

Exploring Alternative Delivery Mode in Philippine Secondary Education

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Abstract. Despite the increasing implementation of the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) in public secondary schools, there remains a limited understanding of how students experience and navigate this educational approach, especially those facing personal or socioeconomic barriers. This study addresses this gap by exploring the lived experiences of students enrolled in ADM to assess how effectively it supports their learning needs. Employing a mixed-methods design, the study gathered survey data from 300 students and conducted in-depth interviews with 15 participants across various public secondary schools. Findings reveal that students often choose ADM to accommodate responsibilities related to work, finances, or family. Among the different modes, modular learning emerged as the most preferred due to its flexibility and accessibility. In contrast, online learning was less favored due to connectivity issues and a lack of digital resources. Although students expressed general satisfaction with the clarity of instructional materials and teacher support, they reported challenges including time management, difficulty comprehending lessons, and limited direct assistance. To overcome these obstacles, learners relied on digital resources, peer and family support, and cultivated self-discipline. Notably, many participants highlighted that ADM fostered greater independence and motivation. The study concludes that while ADM serves as a valuable alternative to traditional schooling, targeted improvements are essential. These include enhancing instructional materials, increasing teacher engagement, involving families more actively, and equipping educators with ADM-specific training. Such measures are critical to ensuring ADM's sustainability, inclusiveness, and effectiveness in addressing diverse learner needs.

Keywords: Alternative learning delivery; Coping strategies; Educational challenges; Learning experience; Student support.

1.0 Introduction

Education plays a vital role in societal development by fostering critical thinking, creativity, and personal and professional growth. However, many learners continue to face significant barriers such as poverty, discrimination, family responsibilities, and limited access to quality schools. These challenges highlight the need for inclusive educational approaches that ensure learning opportunities for all. One such approach is the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM), which enables students to continue their education through non-traditional, more adaptable learning setups.

As Sharma and Ankit (2023) observed, education empowers individuals to solve real-world problems and transform their lives. ADM supports this goal by promoting equity and extending access to learners who might otherwise be excluded. Lucero (2020) emphasized that ADM has become a practical solution for schools, parents, and learners seeking more inclusive and responsive education. Internationally, countries like Ukraine have adopted ADM in times of crisis. Grynyuk et al. (2022) found that students and teachers generally adapted well to the shift from face-to-face to online learning, with students often demonstrating higher flexibility. Similarly, blended learning—another form of ADM—has been shown to boost student engagement and academic performance (Alducin-Ochoa & Vazquez-Martinez, 2016).

In the Philippines, ADM has helped students stay in school despite difficult life circumstances. Rivera et al. (2018) documented how learners managed to pursue education while earning a living, thanks to ADM's adaptable format. The Department of Education (DepEd) has supported this initiative through policies such as DepEd Order No. 54, s. 2012, which guides the implementation of ADM to assist students facing family duties, long commutes, or academic struggles. Chi (2023) also noted that Filipino students often miss school due to financial hardship or household responsibilities, challenges that ADM directly addresses. Teachers, as shown in the study of Suazo and Almeréz (2024), have responded with innovative strategies such as home-based learning, digital tools, and differentiated instruction. In Digos City, ADM has supported learners dealing with academic and socio-economic challenges, helping them continue their studies through alternative formats.

Despite its growing implementation, limited research exists on how ADM affects students' academic and personal development, especially compared to traditional classroom education. There is a particular lack of studies examining its social, economic, and psychological impact. This study seeks to address that gap by exploring the lived experiences of students enrolled in ADM, focusing on how the program influences their learning, well-being, and daily routines. The findings aim to inform DepEd policymakers and school leaders in improving ADM support systems, tailoring interventions, and ensuring that flexible learning becomes a truly effective and inclusive pathway for Filipino students.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, specifically the convergent parallel design, wherein both quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, analyzed separately, and then compared to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The quantitative part employed a descriptive survey design to assess learners' satisfaction with the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) in terms of learning content and class conduct. The qualitative part utilized a phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences and coping strategies of ADM learners. This approach enabled the researcher to understand both measurable patterns and deeper insights from student experiences.

2.2 Research Participants

The participants for the quantitative phase were all 300 students enrolled in the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) program. A complete enumeration technique was used due to the manageable population size, ensuring comprehensive data coverage. For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling was employed to select participants who could provide rich, in-depth insights into their experiences with ADM. Inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) currently enrolled in ADM during SY 2024–2025, (2) actively participating in classes, (3) willing to be interviewed, and (4) able to provide informed consent. An initial set of 15 students was identified and interviewed. Data saturation was determined during the interviews. After the 13th interview, no new themes, categories, or significant insights were emerging, indicating that saturation had likely been reached. To confirm this, two additional interviews were conducted, bringing the final number of qualitative participants to 15. This approach ensured both depth and reliability in the data collected for thematic analysis.

2.3 Research Instruments

Two main instruments were used in this study. The first was a researcher-made survey questionnaire designed to measure students' satisfaction with the ADM program, covering dimensions such as instructional delivery, quality of learning materials, teacher support, assessment, and program accessibility. This instrument was adapted from the satisfaction scale developed by Pimentel (2019), with several modifications made to align with the ADM context. These modifications included the rewording of items to reflect modular and online learning

environments, the inclusion of indicators specific to ADM experiences (e.g., use of self-learning modules), and the addition of items related to learner support and technological accessibility. The second instrument was a semi-structured interview guide created to capture students' personal experiences, challenges, and coping strategies in the ADM setup. It included open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed narratives and was aligned with the main themes emerging from the quantitative survey.

To ensure content validity, both instruments were reviewed by a panel of three experts in educational research and curriculum development. The items were assessed for clarity, relevance, and representativeness of the constructs. Based on their evaluation, the overall mean Content Validity Index (CVI) was 0.92, indicating excellent content validity. Minor revisions were made following expert feedback, particularly to improve the clarity and specificity of some survey and interview items. For reliability testing, a pilot study was conducted with 30 ADM students from the same school who were not part of the main study. The internal consistency of the survey was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a value of 0.87, indicating a high level of reliability.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured an endorsement letter from the Dean of the Graduate and Professional School of Education and obtained the necessary approvals from the Schools Division Superintendent, District Supervisor, and school principal. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants after they were briefed on the purpose of the study. For the quantitative phase, survey questionnaires were distributed to all ADM learners. For the qualitative phase, in-depth interviews were conducted with selected students who met the inclusion criteria. All participants voluntarily agreed to be interviewed. With their permission, interviews were audio-recorded and supported by note-taking. These were conducted in quiet, private settings to ensure participant comfort and confidentiality.

2.5 Data Analysis

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods for data analysis. For the quantitative data, the researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 to compute descriptive statistics, specifically the mean and standard deviation, in order to assess students' satisfaction levels with the ADM program. For the qualitative data, the researcher used NVivo 12 software to manage and analyze the interview transcripts. After transcribing the audio recordings verbatim, the researcher applied descriptive and pattern coding to identify recurring ideas and themes. Thematic analysis was used to systematically explore the data, focusing on students' experiences and coping strategies. The findings were organized into key themes and illustrated with direct quotations from participants to ensure authenticity and depth.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Ethical clearance was granted by the Institutional Ethics Committee of the institution, confirming that the study complied with established standards for the protection of research participants. All participants were fully informed about the purpose, procedures, duration, and their rights prior to giving written informed consent.

Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in place of actual names in all records and reports. All data collected was securely stored and used exclusively for research purposes. The researcher took every precaution to ensure that no physical or psychological harm occurred during data collection.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Characteristics Profile of the Students

Understanding the characteristics of students enrolled in the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) is essential for determining their backgrounds, challenges, and learning needs. This study examines key demographics — such as age, gender, income, reasons for enrollment, duration of participation, and preferred learning modalities — as shown in Table 1. These variables offer important insight into the circumstances that lead students to choose ADM over traditional educational settings. The majority of ADM students are in their teenage years, particularly those below 18, which suggests that the program primarily serves out-of-school youth who are re-entering the educational system. This aligns with findings by Lucero (2020) in Digos, Davao del Sur, where the average age of ADM students was approximately 11 years old. It also supports national data showing that millions of young

Filipinos remain out of school (World Bank, 2018), highlighting ADM's vital role in bridging educational gaps. For this age group, instructional materials must be engaging and developmentally appropriate, utilizing gamification, visual aids, and interactive strategies to sustain interest and enhance understanding. While younger learners may be more digitally inclined, disparities in internet access still pose challenges, requiring continued support in digital literacy and infrastructure. Age-appropriate counseling and guidance services are likewise critical to helping students overcome both academic and personal barriers.

Table 1. Characteristics Profile of ADM Students

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
Under 18	205	68.34
18-21	63	21.00
22-25	22	7.34
26 and above	10	3.32
Gender		
Male	124	41.34
Female	163	54.32
LGBTQ+	13	4.34
Family Income		
Less than P10,000	170	56.70
P10,001-P20,000	73	24.30
P20,001-P30,000	34	11.30
P30,001 and above	23	7.70
Reason for Enrollment		
Work-Related Responsibilities	112	37.30
Family Obligations	72	24.00
Health-Related Concerns	30	10.00
Financial Reasons	80	26.70
Others (pls. specify)	6	2.00
Years of Enrollment		
Less than 1 year	126	42.00
1-2 years	100	33.30
3-4 years	52	17.40
More than 4 years	22	7.30
Learning Modality		
Modular	114	38.00
Online Learning	19	6.40
Blended Learning	88	29.30
Others	79	26.30

In terms of gender, the data show a slightly higher proportion of female students compared to males, with a minor but significant representation from the LGBTQ+ community. This reflects a diverse and inclusive student population, although gender ratios can differ by region and academic level. For instance, Lucero (2020) observed a higher male enrollment in ADM in Digos, whereas Senior High School settings often show more female participation. These differences highlight the need for gender-responsive educational strategies. Inclusive policies and practices must be implemented to ensure safe learning spaces for all genders, including the LGBTQ+ community. Teacher training and curriculum content should incorporate gender sensitivity, empathy, and representation, promoting equity and respect throughout the learning process.

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Economic hardship is a prominent theme among ADM learners, as most students come from low-income households. This reflects broader socioeconomic inequities and reinforces findings from Dizon et al. (2023), who noted that most students in Bugallon Integrated School had only one working parent earning below P10,000 per month. The financial instability faced by many students often limits their access to essential resources such as learning materials, transportation, and digital tools. Consequently, education delivery in ADM must be adaptive to these realities, providing scholarships, feeding programs, and community-based support. The digital divide remains a significant barrier, which can be addressed through the provision of offline modules, lending programs for devices, and the establishment of learning hubs. Financial stress may also contribute to poor mental health, necessitating expanded psychosocial services within ADM programs. Partnerships with LGUs, NGOs, and private entities can support not only students' academic progress but also their overall well-being.

The reasons students enroll in ADM reveal much about the flexibility and adaptability the system must provide. Many students cite work responsibilities and financial constraints as key motivators for choosing this modality. Others enroll due to family obligations or health concerns. These patterns suggest that ADM serves a population juggling multiple roles and responsibilities outside of school. As such, learning systems must be designed with flexibility in mind, offering asynchronous options, extended deadlines, and learner-centered approaches. This aligns with the principles of both ADM and the Alternative Learning System (ALS), which aim to support those marginalized by traditional schooling due to employment, caregiving duties, economic hardship, or health limitations. The increasing demand for such alternatives further demonstrates that educational policy must move beyond a one-size-fits-all model and toward more adaptive, personalized frameworks.

When looking at the duration of enrollment, most students are relatively new to ADM, having joined within the past year or two. This points to rising awareness and acceptance of ADM, especially in a post-pandemic context where educational disruptions were widespread. However, the smaller numbers of long-term enrollees may indicate challenges related to retention, such as recurring financial problems, personal responsibilities, or inconsistent academic support. These trends underscore the need for structured interventions aimed at helping students complete their education through individualized learning plans, academic mentorship, flexible pacing, and ongoing evaluation of learner progress. ADM programs must prioritize not just access but also continuity, engagement, and success to ensure long-term impact.

Students' preferred learning modalities provide insight into how ADM can be better tailored to meet learner needs. Modular learning is the most popular option, indicating its practicality and accessibility, especially for those in remote or underserved areas. Blended learning also attracts significant interest, likely due to its ability to combine face-to-face interaction with the flexibility of digital tools. In contrast, online learning remains less common, reflecting limitations in internet connectivity and device availability. This mirrors findings by Fongkaew and Pinyaphatong (2020), who emphasized the efficacy of printed modules in supporting literacy development. Moreover, research by Imran et al. (2023) and Giovannella (2021) has shown that blended learning can increase student engagement and improve learning outcomes. To fully capitalize on these benefits, schools must improve module design, enhance support through instructional media and tutoring hotlines, and build digital infrastructure where possible. Continuous professional development for teachers across all delivery modes is equally important in ensuring pedagogical quality. Ultimately, aligning learning modalities with students' specific circumstances and preferences is central to making ADM more effective, inclusive, and responsive.

In sum, the data reveal that ADM students face multiple intersecting challenges, including age-specific needs, gender diversity, financial limitations, and a range of personal circumstances that impact their learning journey. These factors must be considered in the design and implementation of ADM programs to ensure they fulfill their mission of delivering equitable, flexible, and meaningful education to all.

3.2 Level of Satisfaction of ADM

Student satisfaction with the learning content in the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) was found to be consistently high, as shown in Table 2. Respondents perceived the modules as well-structured, understandable, and supportive of their learning needs. Clarity of instructions, relevance of activities, and organization of materials were identified as particular strengths. These perceptions validate the effectiveness of learning resources such as modules, digital packets, and worksheets. This is in line with Niez's (2024) findings, which emphasized the positive impact of such tools on academic performance among junior high school students. Similar results were observed by Ong et al. (2020), who noted improved outcomes for Malaysian students using these resources compared to those who did not.

Table 2. *Level of Satisfaction of Students in terms of Learning Content*

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. The module content is straightforward to understand.	3.51	High
2. The content is presented in a format that accommodates my learning preferences.	3.65	High
3. The modules provide enough examples and explanations that are easy to understand.	3.72	High
4. The learning activities in the modules are engaging and meaningful.	3.63	High
5. The modules are well-organized and easy to follow.	3.67	High
6. The content of the modules is minimal and can be completed in one session.	3.54	High
7. The modules are clear and understandable to the parents or peers who guide the students.	3.60	High
8. The module includes sufficient examples and activities to enhance my understanding.	3.64	High
9. The instructions for activities and assessments are easy to follow.	3.70	High
10. The learning materials and resources provided are helpful.	3.84	High
Aggregate Mean	3.65	High

The findings support the goals of the Department of Education (DepEd) through programs like the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) and the Learning Resources Management and Development System (LRMDS), which aim to make quality learning content accessible to all. The data indicates that these efforts are resonating with learners. Moving forward, it is critical to maintain the clarity and relevance of these modules while continuously adapting them based on learner feedback. Enhancing the quality of examples, visual design, and the engagement level of activities can further optimize the ADM learning experience. Moreover, there is room to develop more inclusive content that accommodates different types of learners, especially those guided by peers or parents at home. In terms of the conduct of ADM classes, the results also show a high level of student satisfaction (Table 3). Respondents particularly valued the flexibility of class schedules, accessibility of teachers for consultation, and the effectiveness of communication and feedback mechanisms. These indicators suggest that the core components of instructional delivery and classroom management in ADM are functioning well. The presence of teacher support and the effective use of technology seem to play a significant role in maintaining student motivation and performance.

Table 3. *Level of Satisfaction of Students in terms of Conduct of Classes*

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. The ADM class schedule is convenient and flexible.	3.83	High
2. The teacher provides clear instructions on how to accomplish the modules.	3.89	High
3. The teacher is available for consultations and assistance when needed.	3.90	High
4. The communication between the teacher and students is effective.	3.73	High
5. The students receive timely feedback on their performance and submitted work.	3.71	High
6. The activities during the ADM class are interactive and engaging.	3.55	High
7. The ADM class, activities, and structure help students stay motivated and focused on their learning.	3.74	High
8. The ADM learning environment is conducive.	3.60	High
9. The use of technology during the ADM class is effective in supporting learning.	3.91	High
10. The pace of the ADM class aligns well with the students' learning needs.	3.61	High
Aggregate Mean	3.75	High

This is reinforced by research such as that of Tammubua and Pattiasina (2019), who concluded that responsiveness, empathy, and reliability are key contributors to student satisfaction in distance learning. In addition, Goncalves et al. (2020) and Tseng and Walsh (2016) found that blended and distance learning strategies can better address student diversity when delivered with thoughtful planning and teacher preparedness. However, lower satisfaction in some areas—particularly related to the interactivity of class activities—indicates opportunities for refinement. More engaging learning experiences and interactive methodologies can be introduced through blended or tech-enhanced formats, while still maintaining accessibility for students in low-resource settings.

DepEd initiatives such as the K-12 Curriculum Review, NEAP training programs, Learning Action Cells (LACs), and the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Teachers are critical to sustaining quality instruction. These results affirm the direction of current efforts while also pointing to the need for more dynamic delivery strategies that balance structure, flexibility, and interactivity in the ADM environment.

3.3 Students' Satisfaction with the Alternative Delivery Mode

The Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) has emerged as a vital learning approach that accommodates the diverse needs of students, particularly those who face barriers to traditional schooling due to work obligations, family responsibilities, or geographical limitations. By offering flexible learning structures, ADM enables learners to continue their education without compromising their other commitments. Understanding students' satisfaction with this mode of learning is crucial in evaluating its effectiveness and sustainability as an alternative to conventional classroom-based education. The present study identified key dimensions that influence how students perceive their experience with ADM. These dimensions include the program's accessibility and flexibility, the relevance of its learning content, and the effectiveness of the teaching strategies used. Each of these factors contributes to students' overall satisfaction and plays a critical role in shaping their motivation, engagement, and academic success. Table 4 presents the thematic matrix summarizing the central theme and subthemes derived from the qualitative analysis of student responses regarding their satisfaction with the ADM program. The matrix outlines the core ideas associated with each subtheme, highlighting the specific aspects of ADM that students found beneficial and effective in supporting their educational journey.

Table 4. *Thematic Matrix on the Satisfaction of Students in the Alternative Delivery Mode*

Main Theme	Subtheme	Core Ideas
Dimensions of Students' Satisfaction in Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) Learning	Program Accessibility and Flexibility	Many students appreciate the program's ability to accommodate working students and provide an alternative way to complete their education.
	Relevance of Learning Content	The lessons are generally aligned with students' academic and career goals, fostering self-improvement and critical thinking.
	Effectiveness of Teaching Strategies	Hands-on, modular work is seen as effective and simulates traditional learning.

Dimensions of Students' Satisfaction in Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) Learning

The central theme, Dimensions of Students' Satisfaction in Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) Learning, captures the key factors that shape learners' positive experiences in the program. These include program accessibility and flexibility, relevance of learning content, and the effectiveness of teaching strategies. These dimensions reflect how well the ADM program addresses the unique challenges of non-traditional learners, promotes meaningful learning experiences, and sustains instructional quality in a flexible environment. Collectively, they contribute to a deeper understanding of student satisfaction within the ADM context. Sub-themes include program accessibility and flexibility, relevance of learning content, and effectiveness of teaching strategies.

Program accessibility and flexibility. The high level of student satisfaction with the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) program underscores its effectiveness in addressing learners' diverse needs. ADM's flexible structure allows students—particularly those balancing work, family responsibilities, or health concerns—to continue their education in a manner that aligns with their circumstances. Participants consistently emphasized how the program supports not only academic advancement but also career development and self-improvement. Several participants explicitly described how ADM enabled them to manage their responsibilities without compromising their education:

"I can say that ADM is a good program. It helps me, especially those students like me who are working while studying." (P11)

"I feel satisfied with the ADM program because it allowed me to continue studying without leaving my job." (P7)

"For me as a student in the ADM program, I went through a lot of positive effects along with my ADM classmates who are content with the way of teaching in our classes." (P12)

"ADM is helpful because I do not need to miss work just to attend school." (P2)

These testimonies illustrate how ADM accommodates students' complex lives, enabling them to pursue academic goals without sacrificing employment or personal obligations. Such flexibility is crucial for marginalized learners, including those in remote areas, single parents, or breadwinners. This finding echoes Rivera et al. (2018), who noted that ADM implementation enables continued schooling for learners experiencing life disruptions, such as early pregnancy, poor attendance, or financial constraints. The adaptability of the ADM model makes it a viable long-term strategy for inclusive education. Institutions and policymakers should, therefore, continue to invest in flexible learning systems by offering modular schedules, blended delivery modes, and career-relevant curricula that accommodate various learner contexts.

Relevance of learning content. The perceived relevance of the learning content to students' career and academic growth highlights the importance of a future-focused and practical curriculum in Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) learning. When students recognize the direct application of lessons to their professional aspirations and personal development, it enhances their motivation, engagement, and long-term commitment to learning. Participants frequently emphasized how the program's content aligned with their current life situations and future goals. Some students shared how the curriculum helped them progress academically while accommodating their work or other responsibilities:

"It can surely help me a little in completing Junior High School." (P3)

"Even though the learning is limited, it is better because it can provide me the opportunity to complete junior high while being able to work at the same time." (P9)

These reflections demonstrate that students appreciate the program's ability to blend academic progress with real-life demands, making learning not just accessible but purposeful. The relevance of content enhances their belief in the practicality and usefulness of education—even in a non-traditional setup—by fostering both career preparedness and self-improvement. In connection, the study by Niez (2024) reveals that the academic performance of junior high school students is significantly influenced by various alternative delivery modes in modular distance learning, including learning resource materials, digital packets, worksheets, activity sheets, and printed modules. Furthermore, Ahmed's (2019) research investigated the impact of using worksheets on the academic performance of secondary school students in mathematics. The outcomes showed that students who engaged with worksheets had a higher academic performance than those who did not.

This finding suggests that educational institutions should continue to align ADM content with real-world skills, emphasizing career-readiness, critical thinking, and self-development. Integrating practical examples, job-related competencies, and reflective activities can foster a deeper learning experience that not only equips students for employment but also encourages lifelong learning. Moreover, the positive response to relevant content reinforces the need for regular curriculum review and stakeholder consultation, ensuring that ADM programs stay responsive to evolving workforce demands and individual learner needs. This approach supports a more holistic and purpose-driven education, contributing to both personal fulfillment and national development goals.

Effective teaching strategies. Participants acknowledged the value of varied instructional strategies used in the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM), particularly those that fostered independence, creativity, and real-world application of knowledge. Hands-on projects, modular activities, and access to online resources were repeatedly highlighted as instrumental in enhancing their learning experience. These learner-centered approaches encouraged critical thinking, promoted problem-solving, and helped students take more control over their academic journey. Several participants shared how these strategies deepened their understanding of concepts and encouraged meaningful engagement:

"Hands-on projects encourage active participation and critical thinking, leading to a deeper understanding of concepts." (P1)
"We students appreciate the effectiveness of teaching strategies by practical exercises and module activity that allows us to apply the academic framework to real-world scenarios." (P10)

These accounts reflect students' appreciation for teaching methods that move beyond rote learning and instead emphasize active participation and applied learning. Participants felt more engaged when lessons involved doing, reflecting, and connecting with real-life contexts, especially when learning independently or away from traditional classrooms. This is supported by Giovannella's (2021) findings, which indicate that despite an initial adjustment, many students positively absorbed the transition to virtual or blended learning environments. The emerging educational landscape suggests that today's learners are increasingly ready for flexible, technology-driven, and experience-based teaching formats.

This insight implies that ADM programs should continue to integrate practical, experiential, and self-directed learning elements into their curriculum. By doing so, educators not only support academic mastery but also cultivate 21st-century skills such as resourcefulness, self-management, and adaptability. Moreover, the findings underscore the importance of ongoing professional development for teachers, equipping them with innovative and flexible pedagogical approaches suitable for ADM settings. Schools should also prioritize equitable access to digital tools and resources to ensure that all students—regardless of socioeconomic status or geographic location—can benefit fully from these learner-centered strategies.

3.4 Experiences of Students in Alternative Delivery Mode

Students enrolled in the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) encounter a learning experience marked by both rewarding opportunities and significant obstacles. This dynamic interplay of positive outcomes and persistent challenges shapes their overall satisfaction. Based on the data gathered, two major themes emerged that encapsulate students' lived experiences in ADM: Positive and Remarkable Experiences in ADM and Challenges Faced in ADM Learning. Together, these themes offer a holistic view of the student experience in ADM—both its strengths and areas for improvement. Table 5 provides a thematic matrix summarizing the main themes, subthemes, and core ideas that emerged from the analysis of student narratives.

Table 5. *Thematic Matrix Showing the Main Theme and Sub-themes on Students' Experiences in the Alternative Delivery Mode*

Main Theme	Subthemes	Core Ideas
Positive and Remarkable Experiences in ADM	Independence and Self-Discipline	Students developed responsibility, time management, and ownership of their learning.
	Flexibility in Learning	Students appreciated self-paced study schedules and the ability to balance work and school.
	Enhanced Socialization	Some students reported improved social interactions through alternative and creative means.
Challenges Faced in ADM Learning	Difficulty Understanding Lessons	Lack of teacher presence led to difficulties in grasping the lesson content.
	Limited Teacher Interaction	Minimal engagement with instructors reduced opportunities for clarification and support.
	Time Management Struggles	Balancing academic work with personal and job responsibilities remained a challenge for many.

Positive and Remarkable Experiences in Alternative Delivery Mode

The first theme highlights the empowering aspects of ADM, including enhanced independence and self-discipline, flexibility in learning, and improved socialization. These elements illustrate how ADM fosters autonomy and makes education more accessible, especially for learners facing time, geographic, or financial constraints.

Independence and self-discipline. One of the most significant developmental outcomes recognized by students in the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) program is the cultivation of independence and self-discipline. Unlike the traditional classroom environment, where teachers provide structured guidance, ADM demands a greater level of personal responsibility. Students are expected to manage their learning schedules, monitor their progress, and complete academic tasks without the regular oversight of an instructor. Participants described how this model initially posed difficulties but eventually became an empowering experience that nurtured maturity, accountability, and confidence in their capabilities. Their reflections underscore how the challenges of self-directed learning became turning points for personal growth:

"A remarkable learning experience in the ADM program was developing strong self-discipline and independence in managing my studies." (P4)

"Since I had to rely on myself to study, I became more independent and responsible." (P7)

"Nobody was there to remind me constantly, so I learned to be disciplined and manage my time on my own." (P10)

"It taught me how to set my deadlines and follow through even when I did not feel like studying." (P1)

"I became more mature because I realized no one would do it for me – I had to be accountable." (P12)

These responses highlight how students transitioned from dependence on teachers to embracing autonomy, which is critical in non-traditional learning environments. The absence of regular monitoring did not lead to disengagement; instead, it became a catalyst for developing essential academic habits and life skills. Students learned how to organize their time, remain goal-focused, and motivate themselves to persist through difficulties – skills that are transferable beyond the academic setting. This transformation is well supported by Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which posits that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are core psychological needs that foster intrinsic motivation and long-term success (Martin et al., 2018). ADM environments, when designed with flexibility and support, naturally provide opportunities to fulfill these needs, particularly the development of autonomous learning.

The experiences of working students further illustrate how independence and self-discipline are not only academic traits but also practical tools for balancing multiple roles. These students often navigate demanding schedules and must independently prioritize tasks. This reality echoes the findings of Basalo et al. (2023), who reported that modular learners—especially those in employment—developed strong self-regulatory skills to manage competing responsibilities in school and work. Thus, while ADM may initially appear daunting due to the absence of constant teacher presence, it serves as a platform for empowering learners to become self-directed, disciplined, and resilient – qualities essential in both academic and real-world settings.

Flexibility in learning. Flexibility emerged as one of the most appreciated advantages of the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM), especially for students dealing with economic hardship, health limitations, or conflicting personal responsibilities. Unlike traditional classroom settings with rigid schedules, ADM empowers students to learn at their own pace, choose when and how to study, and balance their academic load alongside other life commitments. This flexibility fosters a sense of control over one's learning process and promotes educational access for non-traditional learners. Participants described how the adaptable schedule of ADM helped them manage work, rest, and study more effectively:

"The flexibility that ADM gives us, being able to learn anytime, allows me to manage my time and schedule for work." (P1)

"I appreciated that I did not have to wake up super early and rush to school every day." (P3)

"Sometimes I would take a break when I felt tired, then go back to studying when I was ready." (P6)

"It is easier to juggle house chores and school when I get to choose what time to study." (P14)

"When my baby needed me, I could pause studying and return to it later. That was a big help." (P11)

These reflections highlight that ADM enables students to tailor their study patterns to their real-life circumstances. Whether working a job, parenting, or managing health concerns, learners can adjust their study hours as needed, without the stress of missing rigidly scheduled classes. This model fosters a more inclusive academic environment that acknowledges students' diverse backgrounds and responsibilities. Research supports this observation. Dobbs et al. (2017) found that many learners choose flexible learning formats to balance academic and life obligations better, avoid the physical and financial demands of commuting, and increase course accessibility. The flexible nature of ADM not only reduces barriers to education but also enhances student autonomy, enabling learners to maintain academic engagement without sacrificing personal well-being or professional responsibilities.

Enhanced socialization. Although ADM is often associated with independent study and limited interpersonal contact, many students in this study described how they were still able to cultivate meaningful social relationships. Through digital communication platforms, occasional face-to-face interactions, and peer collaborations, they built social support systems that enriched their educational experience and reduced the isolation commonly linked with distance learning. Participants highlighted how these connections played an essential role in their learning journey:

"... understanding my lessons better but also making it fun since it made me more sociable due to the people that I met." (P2)
"Even though we do not see each other often, I was able to connect with my classmates differently." (P9)
"Group chats and online meetings helped us feel like a team – we shared answers, gave reminders, and encouraged each other." (P8)
"Our Messenger group became our lifeline. We helped each other when someone did not understand the module." (P13)
"Talking with my classmates online made me feel that I was not alone in this journey." (P5)

These accounts illustrate how students actively used platforms such as Messenger, Zoom, SMS, or Facebook groups to establish a sense of community. These digital tools became virtual classrooms where ideas, encouragement, and resources were shared, bridging the physical gap between learners. For many, these social interactions alleviated the emotional burden of distance learning, offering a space for peer accountability, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving. This finding echoes the study of Garcia et al. (2022), who concluded that distance education opens new avenues for socialization, allowing students to construct learning communities, share coping strategies, and build resilience despite the absence of physical interaction. Similarly, collaborative digital spaces enhance learner motivation and foster emotional connectedness, which are key components for persistence in remote learning environments.

Challenges Faced in Alternative Delivery Mode Learning

The second theme addresses the difficulties students encounter, such as struggles with understanding lessons in the absence of direct teacher guidance, minimal interaction with instructors, and difficulties managing time effectively. These challenges underscore the need for improved support systems, more explicit instructional materials, and increased teacher engagement in ADM settings.

Difficulty understanding lessons. Students commonly reported difficulty in understanding the content of their modules, especially when dealing with unfamiliar terms or abstract concepts. Although ADM learners often turned to supplementary resources like YouTube tutorials or peer discussions, these were not always sufficient in helping them fully grasp the material without guided instruction from teachers. The following reflections illustrate this struggle:

"I find it fun and easy to follow, but at the same time, it can be confusing and difficult, especially when it comes to reading comprehension." (P15)
"Some topics were tough to understand without explanations." (P11)
"There were times I had to reread the whole module multiple times, and I still did not get it." (P5)

These responses echo findings from Saidon et al. (2020), who found that students in online learning environments faced barriers in understanding complex topics without direct instruction. The absence of face-to-face engagement limited opportunities for clarification, thereby emphasizing the need for improved instructional design and supplemental teacher-led support mechanisms in ADM settings.

Limited teacher interaction. Another challenge highlighted by ADM students is the limited interaction with teachers. In traditional classrooms, students can easily ask questions, seek clarification, and receive immediate feedback. In contrast, ADM students may experience delays in receiving responses or have fewer opportunities for one-on-one interaction with their instructors. This can hinder the learning process, particularly when students encounter difficulties that require timely explanations or personalized guidance. As a result, students may feel isolated and unsupported, which can impact both their learning outcomes and overall motivation. Three participants have shared their sentiments on how ADM impacted their work-life balance, particularly in the absence of a teacher as the facilitator of learning. The participants described their experiences with the following statements:

"No teachers to guide me in my learning, minimal lessons." (P6)
"If I had questions, I had to wait a long time to get answers." (P14)
"It was like I was just left to figure it all out by myself." (P10)

The students are encountering the absence of immediate teacher assistance. Without the direct, in-person support that traditional classrooms offer, students struggle with complex concepts or unclear instructions, leading to

confusion and frustration. This issue is further compounded when students lack a structured environment that guides their learning process. According to a study by Mudau et al. (2022), several challenges faced by educational institutions were identified, including connectivity issues, lack of interaction, self-discipline, privacy concerns, and attention problems. The study highlighted that limited interaction between students and teachers in online settings could lead to misunderstandings and hinder effective learning. Additionally, De Paepe et al.'s (2018) study supports this, stating that the disadvantages of ADM include a sense of isolation, struggles with staying motivated, a lack of face-to-face interaction, difficulty in obtaining immediate feedback, and the need for constant and reliable access to technology.

Time management struggles. Time management is a significant concern for many students participating in ADM programs, especially those who balance work, family, and academic responsibilities. The flexible nature of ADM requires students to manage their schedules, which can be challenging for those who lack strong time-management skills. Without the structure of traditional classroom hours, students may struggle to stay on top of assignments and meet deadlines, leading to stress and a sense of overwhelm. The need to juggle multiple responsibilities often leads to sacrifices, with students prioritizing work over academic commitments or vice versa. Students said that they find it challenging to manage their time between work and study. They felt they were always running out of time every day. The reflection highlights this challenge:

"One of the biggest challenges I faced was struggling with time management due to my work schedule and academic deadlines." (P4)

"I had to make sacrifices to meet deadlines." (P12)

"I was always running out of time every day, even when I tried to plan." (P8)

The responses in the interview highlight the difficulties faced, especially by the working students, in balancing school and job responsibilities within the ADM program. While participants appreciate the flexibility and the ability to work while studying, they also encounter significant challenges, particularly in managing their studies. Effective time management is crucial for academic success, especially in distance learning environments. Research indicates that many students struggle to balance their studies with daily life responsibilities, leading to ineffective time management. This challenge is associated with increased stress and anxiety, underscoring the importance of developing self-regulation skills and institutional support to help students manage their time effectively in ADM settings (NU Editorial Contributors, 2025).

3.5 Coping Strategies of Students on Alternative Delivery Mode

In the context of Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) learning, students often navigate a range of challenges that stem from reduced teacher interaction, increased self-regulation, and limited access to real-time academic support. These demands require learners to adopt specific coping mechanisms that help them persist and succeed despite the constraints of the modality. Understanding how students manage these challenges provides valuable insights into their resilience and the overall effectiveness of the ADM program. Table 6 presents the thematic matrix, summarizing the central theme and its related subthemes, which explore how students cope with the challenges posed by ADM. It outlines the core ideas derived from their narratives, reflecting their strategic use of technology, reliance on interpersonal support systems, and cultivation of self-motivation and discipline.

Table 6. Thematic Matrix Summarizing Central Theme and Subthemes on Students' Coping Strategies in Alternative Delivery Mode

Main Theme	Subthemes	Core Ideas
Adaptability and Resourcefulness in Overcoming Alternative Delivery Mode Challenges	Use of Online Resources	Students rely on online tools and apps like YouTube, Google, and online tutorials to understand lessons.
	Seeking Social Support	Students seek help from peers, family, or study groups to cope with challenges.
	Self-Discipline and Motivation	Students emphasize the importance of self-discipline, motivation, and encouragement to overcome challenges.

Adaptability and Resourcefulness in Overcoming Alternative Delivery Mode Challenges

The findings from student interviews revealed that learners employed various coping strategies to maintain their academic performance and motivation. These strategies reflect not only their initiative but also their adaptability to the flexible and often autonomous nature of ADM. The central theme that emerged—Adaptability and Resourcefulness in Overcoming ADM Challenges—is supported by three subthemes: use of online resources,

seeking social support, and self-discipline and motivation. These dimensions capture the proactive efforts of learners in navigating the ADM environment and underscore the importance of both internal and external supports in achieving academic success.

Use of online resources. A prominent coping strategy among students in the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) is the use of online and digital resources to enhance their understanding of lessons. Given the limited interaction with teachers and the demands of self-paced learning, students often find themselves seeking supplemental materials to bridge the gaps in comprehension. Digital platforms like YouTube, Google, and mobile educational applications have become essential tools for navigating difficult topics and reinforcing complex concepts. Participants shared their personal experiences with using online resources as part of their learning strategies:

"I use Google and YouTube to help me with topics I do not fully understand." (P3)

"I look for explanations on YouTube and Google whenever the lessons get too difficult." (P10)

"Sometimes I just search for video tutorials when I cannot grasp what the module is saying." (P8)

"Watching lessons on YouTube makes it easier for me to understand the topic compared to just reading." (P6)

"When I am confused, I rely on Google or even TikTok for explanations from other students or teachers." (P13)

These responses show how students actively seek solutions outside the traditional classroom to compensate for the lack of immediate instructional support. Instead of passively waiting for assistance, they turn to online tools as a form of self-directed intervention. This strategy not only aids understanding but also fosters independent learning habits, essential skills in alternative and flexible educational setups. This theme highlights the critical role of digital platforms in supporting ADM learners. By empowering students to explore lessons beyond the module, these tools enable them to take ownership of their academic progress. This aligns with Sari et al. (2020), who emphasized that the use of multimedia resources improved student engagement and academic performance in mathematics among junior high school students in Indonesia. The findings are also supported by Campus Explorer (2019), which noted that in asynchronous online courses, students benefited from flexible scheduling and access to diverse digital content, allowing them to learn at their own pace while managing personal commitments. The integration of online resources into ADM learning environments illustrates a shift toward more autonomous, technology-supported education, where students become proactive agents in their learning process.

Seeking social support. Despite the individualized and self-paced nature of Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) learning, many students emphasized the essential role of social support in navigating academic pressures. In the absence of regular face-to-face interaction with teachers, learners turn to peers, family members, and online communities to receive both academic help and emotional encouragement. This sense of connectedness becomes a vital coping mechanism, especially when learners encounter academic stress or feelings of isolation. Participants shared how they sought and benefited from various forms of social support:

"I communicate with peers through social media and Saturday classes." (P11)

"Talking to my friends helps me get through the stressful moments." (P6)

"Whenever I feel lost in the modules, I message my classmates and we try to figure things out together." (P2)

"My family motivates me to keep going when I feel like giving up." (P7)

"Group chats help me a lot – someone is always willing to help explain things." (P9)

These responses reflect that social interaction remains a cornerstone of students' learning experiences, even in the ADM format. Digital tools such as Messenger, group chats, or video calls act as virtual classrooms where students share answers, clarify lessons, and provide emotional reassurance. In many cases, support from family members also serves as a buffer against academic burnout, reinforcing students' motivation to complete their studies despite external pressures. This sub-theme underscores the value of collaborative learning and emotional connectedness in alternative educational settings. By staying connected with peers and family, students build informal learning communities that enhance both their academic performance and emotional well-being. This is supported by Villanueva (2020), who highlighted the importance of social and teaching presence in blended learning environments, noting that strong learning communities develop when students feel a sense of belonging and support. Similarly, Kurt and Yildirim (2018) found that students in blended and distance learning contexts placed a high value on teacher guidance and peer interaction, which significantly contributed to their satisfaction, engagement, and perceived success. In essence, while ADM promotes independence, these findings reveal that

social support remains indispensable to student resilience and academic perseverance. The ability to reach out, connect, and collaborate serves as a counterbalance to the isolating tendencies of self-directed learning.

Self-discipline and motivation. Given the self-directed nature of the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM), cultivating self-discipline and intrinsic motivation emerges as a key strategy for student success. Without the fixed routines and supervision offered in traditional classroom settings, ADM learners must rely on their internal drive to stay focused, manage competing responsibilities, and sustain academic momentum. Students are expected to structure their own time, avoid distractions, and consistently work toward long-term educational goals despite various personal and contextual challenges. Participants shared how they remained committed and motivated throughout their ADM journey:

"I remind myself why I am doing this and focus on my long-term goal of graduating." (P12)

"I always tell myself that I have no other choice but to finish my studies despite the challenges." (P1)

"Sometimes I get tired, but I push myself because I know education is my only way out of poverty." (P5)

"It is hard, especially without teachers, but I have learned to be disciplined and just keep going." (P8)

These reflections highlight a strong sense of resilience and personal accountability. For many students, ADM not only delivers academic content but also serves as a training ground for life skills such as perseverance, time management, and goal-setting. The narratives suggest that self-talk, long-term planning, and reminders of one's aspirations are potent tools in sustaining motivation. Furthermore, the need for institutional support systems that encourage these behaviors becomes apparent. Programs that integrate tools for schedule planning, provide regular motivational check-ins, and offer accessible teacher support could significantly bolster student persistence. As Anoda (2022) pointed out, strategies such as time management training, consistent access to learning resources, stable internet connectivity, and open communication with instructors are all essential to facilitating student adaptation to ADM. These elements not only support academic performance but also nurture self-regulated learning, a vital component in non-traditional education formats. Ultimately, these students' experiences reveal that motivation and discipline are not fixed traits but dynamic qualities that can be developed and reinforced through both personal effort and institutional scaffolding. In ADM, where independence is a necessity, the cultivation of these qualities often defines whether students thrive or struggle.

3.7 Corroboration

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings in this study presents a coherent and mutually reinforcing picture of student satisfaction with the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) program. The corroboration between these two sets of data strengthens the credibility of the results and offers a richer understanding of students' learning experiences. The quantitative finding of a high overall satisfaction rating for learning content (Mean: 3.65) is strongly supported by qualitative data indicating that students find the curriculum relevant to their career goals, critical thinking development, and personal growth. Participants highlighted the career-oriented nature of the lessons, as well as the opportunities for self-reflection and independent thinking, which reinforce the ADM's contribution to meaningful education. This alignment underscores the effectiveness of ADM in delivering purposeful and applicable learning content. In particular, Item 10 (Mean: 3.84), reflecting high satisfaction with learning content, corresponds with qualitative themes emphasizing how students value content that supports both academic advancement and real-world readiness.

Meanwhile, the overall high satisfaction with class conduct (Mean: 3.75) corroborates the qualitative theme of effective teaching strategies. Students expressed appreciation for the approachability and supportiveness of teachers, as well as for the structure and delivery of lessons. They reported feeling engaged and guided despite the flexible nature of ADM. This confirms that even within non-traditional learning environments, quality teaching remains a central contributor to positive student experiences. The very high mean scores of Item 9 (Mean: 3.91) and Item 3 (Mean: 3.90) further validate that learners are satisfied with the teaching delivery, communication, and feedback mechanisms, indicating that ADM is not only accessible but also instructionally sound. A recurring theme in both qualitative responses and quantitative ratings is the flexibility that ADM provides, particularly for working students or those with personal responsibilities. Participants emphasized the ability to balance academics with employment or family obligations, while the high ratings in relevant items support this notion statistically. This intersection confirms that the program structure effectively accommodates diverse learners, making it a practical solution for inclusive education.

In summary, the triangulation of quantitative mean scores and qualitative narratives demonstrates a strong consistency across data sources. The results corroborate that students experience ADM as accessible, flexible, and beneficial, with a curriculum that is relevant and career-aligned, and teaching that is engaging and supportive. This multi-perspective validation reinforces the conclusion that ADM is a viable and well-received educational alternative, capable of addressing the diverse needs of contemporary learners. Thus, the corroboration of quantitative and qualitative findings in this matrix demonstrates that the ADM program is highly valued by its participants. The learning content is both relevant and practical, and the overall class conduct is appreciated for its flexibility and supportive nature, particularly for working students. This integrated approach ensures that the program meets the diverse needs of students, paving the way for holistic academic and career development.

4.0 Conclusion

This study explored the lived experiences of students enrolled in the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) program, revealing both the strengths and challenges of this flexible learning approach. The majority of participants were under 18, mostly female, and enrolled in ADM primarily due to financial constraints. Their preference for modular over online learning was driven by limited access to technology and unstable internet connectivity, highlighting the ongoing digital divide in education.

Students reported high satisfaction with the clarity of instructional materials and the support provided by teachers. However, they also faced notable challenges, including minimal interactivity, difficulties with time management, and struggles with independent learning. Despite these barriers, students showed resilience through self-discipline, peer collaboration, and the use of available online tools and group chats. The ADM's flexibility emerged as both a key advantage and a source of difficulty, requiring learners to balance autonomy with structure. To enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of the ADM program, the following recommendations are proposed: (a) Improve Digital Infrastructure: Government and educational institutions should invest in expanding affordable internet access and providing digital devices, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Public-private partnerships may help reduce costs and widen coverage, (b) Strengthen Teacher Support Systems: Continuous professional development should be offered to educators, focusing on innovative strategies for distance learning, learner engagement, and differentiated instruction. Teacher check-ins, regular feedback, and the use of multimedia content can improve student motivation and comprehension, (c) Increase Interactivity and Engagement: Supplement modular learning with interactive components such as video lessons, recorded lectures, quizzes, and peer discussion forums. These strategies can combat isolation and enhance understanding, (d) Create Structured Learning Schedules and Routines: Introduce learning guides and personalized study plans to help students manage time more effectively and reduce the burden of self-directed learning, (e) Enhance Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms: Implement digital and manual tools for tracking student progress, with prompt interventions for those falling behind.

These findings align with prior studies (e.g., Rivera et al., 2018; Giovannella, 2021) that underscore the need for adaptable, inclusive, and tech-integrated distance learning models. Compared to traditional delivery, ADM offers greater accessibility but demands stronger support systems to maintain student engagement and learning quality. Future research could explore longitudinal outcomes of ADM learners, assessing academic performance and employment trajectories over time. Experimental studies testing hybrid or technology-enhanced ADM models may also provide insights into further innovations in flexible learning. By continuously refining ADM through research-based interventions, policymakers and educators can ensure it remains a responsive and empowering educational pathway.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Author 1 contributed to the conceptualization of the study, data collection, data analysis, and research packaging. Author 2 provided technical editing support, contributed to data analysis, and served as the academic adviser.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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