

## CAMPUS JOURNALISM PRACTICES AMONG STATE UNIVERSITIES OF CALABARZON

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### ABSTRACT

*Campus Journalism plays a huge part in Philippine Education. The management of the Student Publication led to the use of campus journalism practices to achieve journalism goals and objectives of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) pursuant to the Campus Journalism Act of 1991. This study aimed to describe the profile of respondents, assess the campus journalism practices, and relate the assessment to the journalism practices and students' profile variables in state universities of CALABARZON. The researcher utilized the descriptive method of research using qualitative and quantitative approaches. There was a total of 437 respondents from the five state universities. A researcher-made questionnaire and a focus group discussion (FGD) were utilized in the study. Weighted mean, frequency/percentage, and Chi-square of Independence were the statistical tools used. Based on the data gathered, it was found out that the campus journalism practices used in planning, management, production and distribution, and participation during competitions were moderately manifested. However, some of the campus journalism practices in budgeting were least manifested. The findings further revealed that the degree program, years of experience as a campus journalist, and seminars/workshops/conference attendance were the profile variables significantly related to campus journalism practices. The results suggested the creation of a creative management plan for the improvement and upgrade of campus journalism practices of HEIs.*

*Keywords: budgeting, campus journalism practices, creative management plan, management, planning*

### INTRODUCTION

Journalism has been the basic proof of the existence of freedom. It has been an essential component of a nation's democracy and is considered as a basic practice of societies' expression, awareness, and cooperation. It is one of the cores of society's foundation by providing information that will help in molding public opinion and engaging the citizens to a higher level of social responsibility. For some, on the other hand, it is known to be a professional activity involving the gathering, refining, and broadcasting of information through various sorts of media such as newspapers, television, radio, and other

transmitting devices. Thus, a career in journalism is still considered one of the most desirable and fearless careers in the Philippines today.

In times of crisis like the current pandemic, reliance on journalism has been very evident. During the quarantine where movements are limited to the four corners of the home, the news is continuously delivered. With the core principle of pursuing and verifying the truth by gathering information and facts, journalism has been a source of information and current news for centuries. In the past few years, this field of journalism has experienced significant changes in content and format with the advent of the internet and digital technologies, which has caused doubt on the role of traditional journalism in the modern



world. Despite newspaper readership significantly going down because online journalism is becoming a current practice, print journalism continues to be a source for current events, information, and news today for many.

Journalism in the Philippines led to the birth of campus journalism in its breeding field, the schools, and universities, wherein the youth of today are trained to become young journalists. In support of campus journalism, Higher Education Institutions in the country have their respective student publications. These student publications have paved the way in promoting journalism and train aspiring journalists in various ways. Annually, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) holds the yearly Luzon-wide Higher Education Press Conference (LHEPC) and Regional Higher Education Press Conference (RHEPC). Moreover, CHED holds press conferences and seminar workshops through various private organizations like Organization of Student Services Educators, Inc. – OSSEI, Philippine Pedagogical Institution (PMI), and School Press Advisers' Movement, Inc. (SPAM, Inc.) and the like to improve and develop tertiary campus journalists also through competitions.

In support of the development and promotion of campus journalism in the tertiary level of the country, Republic Act 7079, also known as the Campus Journalism Act of 1991, aims to uphold and protect the freedom of the press at the campus level and to promote the development and growth of campus journalism, as stated in its policies. The RA 7079 declares that at the tertiary level, the editorial board will be created and will be composed of campus journalists who have qualified in placement examinations. Once the publication is established, its editorial board shall freely determine its editorial policies and manage the publication's funds.

In the management of the Student Publication, the editorial board is guided by their created editorial policies or policies and procedures in its daily operation and responsibilities. The policies and procedures serve as guidelines to determine the frequency of editions to publish, the process involved in of selecting articles, recruitment of members,

selection of advisers and editorial board, and the processes to use on its operations including the functions of each editorial staff/member.

While production and distribution have long been part of the process of campus journalism. Still, many issues continue to mark these tasks. When a school administration refused to pay a printer to cover costs for the publication or denies funding because of campus paper content that is deemed objectionable, controversial, or viewed as offensive, the Supreme Court determined that the students were entitled to funding to cover printing costs of student newspapers on campuses in HEIs in the United States (Russo and Hapney, 2013). In addition, university administrators or student government groups try to influence campus newspapers through funding, arguing that providing subsidies affords them such control as to what should be published and printed.

Recently, the coronavirus crisis has considerably increased news consumption around the world. More people identified television and online sources as their main sources of news. This has resulted in the decline in the consumption of printed newspapers as lockdowns weaken physical distribution, leading to an all-digital shift. Newman (2020) reported that journalists, nowadays, use their creativity in finding flexible ways to produce the news under these extremely difficult COVID conditions. As a result, fact-checking has become a fundamental concern to newsroom operations, because the seriousness of this crisis has strengthened the need for reliable and accurate journalism to avoid misleading information and false news.

The pandemic caused by COVID-19, however, has resulted in schools shut across the world. As a result, tertiary education has changed, with the distinctive rise of e-learning, whereby teaching is undertaken remotely and on digital platforms. In the case of the Office of the Student Publication, temporary suspension of face-to-face learning in state universities in the Philippines has led to the discontinuation of the delivery of programs and activities. To adapt to the current situation during the pandemic, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) issued guidelines on the implementation of flexible delivery of Student



Services Affairs (SAS) Programs during the COVID-19 this July 28, 2021. Memorandum Order No. 08 series of 2021 explains the continuity of SAS programs in various flexible learning modes to provide equitable learning opportunities and help students to the learning environment during the COVID-19 pandemic and as well as prepare them for the resumption of classes under the new normal conditions. Furthermore, CHED suggested actions under offline and online flexible delivery options like sending student publications via courier or pick-up for offline; conducting webinars on online campus journalism, providing software for students to convert print campus journal to e-publication, and providing online platforms for student publication for online.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted with the objective to 1) describe the respondents in terms of degree program enrolled in, years of experience as a campus journalist, participation in journalism seminars/workshops/conferences, awards received, and exposure to journalism activities during high school; 2) assess the campus journalism practices used in terms of planning, management, production and distribution, participation in competitions, and budgeting; and 3) relate the assessment on the journalism practices and students' profile variables.

## METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the descriptive method of research using qualitative and quantitative approaches. A researcher-made questionnaire was the main instrument used in gathering data. In addition, focus group discussion (FGD) was also conducted to substantiate the findings of the study. However, only 437 participated in the study by answering the questionnaires. The study addressed all ethical concerns to conduct the study. Approval from the all-state university presidents was obtained and these were attached to the questionnaire that were sent to respondents of the study. The respondents were given assurance of privacy and confidentiality, and that

participation in this research was voluntary. They were then requested to fill the questionnaires after taking their consent.

To substantiate the data gathered, the researcher also conducted focus group discussions with the campus journalist respondents. These FGDs were scheduled after the retrieval of the online questionnaires to understand the issue of campus journalism at a deeper level. There were five schedules of focal group discussions. The participants were the campus journalists, advisers, heads, and coordinators. They were grouped according to students (campus journalists) and faculty members (advisers, heads, and coordinators) as homogeneity in the FGD group can help participants feel more comfortable expressing their opinions. Weighted mean, frequency/percentage, and Chi-square of Independence were the statistical tools used in the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 1. Distribution of the Respondents' Profile

Table 1 shows the profile distribution of the respondents. In terms of degree program enrolled in, 17.2% of campus journalists were from Journalism/Broadcasting programs, 12.8% came from Communication programs, and 11.2% came from Teacher Education programs, ranking in the top three. In terms of years of experience, the campus journalists with two years of experience were predominant, three years, accounting for 27.2%, followed by campus journalists with three years of experience, and one year of experience, accounting for 22.4% and 19.7% respectively, while the scale of those with four, five, and six years of experience was lower. In terms of participation in journalism seminars/workshop/conferences, 102 campus journalists or 47.4% was moderately active, 102 or 23.30 was active, while 128 or 29.3% was not active. In terms of awards received, the number of campus journalists with awards was 190, accounting for 43.5%; the number of campus journalists without awards was 247 or 56.5%. In terms of exposure to journalism activities during high school, 212 campus



journalists or 48.5% were moderately exposed, 109 or 24.9% were exposed and 116 or 26.5% were not exposed.

The program of a student may be considered beneficial in performing duties and responsibilities in Campus Journalism. Based on the results of the survey, 180 respondents, or 41.2 percent were taking Journalism/Broadcasting, Communication, Development Communication, and Teacher Education courses. This clearly states that taking up these courses makes it easier for a campus journalist to perform tasks in campus journalism. Moreover, they were trained in writing journalistic articles, creating newspapers, and getting data for their articles. This is in conformity with Babista (2009) who mentioned that students in journalism acquire and are knowledgeable in writing (basic grammar and style, standard news story, strong narrative ability in feature writing); reporting and covering a beat; interviewing, developing sources, talking to people; writing headlines; and has basic knowledge of the institutions of civic life example like country, city, state or national government. These were in line with what campus journalists do to produce campus papers and in joining competitions.

In general, it is noteworthy to emphasize that nearly one-half of the campus journalists were taking courses related to journalism or had journalism subjects/courses in their curriculum. It could be said that this had made them interested to become part of the Student Publication and engaging in campus journalism activities. Nevertheless, less than one-half of the campus journalists had taken courses not related to journalism. This means that students still become campus journalists because they enjoy the campus journalism experience and exposure. This could be the reason of Moody and Burleso (2013) as they exposed that even if writing is still essential today, taking courses related to journalism may not be enough to land a job when students graduate. Employers' expectations in a workforce, nowadays, demand a course that maintains students' traditional professional competencies and ensures graduates can independently perform multi-media tasks across multiple platforms.

The years of experience as a campus journalist provides lots of benefits. It hones the skills and capabilities that allow the journalist to stand out. In the field of journalism, experienced journalists can do better as they gain experience and may be more effective in producing a unique output. With skills, knowledge, and experience, journalists become more flexible in the field of journalism. From the result, it can be gleaned that 119 campus journalists or 27.20 % have two years of experience as campus journalists. There were 98 campus journalists or 22.40 % with three years of experience, 64 campus journalists or 14.60 % have four years of experience, 44 campus journalists or 10.10 % have five years of experience, and 26 or 5.90 % of the respondents have six years of experience. Nonetheless, 86 of them or 19.70 % only have one year of experience as a campus journalist.

It can be deduced from the figures that 80.30 percent of the respondents have more than one year of experience as campus journalists and only 19.70 percent only have years of experience in campus journalism. This affirms the study of Omay (2020) that experiences impart something to a student. In campus journalism, several competencies can be acquired and developed, which eventually become applicable over time from being campus journalists in school, exposures in press conferences, and training on different categories, namely: news writing, feature writing, editorial writing, editorial cartooning, sports writing, science, and technology writing, copy reading and headlining, and radio broadcasting. Furthermore, experiences also improve developing communication skills and socialization skills. This is also supported by Vogts (2016) that the length of journalism experience and education in the campus is valued as it allows students of all types to learn specific skills and gain an understanding of how the news works.

Participation in journalism seminars/workshops/ conference develops and polish the skills of the journalist. It allows the journalist to gain expert knowledge, renewed motivation, and unique ideas that they may apply in their works. It can be implied in the findings that 309 campus journalists or 70 percent were active in participating in



journalism activities particularly seminars/ workshops/ conferences. This is in accordance with Besa and Parcon (2018) that there are many benefits from attending the seminar, workshops, and conferences. These activities triggered excitement as a new experience as these provided them the opportunity to work with others as a team where camaraderie, teamwork, and constant communication were established. Moreover, these also provided them the chance to demonstrate leadership.

The awards received of campus journalists include not only their achievements but also the capabilities and potential a journalist possesses. The number of awards received by the journalist also implied the credibility of the work. There is 43.50 % or 190 of the respondents received an award in campus journalism. However, 247 or 56.50 % did not receive any award. It is implied that the majority of the respondents did not receive an award, which indicates that winning an award is not the main aim of campus journalism but the aim of informing people about what is happening around them and writing meaningful articles. This is in conformity with Laroya and Limjuco (2016) that awards, and recognitions given to a student journalist are only confirmation that work has been done. It does not change the quality of work given by campus journalists. However, the bigger challenge is to sustain this work by maintaining and developing one's proficiency in the practice of campus journalism as a profession.

Exposure to journalism activities during high school shapes the journalist into becoming an expert and active member of society. Being exposed to journalism activities allows them to meet a lot of interesting people which opens a great opportunity for them to grow. As depicted on the table, 109 or 24.90 % of the respondents were exposed to journalism activities during high school; 212 or 48.50 % were moderately exposed, and 116 or 26.50 % were not exposed. This is proven in the study of Omay (2020) that the result of exposure to journalism activities during high school was found relevant as journalism background in high school has a significance to a campus journalists' writing skill advancement and writing motivation in college. Campus journalists, like professionals in

the field, need to become experts in their own community. They need to become a voice for those students who may otherwise not be represented on campus.

## 2. Assessment of Campus Journalism Practices

The respondents assessed the journalism practices used by different State Universities in terms of planning, management, production and distribution, participation in competitions, and budgeting.

In terms of planning, the respondents moderately manifested the formulation of its policies and procedures, which is the practice with the highest waited mean. This clearly indicates that policies and procedures/by-laws are formulated by the campus journalists themselves. The result finds relevance to the study of Cavestro (2019) in the use of policies and procedures as a guide, though, the mere existence of policies and procedures is not enough because individual and organizational factors related to the understanding and use of policies and procedures also play key roles. In addition, organizations need to develop policies and procedures that reflect their vision, values, and culture as well as the needs of their employees. Once policies and procedures exist, enforcing these guidelines is important. However, accomplishing these can be tougher than it sounds.

In general, campus journalism practices in terms of planning had a composite mean of 2.70 interpreted as moderately manifested which means these practices are fairly used. This means that campus journalists use these practices as a strategy to complete a process to develop, achieve desired objectives, solve problems, and facilitate action in campus journalism. This is also shown in the responses of the of faculty members composed by advisers, heads, or coordinators during the FGD that it is a must that campus journalists, along with faculty members, undergo the process of planning as this helps identification of individual tasks in the implementation of strategies and framework for the expected activities and output. Moreover, one adviser stated that sometimes planning can be



very difficult as there are many challenges and hurdles especially with time and complex academic culture, and diversity of the campus journalists.

The Student Publication Office of a university is under the Office of Student Affairs and Services (OSAS). Since management is the process of guiding the development, maintenance, and allocation of resources to attain organizational goals, the Student Publication is considered an autonomous organization managed by the head/coordinator/adviser along with the editorial staff composed of campus journalists. They were guided by the Campus Journalism Act of 1991 and Student Publication Policies and procedures. The respondents highly manifest adherence to the policies and procedures/by-laws in managing the office. This clearly indicates that the Student Publication is guided by policies and procedures in terms of management of campus journalism and that campus journalists in state universities of CALABARZON clearly adhere to their policies and procedures. RA 1991 states that the editorial board is composed of student journalists and publication advisers at the option of its members in the tertiary level. The editorial board determines the editorial policies to be implemented by the editor and staff members of the student publication concerned. The policies and procedures created can further support the management of campus journalism.

The composite mean of 2.89, which was interpreted as moderately manifested, revealed that the campus journalism practices used by campus journalists in terms of management showed awareness that there were many activities and steps to be taken to ensure that plans were executed to meet the goals and objectives of campus journalism. Campus journalists have the responsibility to control the operation of the Student Publication, make decisions, and most of all handle concerns, problems, and challenges.

Campus papers and other editions like magazines and literary folios are the outputs produced by campus journalists as part of the Student Publication Office (SPO) of state universities in the country. It is also their responsibility to distribute these copies to the students as the SPO operates on the

miscellaneous fees under the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (RA 10931) to cover their operational expenses including printing and distribution of campus papers and other editions. The respondents highly manifest the practice of communicating with publishing companies regarding the printing and delivery concerns of editions. This exhibited the fact that the editorial board is authorized to monitor the printing process of the edition to be published. Rusoo and Hapney (2018) contradicted this as the campus dean can interfere with the process involving the publishing company and editorial board. The dean and not only head/coordinator/adviser and the campus journalists can notify officials of the publishing company that will print the campus newspaper what can and cannot be printed.

Likewise, the respondents also moderately manifest the practice of having an efficient way of distributing editions to students. This assessment indicated that each student publication created an organized process on how to distribute their editions. According to the responses of advisers, heads, coordinators during the FGD, a state university practices distribution of editions by manually distributing editions in classrooms, and recipients sign from a list of students from the Registrar's Office. Another state university provided big newspaper racks inside the university premises, where students can get a copy of the editions. Moreover, other state universities require students to get copies of the editions inside the Student Publication Office while some gave the copies of their editions to the dean's offices for distribution. This was also supported by campus journalists that it is somehow difficult to use an efficient way of distributing editions to students as some students were not interested to get their copies. A campus journalist during the FGD added that during the time that printed copies were distributed per classroom, she, along with some of her classmates, saw copies of the campus paper thrown on the side of the road on their way home.

Almost every organization should prepare a budget. Regardless if an establishment is large or small, the impact of a budget affects almost every organization. The budget is an important tool for strategic planning to provide management with



crucial information towards reaching desired goals. Moreover, it ensures effective and efficient use of economic resources (Tanase, 2013). Campus journalism practice in budgeting garnered the highest weighted mean and the moderately manifested by the respondents is the practice of adhering to the policies and procedures pertaining to the utilization of publication funds. This indicates that in the budgeting of funds, certain guidelines should be used even in campus journalism. The use of editorial policies on the use of publication funds is indicated in RA 7079 or the Campus Journalism Act of 1991. This is however contradicting to the issue Eulogio Amang Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology (EARIST) in 2017, when the editor-in-chief (EIC) of the Technozette declared control of the publication funds collected from the students when the school administration insisted to include a faculty member to be one of the signatories of the student publication bank account. The EIC contended that advisers are upon the option of the paper's staff and can function only for technical guidance, in accordance with the Campus Journalism Act of 1991.

On an overall view, the campus journalism practices in budgeting were slightly manifested. It indicates that even if tertiary students are old enough to handle the finances of the Student Publication, they still need assistance on the budgeting skills and management of funds. Coletti (2021) also supports this claim as budgeting helps students manage finances by encouraging effective financial planning and thoughtful spending decisions. Thus, it allows students to identify and limit unnecessary spending that might otherwise go untracked. This will be effective in the use of university funds allotted for the Student Publication.

### 3. Relationship of the Assessment of Journalism Practices and Students' Profile

Table 1 depicts the relationship of the assessment of campus journalism practices and the students' profile in terms of instructional planning, management, production and distribution, participation in competitions, and

budgeting. The assessment of the students regarding the campus journalism practices was analyzed.

**Table 1**  
Correlational Analysis Between the Overall Assessment on the Campus Journalism Practices and Students' Profile

Profile Variables	Computed $\chi^2$ -value	p-value	Decision on $H_0$	Conclusion
Degree Program	56.977	.061	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Years of Experience as Campus Journalist	48.067	.000	Reject	Significant
Participation in journalism seminars/ workshops/ conferences	19.058	.004	Reject	Significant
Awards Received	8.009	.046	Reject	Significant
Exposure to journalism activities during high school	2.573	.860	Failed to Reject	Not Significant

Level of Significance = .05

There is a significant relationship between planning and the student's degree program and years of experience. This suggests that students engaged in journalism-related programs and those that are seasoned campus journalists may have more inputs in direction-setting and planning sessions. Hence, it can be recommended that top members of the editorial board engaged in planning sessions should be those students enrolled in journalism-related programs and have at least 2- or 3-years' experience as a campus journalist.

Years of experience as a campus journalist and planning also had a significant relationship. It shows that campus journalists with longer experience show that they have better planning skills. This is supported by Omay (2020) which



revealed that experience teaches several competencies and skills where planning is included.

Results also confirmed that there is no significant relationship between the assessment on the journalism practices in terms of planning and respondents' participation in journalism seminars/workshops/ conferences, awards received, and exposure to journalism activities during high school. This is in accordance with the discussion during the focus group discussion, wherein many respondents stated that skills in writing and creating a campus paper are the focus of these campus journalism activities and planning was not enhanced in the attendance to the said activities.

Similarly, awards were given based on writing skills and technical aspects of creating campus papers and it does not show any relationship to campus journalism practices related to planning. Moreover, there is no relationship between the planning and exposure to journalism activities during high school as journalism activities. This contrasts with Dvorak (2018) that students with exposure to journalism in high school newspapers are talented, active, and involved students with a higher chance of applying leadership abilities and exercising their critical thinking, designing, and writing skills but do not include planning skills.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on data collected and analyzed the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The biggest groups of respondents are journalism/broadcasting students, have two years of experience as a campus journalist, have moderately active participation in journalism seminars/workshops/conferences, and have been moderately exposed to journalism activities in high school and have not received an award.
2. The campus journalism practices used in planning, management, production, and distribution of editions and participation in competitions are moderately manifested.

However, the campus journalism practices used in budgeting is slightly manifested.

3. The degree program, years of experience as a campus journalist, and seminars/workshops/conference attendance are the profile variables related to campus journalism practices.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. Benchmarking of other SUCs and private HEIs may be done to identify other practices to can be explored in the operation of the Student Publication Offices in the state universities.
2. The Republic Act 7079 or the Campus Journalism Act of 1991 should be discussed and fully understood to assist campus journalists and advisers/heads/coordinators in aligning and refining their campus journalism practices.

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