AMBA & BGA
Shouting Into the Void:

Communication between business schools and their students



Association of MBAs

Business Graduates Association

READY Education



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Introduction

One irony of the modern world is that, despite there being an unprecedented number of ways to communicate, it is becoming harder and harder to truly reach people. Information overload is difficult to escape. Inboxes are full to the brim with promotions, phone screens constantly ping with notifications, and even our watches can now take calls.

But amid this constant noise, what actually gets through?

How do business schools ensure that important information reaches students? Which communication styles are most effective? Is mass communication enough, or is it worth investing in more personalised approaches? And if communication is personalised, will students engage with it?

This survey, conducted in association with Ready Education, aimed to understand how business schools within the AMBA & BGA network communicate with their students, and whether there is a gap between how institutions deliver information and how students actually receive and engage with it.

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Methodology

The survey was sent to senior leaders at AMBA & BGA business schools. A total of 93 leaders responded.

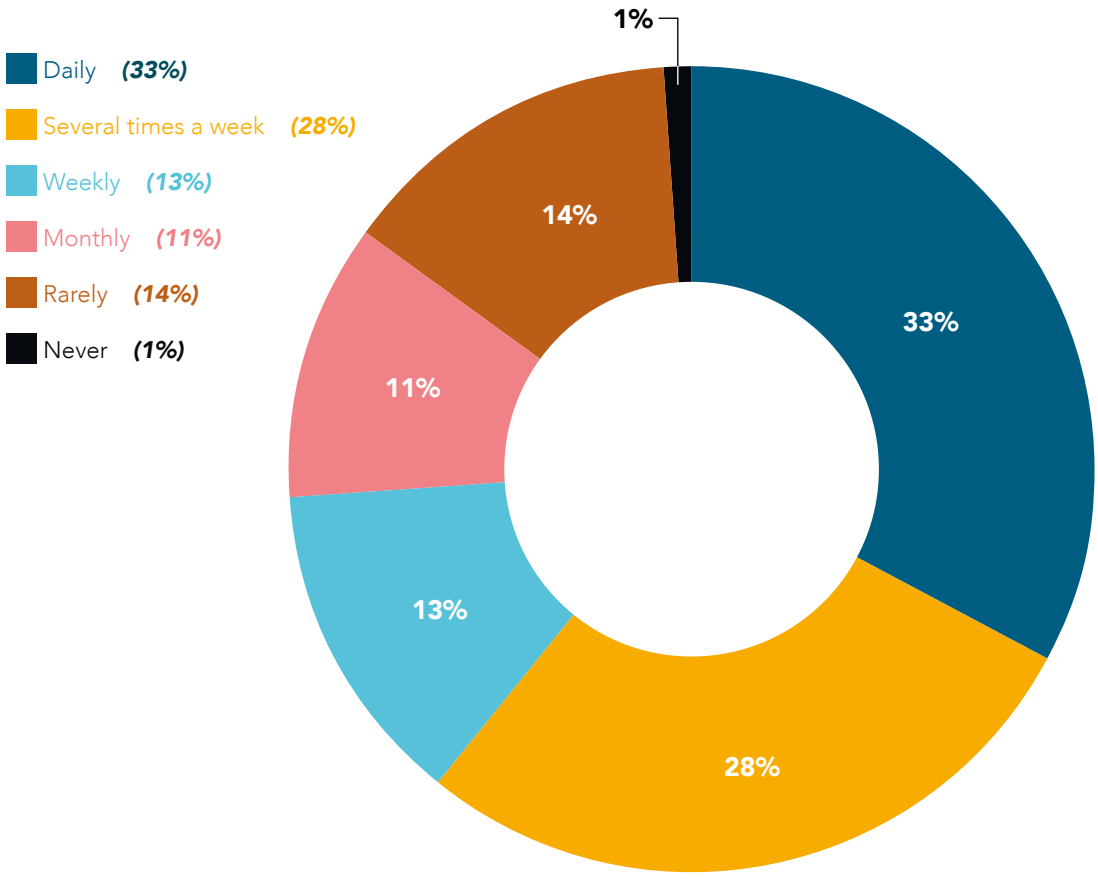
Of those respondents, 39 per cent identified themselves as senior directors at a business school (for example, Dean or Director); 29 per cent worked in another capacity within a business school; 13 per cent were business management academics; 10 per cent worked in the design or delivery of management programmes at business schools; and 10 per cent worked with management students and graduates.

A total of 41 per cent of respondents were male and 59 per cent were female.

In terms of location, 55 per cent of respondents were based in Europe, 14 per cent in Latin America, 8 per cent in the UK, 8 per cent in Africa, 8 per cent in Asia and the Middle East, 3 per cent in India, 2 per cent in North America, 2 per cent in China, and 1 per cent in Oceania.

Another important factor in analysing the results is how often these leaders interacted with students. A total of 74 per cent of business school leaders who responded to the survey interacted with students at least once a week.

FIGURE 1: HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU PERSONALLY INTERACT WITH STUDENTS IN YOUR ROLE?



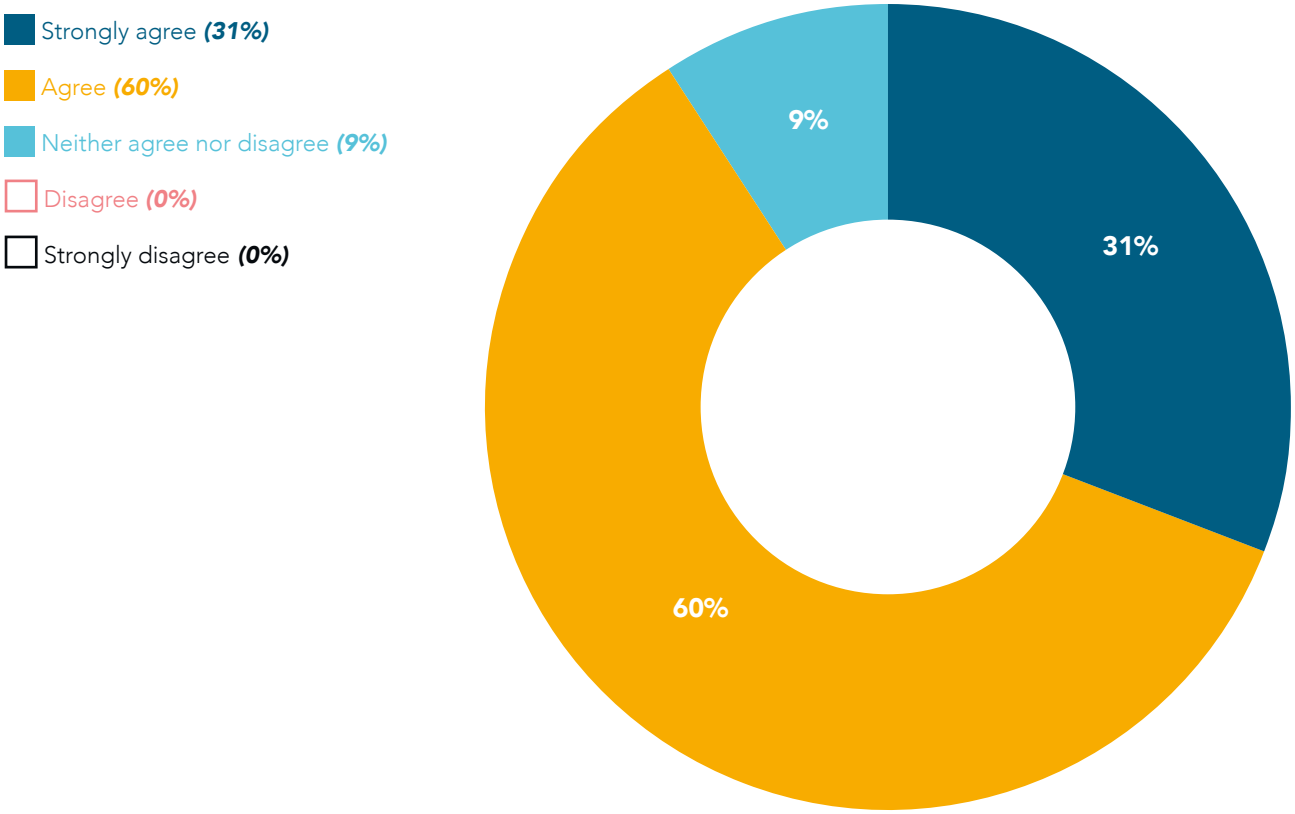
Part one:
BUILDING A COMMUNITY

Business schools are communities, with students joining a brand and ideally remaining part of it long after they graduate. The survey explored whether leaders believe their institutions foster this sense of belonging.

Results were overwhelmingly positive. A total of 31 per cent of leaders strongly agreed that students feel part of a community at their business school, while a further 63 per cent agreed. Only 9 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed.

Notably, no respondents felt that students do not experience a sense of community, highlighting strong confidence among leaders in their institutions' ability to foster connection and belonging.

FIGURE 2: HHOW FAR DO YOU AGREE THAT YOUR STUDENTS FEEL PART OF A COMMUNITY AT YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL?



Flipping the question slightly, leaders were asked whether they feel their institution genuinely cares about the students it enrols.

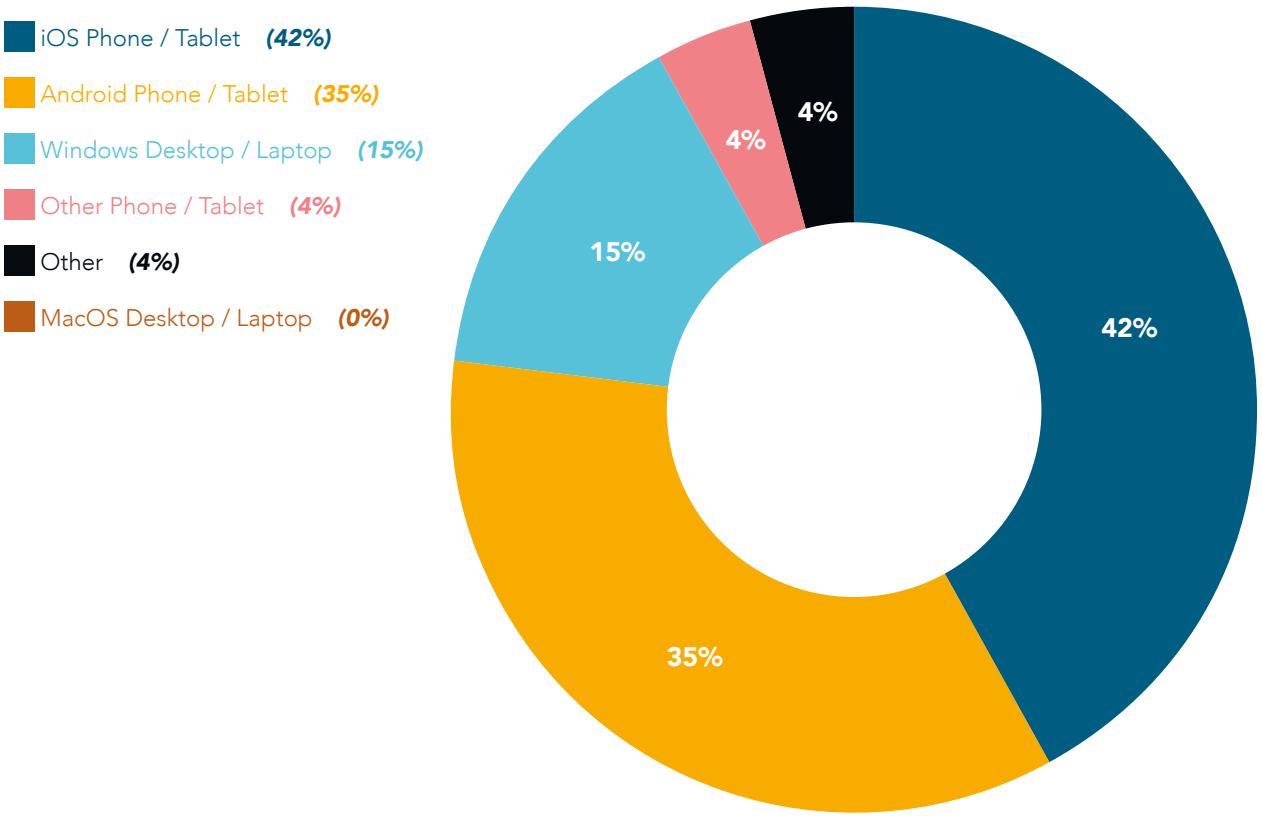
The respondents were in near full agreement. An overwhelming 91 per cent strongly agreed or agreed, while the remaining 9 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed.

Part 2:
Post-graduation networking opportunities

In today's digitally advanced world, the survey also explored how business schools connect with their students.

Leaders were asked how they believe students access information about their university. The majority identified iOS phones or tablets as the primary channel (42 per cent), followed by Android devices (35 per cent).

FIGURE 3: WHAT DEVICE DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR STUDENTS MOSTLY USE TO ACCESS INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR UNIVERSITY?

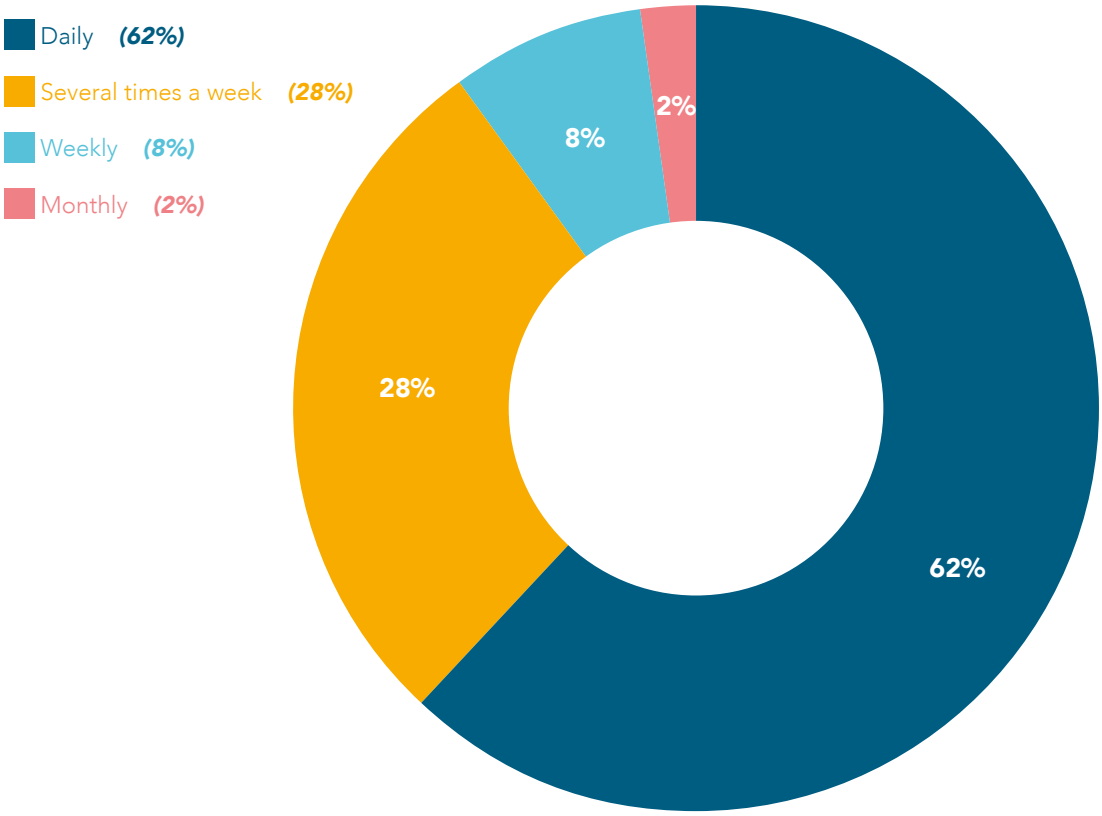




In terms of communications, the survey explored whether business schools actively seek student feedback on communications and overall experience.

Most leaders indicated that they do. A majority (62 per cent) reported seeking feedback at least once per term, while a further 28 per cent said they do so occasionally. However, 10 per cent admitted they rarely or never seek feedback.

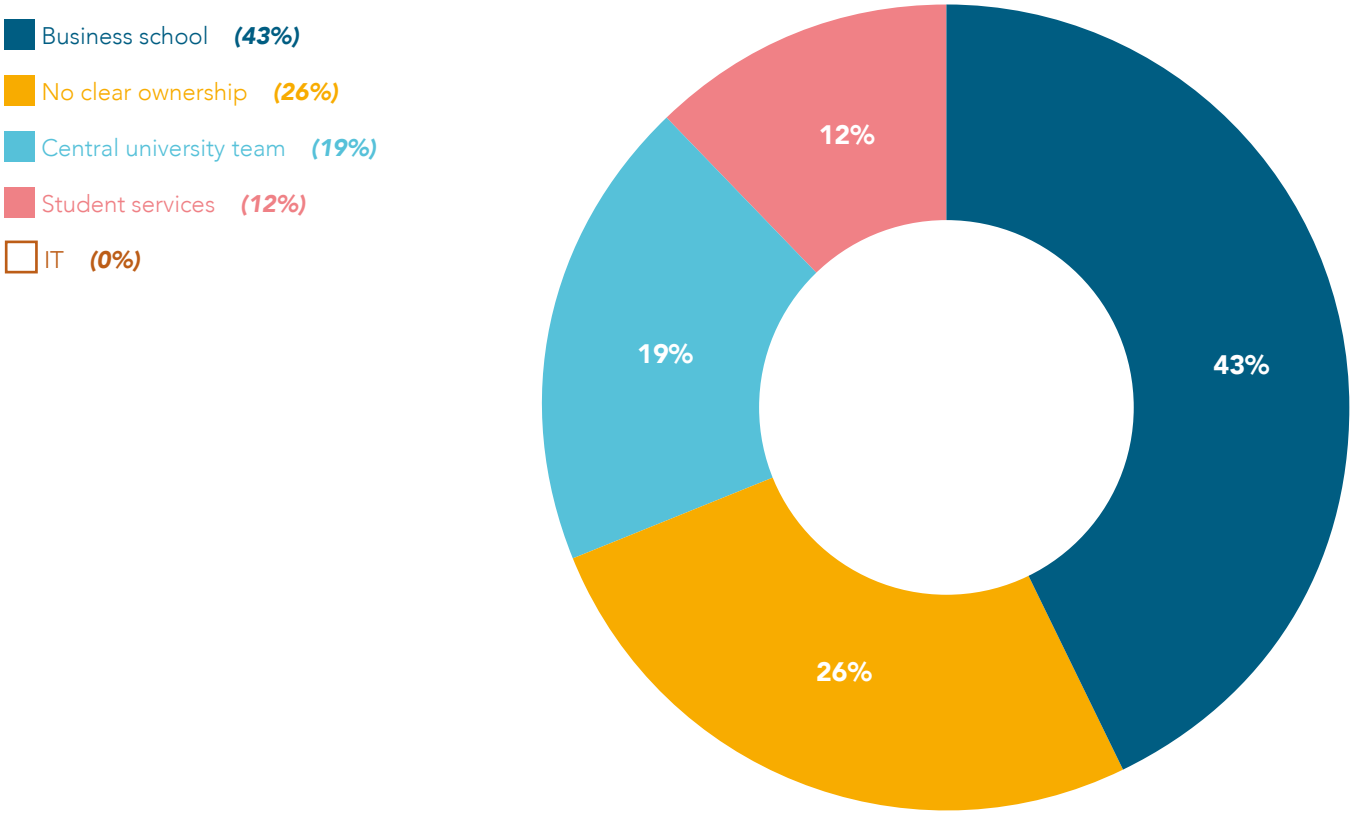
FIGURE 4: HOW OFTEN DOES YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL ACTIVELY SEEK STUDENT FEEDBACK ON COMMUNICATION AND EXPERIENCE?



Part 3:
Digital fragmentation and shouting into the void

Business schools sometimes don't have control over institutional policies - in fact it is a common frustration for many business schools heard by AMBA & BGA. Business schools are often seen as needing different strategies than other departments, but are restricted by institutional policies. To begin this part of the report, it was important to understand who owns the strategy associated with communications to students.

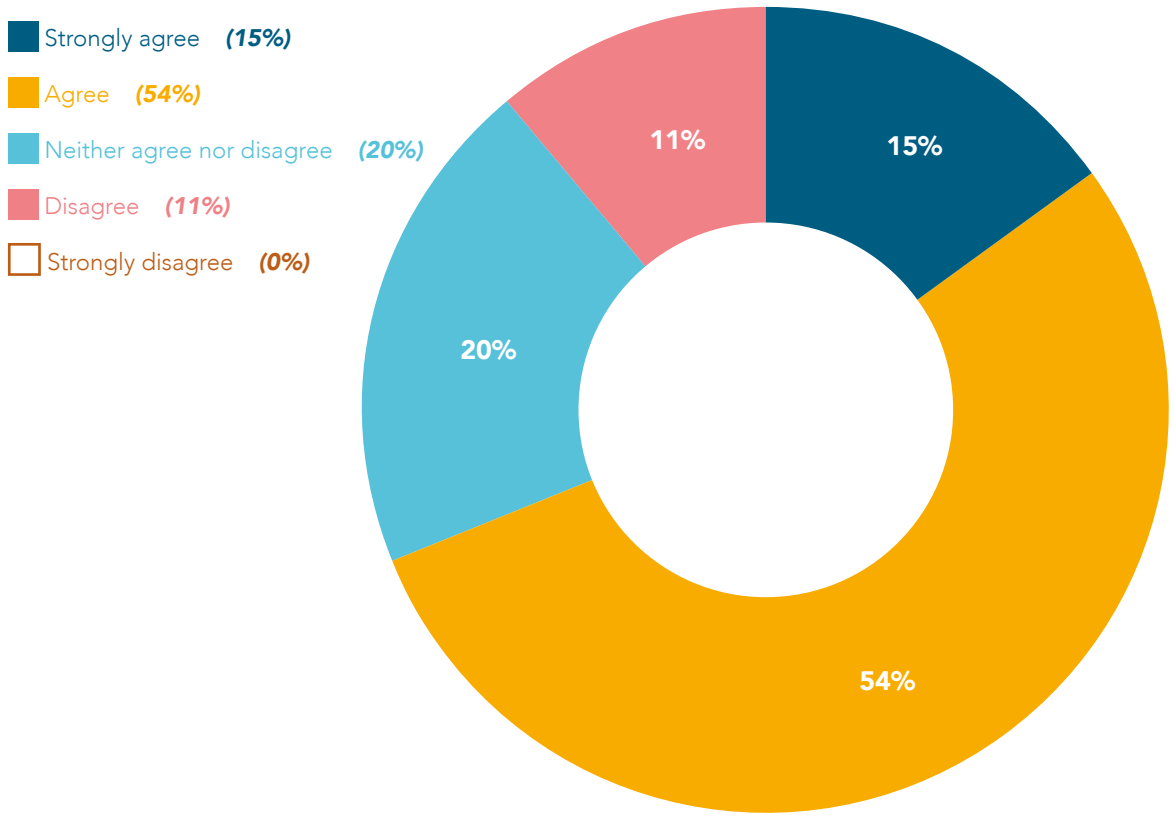
FIGURE 5: WHO OWNS THE STUDENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AT YOUR INSTITUTION?



The survey also examined whether leaders feel their business school communicates with students in a way that meets their needs.

Overall, responses were positive, though more mixed than in other areas. A total of 15 per cent strongly agreed, while a further 54 per cent agreed. However, 12 per cent disagreed that their school communicates in a way that meets student needs, and 21 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed

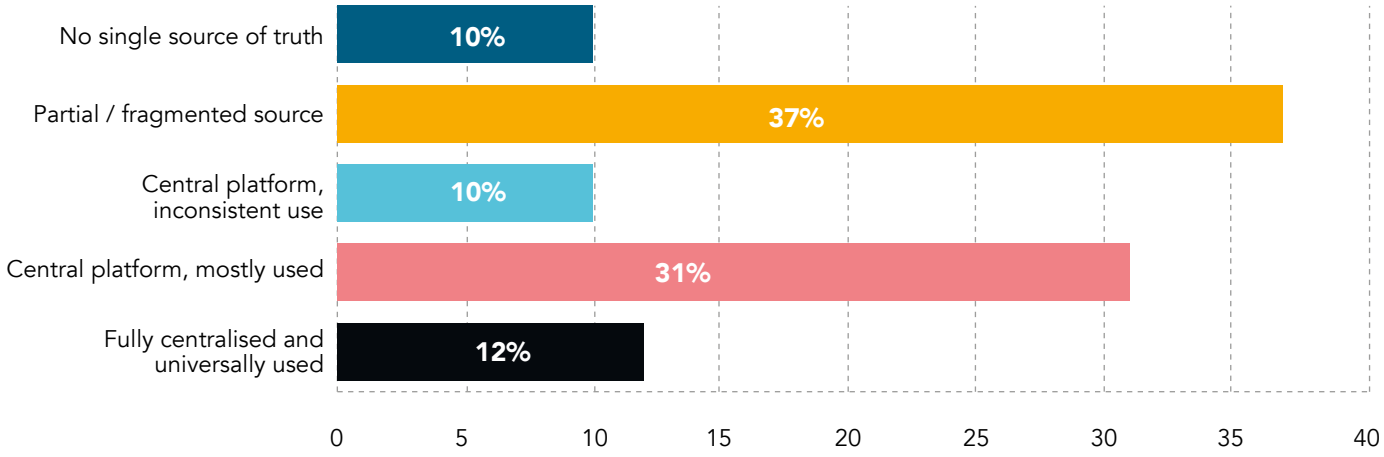
FIGURE 6: DO YOU AGREE THAT YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL COMMUNICATES WITH STUDENTS IN WAYS THAT MEET THEIR NEEDS?





There is nothing more frustrating than being unable to find information when you need it, or having to search across multiple systems to locate what you are looking for. The survey therefore aimed to find out whether business school students experience this challenge when accessing information from their institution.

FIGURE 7: DOES YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL PROVIDE A SINGLE, CENTRALISED 'SOURCE OF TRUTH' WHERE STUDENTS CAN FIND ALL ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL UPDATES, OR MUST THEY CHECK MULTIPLE PLATFORMS INDEPENDENTLY?



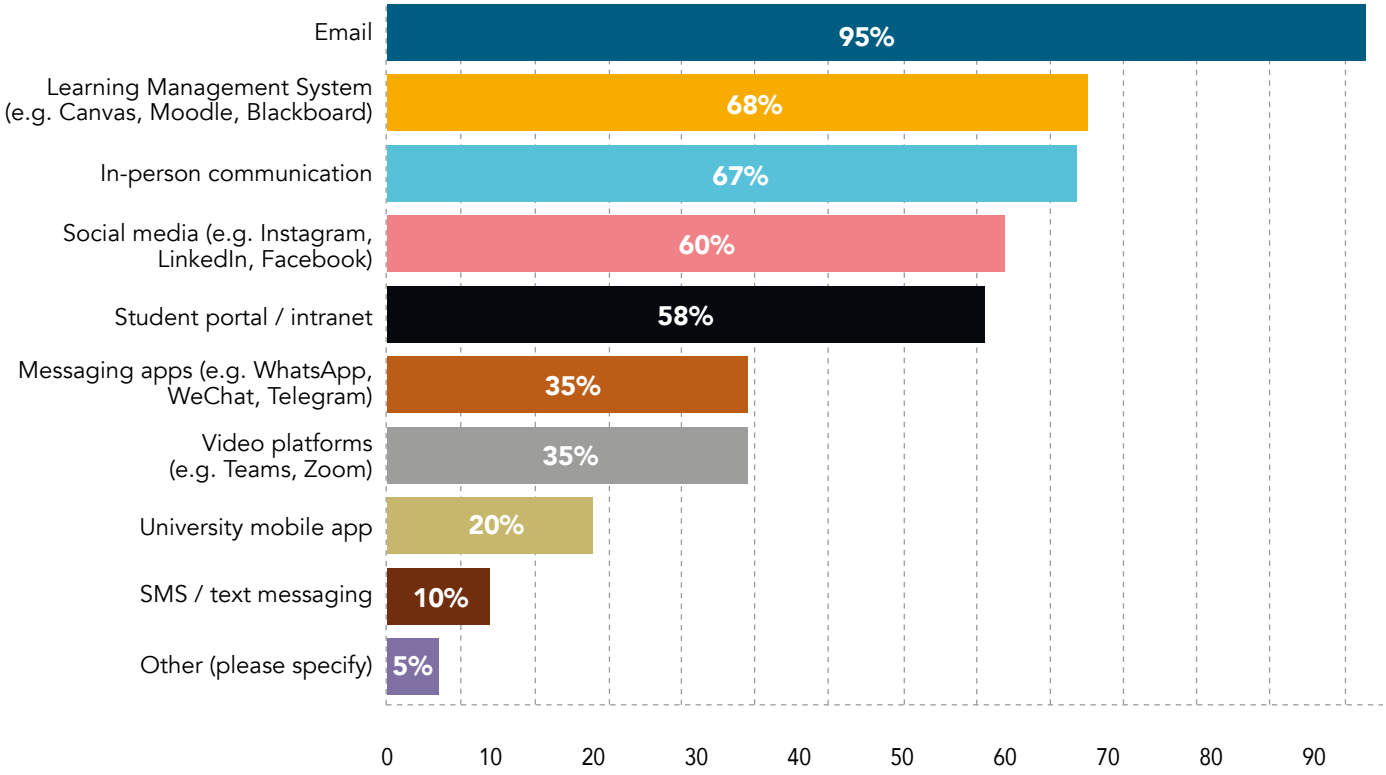
From this, we asked business school leaders whether they felt students knew where to find important information relating to their studies and overall student experience. Most responded positively, with 72 per cent saying they believed students did know where to access the information that mattered to them.

In today's always-connected world, it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information. The survey therefore asked whether leaders felt students experienced communication overload from their university. Just over half (53 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that students do experience information overload, while a further 37 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed.



To better understand where this overload may be coming from, the survey then explored which platforms and channels business schools use to communicate with students.

FIGURE 8: WHICH PLATFORMS OR CHANNELS DOES YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL USE TO COMMUNICATE WITH STUDENTS? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



Not surprisingly, the top communication channel was email, with 95 per cent of business school leaders reporting that they use it. Further down the list in popularity were learning management systems (68 per cent).

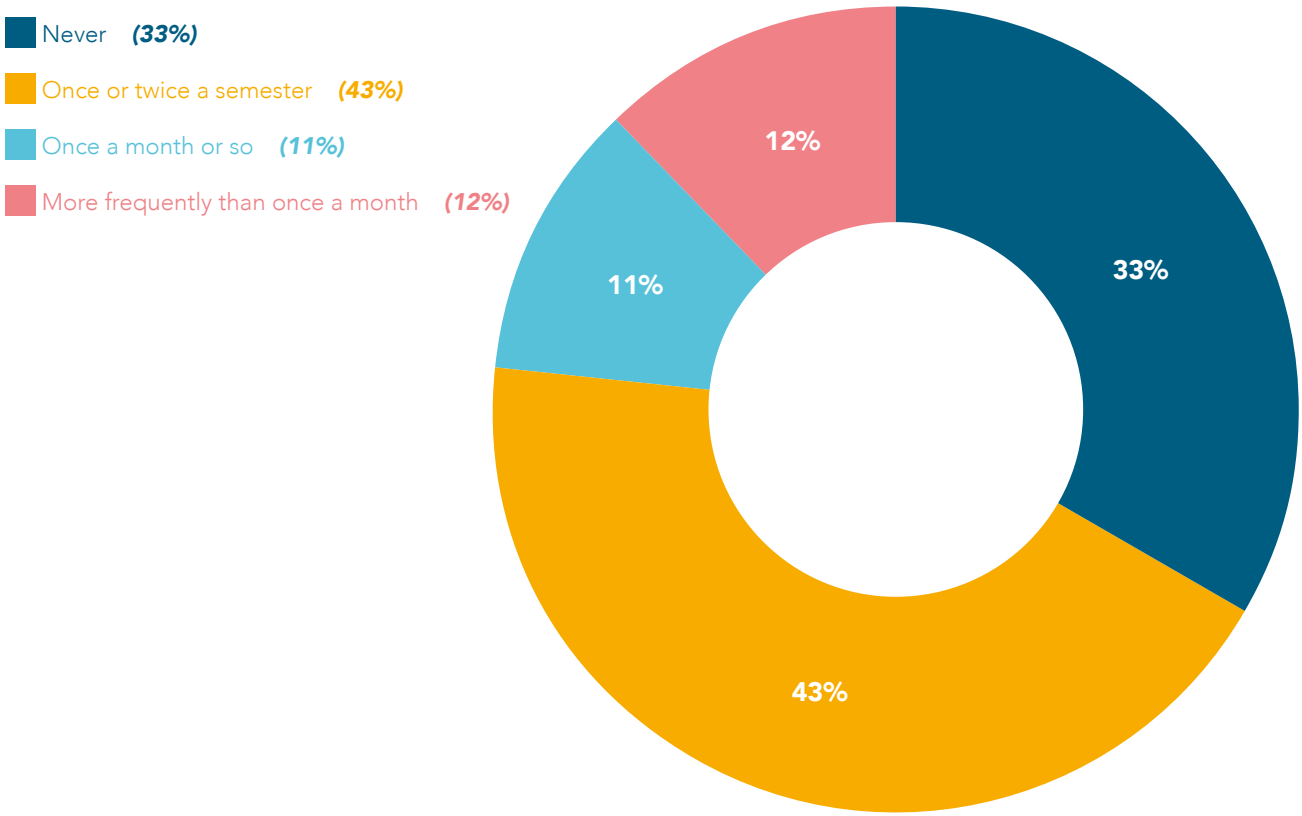
However, in a separate survey by Ready Education, students were asked whether they receive too many emails from their university. Half (50 per cent) either strongly or somewhat agreed, suggesting that while email may be the most direct and accessible method of communication, there is also a risk of over-reliance.

The survey also explored how many different platforms students are expected to use as part of their business school experience, including for course registration, billing, and assignments. Just over half of respondents (52 per cent) said students typically use one or two platforms, while a further 41 per cent reported that students are required to use three or four.

A separate Ready Education study found that 35 per cent of university students felt there were too many systems, applications, and platforms required to complete assignments and other university processes, highlighting the importance of simplicity and ease of use in student-facing digital ecosystems.

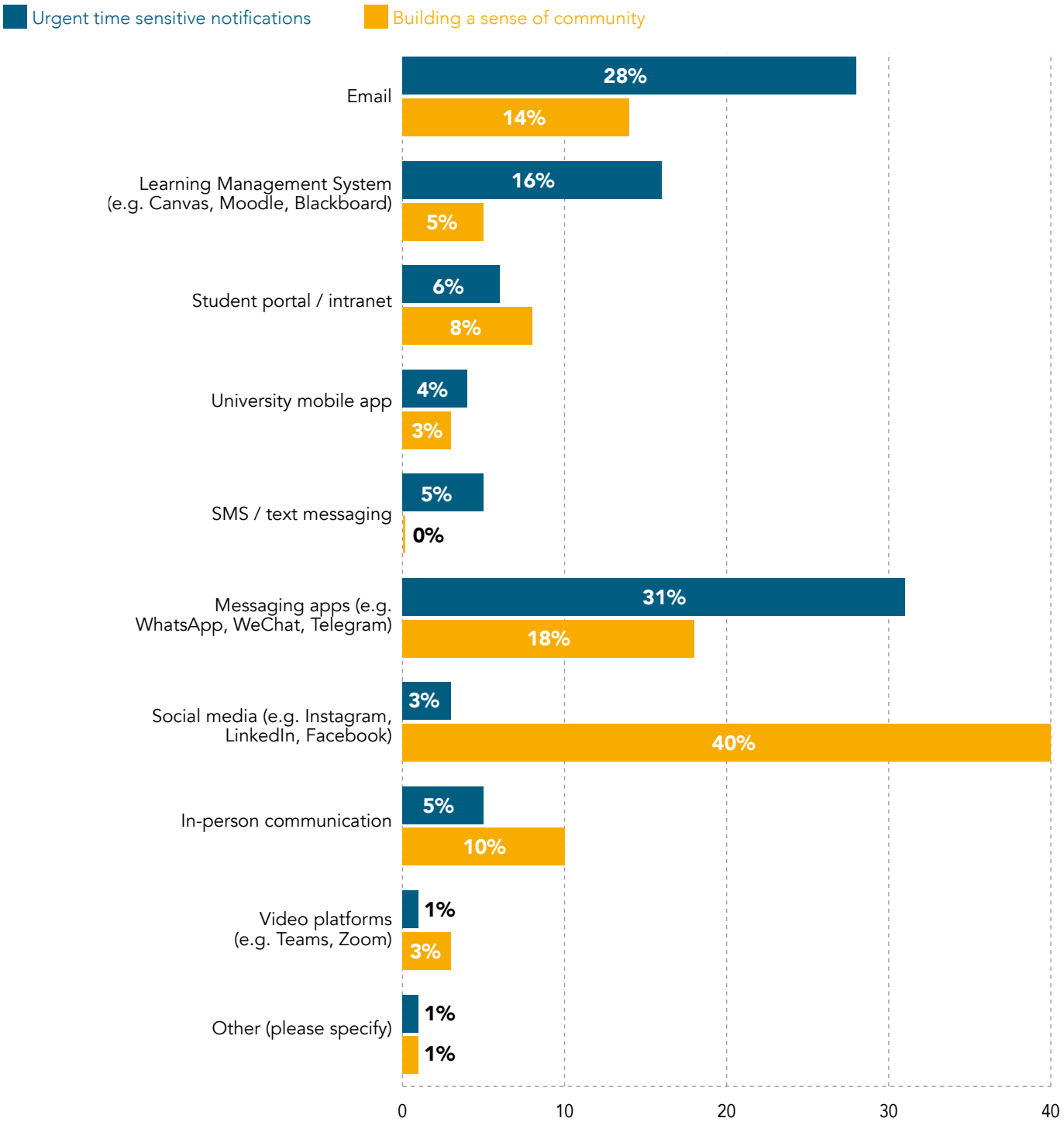


FIGURE 9: HOW OFTEN DO STUDENTS AT YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL MISS DEADLINES ON ASSIGNMENTS OR FORGET ABOUT UPCOMING EXAMS?



One consequence of having too much information spread out between too many different systems is the potential for students to miss, not know about or forget their examinations. The survey asked if students at the business school ever miss deadlines or forget about upcoming exams. A total of 66 per cent of students were missing a deadline at last once a semester. If communication was more clear and more easily available – would this be such an issue? For example, if communication was less reliant on email and more centralised?

FIGURE 10: COMMUNICATION METHODS FOR URGENT TIME SENSITIVE NOTIFICATION AND FOR BUILDING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

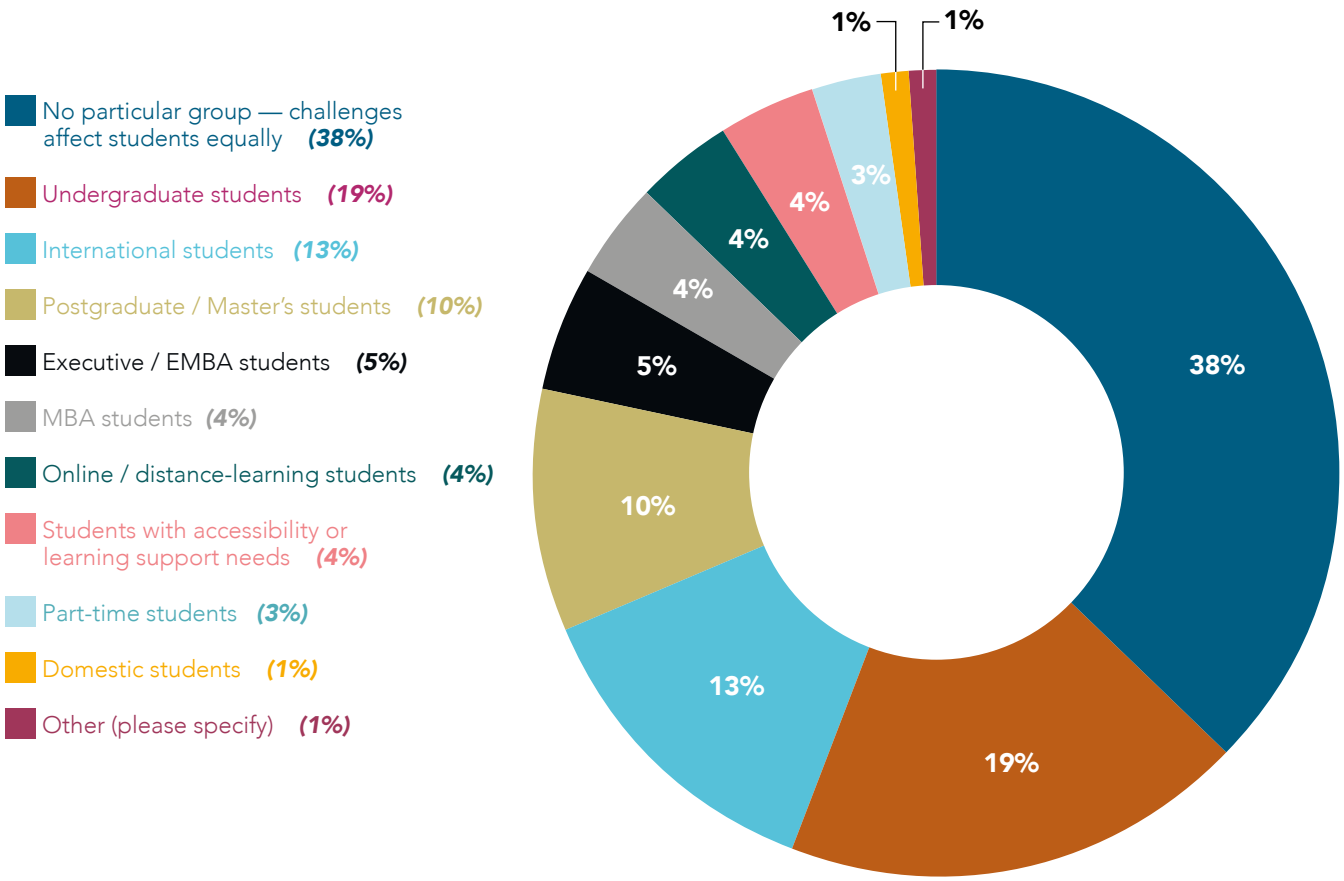


Not all communication methods can be used for the same type of message. The survey was keen to find out what business schools used for different kinds of messaging. For urgent, time sensitive messages, business schools were most likely to use messaging apps such as WhatsApp (31 per cent), followed by email (28 per cent).

When business schools are trying to build a sense of community, they are much more likely to use social media to do this (40 per cent), followed by messaging apps.

Of course, not all students experience the same level of communication challenges. The survey therefore asked which types of students within their institution leaders felt were most affected by these issues.

FIGURE 11: WHICH STUDENT GROUP DO YOU FEEL IS MOST AFFECTED BY COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES?



Business school leaders felt that no single student group was disproportionately affected by communication challenges, with 38 per cent selecting this option. A further 19 per cent identified undergraduates as the most affected group.

The survey then assessed how easy it is for students to respond to communications, ask questions, or seek clarification through their institution's main channels. Leaders were generally confident in this area, with 86 per cent saying it was either "very easy" or "somewhat easy" for students to do so. Only 14 per cent felt it was difficult, and none considered it very difficult.

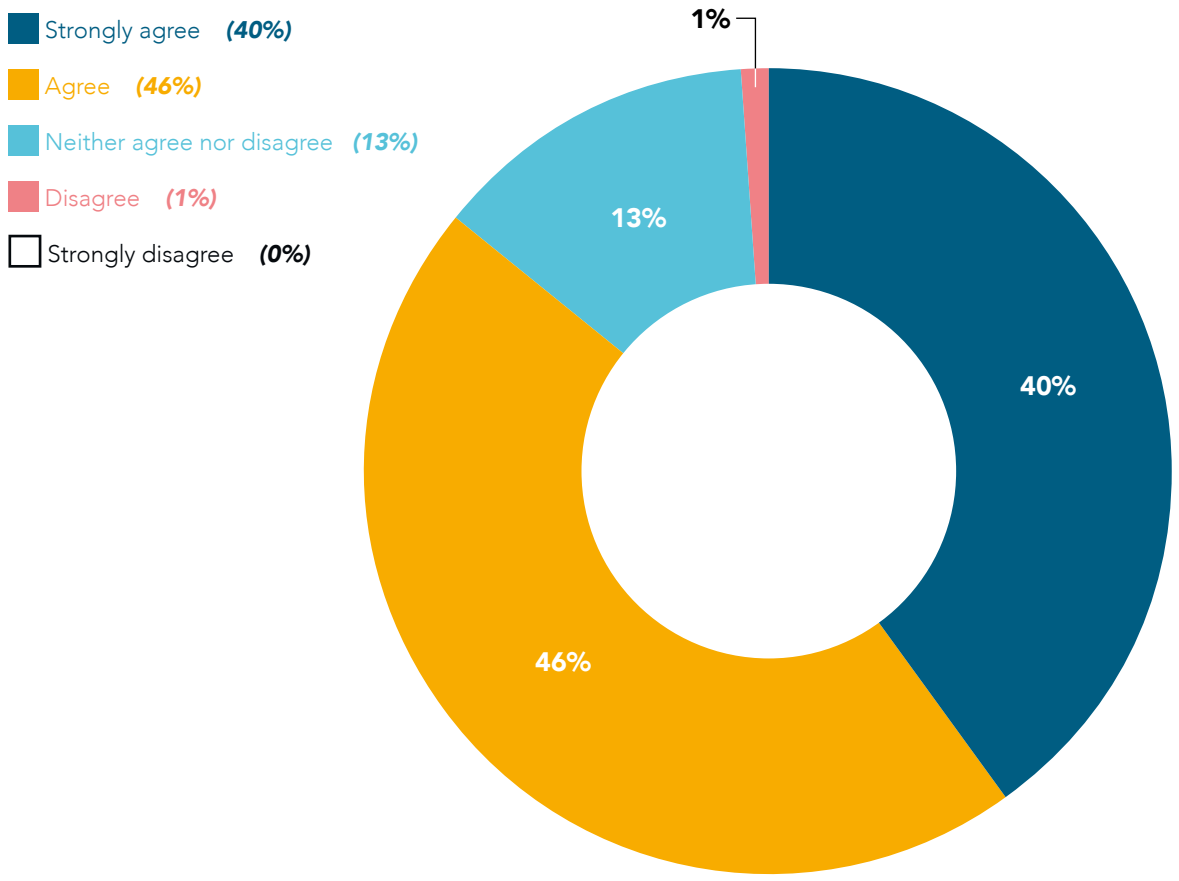
Finally, the survey asked whether students ever receive conflicting messages. This was not seen as a major issue: just 10 per cent said yes, while 48 per cent felt it sometimes occurred, and 43 per cent said it did not.

Part 4:
Wellness, support, and breaking down silos

Wellness and student support are increasingly being integrated into the business school curriculum, reflecting a broader shift towards more holistic approaches to education and student experience. As pressures on students continue to rise, institutions are placing greater emphasis on mental health, wellbeing services, and structured support systems that extend beyond academic delivery.

To begin this part of the survey, we asked business school leaders whether they felt student wellness was a priority within their institution.

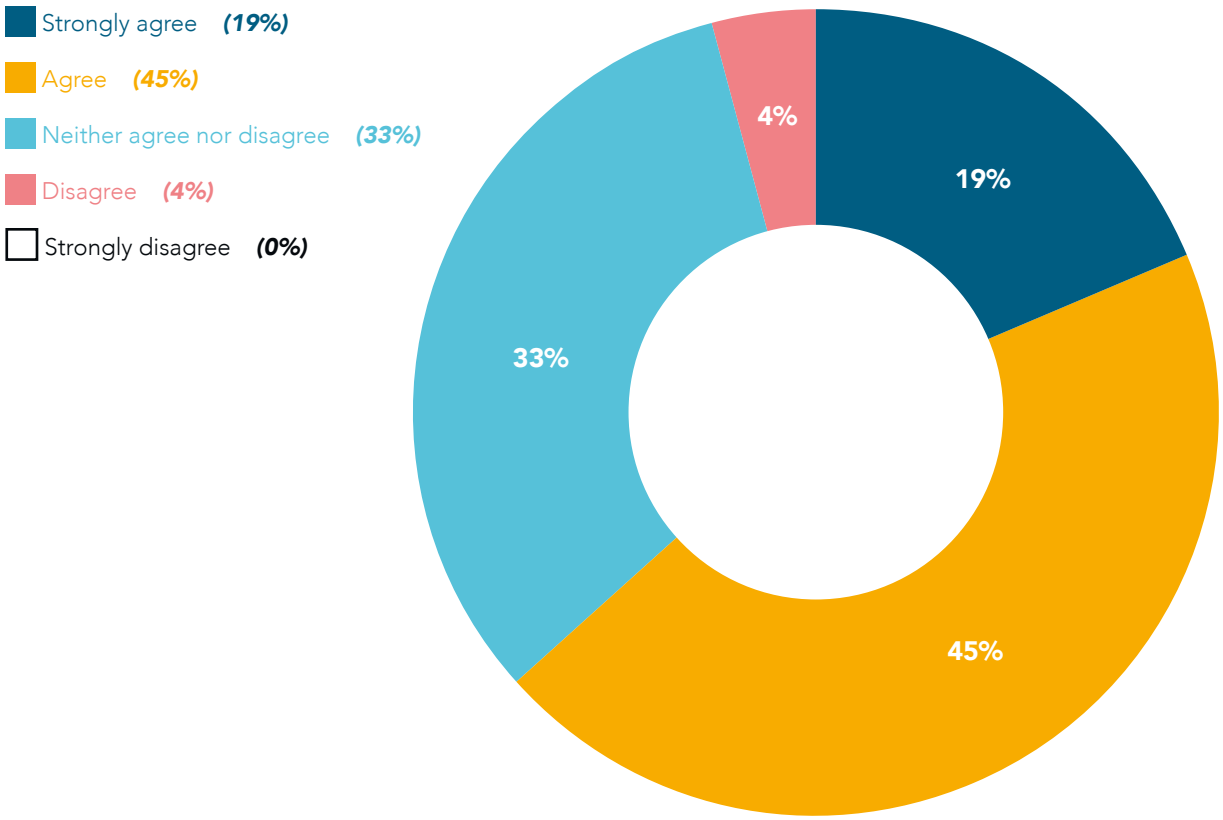
FIGURE 12: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE THAT STUDENT WELLNESS IS A PRIORITY AT YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL?



The vast majority of business schools believed that wellness was indeed a top priority at their business school. A total of 86 per cent either strongly agreed or agreed. This shows that student wellness is something that business school leaders do take seriously.

The story slightly changed when these same leaders were asked if they believed that students felt like wellness was a priority at the business school.

FIGURE 13: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE STUDENTS PERCEIVE WELLNESS AS A PRIORITY AT YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL?



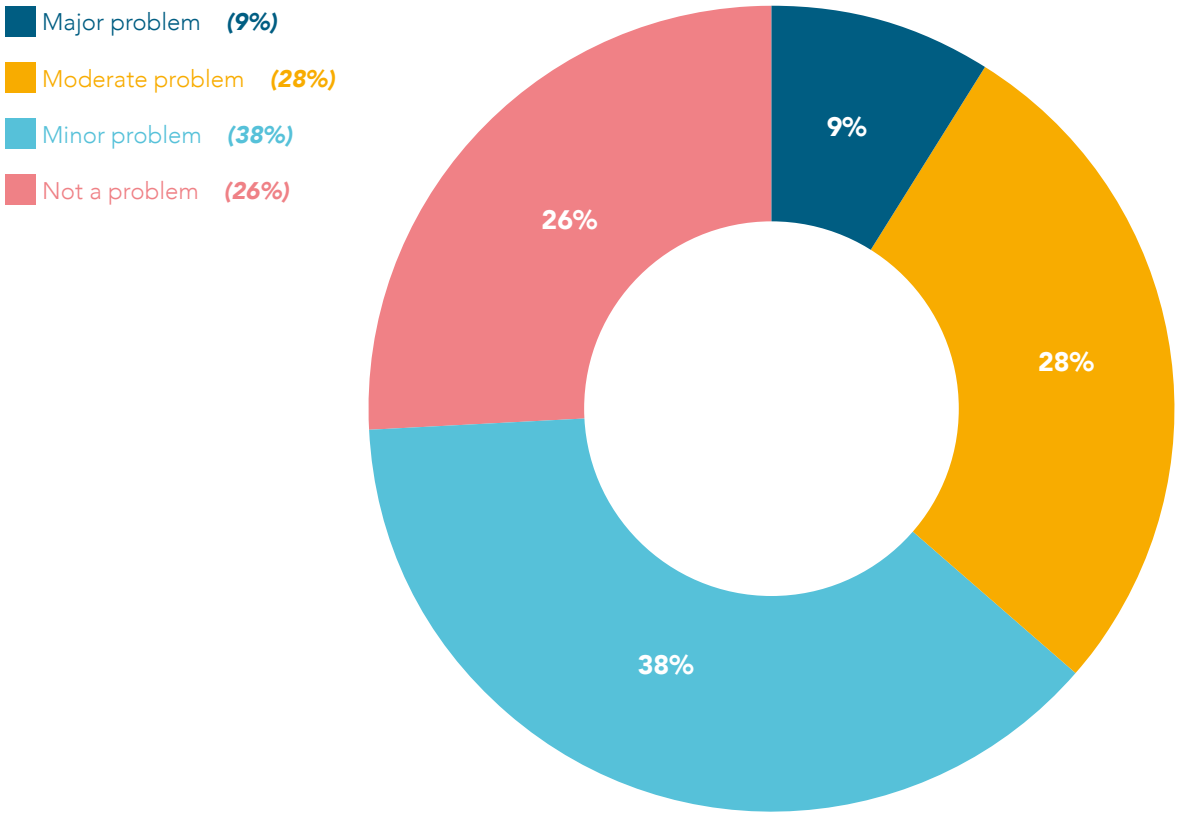
Only 19 per cent of business school leaders strongly agreed that student wellness is a priority at their institution, while a further 45 per cent agreed. However, a significant 33 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed.

This suggests that while many leaders believe their institutions are prioritising wellbeing, there is less certainty about whether this is fully experienced or recognised by students, or whether wellness provision is clearly visible and understood.

One factor closely linked to student wellbeing is retention and dropout rates. The survey therefore explored how significant an issue student dropouts are for business schools.

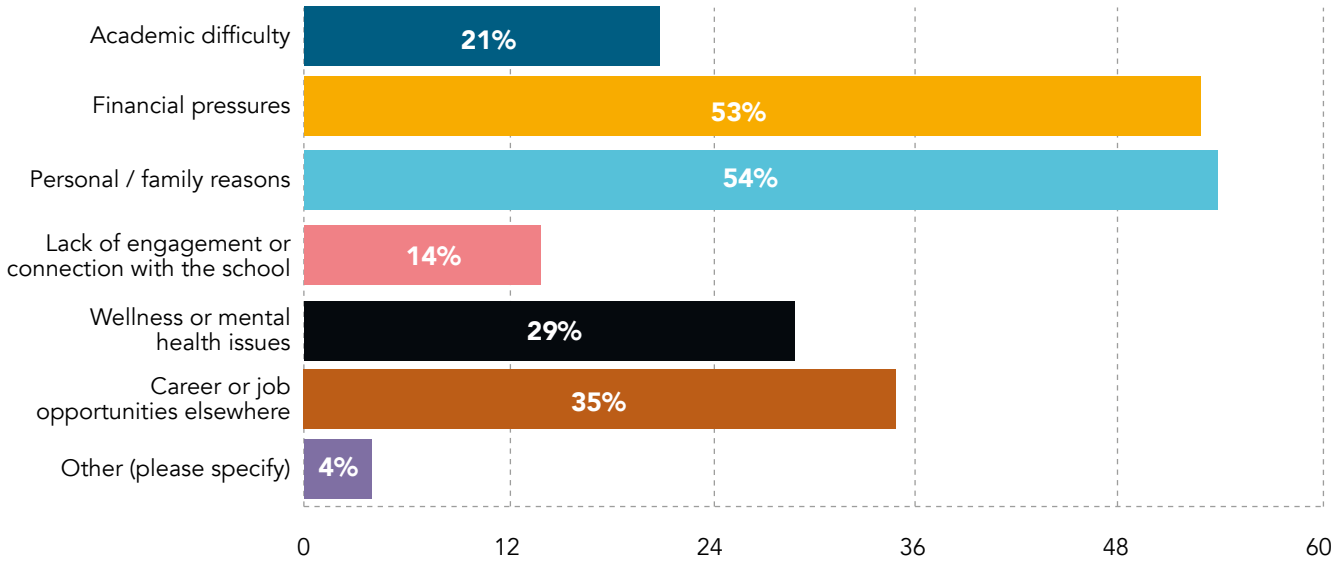


FIGURE 14: DO YOU CONSIDER STUDENT DROPOUT RATES TO BE A PROBLEM FOR YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL?



Most schools didn't see student dropout rates as a huge problem for their business school. Only 9 per cent said they saw it as a major problem and a quarter (28 per cent) said it was a moderate problem. For 64 per cent of the respondents it was considered a minor problem or not a problem.

FIGURE 15: WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS YOU BELIEVE STUDENTS MIGHT DROP OUT OF YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL?



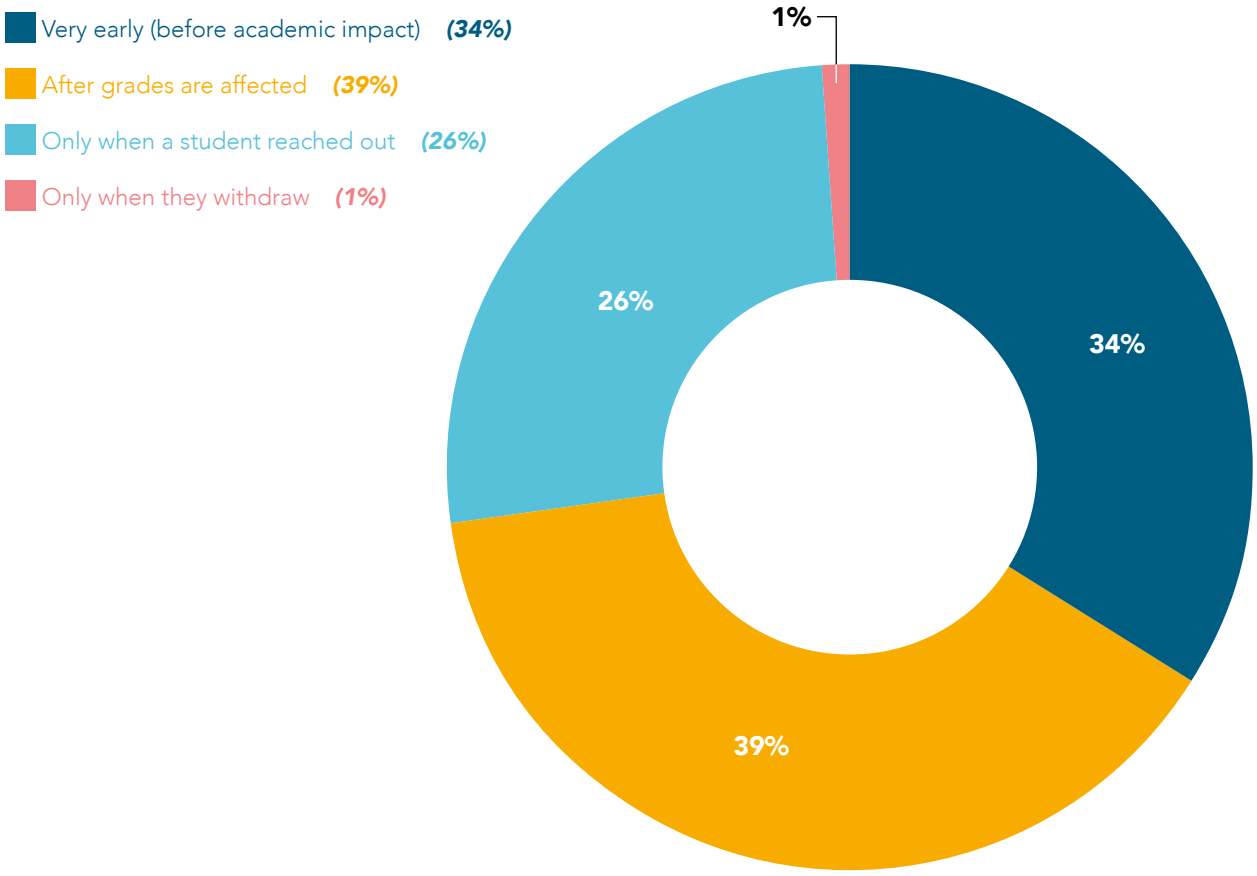
The main reason identified for student dropouts was personal or family circumstances, cited by 54 per cent of respondents. A further 53 per cent pointed to financial pressures. Career or job opportunities, wellbeing or mental health challenges, and academic difficulties were also commonly mentioned.

With a range of factors contributing to student withdrawal, the survey then explored whether institutions are able to identify early when a student is beginning to struggle.

Leaders were asked how early their business school typically becomes aware that a student is experiencing difficulties.



FIGURE 16: HOW EARLY DOES YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL TYPICALLY BECOME AWARE THAT A STUDENT IS STRUGGLING?

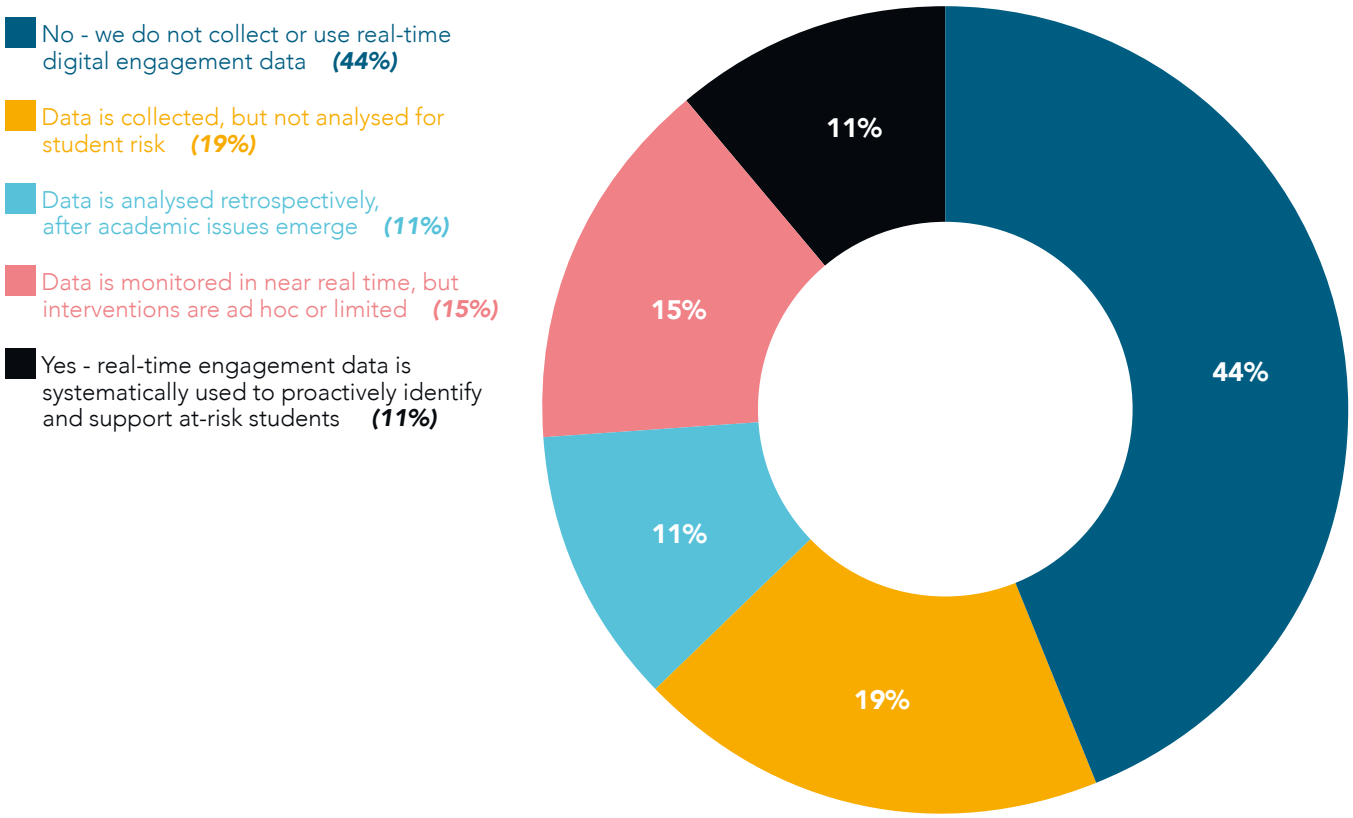


Most business school leaders were confident that their institutions can identify early signs when students may be at risk of dropping out. A third (34 per cent) said they are able to spot students before there is any academic impact, while a further 39 per cent said they typically become aware once grades begin to be affected. However, for around a quarter of institutions (26 per cent), awareness only comes when a student proactively reaches out for support.

Building on this, the survey also asked whether institutions use real-time digital engagement data - such as app logins or interaction with online learning resources - to help identify at-risk students before academic performance begins to decline.

In the modern world, there is so much data that is available to all of us. The survey asked if business schools were using all the available data to identify students who were at risk of dropping out.

FIGURE 17: DOES YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL CURRENTLY UTILISE REAL-TIME DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT DATA - SUCH AS FREQUENCY OF APP LOGINS OR ENGAGEMENT WITH DIGITAL RESOURCES - TO IDENTIFY AT-RISK STUDENTS BEFORE THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IS AFFECTED?

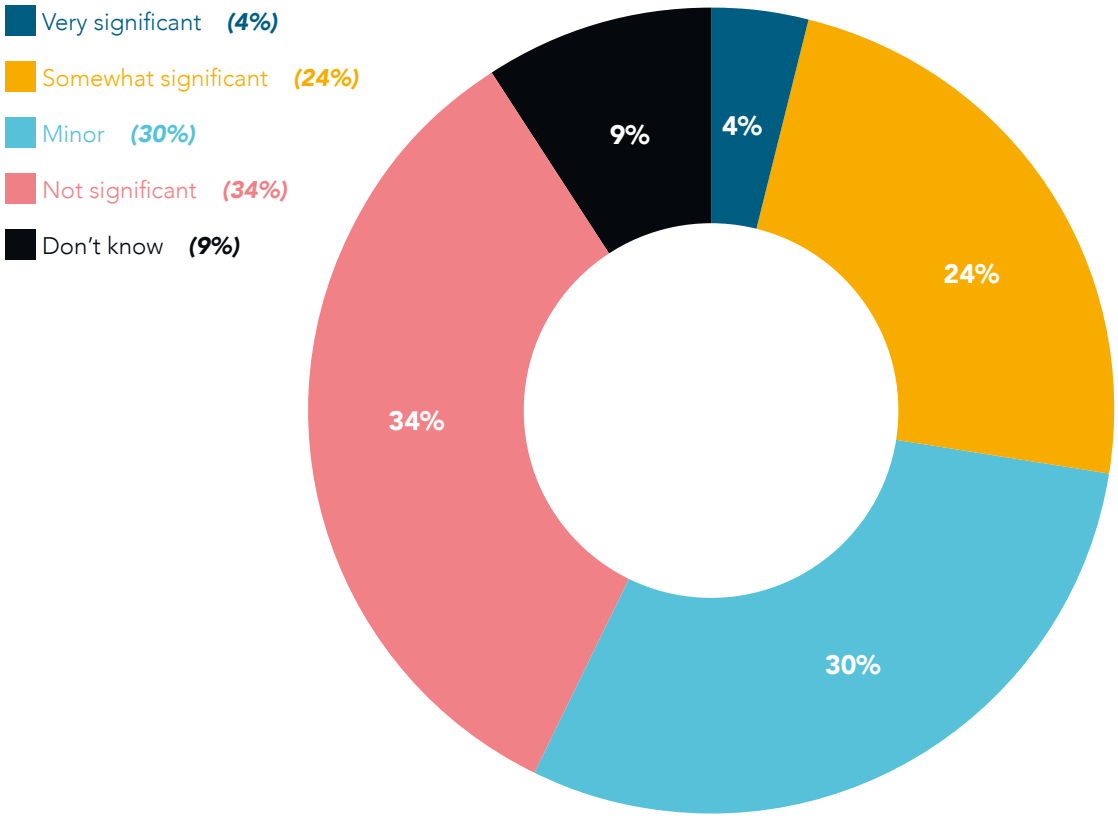


A large proportion of schools do not collect real-time digital engagement data (44 per cent) and the next largest proportion of schools do collect the data but do not analyse it for student risk (19 per cent).

Only 11 per cent of schools use the real time data to proactively identify and support students who were at-risk.



FIGURE 18: TO WHAT EXTENT DO STUDENT DROPOUTS CREATE A FINANCIAL BURDEN FOR YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL?



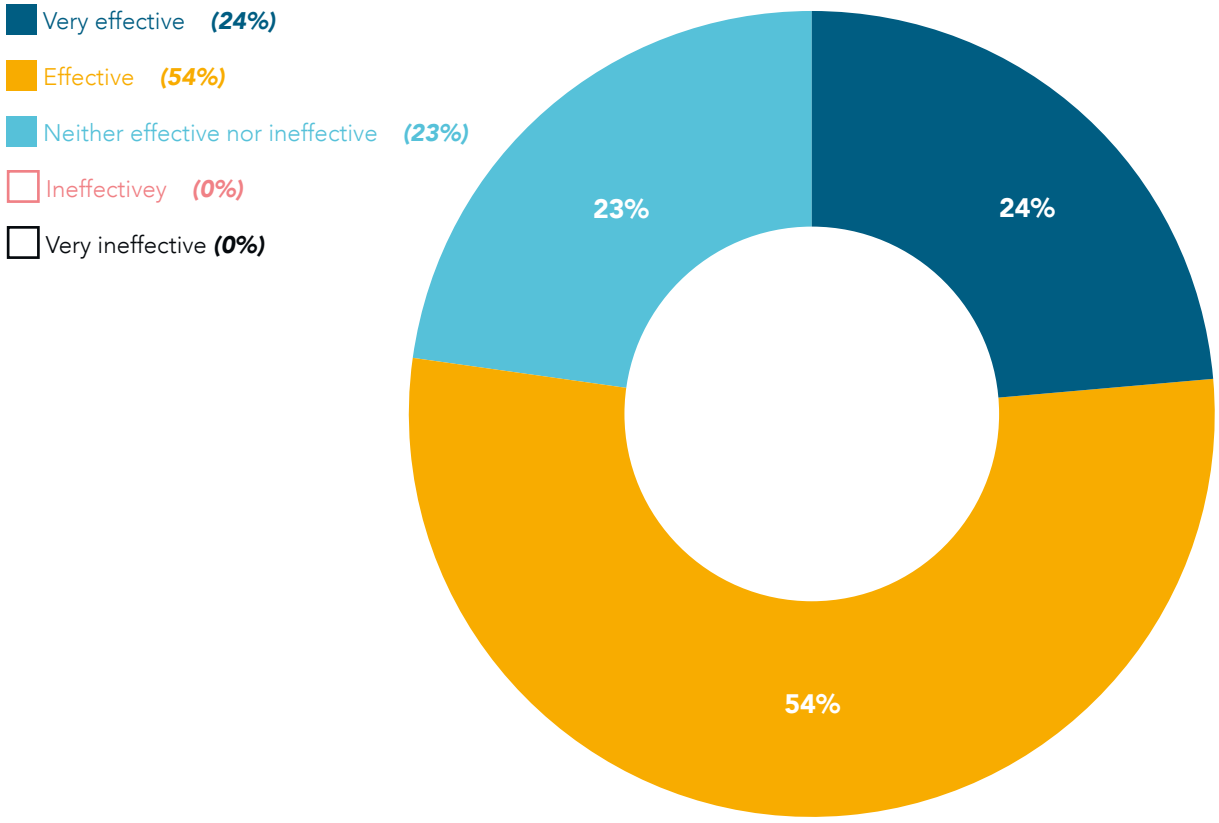
For a small number of schools, dropouts were seen as having a significant financial impact (4 per cent), while a further 24 per cent viewed the impact as somewhat significant. For the majority, however, dropouts were considered a minor (30 per cent) or not significant (34 per cent) financial burden.

When asked whether student dropouts could be prevented, business school leaders were largely optimistic. A total of 15 per cent believed they could definitely be prevented, while 55 per cent said prevention was possible in some cases.

Part 5:
The impact of student services

A crucial part of any business school is its student support services. The survey therefore aimed to assess how successful these services are in helping students.

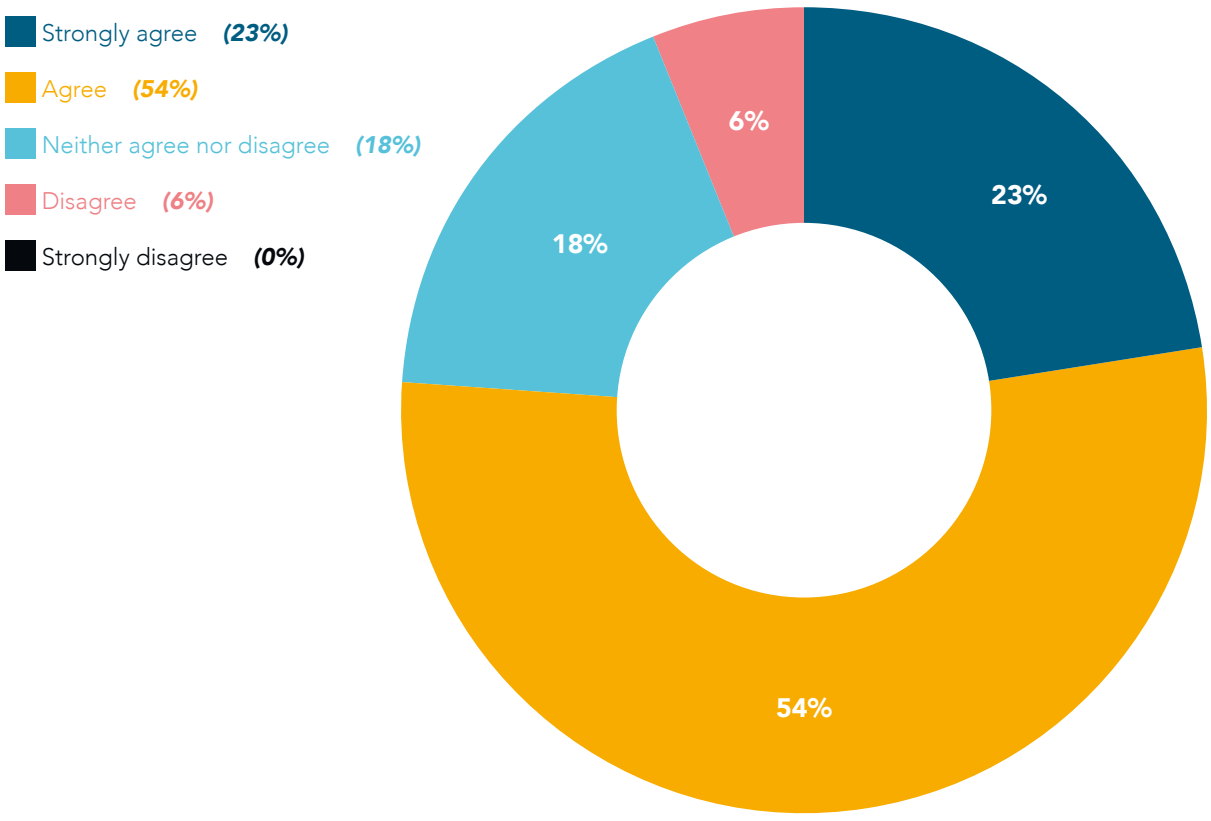
FIGURE 19: HOW EFFECTIVE DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES (E.G., COUNSELLING, FINANCIAL AID, ACADEMIC SUPPORT) ARE IN HELPING STUDENTS AT YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL



Overall, business schools were very positive about their student support services. A total of 24 per cent described them as very effective, while 54 per cent said they were effective. Notably, no leaders considered them ineffective or very ineffective.



FIGURE 20: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE STUDENTS KNOW WHERE TO ACCESS SUPPORT SERVICES (E.G., COUNSELLING, FINANCIAL AID)?



Business school leaders were also mostly positive about students' knowledge of how to access these support services with 77 per cent of business school leaders agreeing that students knew how to access them.

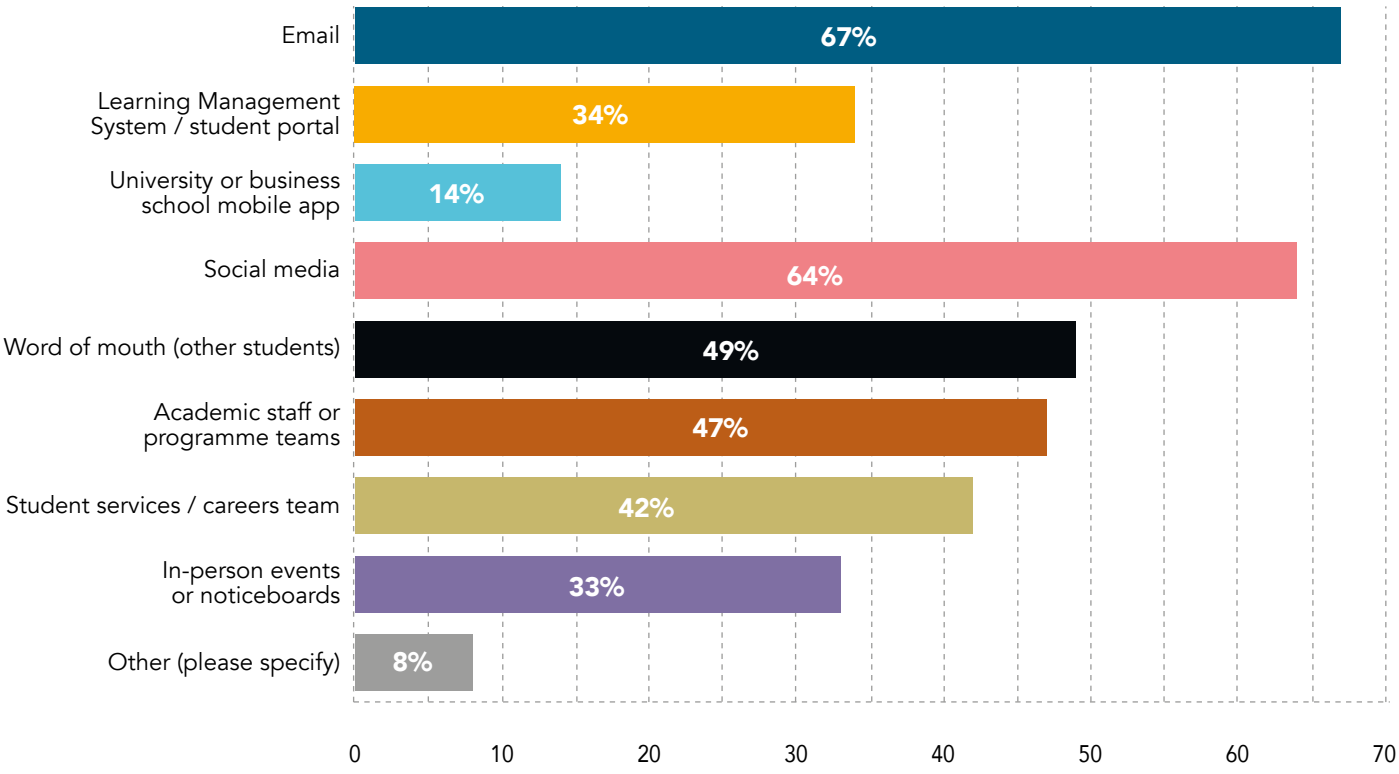
This shows business schools in general believe in their student support service and in their availability to their students.

Part 6:
Engagement and linking extra-curricular activities to academic endeavours

It is widely accepted that organisations who employ business school students do not rely solely on strong academic performance, but instead look for students who demonstrate a broad range of skills developed beyond the classroom.

To support this, business schools typically offer a wide range of clubs, societies, and extracurricular activities. The survey therefore sought to understand how students find out about these opportunities.

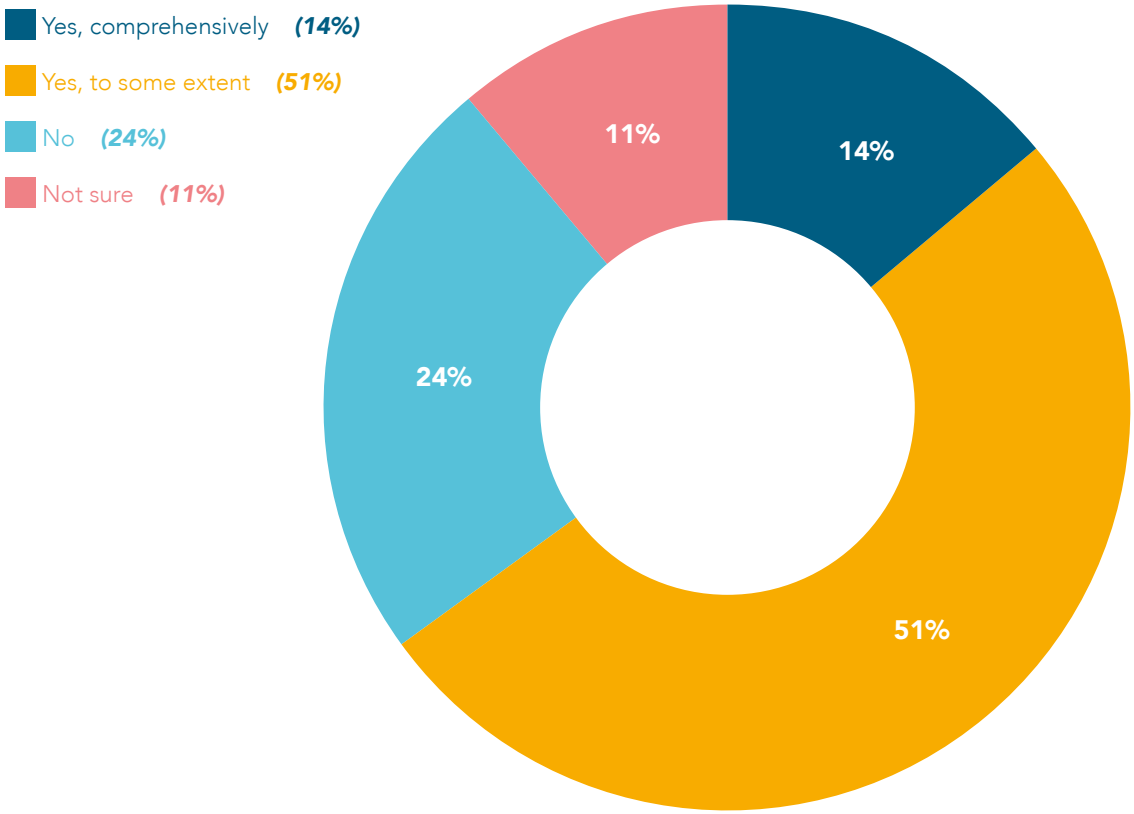
FIGURE 21: HOW DO STUDENTS AT YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL TYPICALLY FIND OUT ABOUT EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES?



Business schools most commonly use email (67 per cent) and social media (64 per cent) to inform students about the extracurricular activities available to them. However, a surprisingly large number still rely on word of mouth to communicate these opportunities, even in today's increasingly digital environment.

The survey went on to ask if business schools keep a record of their students' accomplishments outside of the classroom.

FIGURE 22: DOES YOUR BUSINESS SCHOOL KEEP A COMPREHENSIVE RECORD OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND ACHIEVEMENTS OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM?



A small proportion of business school leaders (14 per cent) said that their institutions track students' extracurricular engagement comprehensively. The majority (51 per cent) said they do so to some extent, although this suggests it is not fully systematised. Notably, nearly a quarter (24 per cent) reported that their school does not keep a record of such activity at all.

The survey then explored whether students understand the connection between extracurricular and co-curricular activities and their future employment opportunities. Leaders were asked whether they believe students recognise this link.

A total of 20 per cent felt students clearly understand the connection, while a further 64 per cent believed they see the link to some extent. However, 11 per cent said not really, and 5 per cent said not at all.

Ready Education conducted a separate survey of university students, asking how helpful they would find having access to a comprehensive record of their participation and achievements outside the classroom. A total of 23 per cent said they would find this extremely helpful, while a further 31 per cent said it would be very helpful.

When compared with the 14 per cent of business schools that currently maintain a comprehensive record of such activity, this suggests a clear gap between student expectations and institutional practice, and highlights an area of potential development for business schools.

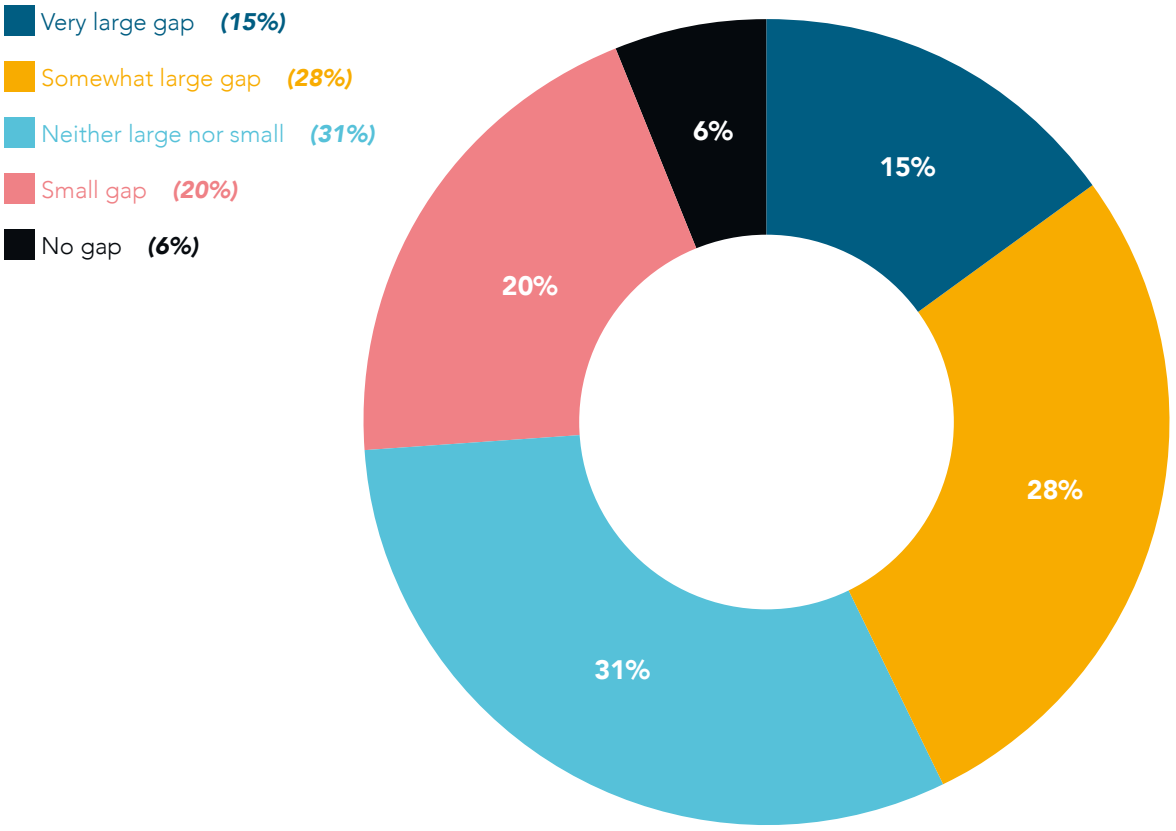
Further to this, the survey asked whether business schools actively communicate the link between extracurricular engagement and employability outcomes. A total of 4 per cent of respondents said this was extremely difficult, 21 per cent said it was difficult, while the majority (55 per cent) described it as moderately difficult. Only 19 per cent said it was either easy or very easy.

Part 7:
Speaking Gen Z's language

The survey first asked business school leaders whether they believe there is a generational gap between university administration and students.

Responses were mixed. For 15 per cent, this gap was seen as very large, while nearly a third described it as somewhat large. Another third felt it was neither large nor small. Only 6 per cent believed there was no gap at all.

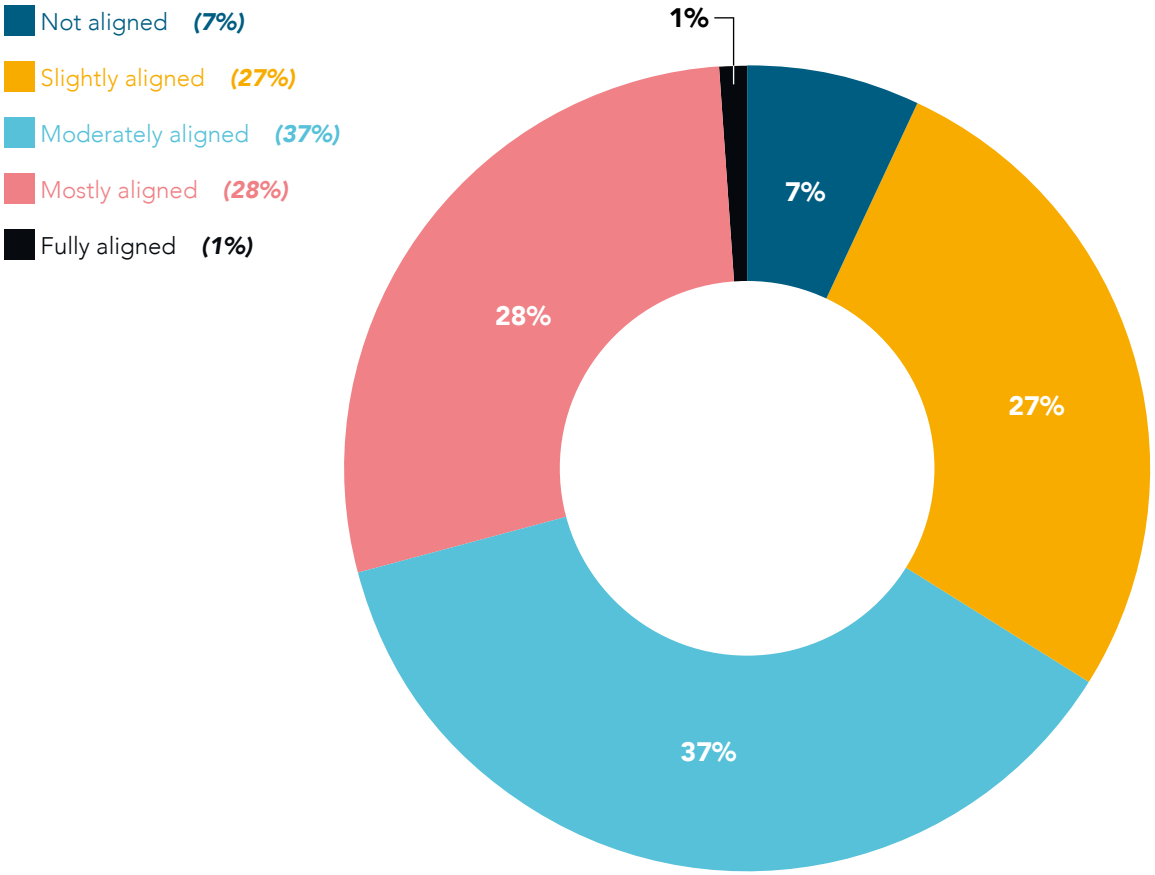
FIGURE 23: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU BELIEVE THERE IS A GENERATIONAL GAP BETWEEN UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION AND STUDENTS?



Further to this, it is often observed that different generations tend to prefer different communication styles and formats. Building on this, the survey asked the extent to which leaders believe the format and tone of their institution's communications (such as long-form emails versus short-form notifications) align with the digital consumption habits of current students.



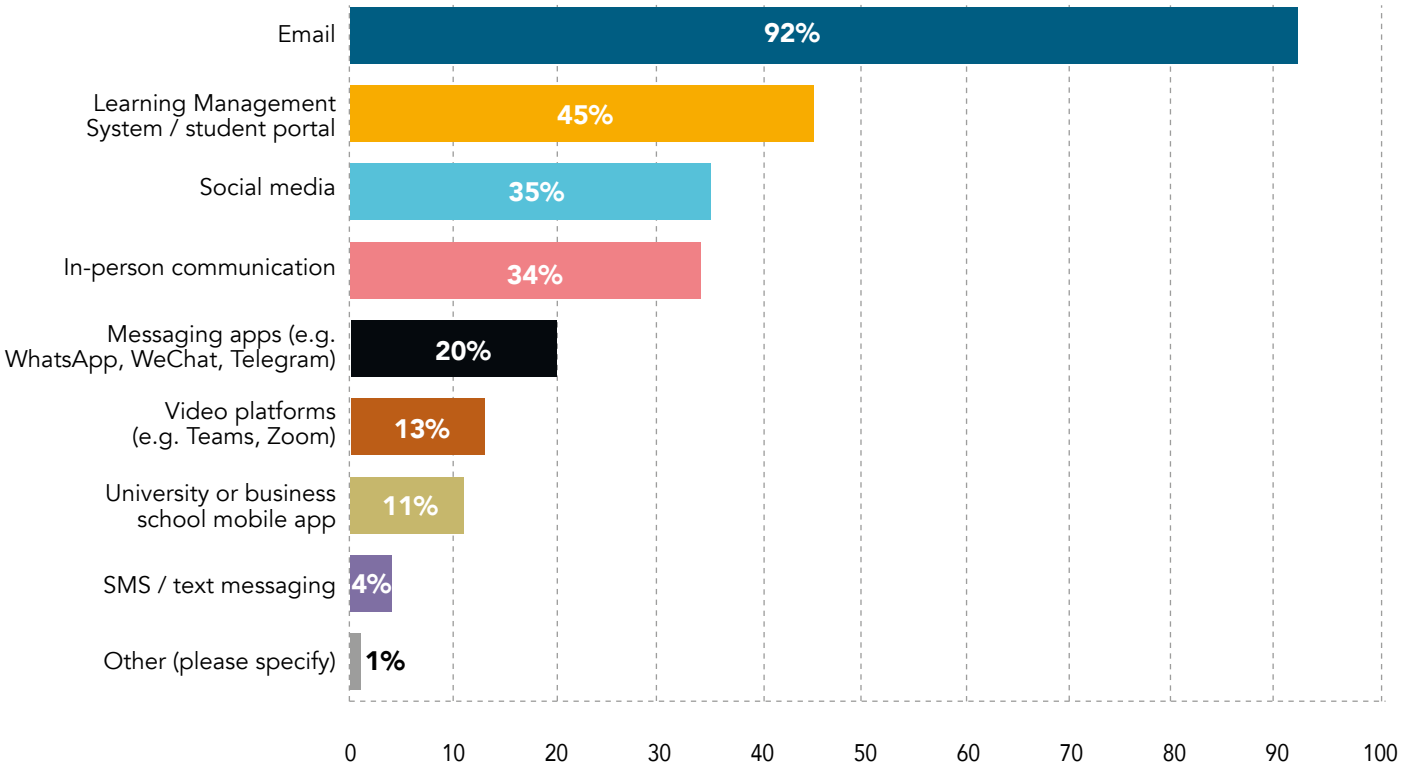
FIGURE 24: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU BELIEVE THE FORMAT AND TONE OF YOUR INSTITUTION'S COMMUNICATIONS (SUCH AS LONG-FORM EMAILS VERSUS SHORT-FORM NOTIFICATIONS) ALIGNS WITH THE DIGITAL CONSUMPTION HABITS OF YOUR CURRENT STUDENTS?



Only 1 per cent of business schools believe that the format and tone of their institution's communications fully align with the current digital consumption habits of their students. The majority of respondents (37 per cent) said their communications are moderately aligned.

This suggests that senior leaders recognise there is a clear mismatch between how information is currently delivered and how students prefer to consume it.

FIGURE 25: WHICH COMMUNICATION CHANNELS DOES YOUR ADMINISTRATION PRIMARILY PREFER TO USE WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS?

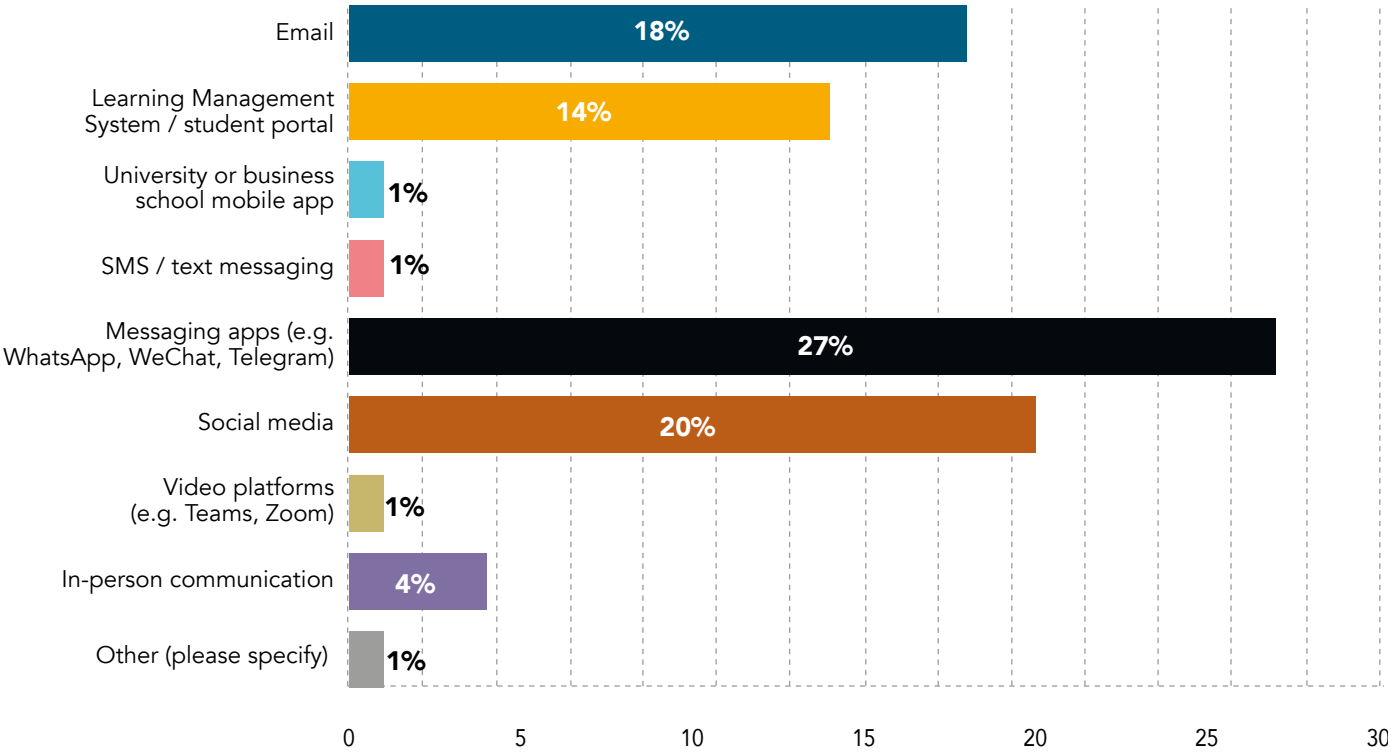


The results highlight the communication gap even further. A total of 92 per cent of administrative staff prefer to communicate with students via email. Administration staff also preferred to use the learning management systems to communicate with students (45 per cent).



In contrast, the survey went on to ask which communication channels students engaged with most. Messaging apps were the clear winner here with 27 per cent of leaders picking this option. This was followed by social media (20 per cent) and email (18 per cent).

FIGURE 26: WHICH COMMUNICATION CHANNELS DO STUDENTS ENGAGE WITH MOST?



Respondents were asked to what extent they observe differences between generations of students within their business school in how they communicate and behave. Over half (54 per cent) said there were some differences, while a further 20 per cent reported very large differences. Only 6 per cent said there were no noticeable differences, and 21 per cent said there were only minor differences.

Building on this, the survey then asked whether there are differences in the devices students use to communicate across generations. Senior leaders again perceived variation: 8 per cent said there were significant differences, 39 per cent said some differences, 30 per cent said minor differences, and 15 per cent were unsure.

This suggests that business schools may need to tailor communication methods and platforms to reflect differing generational preferences in how students engage with information.

Conclusions

This research highlights a clear paradox at the heart of modern business school communication. While institutions have never had more tools at their disposal to reach students, the effectiveness of those communications is far less certain. Business schools are confident in their ability to foster community, provide support, and communicate important information - but the data suggests that this confidence is not always fully aligned with student behaviours, preferences, and experiences.

The results show fragmentation – students are often having to traverse multiple platforms and are receiving many messages – and not always in their preferred communication style. Emails are still the most used method of communication by business schools but seem to risk students feeling disengaged or missing critical information. However, social media and messaging apps where students are most engaged are often under utilised in formal communication strategies.

Very encouragingly, business schools are showing intent in key areas. Leaders show belief in the importance of community, student support and wellbeing. However, there remains a gap between provision and perception - particularly in areas such as wellness and communication clarity - suggesting that visibility, consistency, and delivery are just as important as intent.

The results seem to point to some opportunities for business schools. Schools should aim for greater centralisation of information, more intentional use of data and more digital engagement tools.

Ultimately, effective communication is not about volume, but about relevance, clarity, and timing. Business schools that can simplify their digital ecosystems, personalise their messaging, and meet students where they are will be best placed to cut through the noise.



About Ready Education

Trusted by over 700 institutions in 25+ countries, including 75% of the top 20 universities worldwide, Ready Education helps colleges and universities build communities and improve retention through the industry-leading CampusGroups platform and app. From orientation through graduation, students use the app daily to navigate campus life, academics, and services in one unified experience. Institutions understand and act on engagement patterns through interactive dashboards and AI-powered insights that make data accessible to administrative leaders across campus.

Founded in 2005 by an NYU Stern student, CampusGroups remains deeply rooted in the business school community, counting IE University, ESCP Business School, London Business School, Michigan Ross, Northwestern Kellogg, and Melbourne Business School among its clients. For more information, visit readyeducation.com.

Want to learn more?

If you'd like to discuss how CampusGroups could support your institution's engagement and retention goals, or if you have any questions about the findings in this report, please get in touch:



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