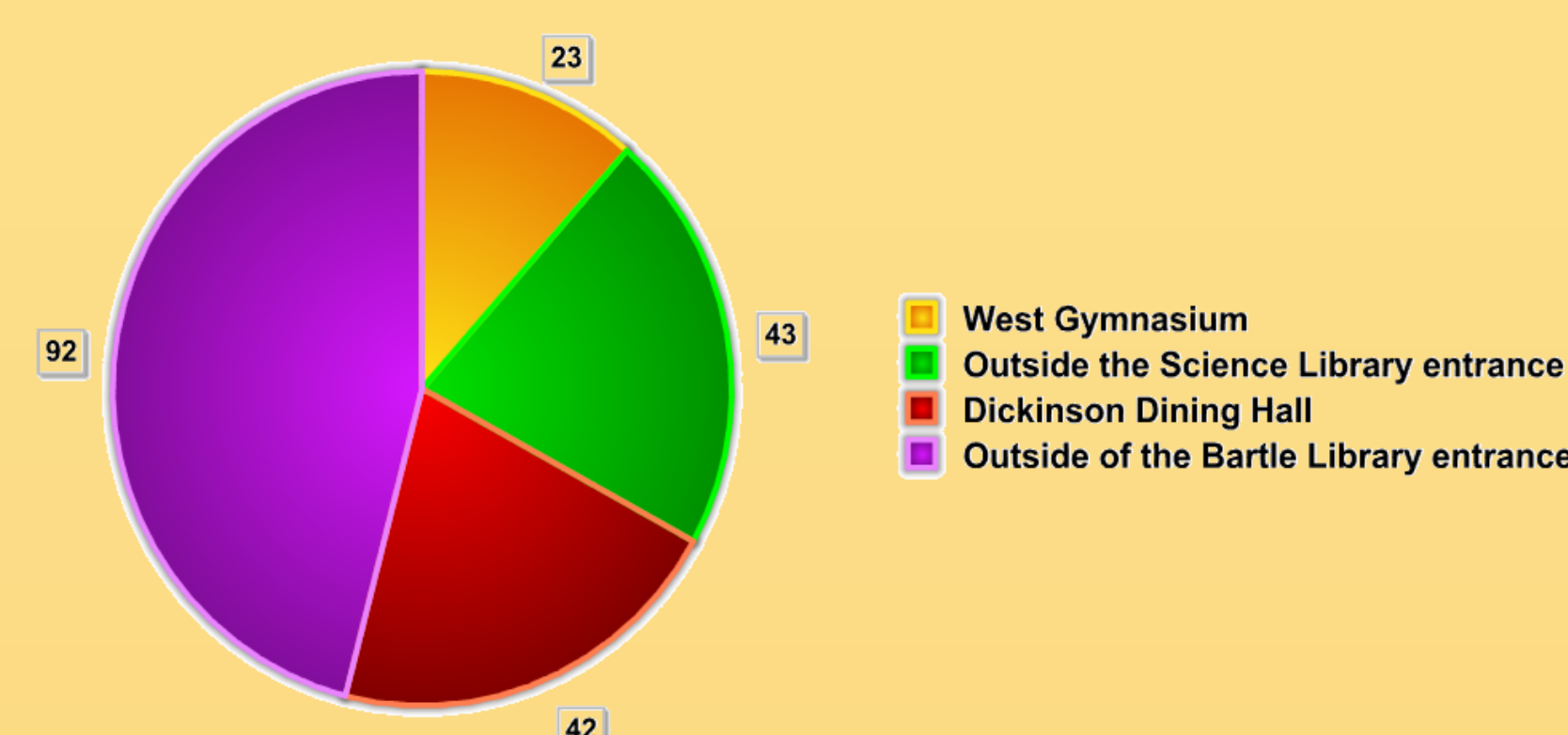
SURVEY METHODOLOGY & RESULTS

METHODOLOGY

Survey Distribution
200 paper surveys distributed at 4 campus locations over a 2-day period, resulting in a 50% return rate.

- West Gymnasium
- Outside the Science Library entrance
- Dickinson Dining Hall
- Outside of the Bartle Library entrance

Survey Questions

- For what purpose do students use the Bartle Library, Science Library, or the Libraries' website?
- To what degree are students satisfied with library services?
- Are there significant differences between frequent users of online services or users of other library services?

RESULTS

Why Students Use the Libraries
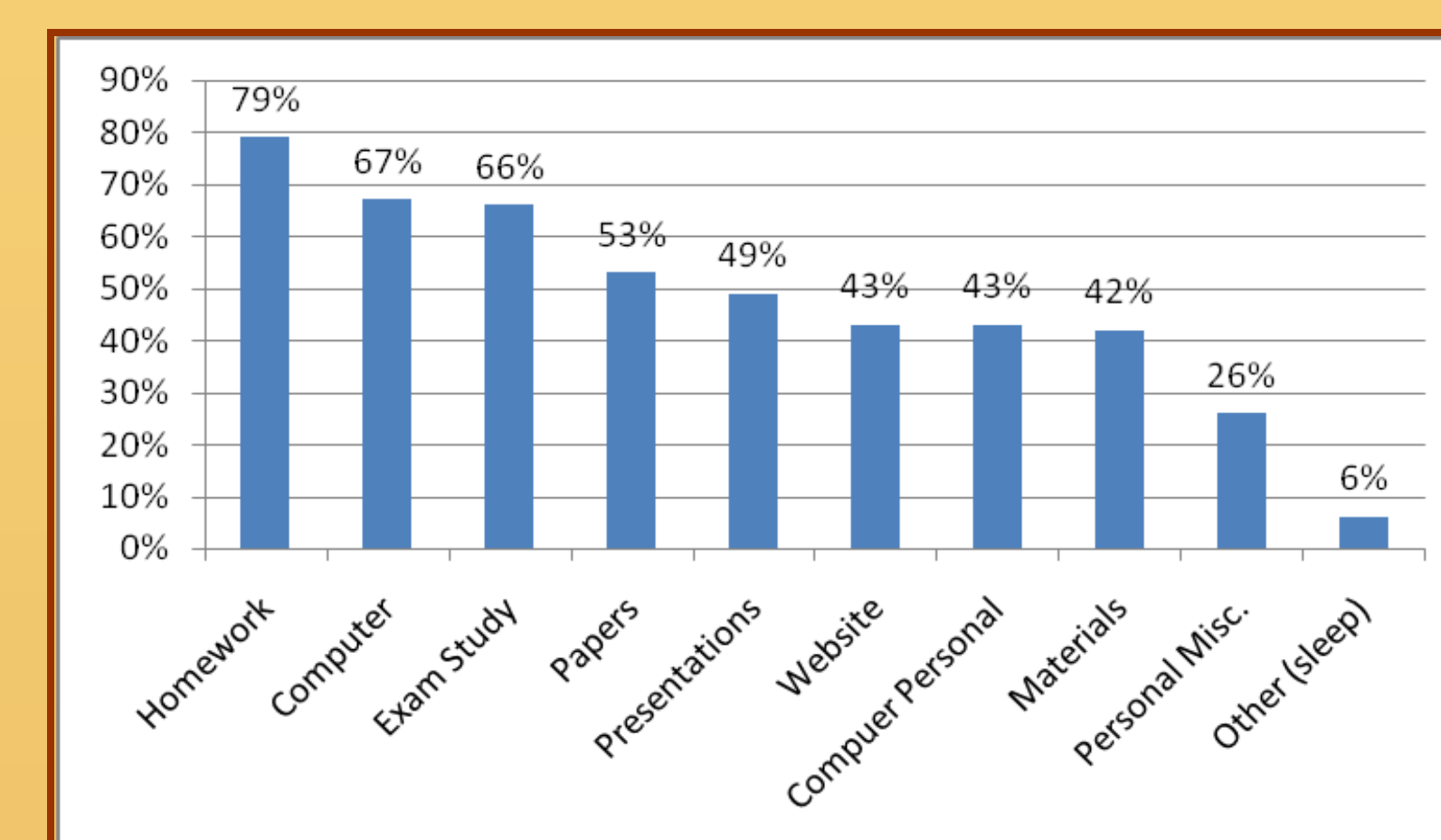
MORE RESULTS

**Library Services**

Usage of Library Services and Resources

119 (59.5%)	Ask a Librarian Service
160 (80%)	Electronic Resources
140 (70%)	Reference Services
145 (72.5%)	Circulation Services
100 (50%)	Interlibrary Loan Services
129 (64.5%)	Reserves
120 (60%)	IM Chat/E-mail Reference
90 (45%)	Special Collections
86 (43%)	Laptop Lending Service

Libraries' Website
Degree of Usage Between Online And Physical Library
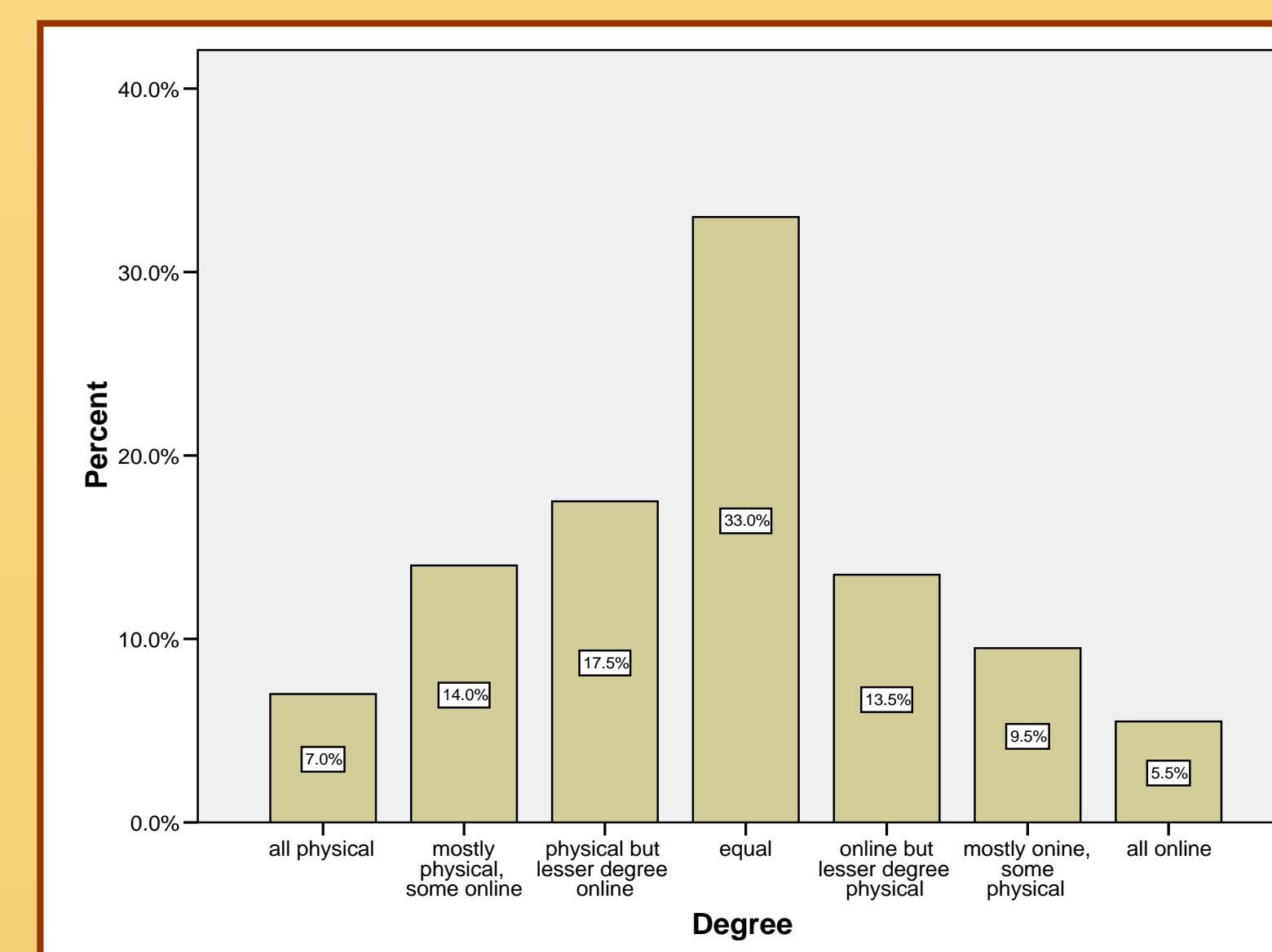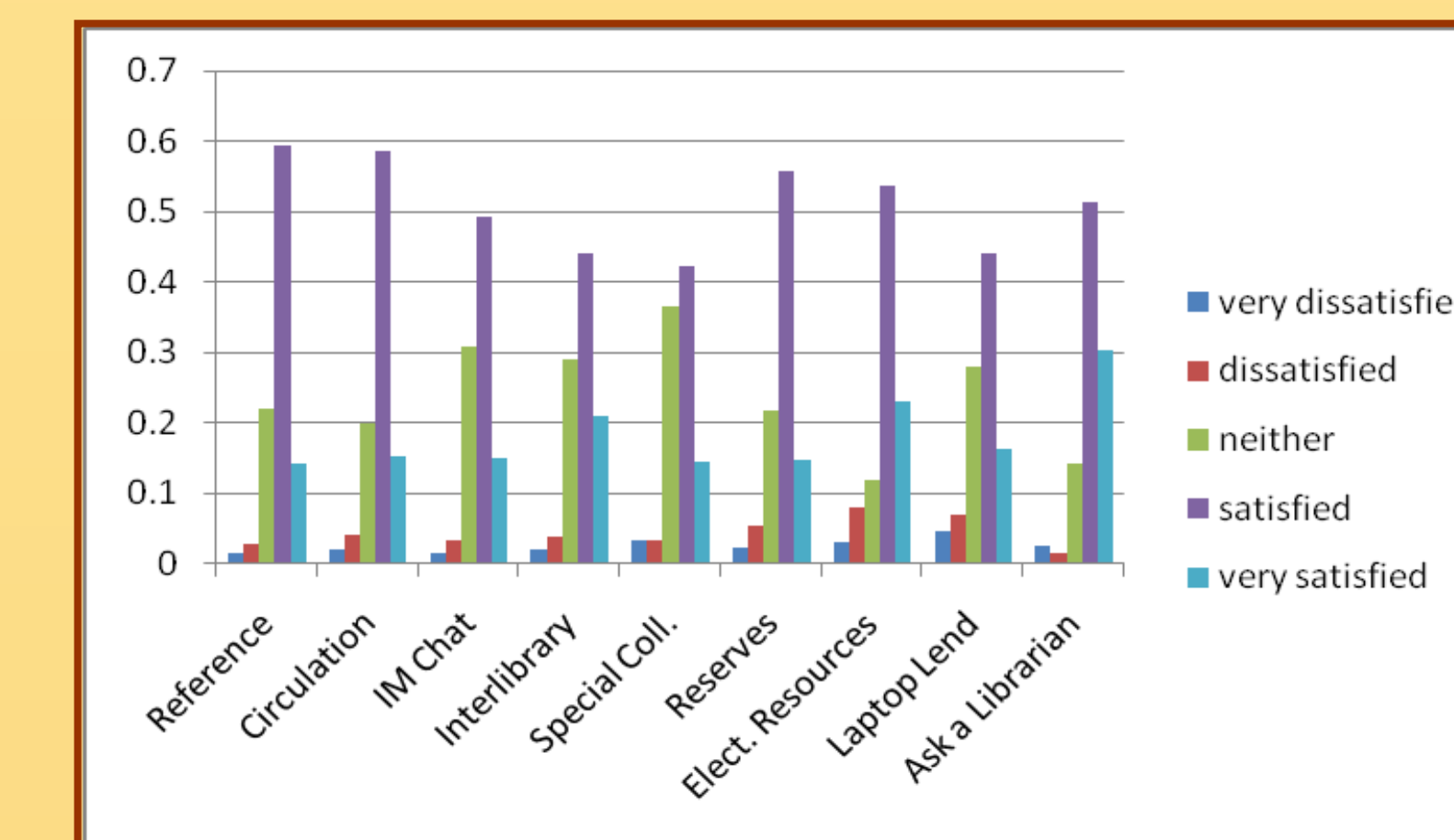

Reasons for Using Libraries' Website
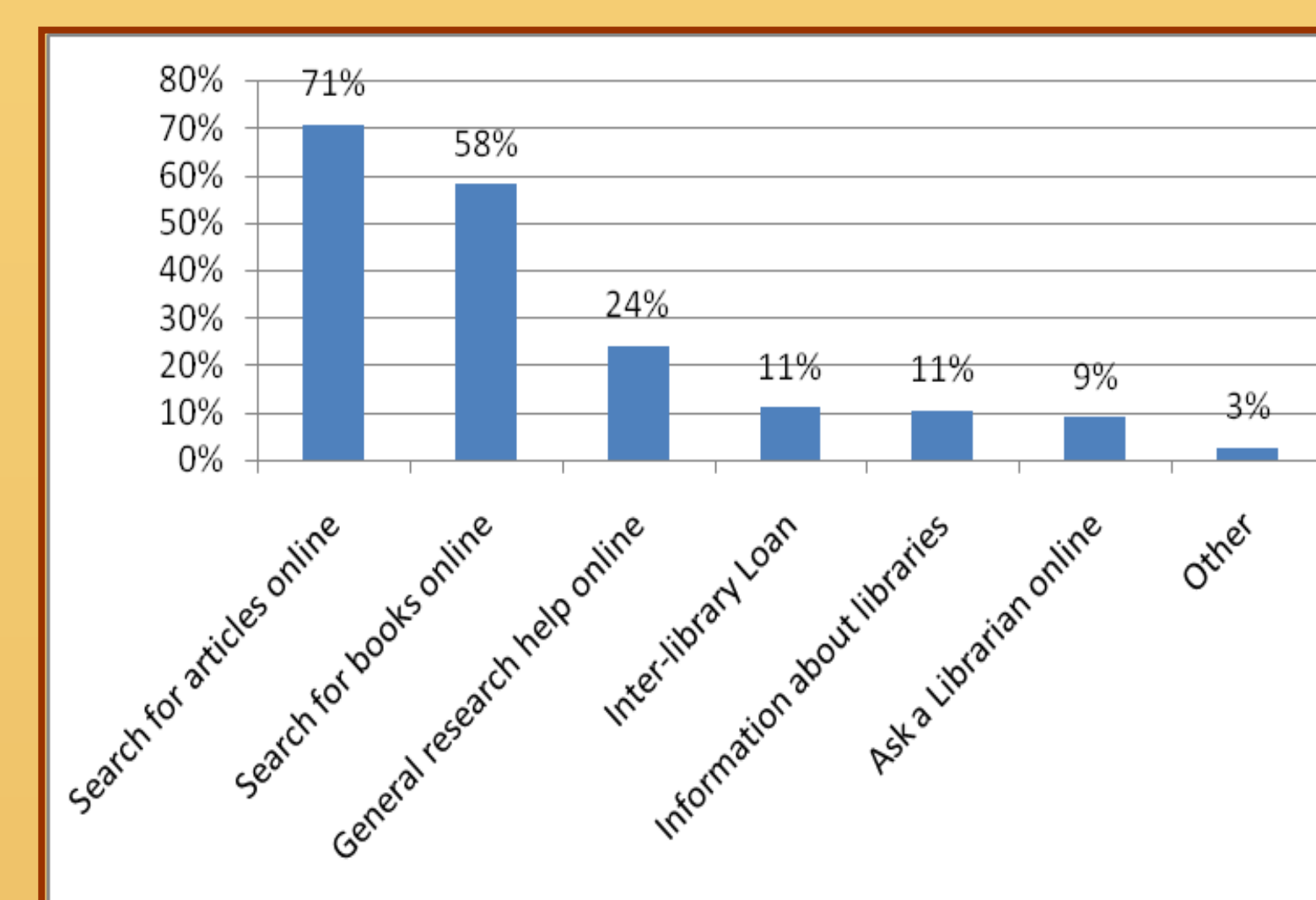
Search for books online	116	58.0%
Search for articles online	141	70.5%
Ask a Librarian online	18	9.0%
General research help online	48	24.0%
Interlibrary Loan	22	11.0%
Information about the Libraries	21	10.5%
Other	5	2.5%

MORE RESULTS

Satisfaction Level Comparisons

Satisfaction with Library Services

- very dissatisfied
- dissatisfied
- neither
- satisfied
- very satisfied

Needs Improvement

- Bartle
- B-Info
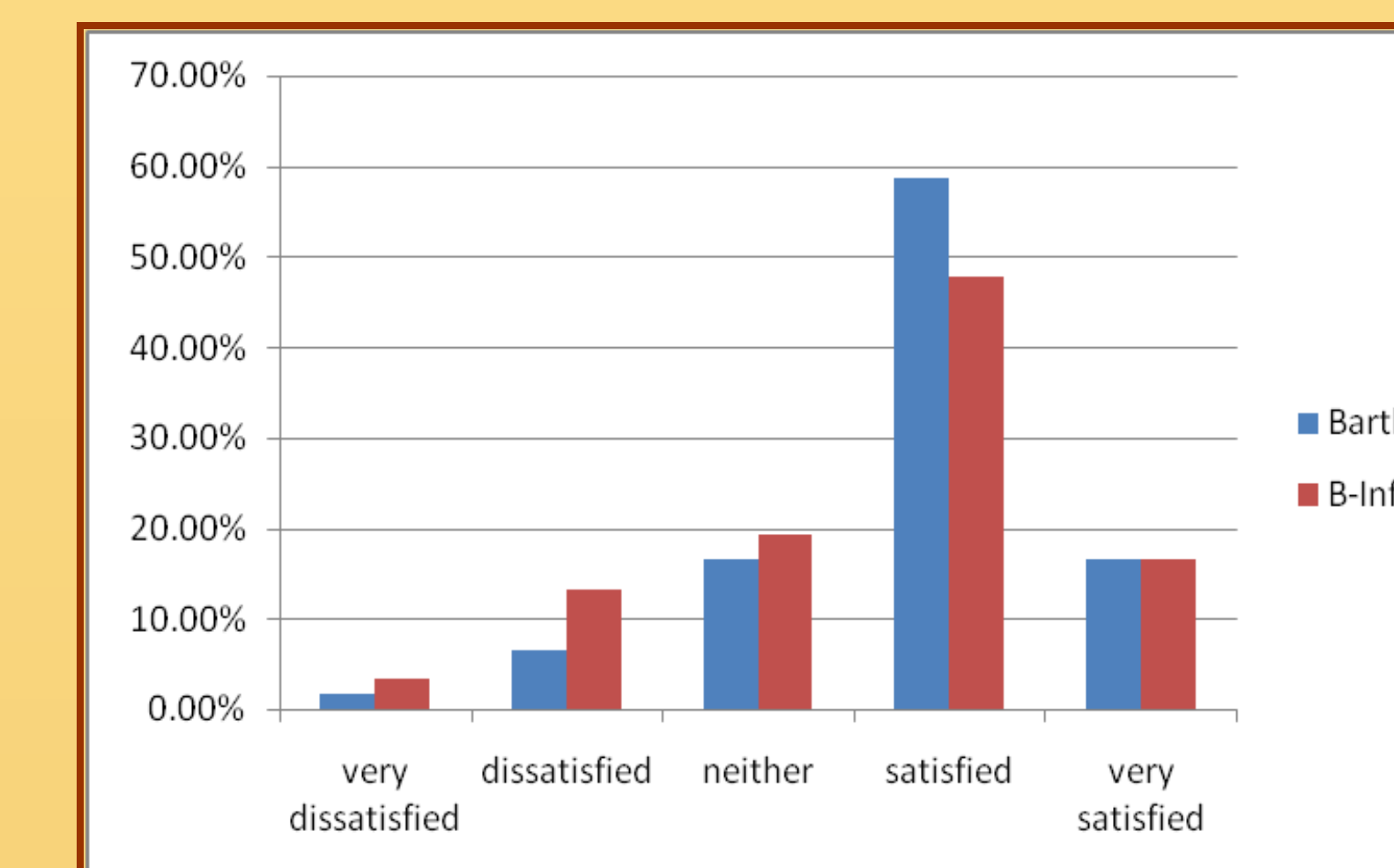
Needs Improvement
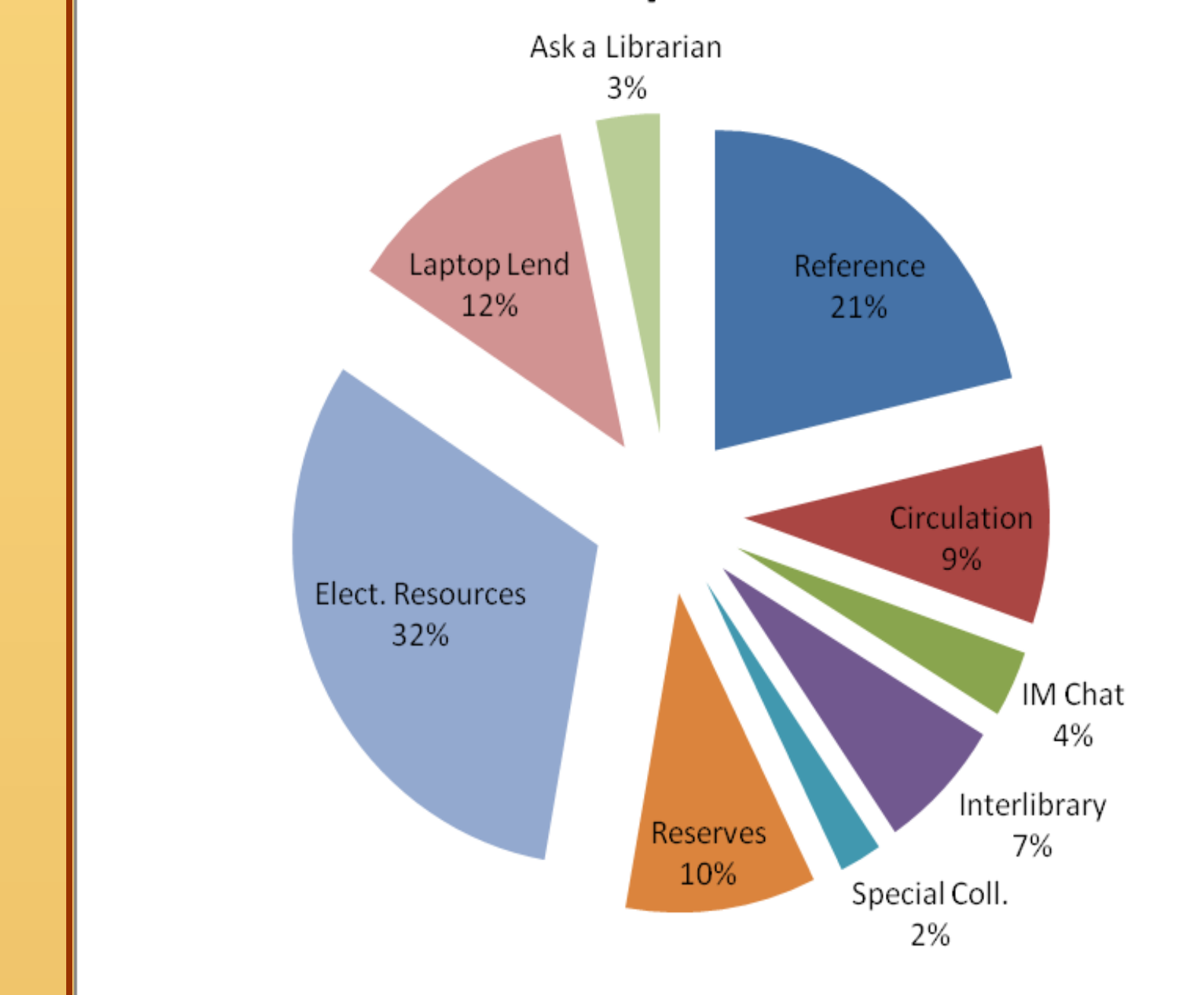
WHAT WE LEARNED

LESSONS LEARNED FOR FUTURE COLLABORATIONS

- **Students have a lack of understanding of library services and resources, which can impede the development of a questionnaire.**
  - The MBA students were fonts of misinformation.

- **Surveys need to be focused—students have a hard time figuring out what services to evaluate or may pick unrealistic topics.**
  - The Library should have a good idea before meeting with the students what areas they want to be evaluated. Our marketing survey was too general.

- **Students respond better to fellow students when filling out surveys.**
  - The MBA students had a high return rate especially considering they used paper surveys.

- **Surveys may be distributed more widely when done by students.**
  - The surveys were handed out in places that the Libraries ordinarily do not go, e.g., dining halls and during a basketball game.

- **Even MBA students may have no background in marketing surveys.**
  - Especially non-Marketing majors. Some results had to be discarded due to survey design problems.

- **…Or number crunching statistical programs.**
  - Our students titled this part of their report "The Coding Nightmare."

- **Collaboration is key.**
  - It is a delicate process, as you cannot write the assignment for the students or tell them exactly how to do it.

- **Have meetings. Lots of meetings.**
  - We only had two initial meetings with the students, but wished that we had more. It is hard to coordinate meetings with busy MBA students.

- **Have the students do a presentation for interested library staff.**
  - And do proofread the final report—ours had some statistical anomalies.

- **Enjoy the process and a different way of connecting with Business students.**
  - One of the MBA students changed his minor to Marketing after this class assignment. They all learned a lot about the Libraries' Services.

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