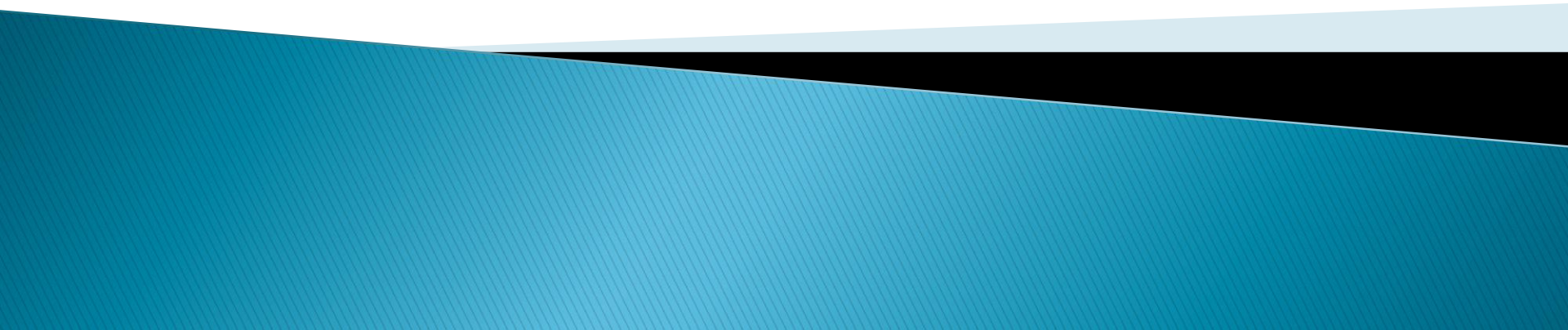


Textbook Buying Habits

Revolution of Knowledge

May 10, 2011



Research Subject

- ▶ Revolution of Knowledge sought to conduct a study to take place on Virginia Wesleyan College's campus concerning the use of college textbooks. Specific purposes included the following–

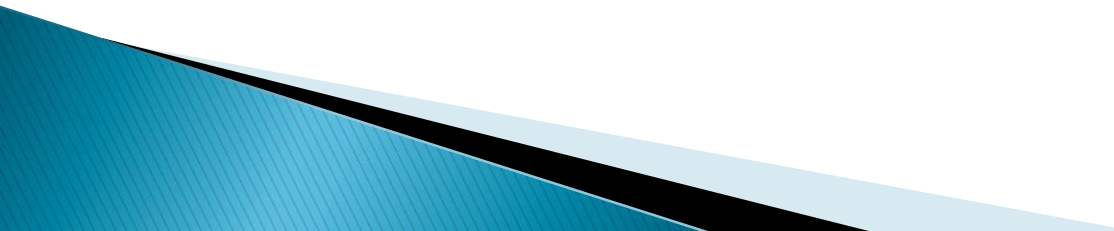
To evaluate how students acquire their textbooks

The implicit motivations behind the various ways they do

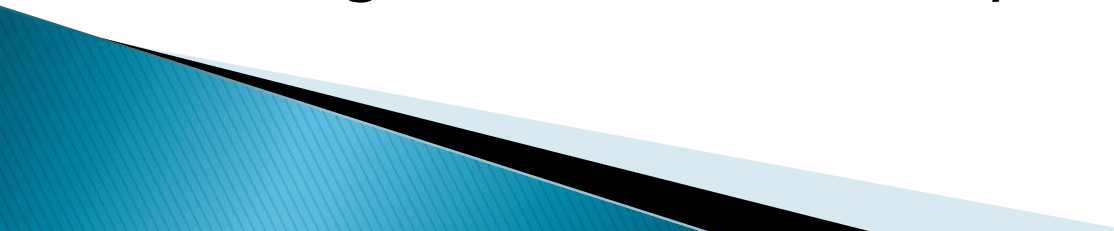
Reveal students' feelings regarding hardcopies and e-Textbooks

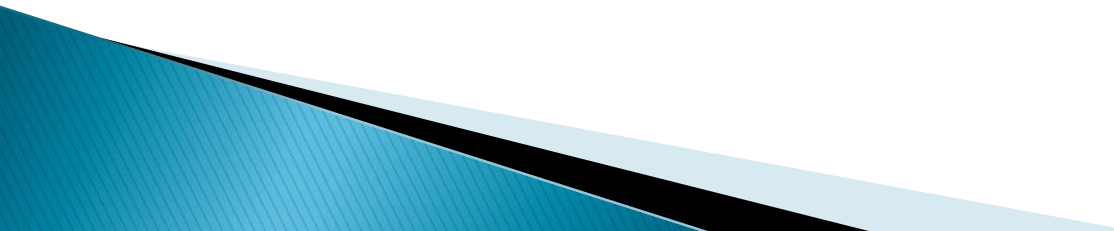
- ▶ Our goal was to use the information we found to better understand the wants and desires of Virginia Wesleyan College students and also to compare the opinions and habits of Virginia Wesleyan College to the societal trends.
- ▶ This study was conducted by Natalie Belva, Roberto Maldonado, Jessi Noel, Olivia Phillips, and Neil Calloway, enrolled in Mass Communications Research Methods.

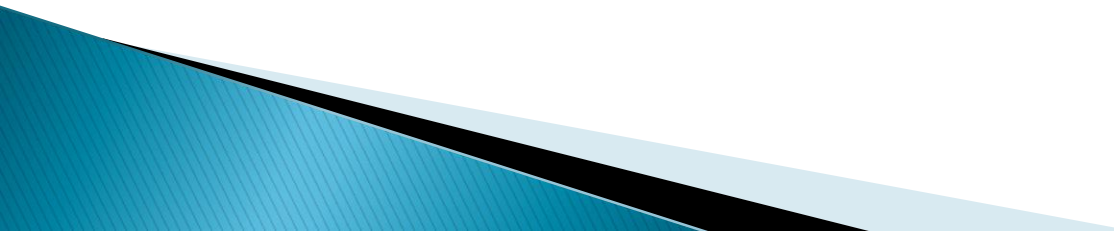
Objectives

- ▶ To determine how Virginia Wesleyan students purchase textbooks.
 - ▶ To determine where students are acquiring their textbooks.
 - ▶ To determine who exactly is purchasing the textbooks. (Mother/Father/Student).
 - ▶ To determine why students are using the methods they use to acquire and purchase textbooks.
 - ▶ To determine whether or not students prefer to have hardcopies or online editions of their textbooks.
 - ▶ To determine students' willingness/unwillingness to convert to various methods of purchasing textbooks (E-books, rentals).
 - ▶ To determine if students own the proper devices for electronic textbooks.
 - ▶ To determine the student's satisfaction with the services chosen.
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Problem

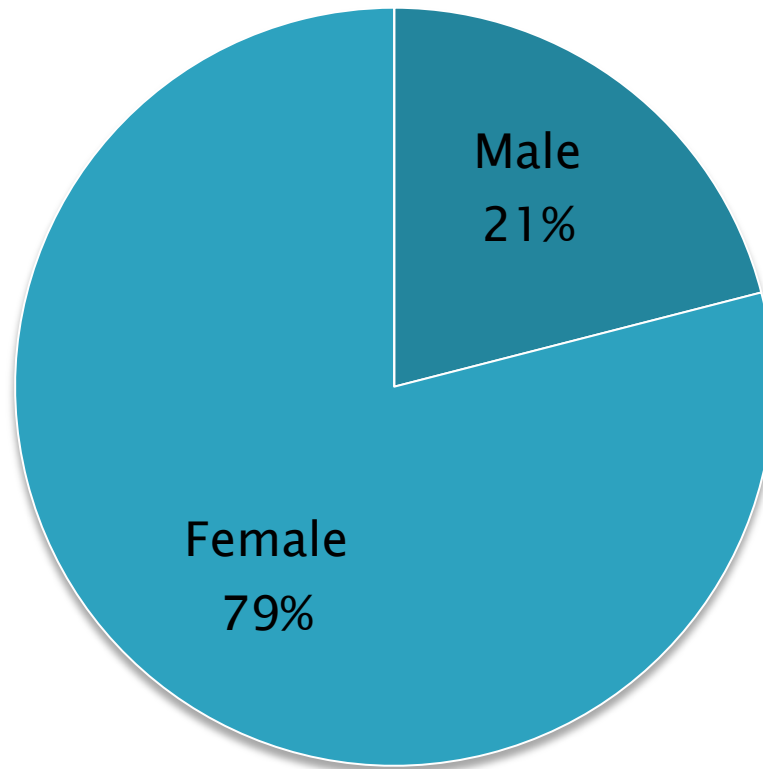
- ▶ Perhaps the least desirable aspect of being a college student is the process that one must go through to obtain their textbooks. Besides costing exorbitant amounts of money when obtained through the college bookstore, seeking them from other sources can be extremely time consuming. However, recent innovations in the industry have provided a number of newer alternatives which are proving their popularity among college students. Between rental services such as Chegg.com and the rise in the accessibility of e-books, there are a number of factors which threaten to severely shake up the college textbook industry that require research.
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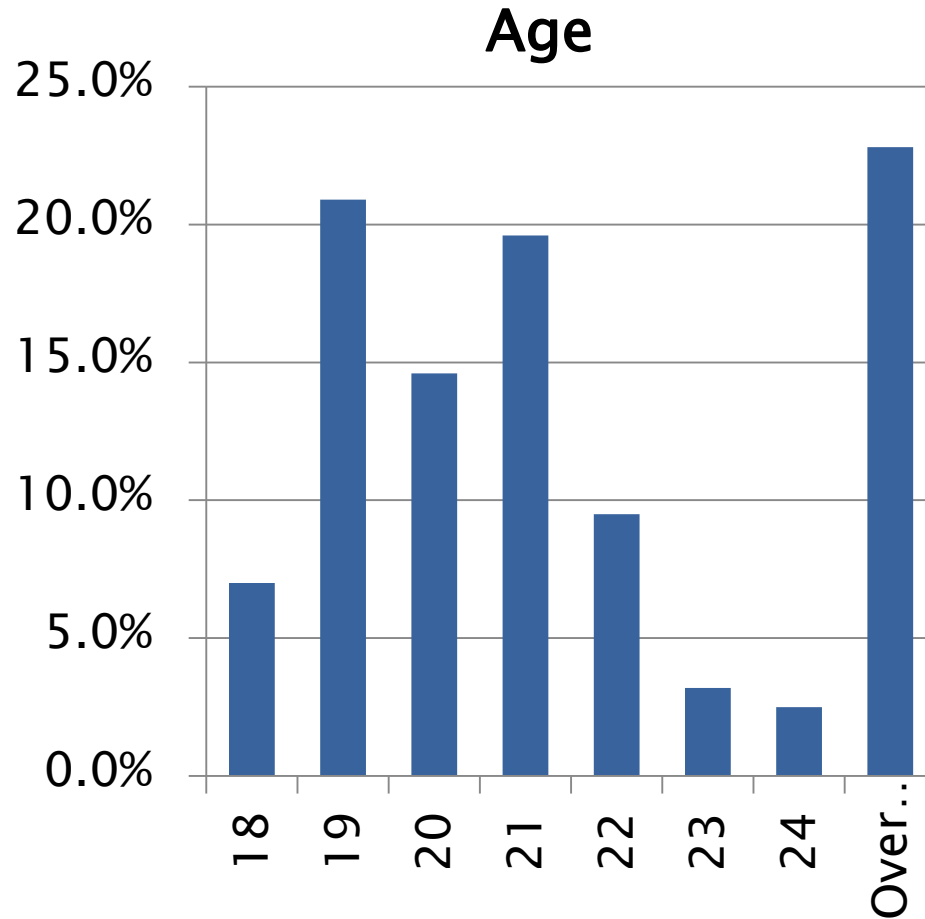
- ▶ In recent years the creation of rental programs has also become an increasingly popular method of purchasing textbooks.
 - ▶ Chegg.com, an online company that rents textbooks to college students, was founded in 2003 and found success in 2007. With constant demands on good textbook deals, the Chegg co-founders capitalized on the concept of renting books.
 - ▶ Books can be sold or rented for anywhere from one-third of the price to half of their full cost. In 2008 their company revenue was more than \$10 million and in January of 2009 alone, Chegg surpassed that amount (Davydov).
 - ▶ Students now have options of buying texts new, used, renting, ordering online, and accessing e-books. With the increased variety of purchasing options, students have become more educated on their options, as well as the money they can save. A study recently done by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education showed that when it comes to buying textbooks, cost is the main priority.
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- ▶ According to The Student PIRGs, data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed that for the past two decades, textbook prices have been rising four times the rate of inflation for all other finished goods (Allen).
 - ▶ Data from the National Association of College Stores showed that textbook costs climbed 14% from the 2006–2007 academic year to 2008–2009 (Gorski).
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Demographics

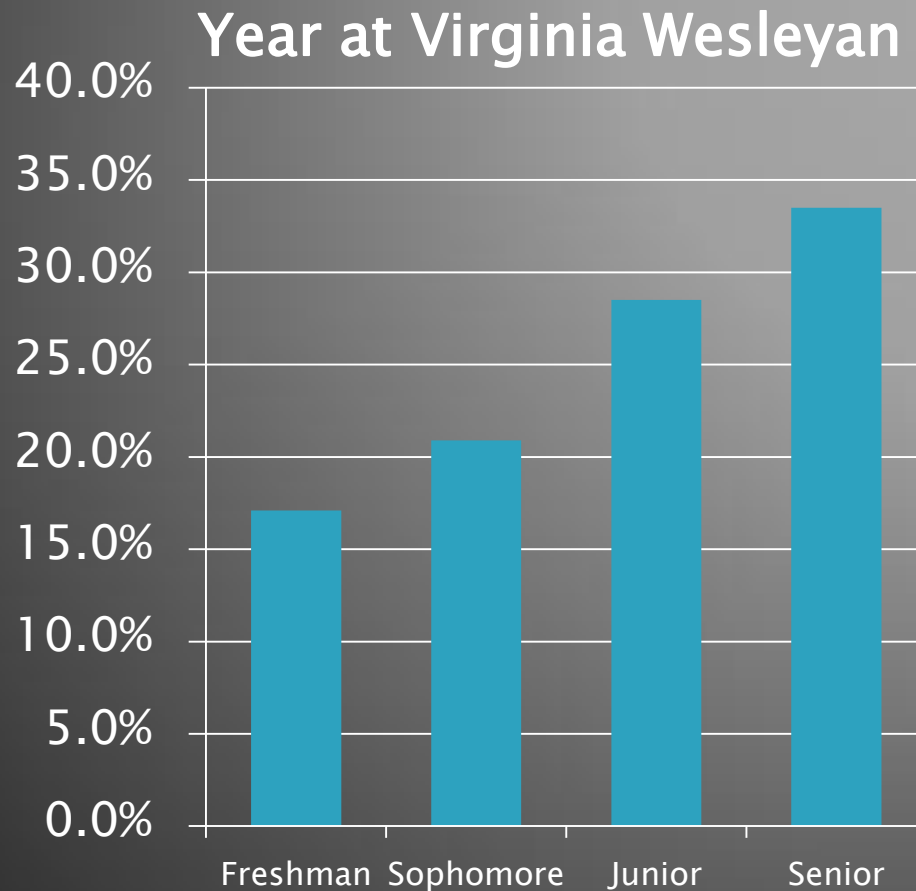
Gender of Participants





A majority of the students that responded listed themselves as 21, 19, or Over 24.

Out of the 157 students that responded to our survey, a majority of them were seniors.



When asked to specify their ethnicity:

Please select your ethnicity.

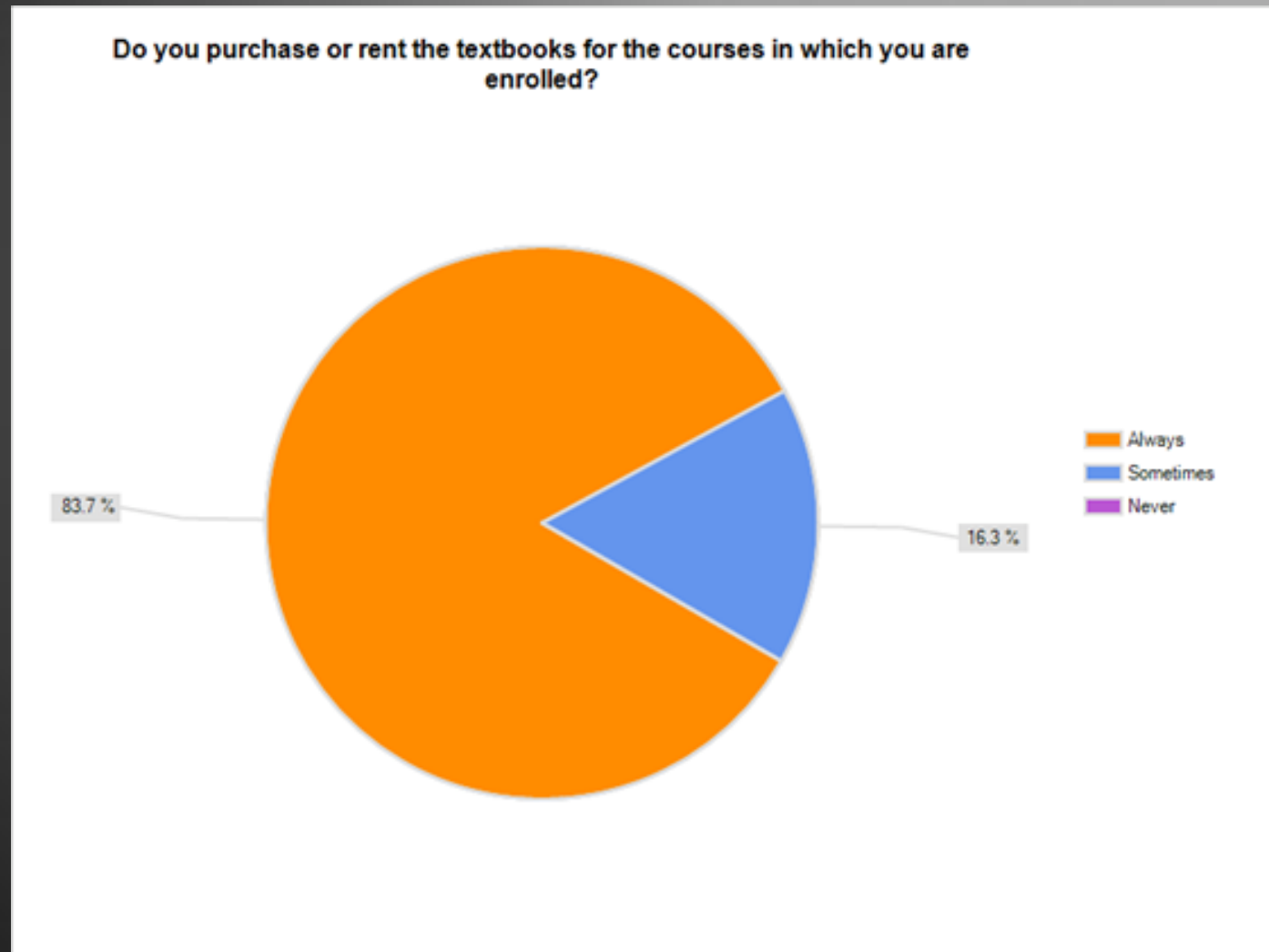
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Caucasian	70.7%	111
African-American	18.5%	29
Hispanic/Latino	2.5%	4
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.9%	3
Native American	0.0%	0
Prefer not to answer	3.2%	5
Other (please specify)	3.2%	5
answered question		157
skipped question		1

Majors

- ▶ Top five responses came from:
 - 7.6% – Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Earth, Environmental)
 - 12.7% – Communications
 - 17.1% – Business
 - 22.2% – Criminal Justice/Sociology/Psychology
 - 29.1% – Other

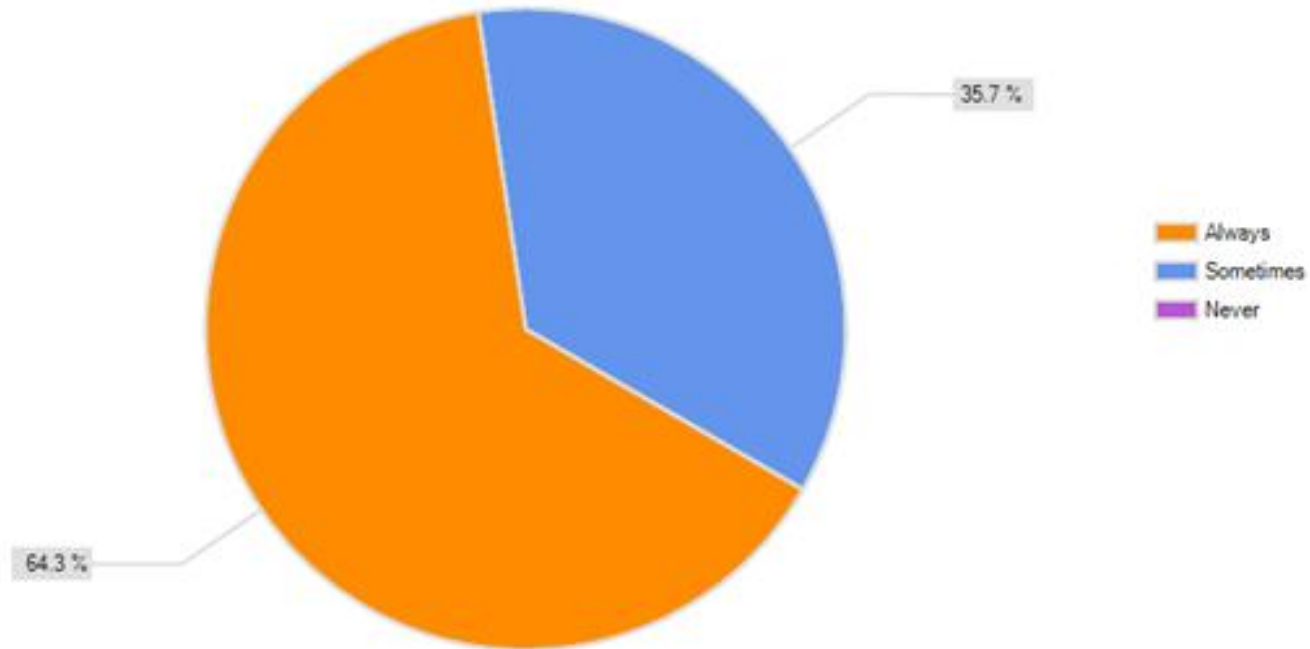
Textbook Habits

Grade Point Averages 2.1–4.0

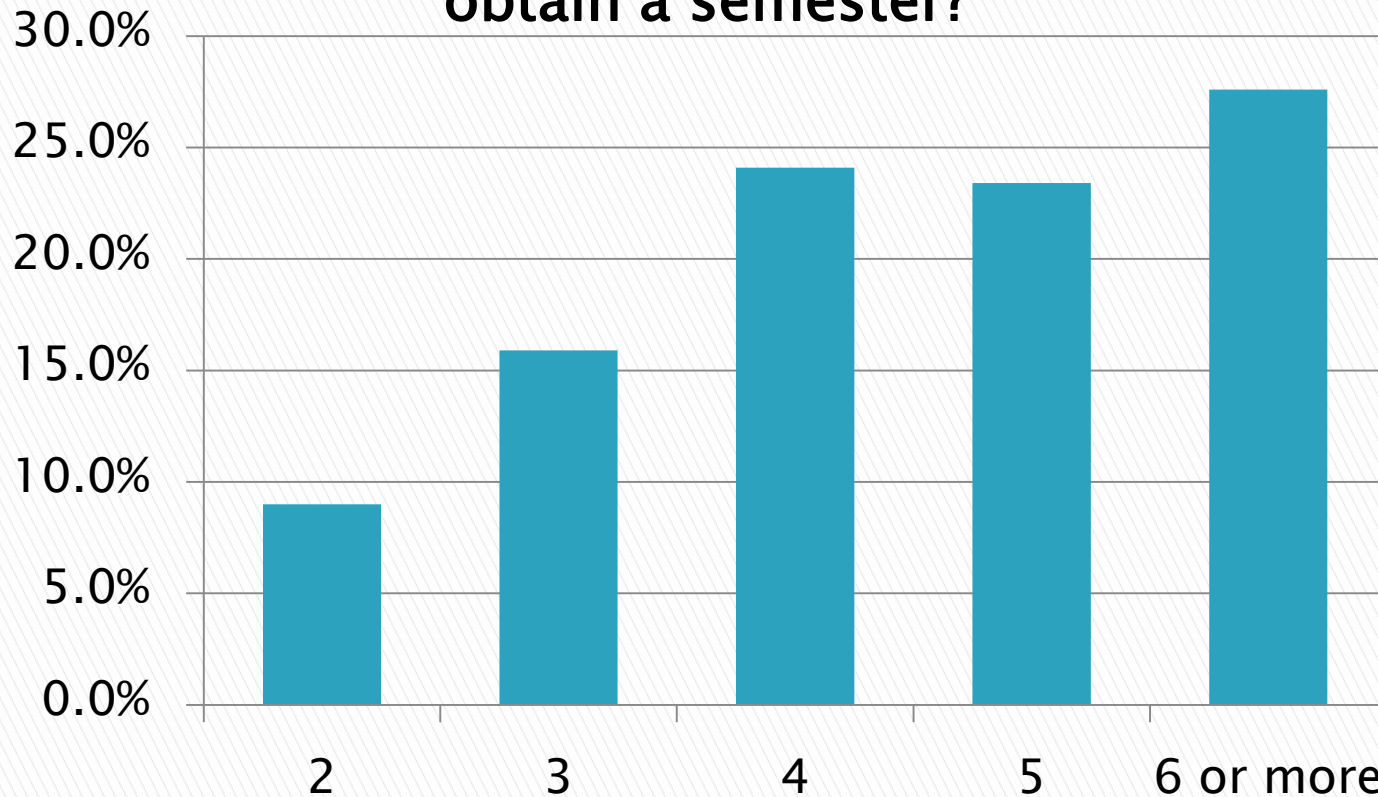


Grade Point Averages 2.0 and below

Do you purchase or rent the textbooks for the courses in which you are enrolled?



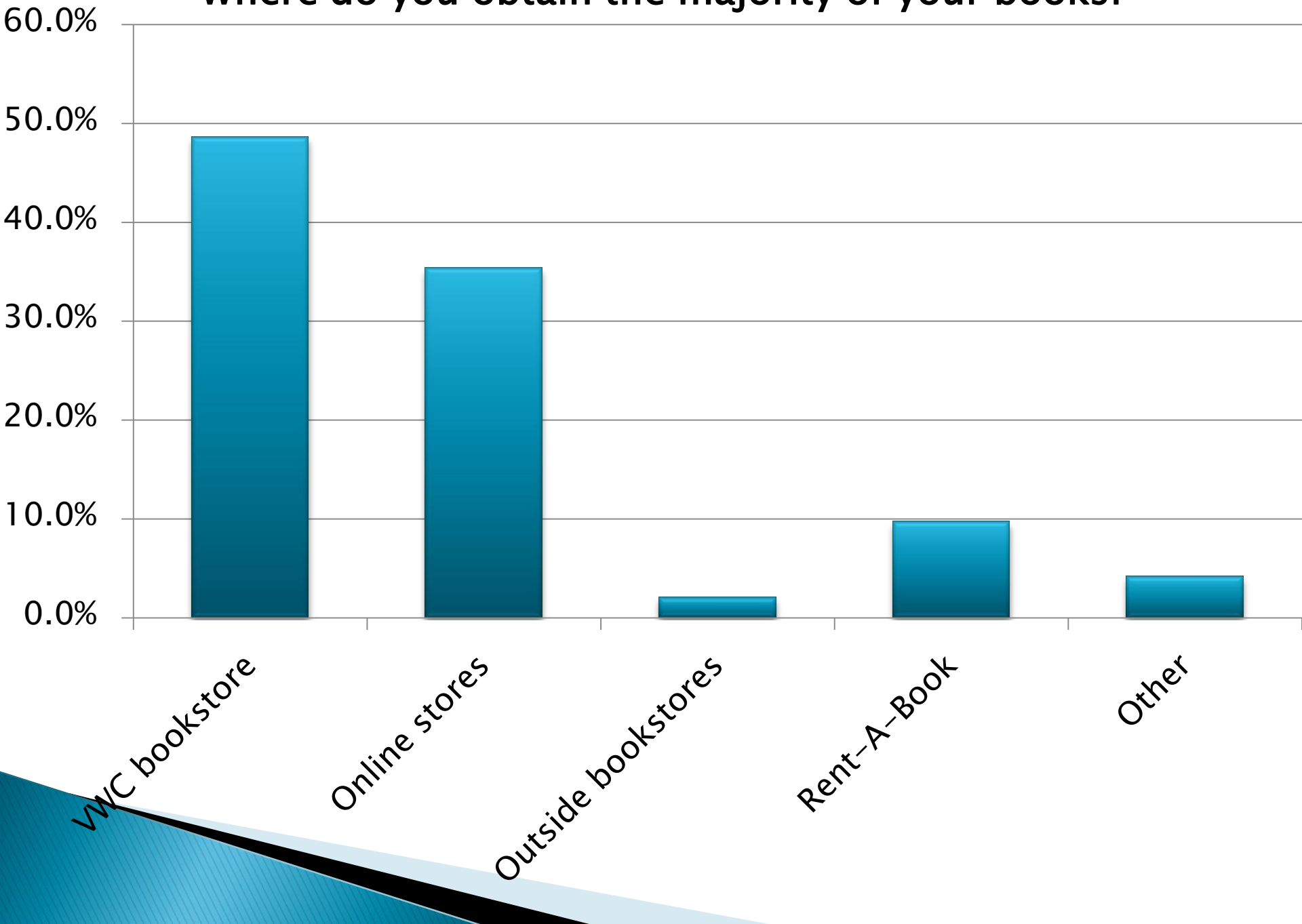
On average, how many textbooks do you obtain a semester?



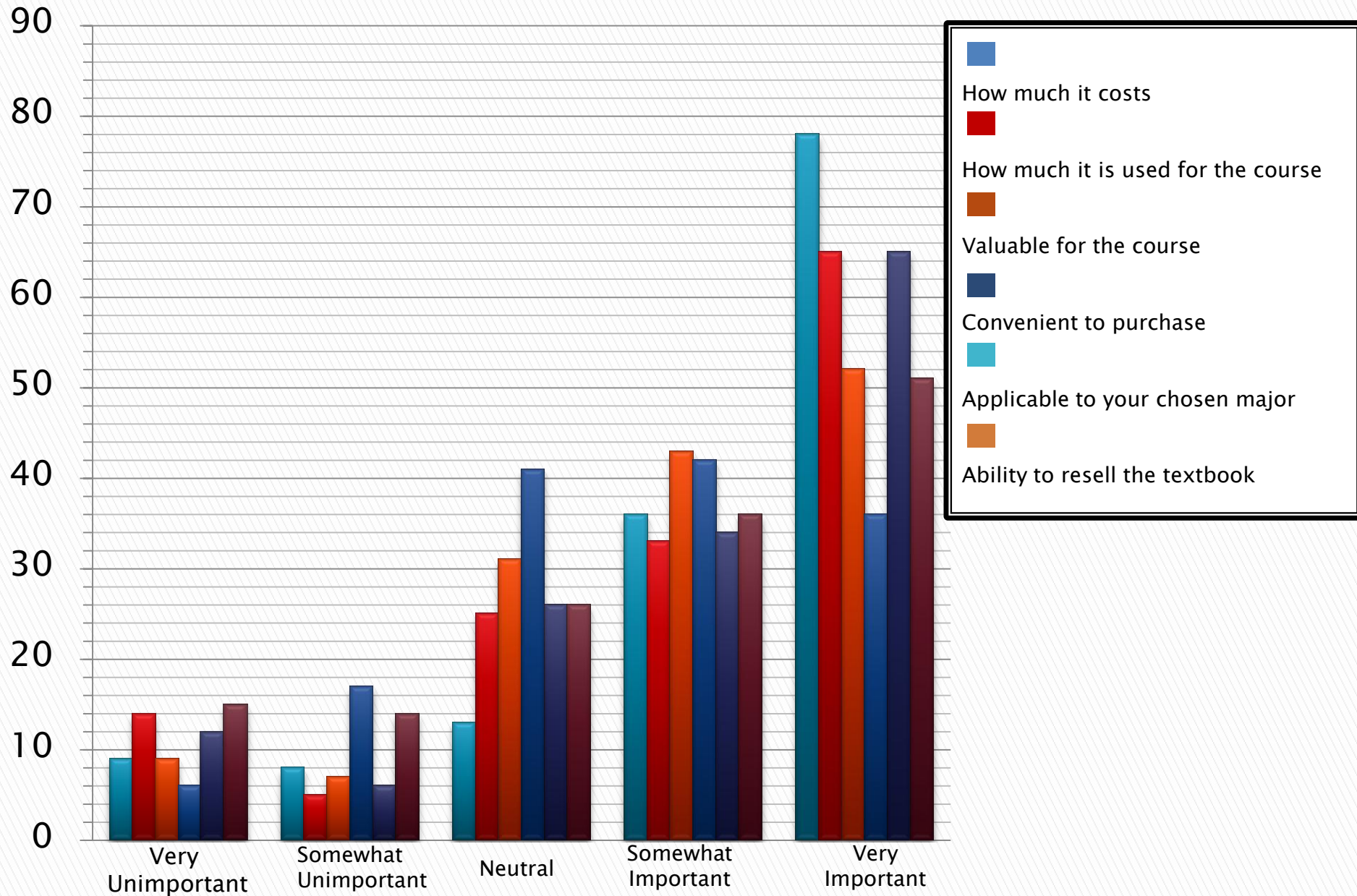
Facts

- Students at Virginia Wesleyan, on average, purchase more than 3 books per semester.
- Majority of the students spend between \$200–\$500 per semester.
- However, something interesting was that half of the students who answered the survey said that they paid for their books.

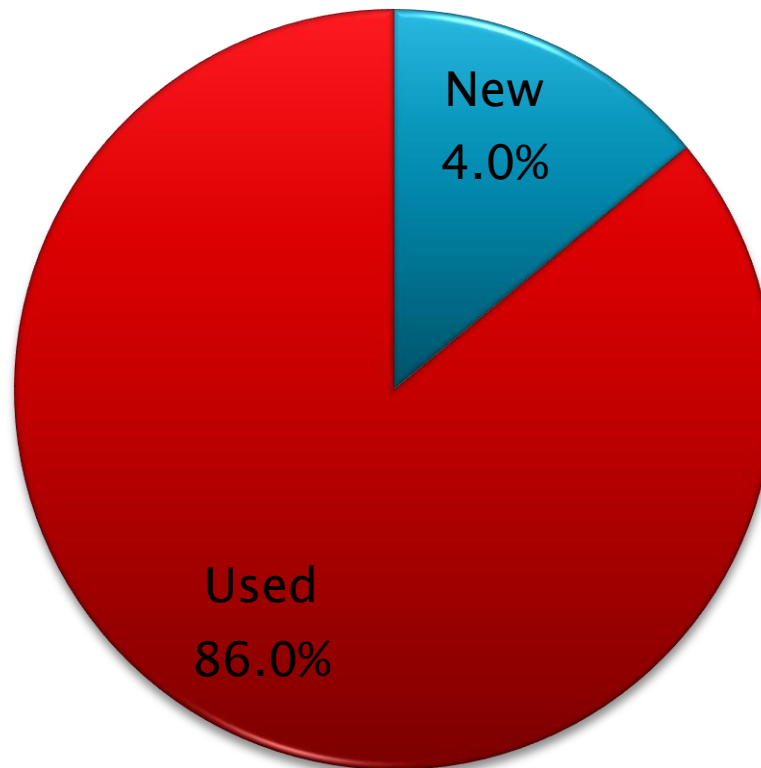
Where do you obtain the majority of your books?



Importance when purchasing textbooks



Do you purchase more new or used books?

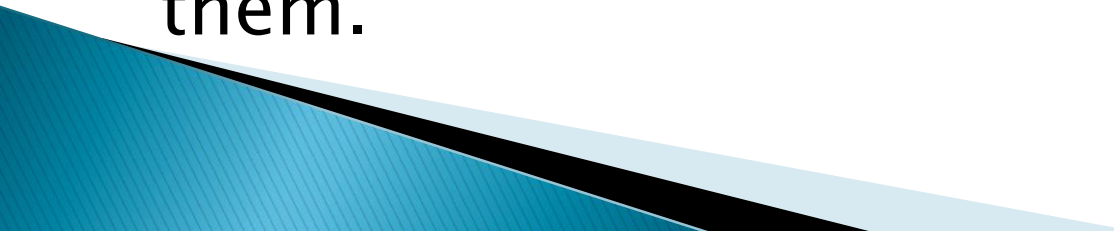


“Used books tend to be cheaper, but still in good condition.”

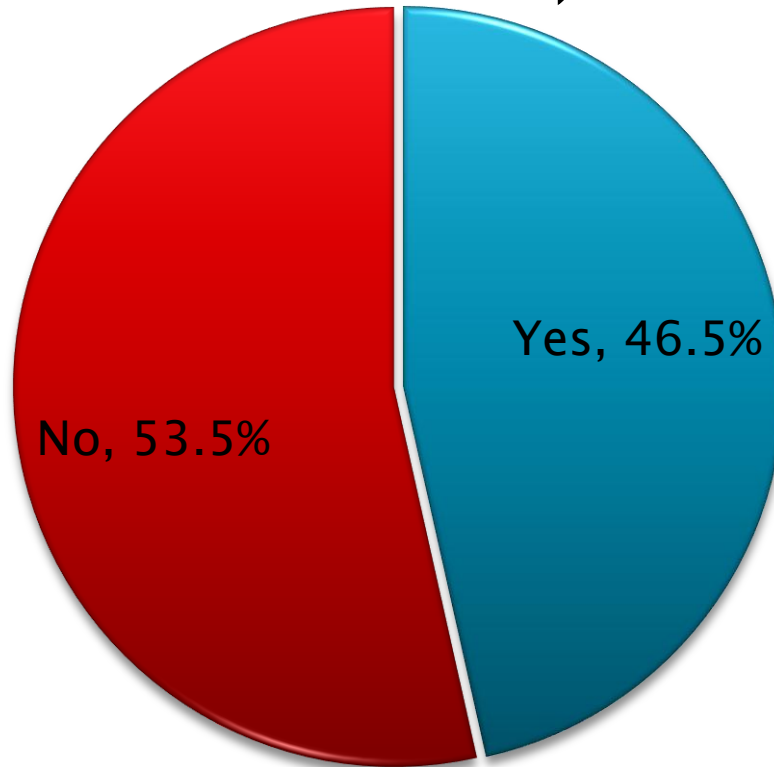
“I purchase as many used books as I can to save money. I find the ones in the best condition. I only buy new books if I have to.”

“Sometimes used books are not available, I would buy all used if they were available.”

“I usually keep my books and prefer them brand new so I can put my own notes in them.”



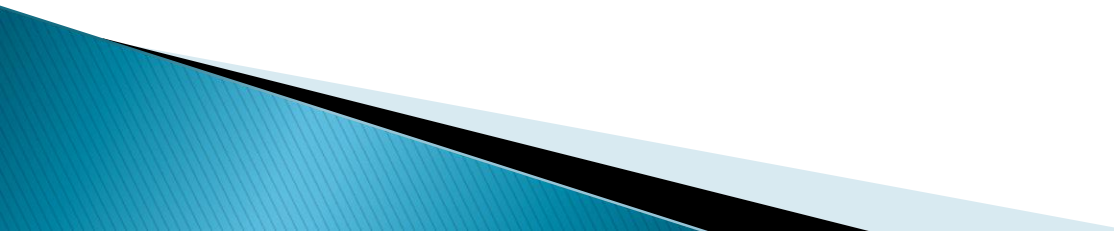
**During your time as a college student, have you ever switched your method of obtaining textbook?
(If yes, please explain why you switched your methods.)**



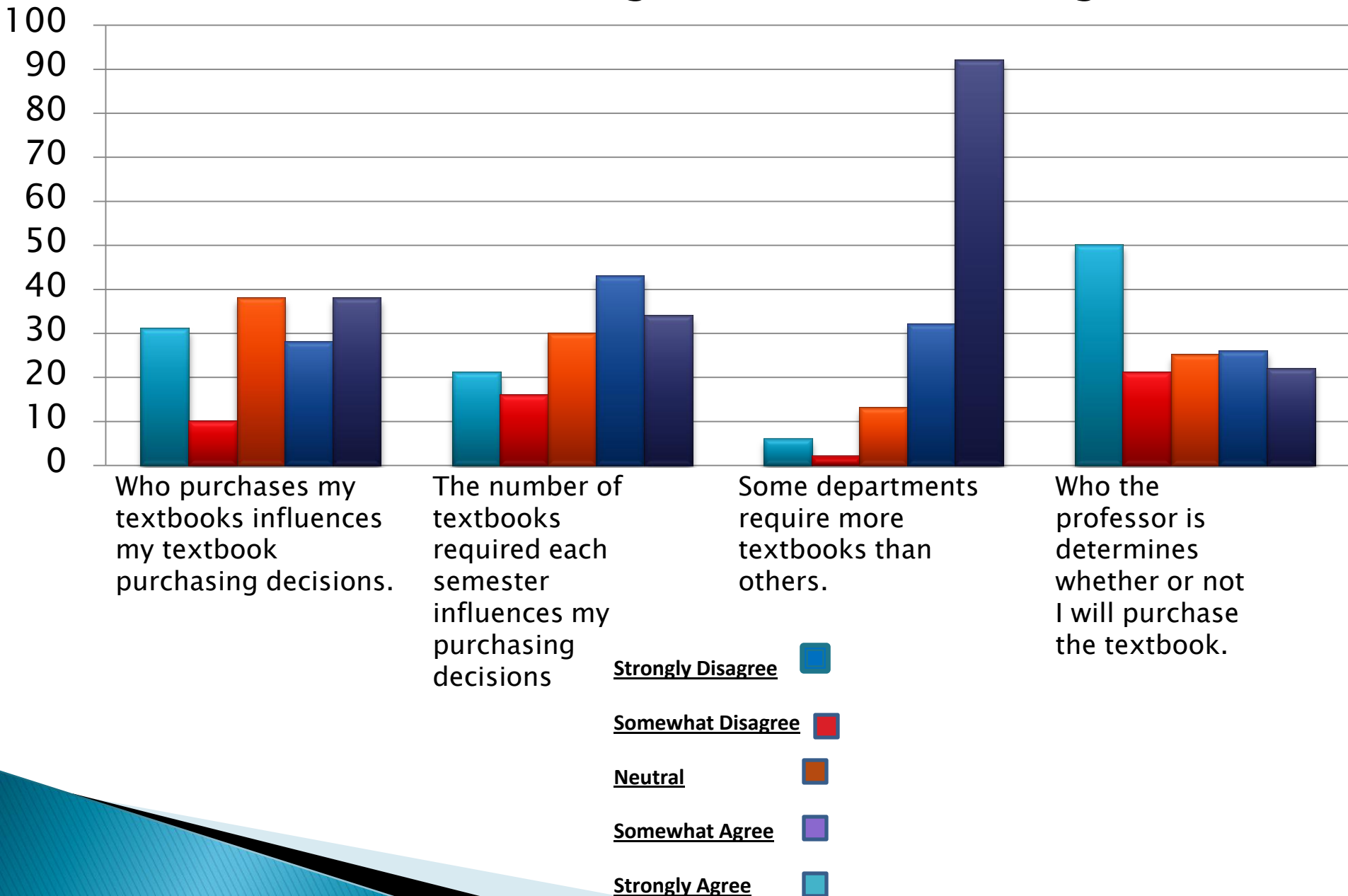
“I switched from purchasing at VWC Bookstore to renting via Chegg and purchasing from Amazon.”

“I used to buy from the bookstore but it was too expensive. I buy online now.”

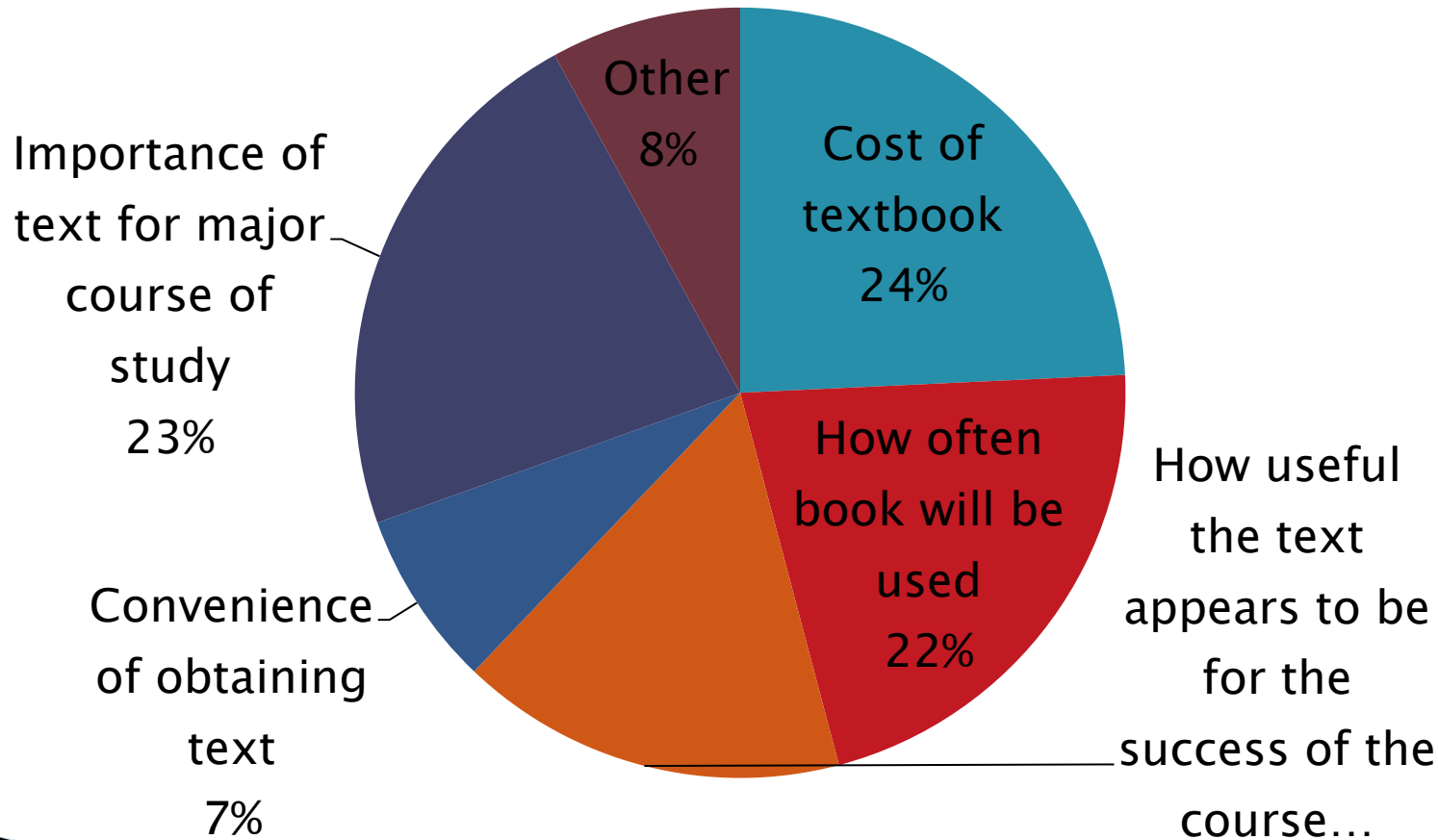
“I use to purchase all of my books from the bookstore. Now I either buy the online or rent them.”



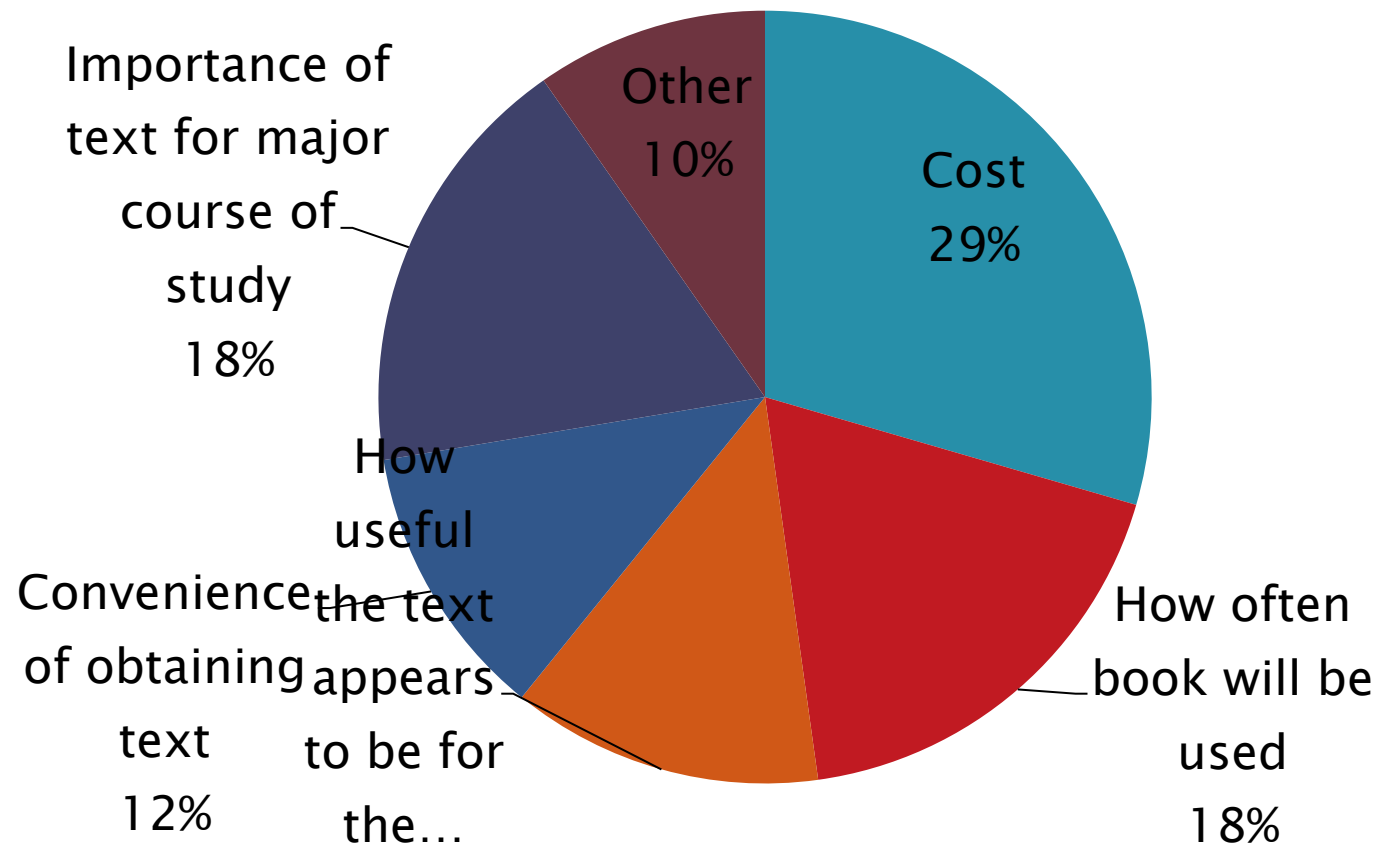
Determining Factors on Purchasing Books



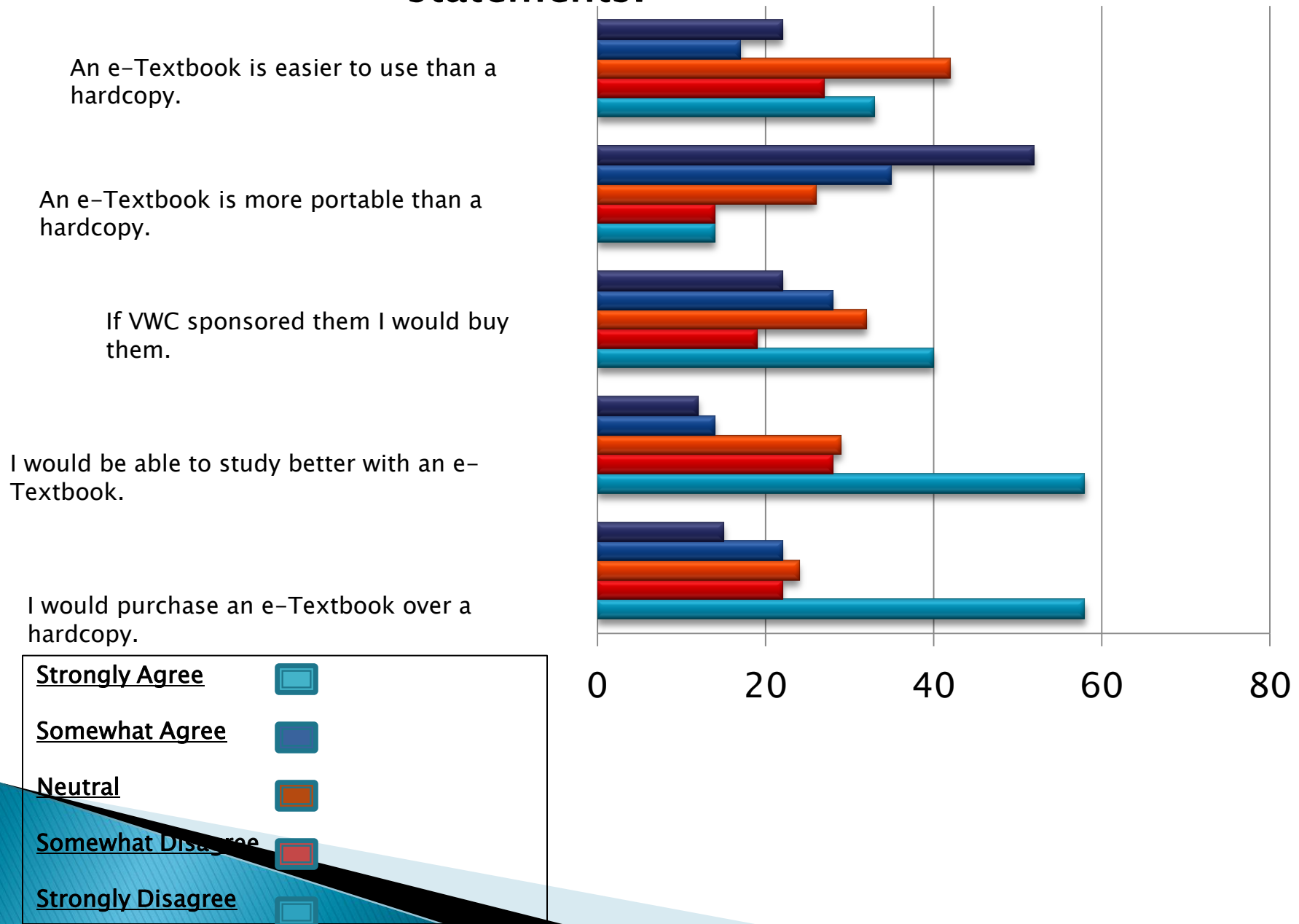
Factors Affecting Purchasing a Textbook



Factors Affecting Renting a Textbook

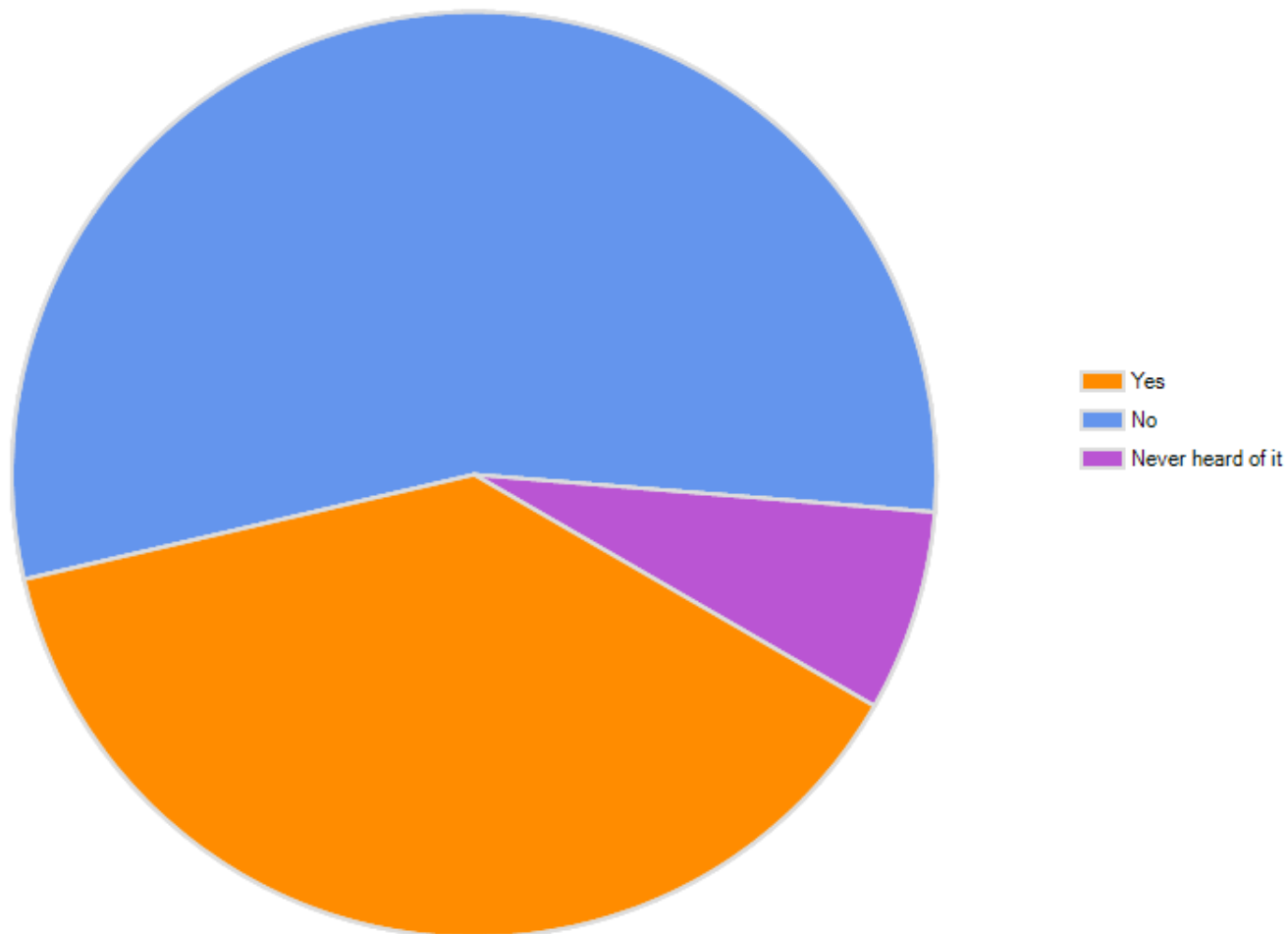


Please rate your agreeance with the following statements.

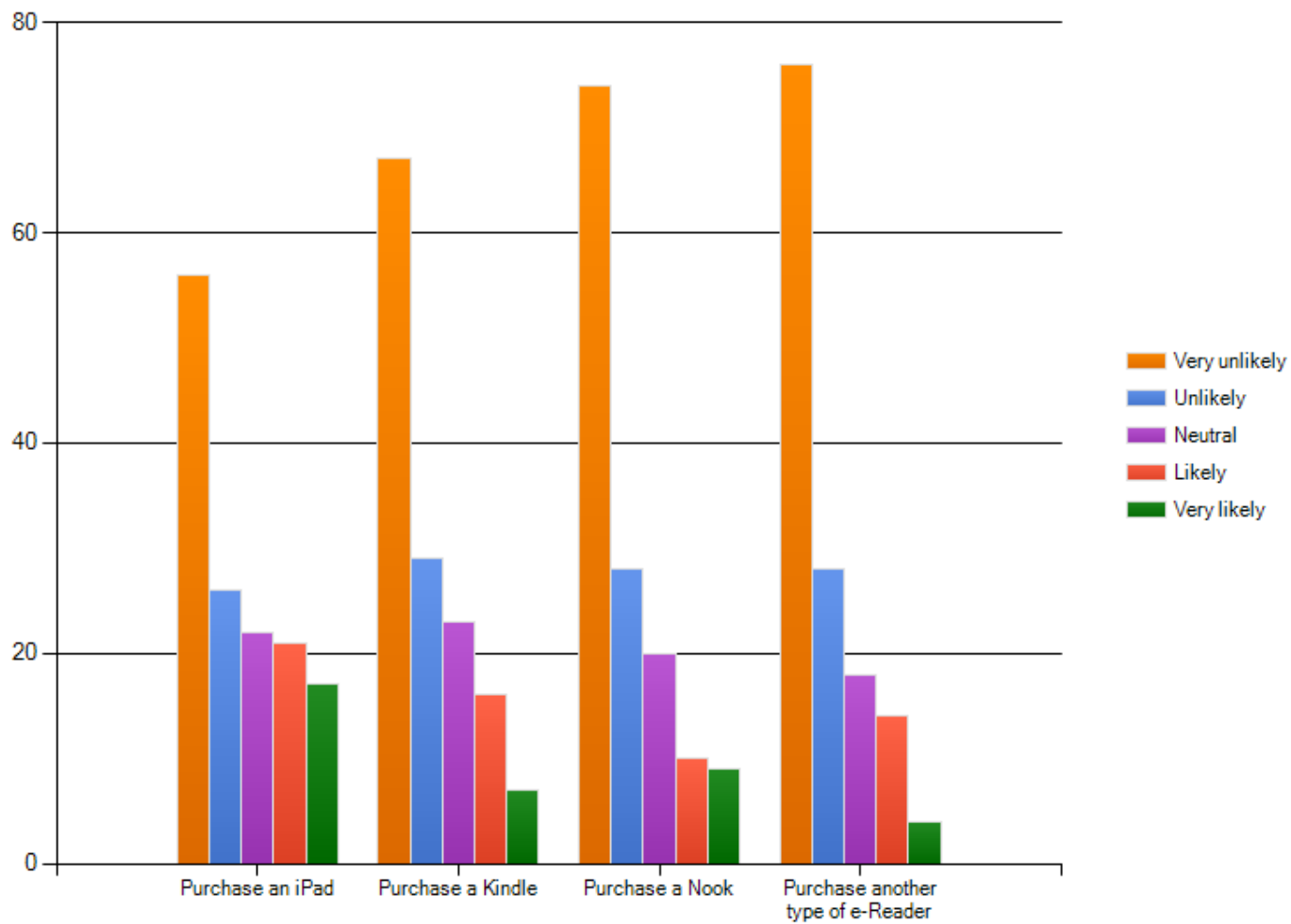


e-Textbooks

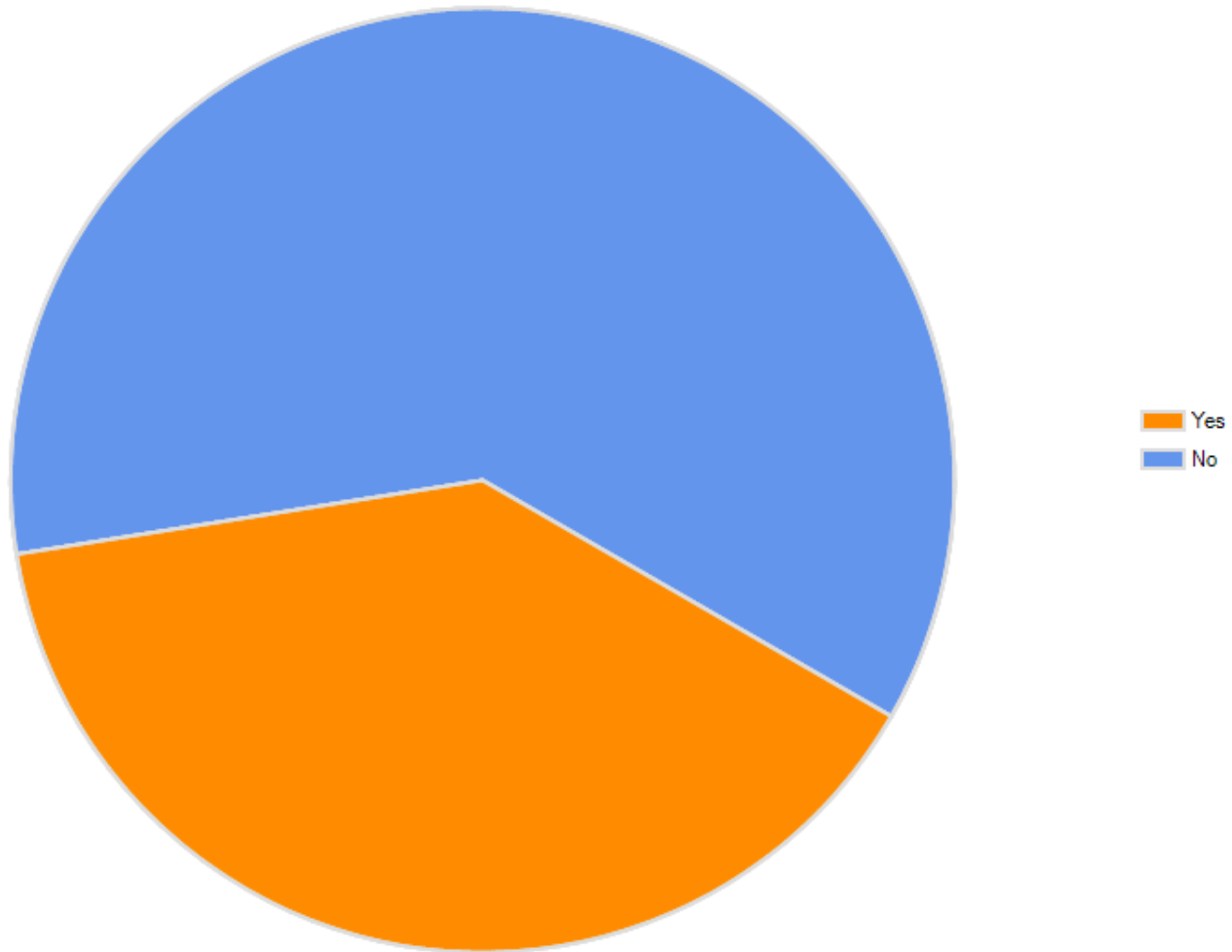
Have you ever considered e-textbooks (textbooks purchased as an electronic copy that is then viewed on a computer or e-Reader)?



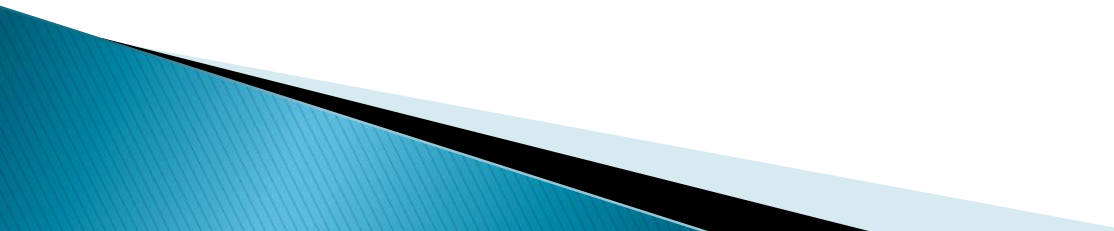
Please rate how likely you are to do the following.



If the bookstore offered e-Textbooks as an option would you buy them?



Recommendations / Conclusion

- ▶ Continually measure the growth of e-textbook purchases among college students. Given that it is predicted that e-Textbooks will grow at a compound annual rate of 48.5 percent, reaching \$585.4 million in sales by 2013 (Cox), if the market is continually growing, then Virginia Wesleyan Students should be more likely to make e-Textbook purchases.
 - ▶ Discuss the option of offering e-textbooks for certain classes with professors, get their feedback and opinions.
 - ▶ Encourage enthused professors to recommend the e-Textbook option to students.
 - ▶ Do a soft roll of e-Textbooks at the Scribner Bookstore to see the amount of purchases.
- 

Recommendations/Conclusion

- ▶ Given that students provided feedback saying they are unaware of renting options, unfamiliar, and do not trust renting sites, Virginia Wesleyan should implement some sort of renting program where incoming freshman and other students unfamiliar with textbook options are able to become familiar with renting. Perhaps more students will stay loyal to the bookstore from there on out.
- ▶ Begin to offer e-Textbook, rental, and new/used purchase options to appeal to the variety of desires from students. One option is not enough, the more options, the more people will be satisfied with their method of acquiring textbooks.
- ▶ Put together some sort of rating/review site, that allows students to identify how much they used the book, how valuable it was to them, would they recommend keeping the book or selling it back, would they recommend the book new/used/rented/e-Textbook. If that all occurs via Virginia Wesleyan, students will be more likely to believe that the Scribner Bookstore is tending to their needs than the perception that the Scribner Bookstore is in the bookstore business for financial gains.