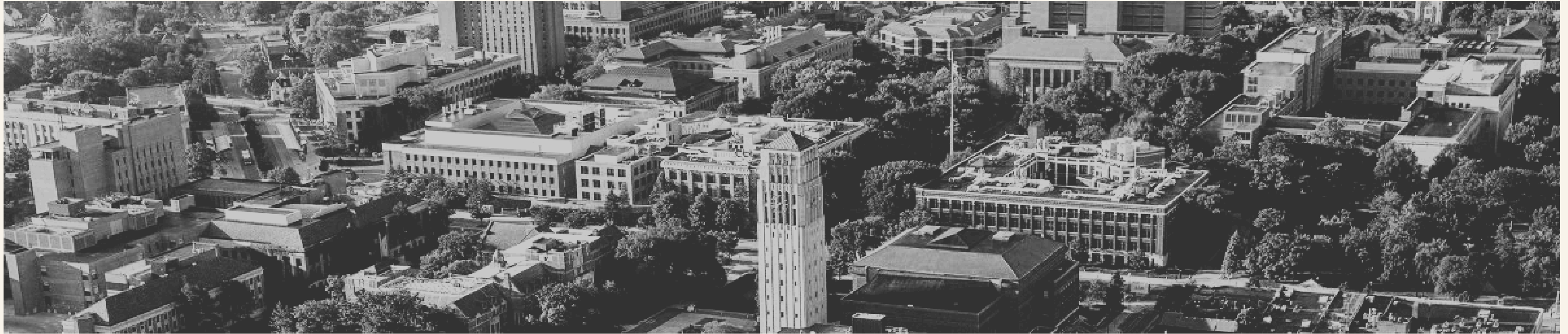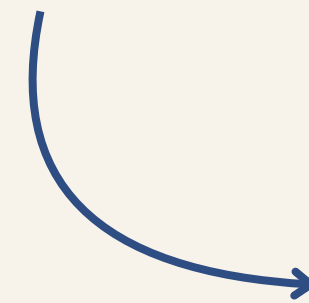# International Undergraduate Students' Awareness and Utilization of Academic Library Resources

Mai Tran, Paige Bost, Craig Smith (mentor)

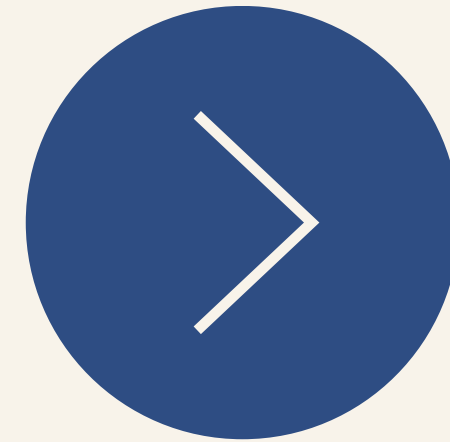Friday, July 26, 2024

About Me

Mai Tran (she/her/hers),

- Rising senior majoring in Biopsychology, Cognition & Neuroscience (BCN); minoring in Writing and Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences (QMSS)
- Pursuing a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, with focus on child development and family dynamics

- **For this project,** I am exploring special characteristics of how international students interact with library resources, and how the library can better support diverse audiences.

Mentor: Craig Smith

Agenda

Project Overview

2023 Library Campus Survey

- First time the library has ever done this

Goals

- Developed to assess how library users at the university (and potential users) get their library-related needs met
- How people experience services, spaces, and collections
- Address unmet needs identified via input provided by students, faculty, staff at U-M

Survey participants

- 15,116 participants (faculty, staff, graduate students, undergraduate students, etc.)
- 12.5% identify as international status
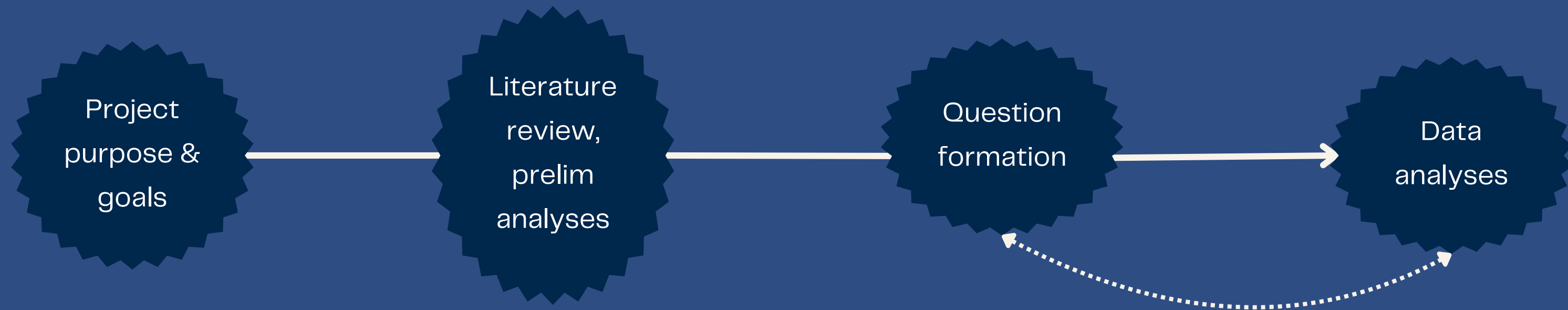
Project statement

- International population's experiences with the library
- Similarities and differences in experience/perception to domestic population
- Identify recommendations to better serve University members from other countries
- Paige & I explored different research questions using subsets of the data
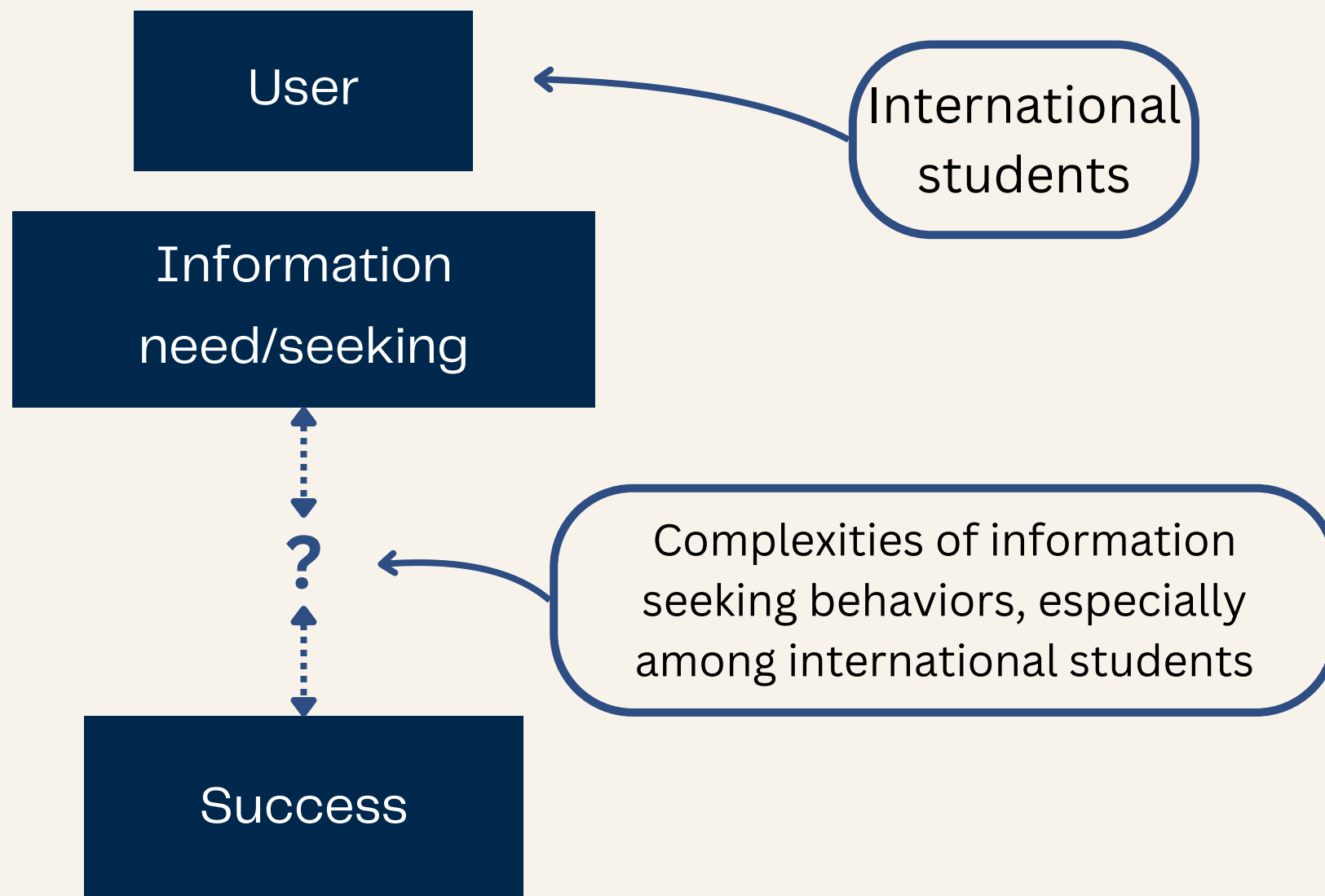
Research Report

Personal goals
- Meaningful representation of international students
- Rich data, opportunities for exploration
- Exploring **information literacy** among international undergraduates

Project roadmap

Project purpose & goals → Literature review, prelim analyses → Question formation → Data analyses

Literature Review

User

Information need/seeking

International students

?

Complexities of information seeking behaviors, especially among international students

Success

Literature review & Development of research question

- **Information literacy**: Ability to find, organize, use, and communicate information in all formats, notably in situations requiring decision making, problem solving, acquisition of knowledge.
- Past literature indicate international students lack this skill.
- **Gap in knowledge**: not enough literature exploring what influences lack of information literacy.

→ **Research questions:**

- Does international status influence U–M students' awareness and usage of library resources?

Methods

Dataset: 2023 Library Campus Survey

- Demographic: ~4000 undergraduate students (international & domestic)
- Key survey questions: Tools and resources common to undergraduate population
- Learning curve: creating my own variables

Analyses

- Learning curve:
  - Quantitative methods
  - Qualitative research (my first time!)

Sometimes the library does not have materials you want, or our own materials are not available. In such cases, the library gets materials from other institutions (through the Interlibrary Loan/Document Delivery Service).

Have you used this service?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No (but I am aware of the service)
- ○ I was not aware of this service

Have you reached out to someone from the library about a course assignment or project? (includes via chat, email, in person, Ask a Librarian service)

- ○ Yes -- one time
- ○ Yes -- more than once
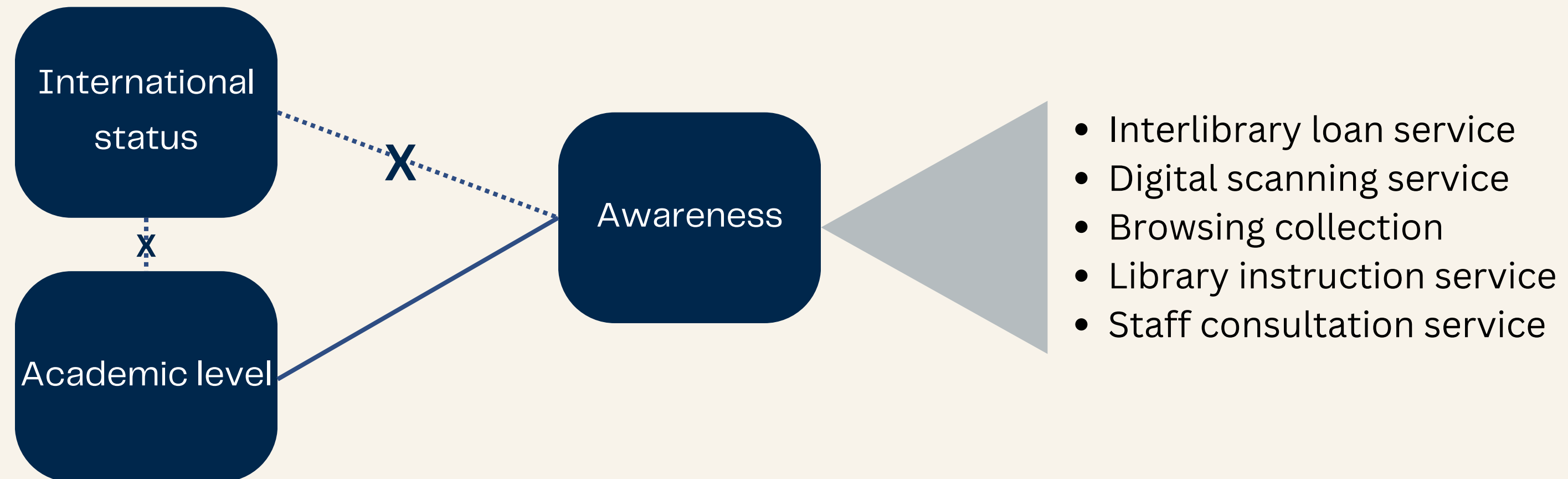- ○ No
- ○ Unsure
- ○ I wasn't aware of this service

Results – Awareness

Research Question 1.

Does international status influence the awareness U–M undergraduates have of common library resources?

Quantitative data

International status

Academic level

X

X

Awareness

- Interlibrary loan service
- Digital scanning service
- Browsing collection
- Library instruction service
- Staff consultation service

Academic level slightly influences awareness, but being an international student or not doesn't make a difference, and there's no special interaction between these two factors affecting awareness.

Awareness

Qualitative data

"I think I just don't know about them…simply because of the amount of information an average student receives…, it is frequently hard to engage…to the degree that would make us aware of the…resources that the libraries can provide us with."

→ While there isn't a difference, international students may feel more strongly about awareness problem due to lack of information literacy/disorientation

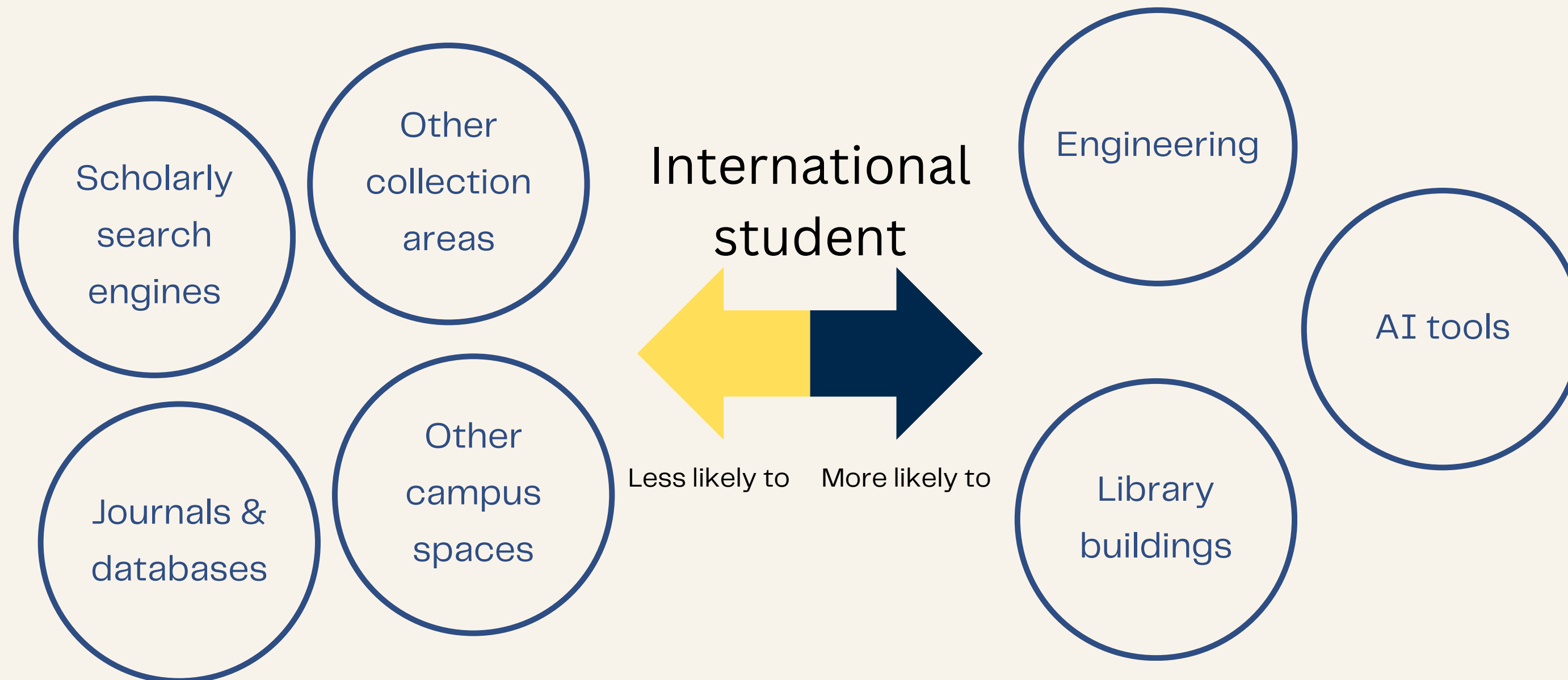→ More compelled to raise the issue

Results – Usage

Research Question 2.

Are there differences in the patterns of use for common library resources between international and domestic students?

Usage

While there aren't significant differences in awareness of resources when it comes to international status among undergraduates, I found modest but significant differences in usage of common library resources.

Quantitative data

Scholarly search engines

Other collection areas

International student

Engineering

Journals & databases

Other campus spaces

AI tools

Less likely to   More likely to

Library buildings

12

Usage

Qualitative data

"If I ever need help regarding one of my courses, my first instinct would be to google my question by myself. I am not used to the idea of going to the library and asking for help, and I don't know whether the library staff can actually provide any help."

"The database aren't quite as discoverable and need the person using it have a good navigation of technology."

- Need for better promotion, easier navigation
- Accessible, user-friendly guidance (e.g., online courses, demos)
- Classes and organized sessions is effective but can be improved

Key Findings

Awareness

May indicate a lack of adequate instruction for new undergraduates, regardless where they're from

Usage

When combined, these small differences may indicate consistent differences between international and domestic students

Other challenges

International students express need for better advertising and easier navigation of library services

Discussion

Suggestions

01. Conduct needs assessment, gather further detailed feedback from employees and students

02. Workshops as an orientation tool
- Accommodate language proficiency, learning needs
- Specialized workshops to locate and evaluate resources
- Information materials and learning activities
- Inclusive language use

03. Involve students to co-design inclusive space, diverse materials and collections

04. More visible communication
- Newsletters to introduce resources and opportunities
- Events for connection and promotion
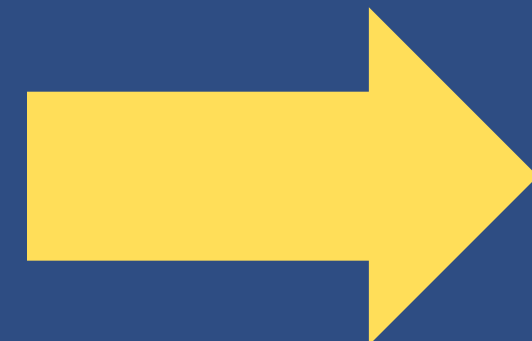
Future Directions
- Continued research
- Focus groups and interviews
- Expand research scope
- Collaborative efforts

Key Takeaways

Highlights

- Flex my creativity
- Data analysis
- Attentive, collaborative, supportive, and passionate team

Challenges

- Finding data that works
- Writing and synthesizing findings
- Statistical significance
- Time management, organization

What I Learned

- Project workshops
- Data analysis, organization, presentation
- Reframing how I think about research outputs

Next steps

01 → **02**

More exploration

We have been continuously exploring project ideas we want to establish...very rich data!

Presenting

Hopefully present our findings via conference posters & publications

Thank You!

Questions?

Acknowledgements :)