

Belonging and Engagement for a Successful Transition to Higher Education



University of Glasgow

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About the Project

- This project aimed to explore the factors which impacted new undergraduate physics students transition to higher education at the University of Glasgow

What is Belonging and Engagement?

Sense of Belonging

- Feeling like an 'integral part of a system or environment'
- As well as feeling **accepted** and **valued** by those within this environment [1]

Engagement

- Participation in and out of the **academic setting** [2]
- Astin's (1993) theory of involvement implied that the **more students were involved** at higher education, the more likely they are to be **successful** [3]

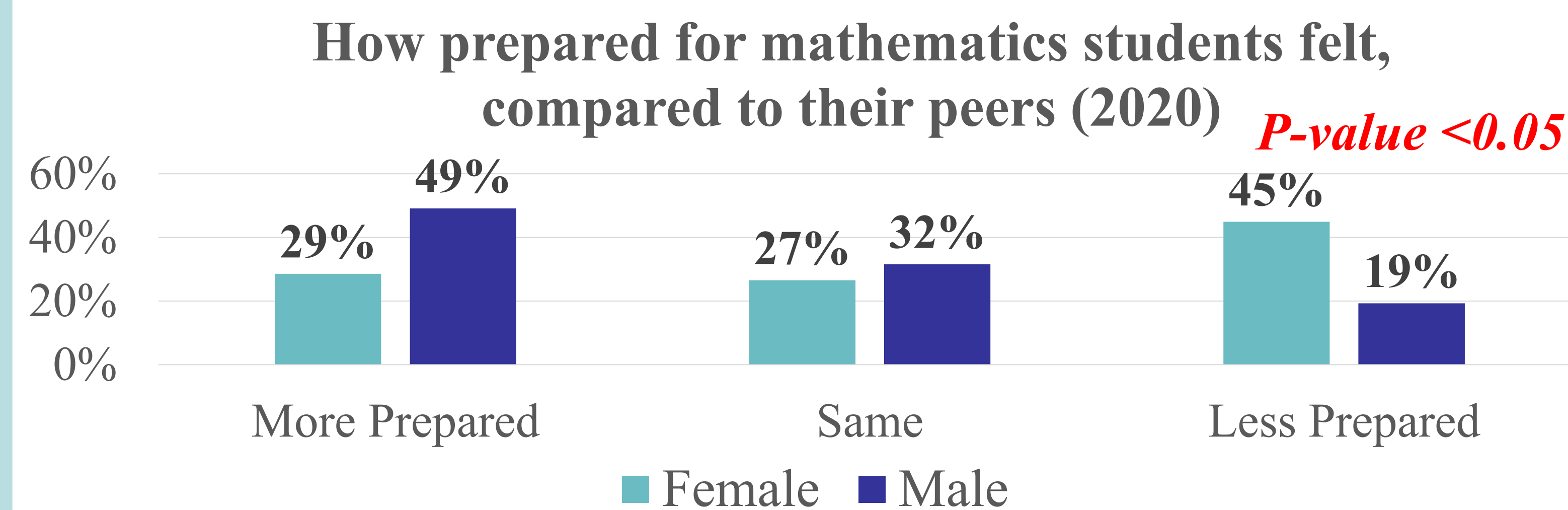
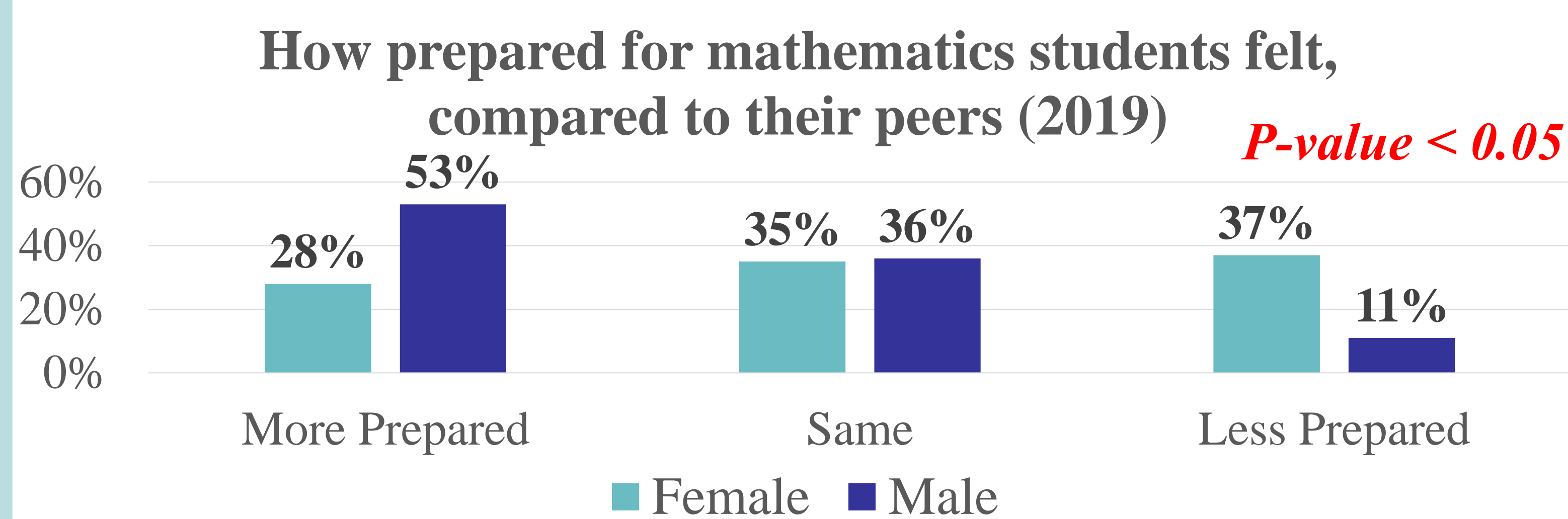
Data Collection

- First-year students received two surveys, **the first at the beginning of semester one** and the **second at the end**
- Second-year students in 2020 received one survey to **identify any changes since year 1**

Data Analysis

- Statistical analysis was used to identify any **significant results** from quantitative data
- General inductive coding process was used to **identify any key themes** from qualitative data

Gender Disparity in Mathematics



Female students initially perceived themselves to be **less prepared** for maths
2019; 140 responses
2020; 110 responses

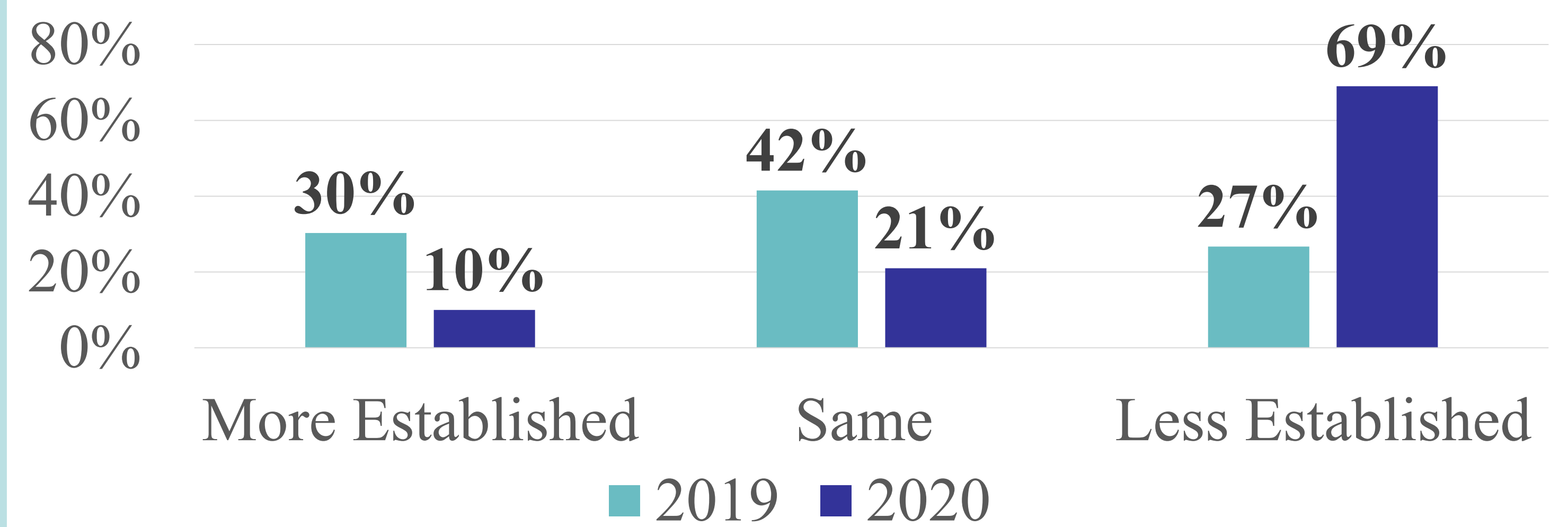
Conclusions

- Female students** sense of belonging may be negatively impacted by their **lack of self confidence**
- Remote learning has highlighted the importance of **student engagement**
- Sense of belonging requires **ongoing intervention**

Social Engagement

2019; 142 responses
2020; 53 responses

How students perceive their relationships with new friends to be, in comparison to other students



All of the students from 2019 who felt they were **less established with new friends** at the end of semester one stated they were **not enjoying the course**

Students in 2020 have experienced a **lack of social engagement** due to remote learning

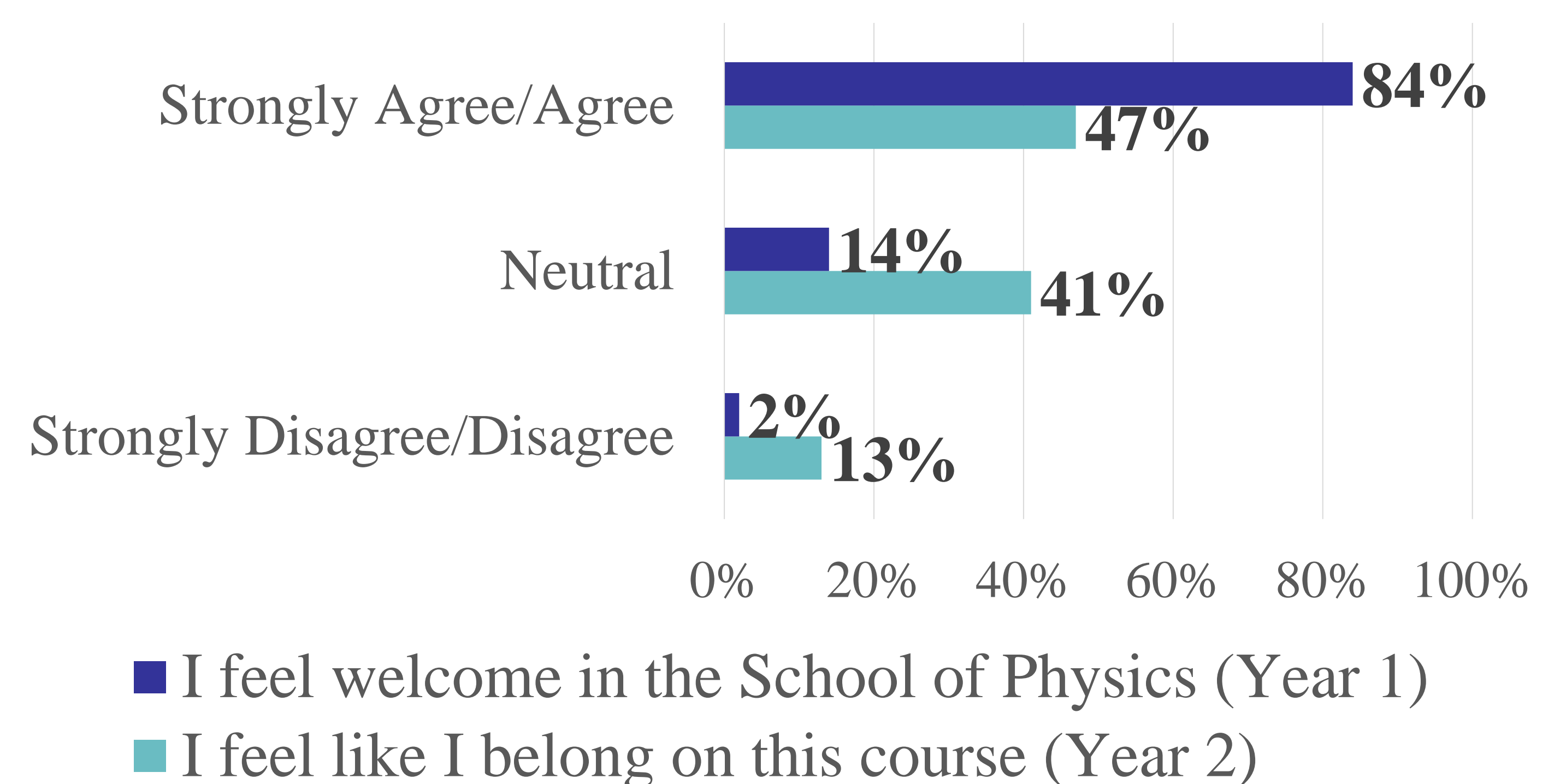
Majority of students stated this has made them feel **isolated and alone**

This led to the **majority** of first-year students in 2020 perceiving themselves to be **less established with new friends** after one semester

Sense of Belonging

Year 1; 142 responses
Year 2; 32 responses

Comparison between feeling welcome in Year 1 and belonging in Year 2



This illustrates that although **students felt welcomed** by the department in their first year this **did not translate into the strong sense of belonging** in their second year

References

- Hagerty, B. M. K., et al (1992). Sense of belonging: A vital mental health concepts. Archives of Psychiatric Nursing, 6, 172-177
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- Astin, A. W. (1984). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education Journal of College Student Personnel, 25:4, 297-308