

Understanding Students' preferences for Blended Learning approaches at Westminster Business School



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WESTMINSTER
BUSINESS
SCHOOL

Learning outcomes

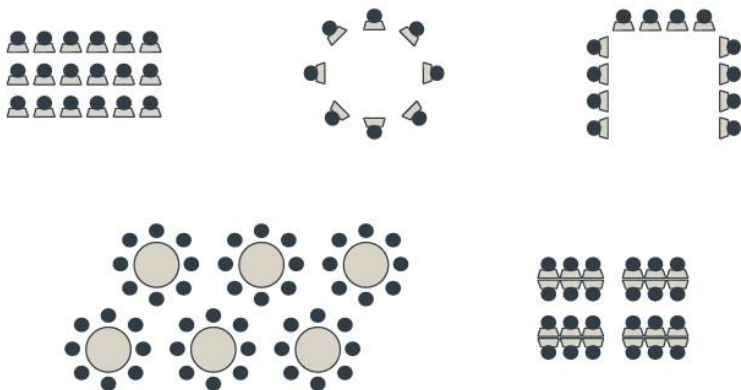
- **Understand the specific preferences of students regarding blended learning activities**
- **Analyse the digital tools that students preferred in blended learning modules**
- **Identify the most effective assessment types in blended learning**



Blended Learning

• Evolving definition

- It integrates effective practices from both physical and digital environments (Office for Students, 2022)
- It combines face-to-face activities (Beckingham et al., 2022), on or off-campus, and online activities (Beetham and MacNeill, 2023).
- Learning activities can be
 - ✓ Synchronous, when students and instructors meet simultaneously,
 - ✓ Asynchronous, when students access learning material at their own pace (Stanford, no date)



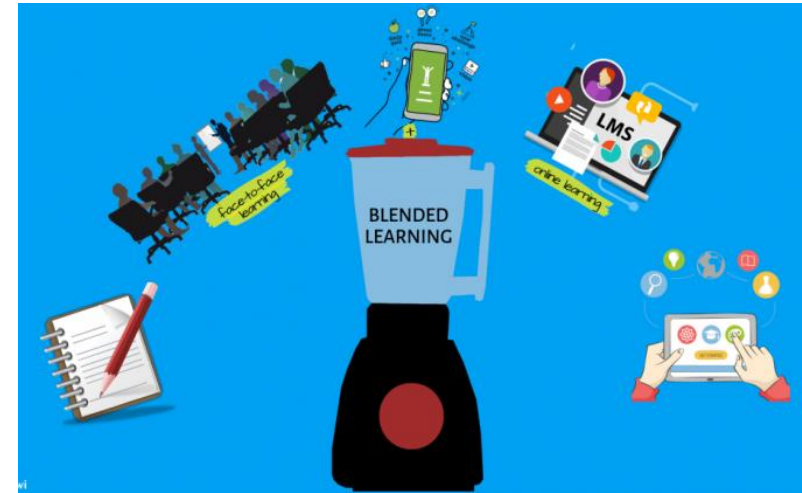
Blended Learning

• Advantages

- Lecturer-student interaction (Marie, 2021)
- Cost efficiency (Rasheed, Kamsin and Abdullah, 2020)
- Student engagement (Lapitan et al., 2021)

• Gap in the research

- Its effects on student experiences through mixed methods (Nikolopoulou and Zacharis, 2023).
- Implementation challenges faced by students, teachers, and educational institutions (Rasheed, Kamsin and Abdullah, 2020).



Student as co-creators (SCC) project

• Aims

- To comprehend students' preferences regarding the design of blended learning modules
- To determine the best balance of physical and online activities that will enhance the learning experience at the Westminster Business School (WBS).

• SCC team

- Mahima Singh (Level 5 - BA Business Management)
- Drilena Ukperaj (Level 5 - BA Business Management)
- Diya Chhillar (Level 5 - BA Business Management)
- Dr. Setenay Dilek Fidler (Senior lecturer – WBS)
- Dr. Gustavo Espinoza-Ramos (Senior lecturer – WBS)



Methodology

This research project employs a **mixed-methods approach**, combining both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

■ Quantitative Method

- ✓ A **survey questionnaire** was used for data collection.
- ✓ The survey consisted of 30 questions, divided into two sections.

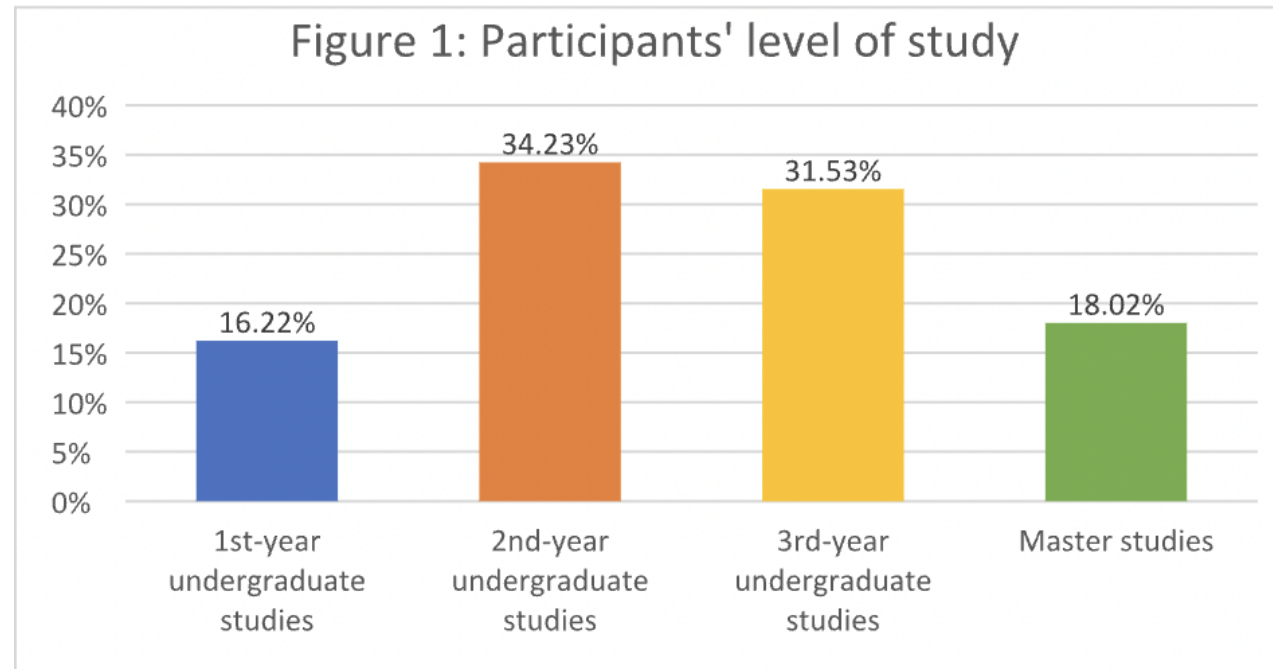
■ Qualitative Method

- ✓ **Semi-structured interviews** were conducted which provided deeper insights into student's preferences.
- ✓ Key themes: sense of belonging, blended learning activities, teamwork skills, etc.



Methodology

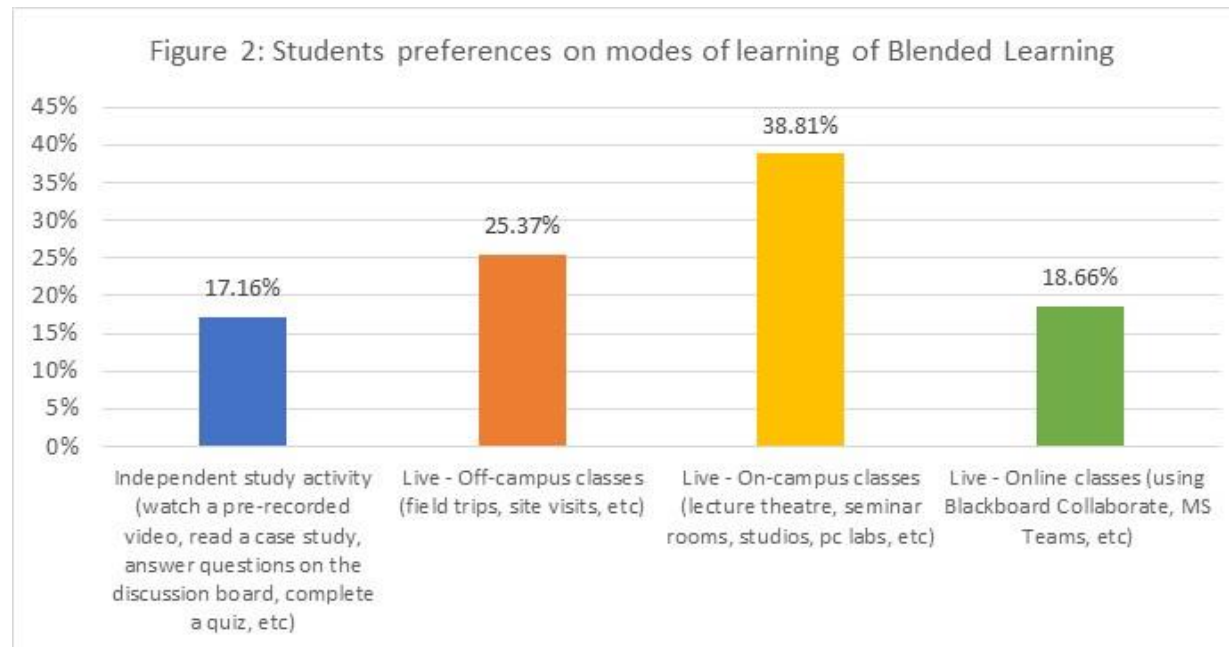
- For research purposes, an ethics forms was approved to ensure protection of participant's rights and confidentiality. In addition, a participant's information sheet was provided to students, which outlined the study's aims and objectives.
- There were 111 responses to the questionnaire, out of which, 59.46% participants identified as females and 38.74% identified as males.



Results - discussion

- **Survey questionnaire:**

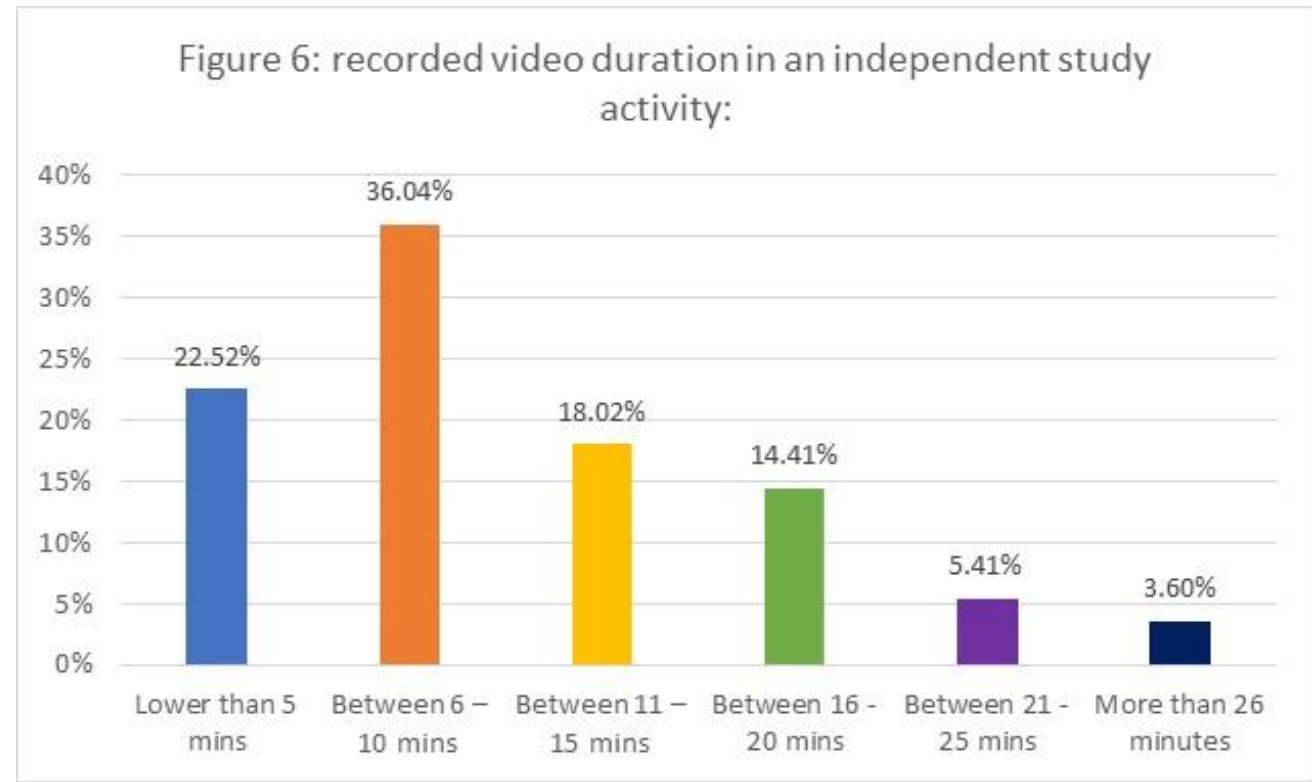
- 111 responses
- Interviewees: students can focus more during lectures/seminars and enjoy having social interaction with their peers (Kumar et al., 2021).



Results - discussion

• Survey questionnaire

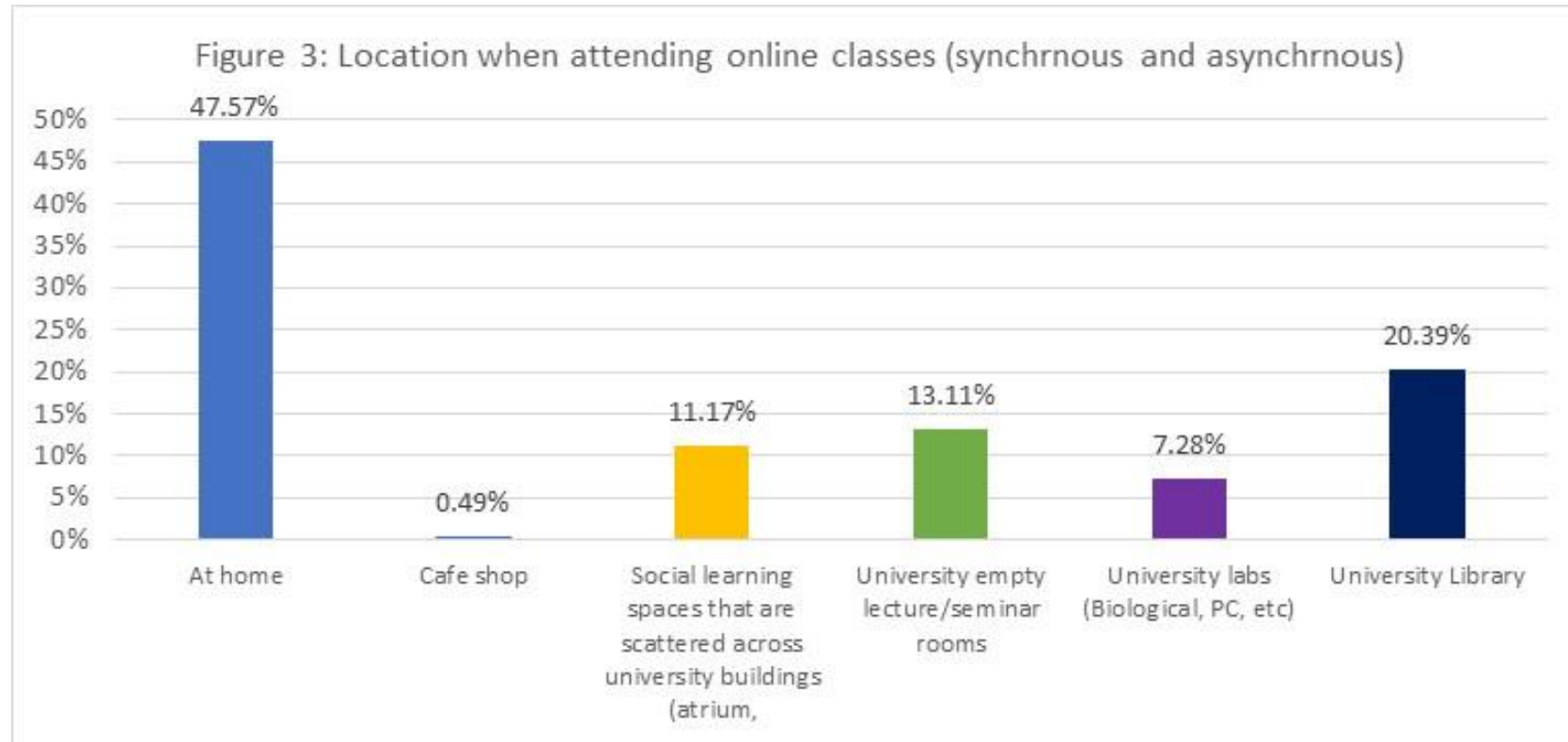
- Duration of recorded videos
- Longer videos will have a negative impact on student engagement (Smith, 2014).
- It is advisable to divide long videos into short clips (Lapitan et al., 2021).



Results - discussion

- **Survey questionnaire**

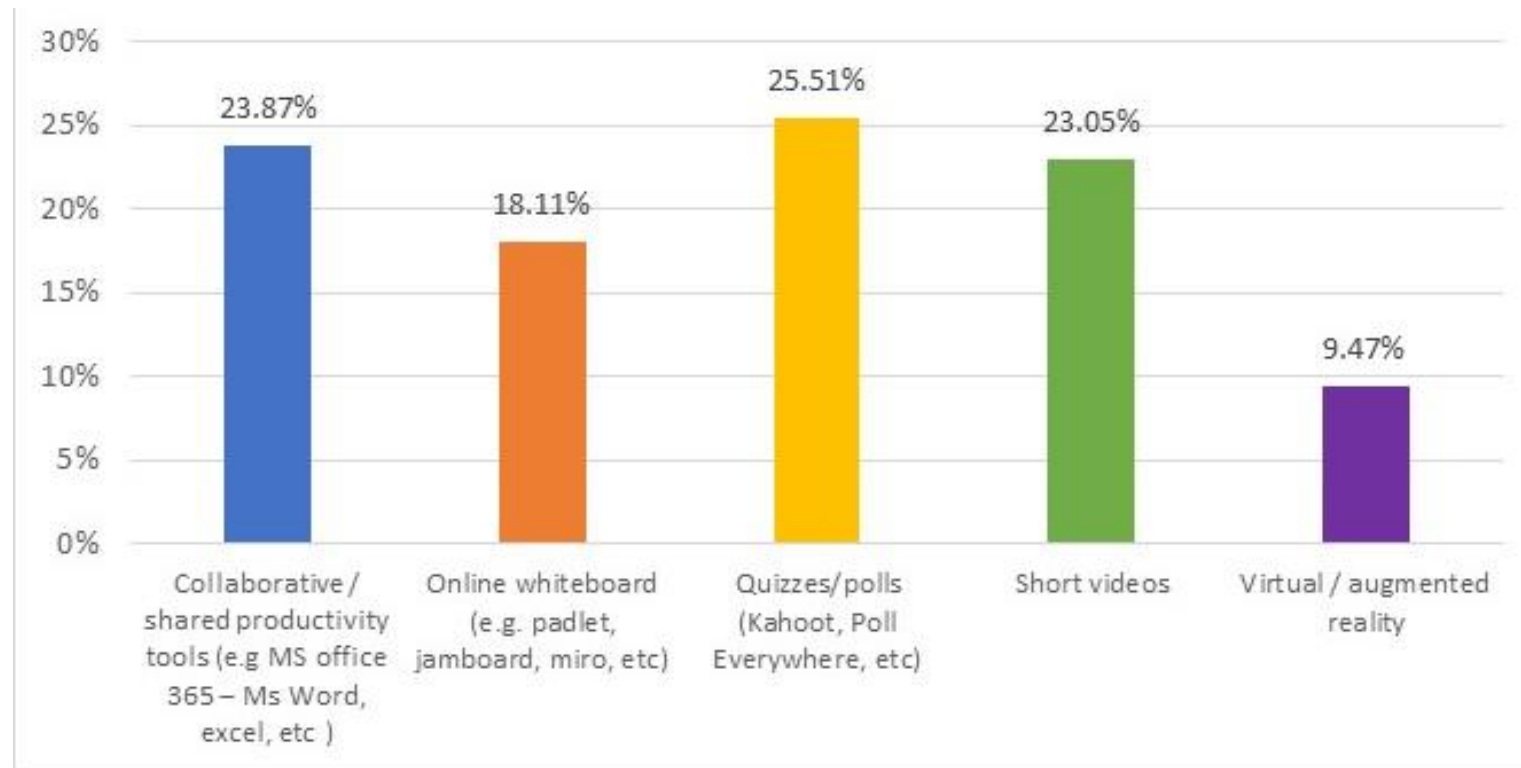
- Do students prefer to attend online classes from home?



Results - discussion

- **Survey questionnaire**

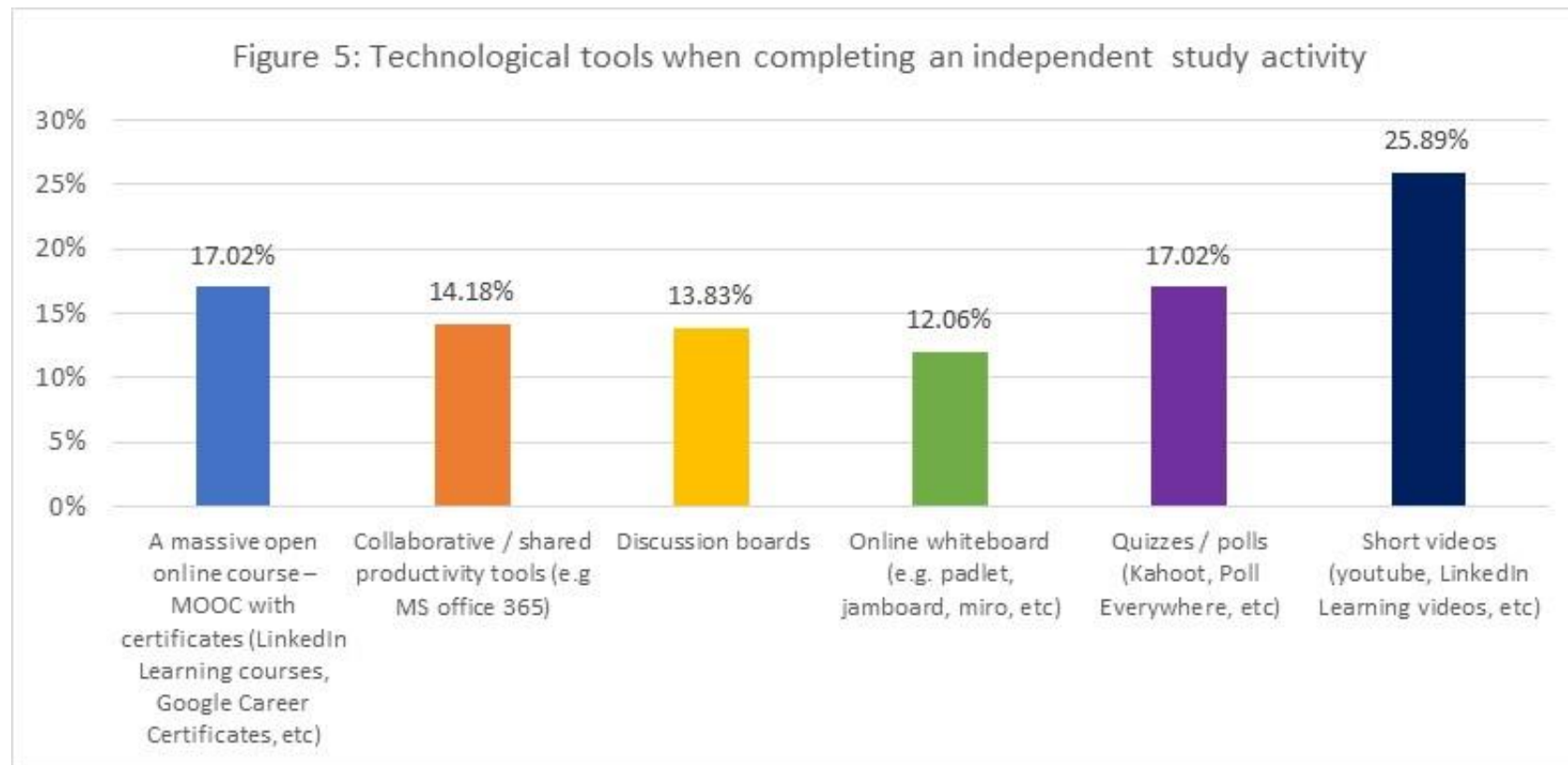
- Favourite digital tools on-campus and online classes
- Online tools enhance student engagement (Kumar et al., 2021).



Results - discussion

- **Survey questionnaire**

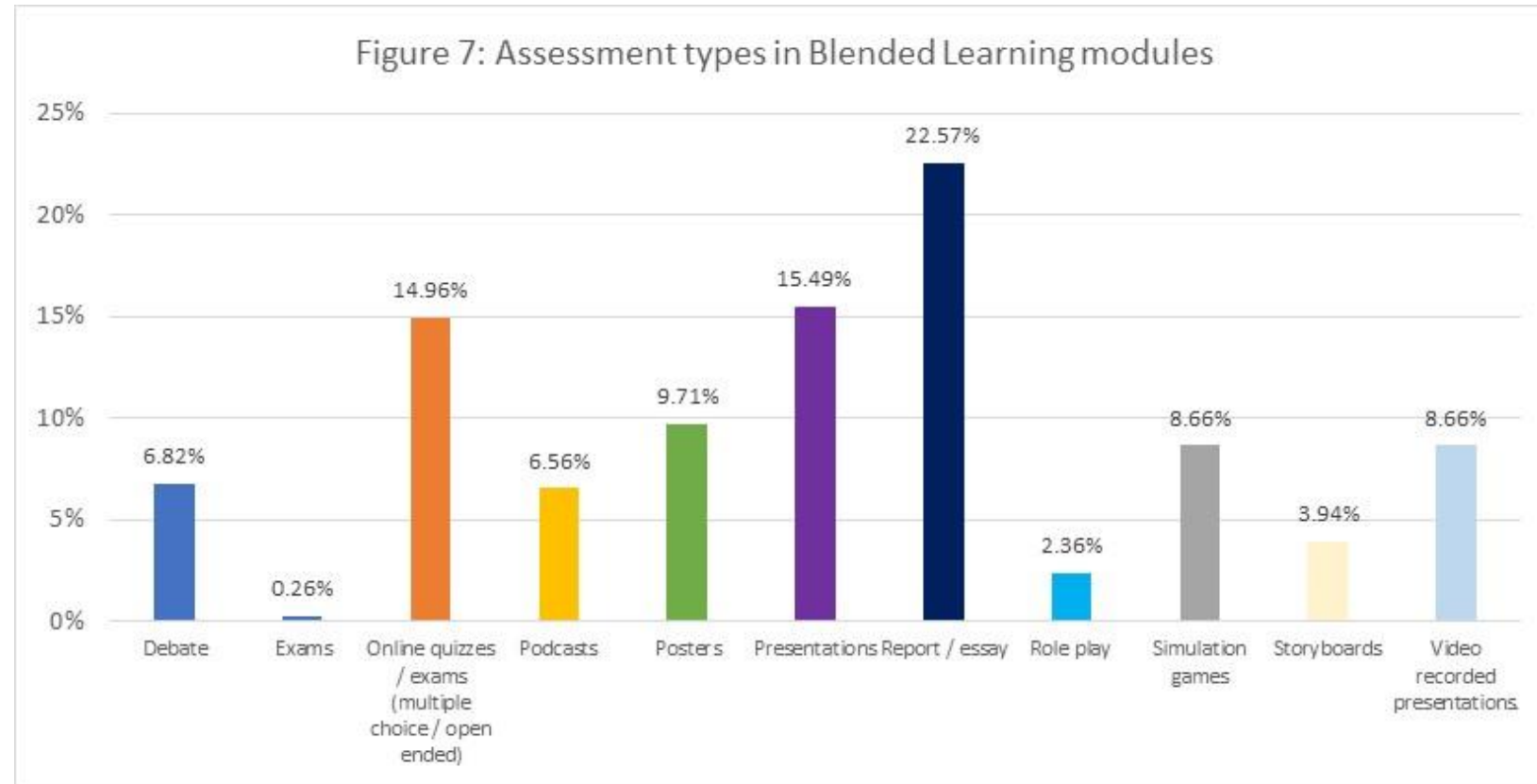
- Digital tools during asynchronous activities



Results - discussion

- **Survey questionnaire**

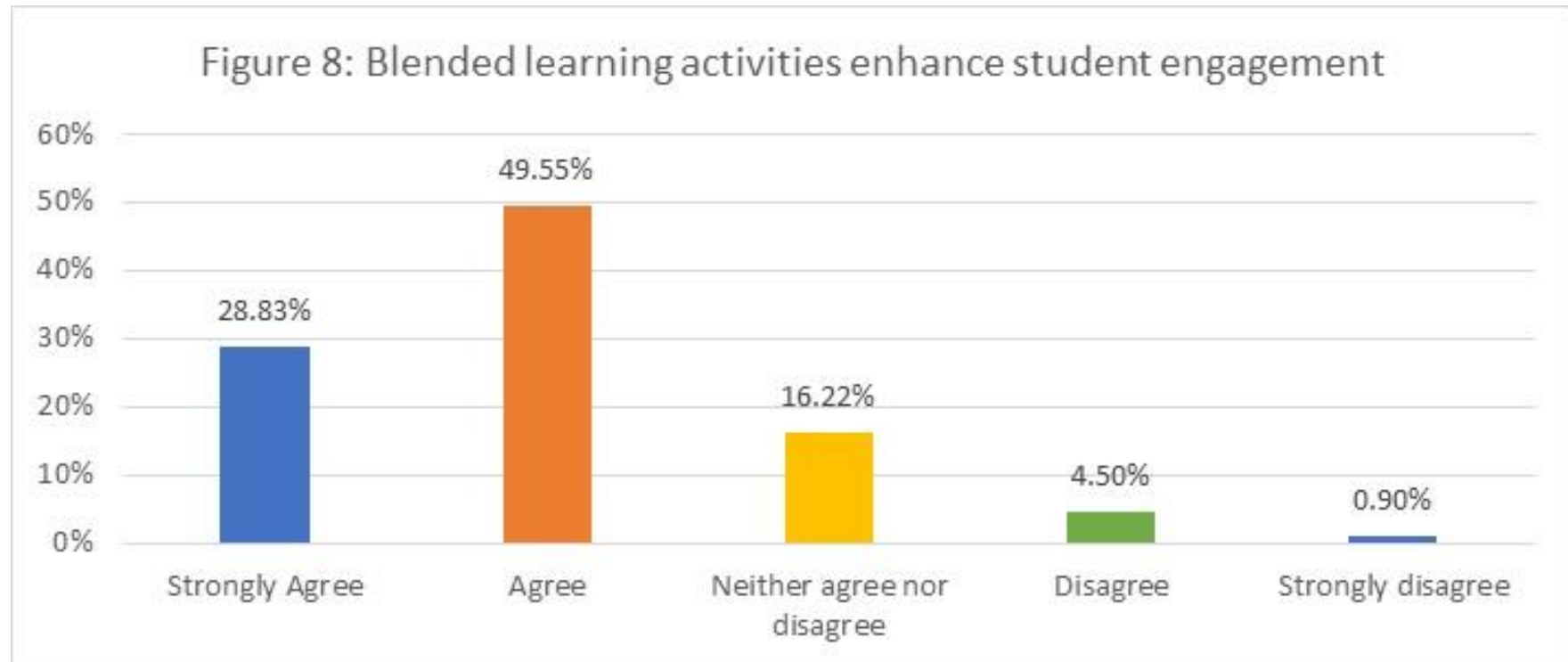
- Assessment types in blended learning modules
- Digital tools are needed in assessment, including video presentations, e-portfolios, and digital projects (Beckingham et al., 2022).
- Interviews: technical issues in video-recorded presentations



Results - discussion

- **Survey questionnaire**

- Impact of blended learning on student engagement



Limitations / challenges

- **Student participation**

- The questionnaire: 111 participants
- Interviews: out of 38 volunteers, only 10 accepted to be interviewed
- Only WBS students

- **Technical issues (recording the online interviews)**

- **Recruitment of student partners**

- **SCC project as part of dissertation projects**



Dissemination

- In the short term, we shared the findings with key shareholders.
- The research has been published on
 - The University of Westminster blog under Student's as Co-Creators Project.
 - Times Higher Education: blog 'Five Tips for Blended Learning Design' blog
- In the medium term
 - We are partnering with CETI to give a presentation on blended learning, which we intend to record and upload to YouTube, LinkedIn, on YouTube, LinkedIn and X.
- In the long term
 - We aim to write an academic article on Blended Learning Guidance in Higher Education, which can be published in academic journals like SEDA – Educational Developments, etc.



Conclusions

- **Students should understand the purpose of blended learning.**
- **WBS students prefer**
 - On-campus learning activities (social interaction and sense of belonging)
 - Some students engage more in online classes due to their learning preferences and other commitments
- **Lecturers should use digital tools**
- **Students tend to prefer videos between 5 to 10 minutes (revision sessions, assessment briefs, welcome videos, etc)**
- **Modules at the same level should schedule synchronous online classes in the same week**

References

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