

## Anecdotes of Male and Female Students on Flexible Learning Modality

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### Abstract

This study aimed to determine the experiences of male and female students on Flexible Learning (FL) during the COVID-19. A qualitative method using a phenomenological approach was used to ascertain the students' experiences, while written questionnaires were utilized to gather the information. The 24 students taking Development Communication and Public Administration were chosen based on set criteria. Both male and female flexible learning participants appreciated its benefits, including convenience and reduced academic stress. They both faced technology-related challenges and suggested improvements. However, differences emerged in their experiences. Males found FL fun, emphasizing family time, while females highlighted skill development and concerns about teaching methods. Females also mentioned practical skill development not emphasized by males. These variations may stem from differing learning preferences and experiences. Variations in male and female experiences in Flexible Learning highlight the need for teachers to tailor instruction, offer mental health support, and incorporate skill development. Improved teacher training and clear guidelines are crucial, as are gender-inclusive program design and regular feedback mechanisms to create equitable and effective educational experiences.

**Keywords:** *Flexible Learning, Male and Female, Higher Educational Institution, SPAMAST.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted education globally, leading to the adoption of emergency remote teaching and flexible learning. In developing countries like Ghana and the Philippines, challenges such as internet connectivity, limited ICT knowledge, and affordability hindered the smooth integration of technology into education (Aboagye et al., 2020; Alvarez, 2020). In Saudi Arabia, undergraduate women face technical issues, lack of interaction, and distractions during remote learning (Al-Rasheed, 2021).

Studies by Krase et al. (2021) and Lee et al. (2021) highlighted that women, particularly in rural and low-income areas, experienced more difficulties and stress during the pandemic, affecting their academic performance. This gender disparity emphasizes the need for gender-specific responses in practice and policy (Krase et al., 2021). Women also exhibited higher stress levels and anxiety in various studies (Abdulghani et al., 2020; Rodriguez et al., 2020; Alyoubi et al., 2021).

Flexible learning emerged as a practical solution to the challenges posed by COVID-19, allowing for independent study skills, problem-solving activities, and the development of communicative and critical thinking skills (Cayetano & Autencio, 2021; Shang & Liu, 2018; Chen et al., 2020; Hasanah & Malik, 2020). Women seemed to benefit more from flexible learning, particularly in terms of temporal flexibility (Veletsianos et al., 2021), and were more

positively ready for flexible learning than males (Anwar et al., 2021). To address the experiences of male and female students in the context of flexible learning during COVID-19, this study was conducted in Davao Occidental. The aim was to determine both favorable and unfavorable circumstances experienced by students, identify practices developed to address challenges, compare experiences between genders, and gather suggestions for improvement.

The study is anchored on the Resiliency theory, focusing on positive contextual, social, and individual factors (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Resilient individuals exhibit strong will, persistence, and patience, allowing them to adapt and thrive in adverse situations (Leykin et al., 2012). The participants in this study were assumed to possess resilience due to their contentment with simple living, patience, familiarity with hardships, and appreciation of simple things.

The resiliency theory encompasses protective, risk, adaptive process, and strength-based approach factors. Protective factors include a strong support network, problem-solving skills, positive self-esteem, and access to educational resources (Steinhardt & Dolbier, 2008). Risk factors increase vulnerability, while adaptive processes involve strategies like cognitive re-framing and seeking social support (Hill & Gunderson, 2015). The strength-based approach identifies and harnesses individuals' strengths to build resilience (Ferrara, 2018).

This study explored the experiences of male and female students who used flexible learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding the challenges, practices, and gender differences is crucial for formulating effective policies and guidelines to cater to the diverse needs of students. The study draws on the resiliency theory to examine how protective, risk, adaptive, and strength-based factors contribute to students' ability to cope with and adapt to the challenges of flexible learning during the pandemic.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed a qualitative-interpretive phenomenological method, as highlighted by Connelly (2010), San Jose et al. (2017), and Torres et al. (2020). According to these authors, phenomenology delves into the meaning of individuals' experiences and their consciousness of the phenomenon at hand. As suggested by Torres et al. (2020), qualitative methods are suitable for investigating personal views and opinions. MacLeod (2019) emphasized interpretive phenomenology, focusing on individuals' interpretations when experiencing a phenomenon.

The participants, 24 sophomore, junior, and senior college students in Bachelor in Public Administration (BPA) and Development Communication (BSDC) programs, were chosen based on specific criteria. The study utilized a validated interview guide questionnaire endorsed by three experts using San Jose's (2022) Qualitative Research Questions Validation sheet. The interview guide comprised three main questions, each with two probe questions.

Data collection followed four steps: formulating and validating interview guide questions, observing ethical protocols, gathering information, and self-verification. In formulating questions, the researchers aligned them with the study's objectives, assigning each objective one question and at least one probe question. To ensure reliability, the instrument underwent validation by three expert validators. The study contributes valuable insights into the personal experiences and interpretations of college students undergoing a flexible learning approach.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For easy understanding of the results, the researchers present the results using tables. Table 1 was intended for male participants' themes and core ideas, while Table 2 dealt with female participants. Moreover, the researchers provided implications of the results, and related studies were also provided.

**Table 1: Themes and Core Ideas of Male Experiences on Flexible Learning (FL)**

Themes	Core Ideas
Ease and flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understanding of lessons easily</li> <li>- quickly accessing learning materials</li> <li>- adjusting easily</li> <li>- addressing students' varying preferences</li> <li>- engaging and motivating</li> <li>- having fun</li> </ul>
Reducing Stress and Gaining Freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- having a break from academic life</li> <li>- working part-time and earning extra</li> <li>- conducting classes online is convenient</li> <li>- spending time with family</li> <li>- taking self-discipline and responsibility</li> </ul>
Realization of unfavorable aspects of Flexible Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- demanding</li> <li>- needs to maintain balance</li> <li>- challenging internet connection</li> <li>- lacking deep interaction</li> <li>- feeling isolated and anxious</li> <li>- inadequacy of topic discussion by teachers</li> </ul>
Practices adopted to address Flexible Learning challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- listening actively to lectures</li> <li>- developing study habits</li> <li>- developing independent learning</li> <li>- cultivating a positive attitude</li> <li>- balancing personal and academics</li> <li>- coming early to class and staying organized</li> </ul>
Improvement Needed for Flexible Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- having a reliable internet connection</li> <li>- implementing regular assessments and providing prompt</li> <li>- having a policy on deadlines and consequences for late submission</li> <li>- designing transparent, concise, and accessible learning materials</li> <li>- giving training for educators in online teaching techniques</li> <li>- educating students to be responsible</li> </ul>

Source: Data Analysis Conducted

#### 1. Ease and Flexibility

Flexible learning has proven advantageous for male students, as they find it easy to grasp lessons and conveniently access learning materials through Learning Management Systems (LMS). This accessibility improves learning outcomes, especially for students far from the college, highlighting the positive impact of flexible learning on students' connection to educational materials (Huang et al., 2020). The availability of online resources further enhances the learning experience, promoting independent research and critical thinking skills development (McGarry et al., 2015; Cacheiro-Gonzalez et al., 2019; Mandasari & Wahyudin, 2021). The ability to seamlessly switch between face-to-face and online learning indicates a student-centric approach, addressing diverse learning preferences and circumstances. Flexible learning allows students to choose how and what they want to learn, providing a personalized educational experience and fostering active engagement (Goode et al., 2007; Zhang et al., 2021).

Moreover, flexible learning empowers students by giving them greater responsibility for their education, requiring self-regulation skills such as goal-setting and progress monitoring (Zhang et al., 2021). This shift towards learner-centered education encourages individuals to take more responsibility for their learning, reflecting a departure from traditional teaching methods (Nikolova & Collis, 1998). Instructors are crucial in facilitating engaging and compelling learning experiences within the flexible learning framework.

The positive perception of flexible learning among male students is further supported by its fun and enjoyable nature, aligning with the findings of Azizbek and Surayyo (2023). This fun and engaging environment contributes to a positive learning experience, enhances knowledge retention, and sustains interest in the lessons (Cowand & Farrell, 2023). The benefits of flexible learning for male students include improved accessibility, independent learning opportunities, personalized education, and a positive, enjoyable learning experience.

## **2. Reducing Stress and Gaining Freedom**

As noted by participants, flexible learning offers a "long break to academic life," providing students the flexibility to manage study schedules and reducing stress and burnout (Elsalem et al., 2020; Quintiliani et al., 2022). While it grants students a respite from class demands, Lau and Lee (2021) observe that Flexible Learning increases parental involvement, impacting the quantity and quality of their engagement.

Additionally, Flexible Learning enables students to work part-time, offering practical experience, enhancing time management skills, and easing financial pressures (Gunawardhana, 2022; Shikulo & Lekhetho, 2020). Working students benefit from the flexibility to balance employment and studies, as stated by Bdair (2021). Furthermore, Flexible Learning allows for increased family time, positively impacting participants' mental well-being, aligning with Agaton and Cueto's (2021) findings on Flexible Learning addressing mental health issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, participants acknowledge that Flexible Learning demands self-discipline and responsibility to balance flexibility with accountability, ensuring academic success (Bondarenko et al., 2022; Limbong & Pribadi, 2022). It aligns with the notion that technology-mediated Flexible Learning promotes student self-discipline and responsibility. Thus, Flexible Learning's advantages include stress reduction, part-time work opportunities, and family time, but it requires self-discipline for successful outcomes.

## **3. Realization of unfavorable aspects of Flexible Learning**

Despite the advantages of Flexible Learning, the participants realized its demanding nature, leaving little room for them to relax or engage in other activities. Hence, they needed to have proper time management and stress-coping strategies. Moreover, they needed to maintain balance because otherwise, they would experience burnout. This result coincides with Gonzalez-Ramirez et al. (2021), who observed that students experience burnout due to transitioning from face-to-face to online learning.

Access to a stable internet connection was considered the most challenging among the male participants. In addition, connecting to the internet was costly. They could not sustain attending online classes because of the low connection. Aside from the internet, some male students also found Flexible Learning (FL) due to the absence of a real-time teacher they could ask to explain the topic. This result favors Abuhammad's (2020) and Amir et al. (2020) findings, which state that virtual classes are problematic because they require technology and cost.

Moreover, the male participants realized that in Flexible Learning (FL), they experienced a lack of in-depth interaction with their classmates and teachers as face-to-face learning. Some of them were lazily listening or doing something while the teachers were having a discussion. This result corroborates the findings of Unger and Meiran (2020), who mentioned that FL reduced socialization or communication among students and teachers. Also, some other male participants stated that with FL, they felt isolated, anxious, and depressed. This finding coincides with Demetriou et al. (2021), who state that students felt that online classes were a form of punishment that isolated them from their classmates physically; hence, they felt depressed. This feeling among students, Matulesy et al. (2021) pointed out that students develop learning anxiety, while Núñez and Cuisia-Villanueva (2020) stressed that feeling of isolation among students is one of the reasons for students' withdrawal.

#### **4. Practices Adopted to Address Flexible Learning Challenges**

The male participants revealed that they listened attentively to online lectures. The lectures gave them relevant information about the topic and connected them to their existing knowledge. In a way, it allowed them to think critically. This finding is congruent with the study of Vlachopoulos and Makri (2019) and Yustina et al. (2020), which states that Flexible Learning's online approach allows students to think critically to connect the new and the gained ideas.

Some male participants mentioned that they established a consistent study routine, which developed their discipline of having study habits. They ensured they allocated sufficient time for their task and homework and created a boundary between study and personal life. Regarding this finding, Nganji et al. (2022) said that with Flexible Learning, students take e-learning, which develops into a habit. Also, Gamboa (2022) said that with distance learning (FL), for students to comprehend lessons, they have study habits.

Other male participants said that leveraging online resources for supplementary learning was a valuable skill. It encouraged independent research and information literacy, enabling them to validate and expand their understanding of the course materials. Moreover, it encouraged them to brainstorm solutions to challenges and seek help when needed, which fostered their self-reliance and resourcefulness. Azhari and Fajri (2022) and Cacheiro-Gonzalez et al. (2019) admitted that flexible online learning made them independently learn the materials related to the lessons. Likewise, Lin and GAO (2020) mentioned that asynchronous distance learning (Flexible Learning) stimulates students' self-directed learning, motivating them to access various learning materials.

Some other male participants said that with FL, they cultivated a positive attitude, which helped them approach the challenges they encountered. This attitude encouraged them to view setbacks as opportunities for personal and academic growth, which can lead to increased motivation and resilience. These findings coincide with Çevik and Bakioğlu (2022), Salas-Pilco et al. (2022), and Segbenya et al. (2022), who found that there was a significant positive attitude among students in accepting distance learning (FL), especially towards e-learning. However, Masalimova et al. (2022) pointed out that students' attitudes toward distance learning (FL) differ according to the student's courses.

Other male participants mentioned that they balanced their academics and personal, especially when they felt burnout. They took breaks and spent quality time with their families, which helped reduce stress and maintain life balance. This finding confirms Masalimova et al. (2022), who observe that distance education (FL) contributes to various physical and

psychological health concerns, including fear, anxiety, stress, and attention problems. Other relevant authors like Al Ateeq et al. (2020) and Wang and Zhao (2020) mentioned that distance learning, as part of flexible learning, increased the stress level of students and suggested integrating stress management programs to mitigate anxiety, frustration, and boredom. It implies that taking balance and breaks of student's shows their maturity in handling their situations.

For some, punctuality for online classes and staying organized with schedules and reminders developed their professionalism and effective time management. They believed that being mindful of their schedules and tasks kept them constantly updated and ready.

### 5. Improvement Needed for Flexible Learning

The male participants believed that their experiences in Flexible Learning would improve if there were reliable internet connections, especially for those living in far-flung barangays. It implies that the institution must prioritize internet infrastructure to address this concern. Providing backup options like mobile data for areas with connectivity issues may be a practical solution to prevent disruptions. Second, they suggested that implementing regular assessments and providing prompt, constructive feedback is crucial. They believed it could help students gauge their progress, stay motivated, and make necessary improvements. Regular assessments can also help instructors identify struggling students early and offer assistance. Third, they also suggested that clear deadlines and consequences for late submission are essential for maintaining accountability. This practice would help students manage their time effectively and ensure they meet course requirements on time. Fourth, designing explicit, concise, and accessible learning materials is vital for student comprehension and engagement. Considering various learning styles and accessibility needs ensures that content is inclusive and effective for all students. Also, they suggested that proper training for educators in online teaching techniques and course design is critical for delivering a high-quality, flexible learning experience. Structured and logically organized modules with clear objectives and assessments improve learning outcomes. Lastly, they suggested that they must be educated about their responsibilities in a flexible learning environment, essential for creating a collaborative learning community. Students should understand the importance of adhering to schedules, actively participating in discussions, seeking help when needed, and taking ownership of their learning journey.

**Table 2: Themes and Core Ideas of Female Participants Experiences on Flexible Learning (FL)**

Themes	Core Ideas
Convenience and flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- comfortable and adaptable</li> <li>- fostering family ties</li> <li>- making materials readily available</li> <li>- accommodating individual learning styles and needs</li> <li>- enhancing educational opportunities</li> <li>- taking control of one's learning</li> <li>- boosting confidence and allowing multi-tasking</li> <li>- managing time management</li> </ul>
Challenges of flexible learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- having disorientation</li> <li>- having an unstable internet connection</li> <li>- inability to avail gadgets for online learning</li> <li>- having communication and engaging issues</li> <li>- teaching strategies not aligned with students' learning style</li> </ul>
Practice mechanism developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- asking questions</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- creating lesson plans</li> <li>- developing patience and trust</li> <li>- practicing self-directed and independent learning</li> <li>- developing hobby</li> </ul>
Suggestions for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- having reliable internet connectivity</li> <li>- molding students to have advanced technology skills</li> <li>- employing engagement strategies by teachers</li> <li>- having active monitoring by teachers</li> <li>- providing positive reinforcement and encouraging collaboration</li> <li>- streamlining of activities</li> <li>- creating open communication between teachers and students</li> <li>- ensuring assessment integrity</li> <li>- improving students' reading skills</li> </ul>
Guidelines to Improve Flexible Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- observing effective teaching communication-</li> <li>- knowing the students</li> <li>- having clear guidelines</li> <li>- practicing proper manners</li> <li>- teach students to be interested in minor subjects</li> <li>- ensuring materials are accessible</li> <li>- flexible learning should be organized</li> <li>- offering tutorials</li> </ul>

Source: Data Analysis Conducted

### 1. Convenience and Flexibility

The female participants found flexible learning easier compared to the traditional method. They mentioned that it provides a more comfortable and adaptable environment for learning, making it easier to absorb and understand new information. The option to combine in-person and online learning offered flexibility and cater to different learning preferences and schedules. Learning at home is helpful. Learning from home provides a comfortable and familiar environment that can reduce stress and enhance the learning experience. Likewise, Flexible Learning fostered stronger family bonds. Flexible schedules allowed for increased family time and better work-life balance. They also mentioned that online modules were readily available, making it convenient for them to access. It also allowed for tailored approaches, accommodating their learning styles and needs. This result favored the previous finding of Arsovic and Stefanovic (2020) and Kim (2021), which stated that FL accommodates every student's needs and characteristics.

The female participants also pointed out that Flexible Learning enhanced their educational opportunities. FL broadens their educational horizons because it offers a variety of resources and opportunities beyond traditional classroom settings. It also eliminated the constraints of physical location and rigid schedules, which allowed them to learn when and where it suited them. Also, Flexible Learning allowed them to take control of their learning and make improvements as needed. It also led to increased learning and skills development. Flexible learning leads to increased opportunities for learning and skill development. It boosts their confidence and ability to multi-task. The flexibility of online learning allowed them to manage their time more efficiently. This result is similar to the findings of Kara et al. (2019), who stated that the online aspect of Flexible Learning empowers the flexibility of educational opportunities for students. Also, Singh et al. (2021) pointed out that the flexible schedule of FL allows students to allocate time effectively for their studies. Their ability to manage time and access resources enhances the likelihood of completing their assignments on time.

## 2. Challenges of Flexible Learning

Although the female participants mentioned the known advantages of flexible learning, they, too, experienced several challenges. They said Flexible Learning was new to them and caused disorientation, especially in adapting to the new technology. They also felt inadequate in their abilities, which was detrimental to their self-esteem and motivation.

The unstable internet connectivity was considered the most persistent problem. They said that low internet signal disrupted their ability to learn the lessons and access online resources. According to the findings of Rotas and Cahapay (2020), students had difficulty understanding modding during online classes because of internet connectivity. Moreover, they also pointed out that their inability to buy digital devices such as mobile phones, expensive internet, lack of financial resources, and loss of motivation hindered their participation in the class. These factors collectively highlight the challenges related to technology and resources that can demotivate students and impede their participation in Flexible Learning. This result confirms Castroverde and Acala's (2021) findings, which state that many students need help to afford to buy gadgets online. The lack of both internet access and gadgets creates significant barriers to participating in flexible learning.

Female participants also laid communication and engagement issues with their mentors. Their teachers' lack of consistent communication led to confusion and hindered their ability to adapt to changes. Due to a lack of cooperation between students and teachers, their learning could be better. Some also pointed out their experience with overly lenient teachers, which led some students not to take the responsibility seriously. This result corroborates with Abuhammed (2020), who mentioned that a lack of teacher support and ineffective teacher's methods of teachers hindered students' learning experience.

Moreover, some female participants also commented on how lessons were delivered by their teachers. Some teachers used delivery methods that needed to be aligned with their learning preferences and needs. They adapted to their teachers and had difficulty doing it. As a result, they felt tired and mentally exhausted. This finding affirms the findings of Tolosa et al. (2021), who mentioned that FL, though it allows management of someone's learning, also creates mental exhaustion. In a way, it was tiring.

## 3. Practice Mechanism

Due to the challenging experiences of the female participants, they developed various coping mechanisms. They practiced asking questions about their concerns to understand the materials and overcome fears of asking for guidance, leading to a more productive and supportive learning environment. Likewise, they also created lesson plans to help them organize their learning process and stay on track. They also practiced time management to allocate sufficient time to study and complete assignments.

They also developed patience and trust in the learning process, which helped them navigate their challenges. They observed academic integrity by not cheating during exams. They upheld honesty because they believed it could help maintain the credibility of online assessments. They practiced self-directed and independent learning. They did advance reading of their lessons. Through this practice, they develop self-interest and self-motivation. It indicates that Flexible Learning promotes independence as students take more responsibility for their education.



Interestingly, they developed cooking skills. Cooking became their hobby, and they loved doing it. Utilizing flexible learning to acquire new practical skills, like cooking, can be a positive outcome. Also, some of them took the opportunity to venture into online business like selling “used clothing.”

#### **4. Suggestions for Improvement**

Generally, aside from a reliable internet connection, the female participants suggested that preparing them to have advanced technology skills could help them navigate flexible learning environments more effectively. They also suggested that teachers receive training in technology to facilitate learning and make the learning process smoother. Also, they mentioned that teachers should employ engagement strategies in teaching to enhance their participation and understanding. Also, they mentioned that teachers need to provide them with clear guidance on how FL should work so that they can adjust and plan.

The female participants also suggested that teachers should be actively monitored to identify and address individual student needs. They believed teachers are critical in enhancing the learning experience and ensuring students grasp the lesson. They also like teachers to provide positive reinforcement and encourage collaboration to create a more supportive and conducive learning atmosphere. Also, streamlining activities would make FL more friendly to the students. Lastly, the participants mentioned that having open communication between teachers and students was crucial for the understanding and success of FL. Likewise, the female participants clamor for ensuring the integrity of assessment and maintaining academic standards for the students. Moreover, they wish to improve the student's reading skills and knowledge development, promote individualized learning styles, encourage students to take responsibility for their learning and develop a sense of time, essential elements to successful FL.

#### **5. Guidelines Need to be Added to Improve Flexible Learning**

The female participants expressed their thoughts and views on how Flexible Learning (FL) can be improved so that students gain the utmost learning. First, teachers need to observe effective teaching communication with their students. Teachers must establish clear procedures to help students streamline the learning process and reduce confusion. Second, teachers must get to know their students to create effective, meaningful interactions, conduct fair assessments, and provide constructive feedback. It implies that teachers need to invest time in understanding their students. Third, teachers must provide explicit guidelines for students to improve the overall conduct and effectiveness of flexible learning. Fourth, teachers need to maintain the practice of good manners among students. Promoting good behavior and respectful student communication creates a more positive learning environment. Fifth, teachers need to teach students to be interested in minor subjects instead of taking those subjects for granted. Encouraging curiosity and interest in various subjects broadens students' knowledge and perspectives. Sixth, ensure that all learning materials are accessible and well-supported online. This way, students could access the necessary materials for their tasks. Seventh, procedures in an FL approach should be clear and organized so that it would become more accessible for the students. Lastly, offering tutorials is essential for the students to understand the lessons. Providing additional support and resources to help students understand the material is essential for their success. Also, encouraging online discussions promotes engagement and peer learning.

## 6. Commonalities and Differences in Experiences

The study's male and female participants found numerous benefits associated with flexible learning (FL). They appreciated the convenience of Learning Management Systems (LMS) and the ability to study at their own pace. Additionally, they mentioned that FL reduced academic stress and allowed them to manage their schedules effectively. Both groups also highlighted the opportunity to work part-time while studying, which offered practical experience and financial relief. However, males and females encountered technology-related challenges and unstable internet connections. This issue consistently led to frustration and disruption in their learning experiences. Despite these challenges, both groups emphasized the importance of clear communication from teachers and the need for structured guidance to navigate the FL environment effectively.

Furthermore, participants from both genders developed coping mechanisms to address their challenges, including time management, self-discipline, and patience. They displayed resilience in adapting to the FL format. In terms of suggestions for improvement, both male and female participants recommended better teacher training, reliable internet access, clear guidelines, and maintaining academic standards to enhance the overall quality of flexible learning.

While both male and female participants experienced flexible learning (FL), there were notable differences in their perspectives and experiences. Male participants found FL fun and engaging, emphasizing the enjoyment they derived from it. They also appreciated the increased family time as a positive aspect of their mental well-being. However, they should have highlighted concerns about teachers' methods not aligning with their learning preferences as much. On the other hand, female participants should have emphasized the fun and engagement aspect of FL more than males. They appreciated family time, but it was less prominent in their responses. However, they expressed concerns about teachers' methods not aligning with their learning preferences, often leading to mental exhaustion. Female participants also noted that FL allowed them to broaden their educational horizons, gain confidence, and multi-task efficiently. This emphasis on skill development was less prominent among male participants, suggesting differing priorities in their educational experiences.

In terms of challenges, both groups faced difficulties, but females did not specifically mention the demanding nature of FL in terms of managing relaxation and other activities. Moreover, female participants highlighted the development of practical skills, such as cooking and venturing into online businesses, as coping mechanisms. In contrast, male participants did not emphasize this type of skill development.

The perspectives and experiences of male and female participants in FL exhibited variations in terms of what they found engaging, their concerns, and the skills they developed. These differences may be attributed to varying learning preferences and experiences.

## IV. CONCLUSION

This study on flexible learning (FL) highlighted diverse experiences among male and female participants. While both genders appreciated FL benefits like convenient Learning Management Systems (LMS) and reduced stress, variations emerged in their perspectives. Males valued FL for increased family time and enhanced mental well-being, finding it engaging. In contrast, females emphasized the fun aspect of FL, expressing concerns about teaching methods misaligned with their preferences. Skill development priorities differed, with

females focusing on practical skills, unlike males. Both groups encountered technological challenges with distinct natures. Despite differences, resilience was evident as participants developed coping mechanisms. A shared desire for improved teacher training, reliable internet access, clear guidelines, and maintained academic standards underscored their commitment to enhancing FL quality. The study emphasizes the need for recognizing and accommodating diverse perspectives in FL implementation, tailoring approaches to individual preferences for a more inclusive and effective educational environment.

### Implications

Variations in the perspectives of male and female participants in flexible learning (FL) have significant implications for educators and institutions aiming to ensure equitable and effective FL experiences. Acknowledging diverse preferences, educators can tailor instructional methods and content to accommodate varied learning styles, fostering engagement. Offering flexibility in assignments and assessments addresses individual differences. Mental health resources and support services can aid students in managing emotional challenges linked to FL.

Both genders advocate for improved teacher training and clear guidelines, emphasizing the necessity of preparing educators for effective FL delivery. Ongoing professional development for instructors is crucial in meeting diverse student needs. Ensuring gender equity involves addressing female participants' concerns about teaching methods and creating an inclusive learning environment. Regular feedback mechanisms and clear communication channels between students and educators address technology-related issues and enhance overall satisfaction with FL.

Recognizing and addressing these differing perspectives leads to more inclusive and effective educational experiences. Tailoring instruction, supporting mental well-being, and fostering skill development are pivotal for equitable and high-quality FL.

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