

Narratives of Campus Publication Advisers: Challenges, Adaptations and Student Engagement Post-pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This research delves into the narratives of campus publication advisers in one of the districts in the province of Leyte, Philippines, focusing on the challenges they faced, the adaptations they employed to maintain student engagement during the pre-pandemic, the pandemic, and especially, the post-pandemic times. To understand this phenomenon, the researchers used social cognitive theory and adaptive leadership theory. The study utilized a qualitative research design and narrative inquiry approach to gather insights from publication advisers representing diverse institutions and publication types. Using the inclusion criteria, ten (10) publication advisers were selected as participants. The semi-structured interview questionnaire served as the guide during the face-to-face in-depth interviews. Thematic analysis was employed on the gathered data. The findings revealed that a multi-dimensional view of the experiences of these advisers before, during, and after pandemic period, shed light on the following key themes: technological adaptations, challenges in student engagement, content diversification and responsiveness, impact on publication production, sustaining professional development. In conclusion, the narratives of campus publication advisers underscore the resilience, adaptability, and dedication of these professionals in guiding their teams through challenging times. Their narratives offer valuable lessons for educational institutions, highlighting the importance of digital preparedness, mental health support, and fostering a strong sense of community within student organizations.

Keywords: *campus publication advisers, post-pandemic, challenges, adaptations, student engagement, adaptive leadership*

INTRODUCTION

The practice of college journalism in the Philippines was codified with the passing of the College Journalism Act of 1991 (Republic Act 7079). This law offers standards for the creation of campus periodicals, including newspapers, bulletins, and magazines, and it supports press freedom in educational institutions. In the said law, it is also mandated that ‘the state shall undertake various programs and projects aimed at improving the journalistic skills of students concerned and promoting responsible and free journalism. The division, regional, and national press conferences and competitions where student journalists from different schools allowed them to showcase their skills and knowledge (RA 7079, Sec.8). These events foster healthy competition and camaraderie among aspiring journalists.

The campus publications play a vital role in informing students about campus issues, serving as a watchdog on their school’s administration, and uncovering stories that outside media might miss. Behind the success of the campus publication are their respective publication advisers playing a multifaceted responsibility which include editorial guidance, skill development, and upholding journalistic standards.

In the spirit of strengthening campus scribes, advisers are crucial in ensuring students success (Harris, 2022). They often organize workshops and seminars on journalism to enhance students’ writing and reporting abilities. These workshops cover topics such as news writing, feature writing, investigative journalism, and ethics in journalism.

In addition, campus publication advisers emphasize the importance of ethical reporting and responsible journalism. Students are encouraged to fact-check their sources, report accurately, and maintain integrity in their work. They also allow students to explore different aspects of journalism and develop diverse skills.

Campus advisers play a crucial role in the holistic development of student journalists in fostering their creativity, self-expression, critical thinking, and social skills. However, before the onset of the pandemic various studies revealed that there were factors that hindered the success of campus publications. Firstly, in the study conducted by Johnson (2019), it highlighted the significant obstacles such as lack of financial resources, limited curriculum integration, and inadequate teacher training on campus paper organization advising.

On the other hand, Anderson (2003) revealed that the increased emphasis on test-based accountability has led to a narrowing of the curriculum, reducing the time and resources allocated to campus paper organizations. The study also emphasized the importance of advocating for a balanced curriculum to promote student engagement and well-rounded development.

Agreeably, in the investigation by Smith and Brown (2021) they identified factors such as large class sizes, limited instructional time, and varying student abilities as barriers to effective campus paper advising. The study highlighted the significance of differentiated instruction strategies and professional development opportunities for campus paper advisers to address these challenges.

Moreover, in the study conducted by Thompson (2018) it revealed that campus publication was often undervalued in comparison to other academic disciplines, leading to reduced support and funding. It also emphasized the importance of raising awareness about the educational and social benefits of campus publication to challenge these negative perceptions and promote inclusion in secondary school curricula.

While these advisors had to face several challenges and issues that impacts its effective implementation of the program, another unexpected challenge took place– the pandemic. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted traditional educational paradigms and campus dynamics in unprecedented ways. This led to the adjustment to the virtual setting with limited face-to-face interaction. This also allowed campus advisors roles to transitions virtually, which posed various challenges and profound opportunities (Burelison et al., 2021).

In the study of the Associated Colleges of the South (ACS, 2020), it was found mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic's forced adjustments to education gave the rare and fortunate opportunity to adopt and sustain significant improvements in the ways to engage with students. As a result, online engagement activities such as webinars, and social media platforms replaced in-person events (Pridmore, 2021).

After two years, COVID-19 cases gradually decreased and the restrictions were lifted. Post-pandemic, new adjustment strategies were employed to facilitate continuity of learning.

Furthermore, while numerous studies have been conducted on the challenges and opportunities faced by educators during and after the pandemic, most of them highlighted the various challenges of educators. Little research has been done focusing on the experiences of campus publication advisers in handling campus publications, their struggles, and the adaptations to ensure student engagement particularly post-pandemic.

From this standpoint, this study aimed to explore the narratives of campus publication advisers in handling the campus publications, their challenges and adaptations to ensure student engagement post-pandemic. This study employed Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1988), which describes how external, and internal factors such as the environment, personal ability, and past experiences influence the behavior of an individual (LaMorte, 2022). By delving into the campus publication advisers' narratives, we sought to contribute to the broader discourse on media, education, and student involvement during times of disruption and post-disruption.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Campus publications are important to the Philippine educational scene because they give students a forum to share their thoughts, opinions, and creative works. These periodicals support the growth of critical thinking, civic involvement, and journalism skills. It is also considered an integral part of their academic experience.

In ensuring the success of the campus publications, publication advisers play a crucial role in guiding and supporting student journalists and their publications within educational institutions. Their responsibilities encompass various aspects of journalism, mentorship, and education.

Diverse viewpoints provide differing ideas into the responsibilities and importance of these advisers. Miller (2022) highlights the significance of academic advisers and student organizations in accomplishing the goals of the school and fostering student achievement. Additionally, considering the growing number of international political challenges and the focus on producing future leaders who are more dependable, student organizations and leadership initiatives are becoming more important, considering that through them, there is a possibility of producing global leaders who possess the ability to communicate, resolve issues, and take on obstacles (Alajmi & Kalitay, 2019). The advisor's influence is thought to be crucial for both the group's performance and the students' smooth transition into professional work following graduation (Osta et al., 2022).

These perspectives collectively highlight the multifaceted roles of campus publication advisers as educators, mentors, mediators, and advocates for responsible journalism. Advisers are instrumental in shaping students' journalistic skills, ethical values, and overall understanding of the journalism and mainstream media.

Notwithstanding the expanding routines among students' organizations, declaring that the world has become adversely affected by COVID-19, advising and campus publication initiatives before to the pandemic were halted. The constraints of social connection meant that in educational institutions, in-person classes were temporarily out of commission (Ahmed et al., 2023). Finally, this led to the reworking and adjusting of organizational undertakings.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged in late 2019 and led to a global health crisis, had a profound and sudden impact on campus publication activities around the world, including in the Philippines. The pandemic's effects were far-reaching, disrupting traditional educational practices and campus life in unprecedented ways.

One of the most significant effects of the pandemic was the closure of schools and campuses to prevent the spread of the virus. This led to a rapid shift to remote and online learning, as educational institutions had to adapt their teaching methods to virtual platforms. This transition posed challenges for students, teachers, and parents who had to adjust to new modes of instruction.

Another effect of the pandemic was the on students' extracurricular activities, such as clubs, organizations, and especially student publications, faced disruptions as physical meetings and events were limited. Many clubs and groups tried to continue their activities through virtual means, but the lack of in-person interaction presented challenges.

Aziona and Ayshey (2021) argue that digital media in the digital divide suffuses socio-economic relationships between university students and management. The study provides insights into the role of 4th Industrial Revolution, the technological, digital inequalities, environmental, situational, and institutional barriers/disparities students faced during remote learning and assessment.

Campus publications also faced unique challenges. Journalists had to find new ways to gather news, conduct interviews, and publish content while adhering to health protocols. The pandemic itself became a major

topic of coverage.

Moosa's research (2021), a South African university's case study highlighted how the pre-pandemic and pandemic eras of student advising are very different. Their study's findings also show information dissemination as one of the main challenges during the epidemic in their profession as advisers. Considering the requirement to switch to online modes, as per Osta et al. (2022), both synchronous and asynchronous, this emphasizes the disparities in society that affect kids' access to essential resources, such as a reliable internet connection, electrical power, communication, and gadgets (Naughton, 2021). Furthermore, the lack of readiness among educators to transition to remote instruction and learning significantly enhances their inadequate work (Atiles et al., 2021). Their proficiency with and understanding of technology has a part in this problem as well. Considering the generational divide between instructors and students, educators need plenty of time to get ready and adapt to these changes (Rosalina et al., 2020).

Campus advisers are more responsible for navigating these changes. McGill (2021) contends that the role of academic advising in higher education is often misunderstood, which is why the amount of stress, advisors accumulated during the pandemic is concerning. Given the number of studies focusing on the experiences of students, little is known about the perceptions of advising among institutional leaders who shape advising structure and practice (Menke et al., 2020).

Academic advisers take on the role of "first responders," handling students' stress, anxiety, and emergency circumstances (Flaherty, 2020). Considering this, beyond the customary responsibilities of managing assignments and leadership tasks, the adviser's function has grown (McCarthy et al., 2022), requiring them to remain calm and maintaining quality while handling more duties and responsibilities. Nevertheless, Ding (2021) emphasizes that with the strenuous workload that advisers carry, balancing their professional and personal lives is a huge struggle. The obligation to fulfill their function as counselors and instructors ultimately results in fatigue that is now harmful to their own mental health and psychological health (Mosleh et al., 2022). In most cases, under certain circumstances, this makes it difficult for advisers to interact with students, forfeiting the opportunity to assist them in the way they desire.

Given the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on global trade and education system, there are difficulties in allocating fund sources for the campus publications (Chambers, et.al 2021). With few resources,

the organization must be run. Numerous educational institutions and public education rely on financing from the government (Allegretto et al., 2022). According to LSU (2023), due to limited resources and a set budget allocation, student organizations frequently struggle which directly impacts publication production and planned activities (Kalola & Kavale, 2017). Eventually, individuals within the organization, especially the advisers, would put their own money at risk to achieve their goals and for the organization's improvement.

By applying Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, this study emphasized the role of observational learning, imitation, and modeling in human behavior. Applying this theory to the study of campus publication advisers in post-pandemic times can provide insights into how these advisers navigate challenges, make adaptations, and engage students in times of crisis. Utilizing this theory, the researchers gained insights into how campus publication advisers applied observational learning, modeling and imitation, and reciprocal determinism.

Supplementary to that, adaptive leadership theory by Heifetz, Linsky and Grashow (2009) was also employed to understand how campus publication advisers navigated and thrived in a rapidly changing environment. The authors explained leadership as "the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive" (Heifetz et al., 2009). The main tenet of adaptive leadership practice is that if a system is broken, it must be diagnosed and fixed by taking risks and challenging the status quo to provoke change.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a qualitative narrative inquiry approach which aims to aimed to explore the narratives of campus publication advisers' in handling the campus publications', their challenges, adaptations to ensure student engagement in the post-pandemic. Qualitative descriptive research design was suitable for this study as it permitted in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences and viewpoints (Lambert & Lamber, 2012). Meanwhile, the use of narrative inquiry approach by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note that as people tell narratives, they simultaneously construct ways of action in certain settings, which is why narratives can grasp aspects of a context as a socially constructed story.

The researchers utilized purposive sampling in selecting ten informants (campus advisers) from varied teaching backgrounds (elementary, secondary, and college). The specific inclusion criteria included

the following: (a) experience level in campus paper advising exceeding five (5) years; (b) actively engaged in the campus publication during the pre-pandemic, the pandemic, and post-pandemic; and (c) they should have reached the division, regional, and national level of campus paper press conferences.

To capture diverse perspectives about campus publication advisers' challenges, adaptations and student engagement during the post-pandemic times, the researchers used a semi-structured interview guide duly validated by three (3) experts in qualitative research to ensure validity of the instrument. During the face-to-face in-depth interview, voice recording was used in collecting the verbal data. Prior to the collection of data, the rights and welfare of the informants were the primary concern in the duration of the study. The researchers made it clear that their participation was on a voluntary basis, and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Moreover, their responses and personal information were held confidential in accordance with Data Privacy Act of 2012 and other relative existing laws.

The data were analyzed using a thematic analysis, a qualitative method that is used to develop concepts and identify themes by studying printed and verbal materials (Clarke & Braune, 2006). Thematic analysis is a qualitative method of analysis that interprets patterns that will answer the research questions (Chawla & Wood, 2021, as cited by Pedroso et al., 2022). The process involved transcription of the recordings and written responses, examination of the data to identify patterns and recurring elements related to campus advisers' challenges and adaptations strategies, categorization of the data based on these identified patterns, and generation of themes. Further, each theme was then evaluated to gain a better understanding of the participants' experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

To explore the challenges and adaptations employed to sustain student engagement during the post-pandemic times of the campus publication advisers, five (5) significant themes were generated, (a) challenges (b) technological adaptations, (c) content diversification and responsiveness, (d) impact on publication production, and (e) sustaining professional development.

Challenges

Campus publication advisers identified significant challenges in their advising experiences before the pandemic, during and in the

post-pandemic. Some of these challenges were divided into four (4) sub-themes, which include, (1) time management and balancing priorities, (2) motivation and burnout stress, (3) inclusivity, and lastly, (4) mental health considerations.

Time Management and Balancing Priorities

Whether managing remote publication procedures, assisting students virtually, or attending to the changing requirements of school publications, advisers needed to modify their time management techniques to meet the ever-changing demands of their positions. Teachers in public schools in the Philippines frequently go through overwork brought on by difficult teaching and nonteaching tasks (Geronimo & Olegario, 2020). Overwhelmed by documentation and non-teaching tasks, they often suffer from tension headaches and other concerns about health (Huang et al., 2022). Informants narrated the resilience and adaptability required to manage the dual roles of a classroom teacher and a campus publication adviser throughout the different phases of their advisory roles, prior to the pandemic, during, and post-pandemic. The pandemic forced them to reassess and refine their time management strategies, ultimately leading to a more flexible and tech-savvy approach in the post-pandemic era. Adviser D, one of the participants, talk about her struggle as a classroom teacher and advisory roles before, during and after the pandemic.

Before the pandemic, my days were structured around lesson planning, grading, and occasional after-school meetings with the student journalists. I've had to set aside specific times during the week for both roles, and while it was demanding, I've managed to strike a balance.

Adviser F added,

The pandemic turned everything upside down. Suddenly, we were thrust into remote learning, and the dynamics of the classroom and advisory roles shifted. Time that was once spent in face-to-face interactions was now consumed by navigating online platforms and troubleshooting technical issues. The challenge was not just time management but also keeping students engaged and motivated in a virtual setting.

As emphasized by Adviser B,

Coming out of the pandemic, there's a sense of adaptability and resilience. However, transitioning back to in-person teaching and advising presented its own set of challenges. There's a need for re-establishing routines and managing the expectations of both roles. The lessons learned during the pandemic about flexibility and innovation are now valuable assets.

Motivation and Burnout Stress

Motivation attracts individuals to act based on various factors such as instrumental values, obligations, rewards, performance, competition, and external evaluation. The combination of internal and external motivations greatly impacts an individual's ability to self-regulate (McClain, 2023). However, in a study by Canadian K-12 schools during the initial stages of COVID-19 in Canadian K-12 schools, it was revealed that teachers experienced a perceived loss of efficacy in the early stages of the pandemic, which decreased their perceptions of efficacy. However, teachers reported that positive collaboration from colleagues could offset this. They also suggested strategies such as setting self-regulating boundaries in terms of work time and space, applying healthy eating, exercise, and sleep habits (Trudel et al., 2021).

In the study of Brion (2022), noting that before the pandemic, 20% of educators reported feeling severely burned out, making burnout a serious worry for educators. This number increased to 40% after the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased stress levels and presented new problems, which increased organizational concerns about teacher burnout. Teachers and administrators faced extreme stress during the pandemic, which frequently resulted in burnout and decreased self-efficacy. It was possible that the difficulties of remote teaching and learning, along with the special and demanding character of academic job, led to advisers for campus publications experiencing burnout (Brion, 2022). In all the narratives, the advisers were initially motivated by their passion for teaching and guiding students in creative endeavors prior to the pandemic. Adviser C, stated:

Before the pandemic, I always found joy in fostering creativity and critical thinking in my student journalist. As the adviser of the school paper, I dedicated extra hours to guide budding journalists. The collaborative and vibrant atmosphere of the publication office fueled my motivation.

The pandemic-induced shift to remote work exacerbates stress, leading to burnout for some advisers. Adviser J narrated that he struggled a lot to adapt to virtual formats, maintain student engagement, and balance responsibilities.

I struggled to balance teaching online classes and managing the campus paper remotely. The blurred lines between work and personal life led to burnout, exacerbated by the pressure to produce quality content in a rapidly changing campus publication landscape.

The post-pandemic period becomes a time for reflection and restructuring roles to prevent burnout. Adviser I recognized the importance of self-care and seek ways to rebuild connections with students. He said, "I focused on rebuilding the camaraderie among the new and existing staff. The challenge of reconnecting with students and addressing the emotional toll of the pandemic became my primary motivation."

Inclusivity

Prior to the pandemic, campus publication advisers may have focused on fostering inclusive student engagement through various activities, such as writing, editing, and designing, to ensure that diverse student voices were represented in the publication (Parker & Conversano, 2021). As a campus publication adviser before the pandemic, Adviser A states that the focus was on creating a space where diverse voices were heard and respected. He shared,

Together with my other adviser, we worked on recruiting a more inclusive team of writers, editors, and photographers. We actively sought stories that represented the varied experiences of our student body. We held workshops on cultural sensitivity and bias in reporting, ensuring that our team was well-equipped to cover diverse topics.

Based on the report of the National Survey of Student Engagement (2021), it highlighting that during the pandemic, the shift to remote learning and the need to adapt to new technologies may have impacted student engagement and inclusivity in campus publications. Advisers may have had to find innovative ways to maintain student participation and ensure that all students, including those from diverse backgrounds, felt included and heard in the publication process (NSSE, 2021). The pandemic posed unique challenges for some of the campus publication advisers. As Adviser

G recalled, the transition to remote work disrupted the regular routines, and maintaining a sense of community became challenging. She narrated,

I had to find new ways to connect and collaborate. It was important to be mindful of the diverse challenges our students faced, from access to technology to personal struggles. I prioritized flexibility in deadlines and found creative ways to engage our student journalists, addressing the issues that were most relevant to them during these unprecedented times.

In the post-pandemic era, campus publication advisers continued to prioritize inclusivity in student engagement, considering the lessons learned during the pandemic and striving to create an environment where all students felt valued and represented in campus publications. Narrated by the advisers, they recognized that the experiences of student journalists during the pandemic varied widely. Some faced significant hardships, while others adapted more easily to the changes. Adviser F, who stated that their school implemented a hybrid work model to accommodate different needs, allowing for both limited in-person and remote contributions, said,

We also revisited our inclusivity initiatives, adapting them to the evolving concerns and sensitivities of our community. Post-pandemic, the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and understanding became even more pronounced.

Mental Health Considerations

Studies revealed that prior to the pandemic, campus publication advisers focused on fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for students, addressing mental health concerns through various activities and resources (Lisiecka et al., 2023). Marshall et al. (2020) estimated that given the pre-pandemic trajectories, mental health deteriorated significantly by 8.1%, on average. Young adults and women, i.e., groups who had experienced mental health disorders before the pandemic, were most severely affected.

Closures of schools, institutions, and other educational facilities affected more than 94% of the global student population (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). Mental health is never simply an individual concern but rather largely influenced by many personal, cultural, and social elements that interact for reshaping the concepts, discourse, and practices of well-being (Bolton & Bhugra, 2021) This applies to faculty mental health, which could be affected by factors related to the faculty themselves, to their students, or to environmental (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) or organizational (i.e.,

university) changes. Adviser H revealed that before the pandemic, the focus was primarily on guiding students through the intricacies of journalism, honing their storytelling skills, and fostering a vibrant campus media environment. He continued,

Mental health discussions centered around stress related to deadlines and the competitive nature of the industry. As their adviser I often encouraged my staff to have a strong work ethic and I also remind them to strike a balance between academic and extracurricular commitments.

As the pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to the advisers and student journalists, the abrupt shift to remote learning and the uncertainty surrounding the future heightened stress levels. Advisers found themselves not only guiding journalistic endeavors but also becoming pillars of support for students dealing with isolation, fear, and disruptions in their academic and personal lives. Adviser E noted, “strategies for remote collaboration became paramount, focused on maintaining a sense of connection within the publication team.”

As the campus community adapted to the “new normal,” advisers remained attuned to the lingering effects of the pandemic on students’ mental health. Adviser A mentioned that the return to in-person activities brought both relief and new challenges. He shared, “I recognize that the post-pandemic period requires adjusting to a changed academic landscape. The return to in-person collaboration brought a mix of excitement and anxiety.”

Technological Adaptations

Most of the campus publication advisers had to make several adaptations prior, during and in the post-pandemic times to ensure the continued success of student publications. Before the pandemic, Adviser D remembered the days when their publication office was buzzing with activity. “The physical presence of student journalist collaborating, brainstorming, and putting together the next issue was invigorating,” he said. The focus was on traditional print journalism, workshops, and face-to-face mentoring.

However, everything changed when the pandemic hit. Several studies revealed that the educational activity that was most affected required most of the adaptations. The situation prompted much useful research into strategies for teaching using information technology (Ramlo, 2021). Stress

and strains resulting from adapted working modes and greater number of hours were identified in both teaching and research activities, although the former is usually considered to have demanded more of academics (Kulikowski et al., 2022). There were also perceptions that women academics may have endured a more complicated life due to the pandemic, or that the pandemic may have affected academics in some academic fields than others (Górska et al., 2022). With the closure of physical classrooms during the pandemic, as the campus publication adviser, Adviser I took an innovative approach by organizing virtual workshops and training sessions, and said,

I found that webinars and online courses on journalism, photography, and multimedia storytelling were somewhat effective. They not only provided our students with valuable skills but also gave them a sense of continuity during a challenging time.

Informants described that some technological adaptations made by the campus publication advisers during the pandemic were hosting and attending virtual meetings and collaboration, creating digital content, and publishing online and social media platforms, and participating in virtual workshops, training, and contests. This is supported by the statement of Baticulon et al. (2021) noting that technology enhances advisers' engagement to students through improved access to content, data, and networks. Adviser K retold the experience that with tools like Google Meet, and Workspace they co-edit articles in real-time, making the editorial process more efficient and collaborative than ever. "Additionally, we explored online design software, allowing our graphic designers to create stunning layouts remotely," he said.

Tanaleon et al. (2023) study on campus advising during the post-pandemic period found that advisers faced challenges such as the transition to remote advising, shifting deadlines, and increased uncertainty, which impacted their ability to manage their time effectively and balance various responsibilities. For Adviser F, the post-pandemic era brought its own set of challenges, and shared,

The lessons we learned during the pandemic have reshaped our strategies. We're now more adept at leveraging online platforms, and our students have developed a broader skill set. The focus is on staying adaptable, incorporating the lessons learned, and maintaining a strong online presence.

Feeling confident, Adviser C explained,

In the post-pandemic, communication dynamics have shifted. Some students are more comfortable expressing themselves in text messages or emails rather than face-to-face or video chats. This has altered the way we collaborate and sometimes leads to misunderstandings.

Adaptation to New Format and Guidelines in Campus Journalism Contests

As the downward trend in the number of COVID positive cases was now evident (Philippine News Agency, 2021) the Philippine government and educational institutions were eager to grapple with opportunities for the reopening of schools as governments across the world were slowly and steadily easing restrictions. This move has made the education departments hopeful of a safe return of face-to-face classes despite the long school closure (UNICEF Philippines, 2021). With the yearning to return to the pre-Covid instructional form, educational institutions set to integrate health-related activities in their policies and programs, which was evident in the issuances of the joint memoranda and guidelines of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Department of Health (DOH) and the DepEd-DOH circular no. 1 series of 2021 of the Department of Education (DepEd) as they commenced pilot testing for in-person classes.

As the country transitioned into the post-pandemic era, the DepEd released a memorandum (DepEd Memorandum 24, s. 2023), which stipulated the holding of the annual national elementary, secondary, or tertiary school press conference, with the theme, "From Campus Journalism to Real-World Journalism: Shaping Minds from Schools to Societies". The NSPC was conducted from July 17 to 21, 2023 in Cagayan de Oro City with the host region- Region X and the host Schools Division Office (SDO) was Cagayan de Oro City. The much-awaited return of campus journalism contest prompted the recognition of the digital shift accelerated by the pandemic. As a basic requirement for the contest, school paper submissions were accepted digitally. Another unique format of the 2023 NSPC was in response to the global challenges marked by a shift towards mobile journalism.

In addition, the memo also reiterated, that to avoid class disruptions, DSPC and RSPC must be held after class hours, either face-to-face or online. All related training programs in preparation for the

conferences should not in any way disrupt the learners' class time. If face-to-face conduct was preferred, a waiver or permit signed by the parents must be secured. All participants must observe social distancing and abide by the region's prevailing health protocols.

Unlike before the pandemic when student journalists may compete for at least two contests, with the released memo, a campus journalist could participate in only one (1) event, either in an individual or group category. For the group category such as radio script writing and broadcasting and television script writing and broadcasting, participants were also trimmed down to five (5). Prior to the pandemic, it was seven (7) participants. Adviser J responded,

Our publication's staff had a hard time adapting to the new contest guidelines for the DSPC, and NSPC 2023. That's why coordinating, planning, and executing projects in this new set of guidelines is complex. It's tough to strike a balance and ensure that all team members feel equally involved and valued.

Content Diversification and Responsiveness

These themes reflected the changing roles and challenges faced by campus publication advisers in a post-pandemic world, where content diversification and responsiveness became central to their work. It demonstrated how advisers adapted to these shifts to ensure their publications remain relevant and impactful.

As Adviser J stressed that their publication employed creative and flexible approaches, prioritizing student well-being, and provided opportunities to accommodate diverse student needs. She said,

My role has evolved from a traditional adviser to more of a content strategist. I work closely with students to respond to current events and community needs while maintaining journalistic integrity. We've learned to adapt to the fast-paced nature of news, and our publication now stands as a responsive voice in our community.

In the post-pandemic world, campus publication advisers recognized the importance of sensitivity in their content. They become more cautious not to exploit sensitive topics and are quick to respond to concerns. As Adviser E articulated,

Our adviser role now includes helping students develop ethical journalism skills and navigate the fine line between responsible reporting and sensationalism. It's essential to be proactive in addressing potential issues and ensuring that our content respects our readers.

Moreover, the challenge for some of the campus publication advisers was to balance the old with the new. While they embrace multimedia and diverse content, they must preserve the core principles of journalism. As Adviser I quoted,

My role as an adviser is to strike that balance - to encourage creativity while upholding the highest standards of reporting. Responsiveness means adapting our content and format, but it doesn't mean compromising our ethics. It's an exciting challenge to guide students in finding that equilibrium.

Impact on Publication Production

This theme reflected the multifaceted impact on campus publication advisers prior, during and the post-pandemic era since they had to navigate significant changes in content, production, and team dynamics while finding creative solutions to continue delivering quality publications to their campus communities.

All the campus publication advisers experienced significant shifts and challenges in their roles. As narrated by Adviser A, prior to the pandemic, their publication was buzzing with campus coverages, journalism trainings and workshops, but with the closure of schools and halting in-person events during the pandemic, "totally we stopped and did nothing during the height of the pandemic."

Moreover, when DepEd Regional Office VIII released a memo on the conduct of regional virtual campus journalism workshop series (Regional Memorandum No. 10, s.2023), Adviser D recalled that she found the training a steep learning curve for both our students and her as an adviser to adapt to digital platforms and remote collaboration. She shared, The training is a bit new to us considering also the unstable connection in our location. We had a hard time completing the online journalism workshop series.

As to Adviser H, noting that one of the most significant changes was the need for remote collaboration,

I had to guide our team in managing a publication from various locations. It's been a learning experience, teaching students how to communicate effectively, meet deadlines, and maintain a sense of camaraderie through emails and Messenger app.

At the height of the pandemic, physically distanced campus publication advisers and student journalists highlighted the importance of publication in maintaining a sense of community on campus. Adviser J found an innovative way to engage their audience and keep them connected to campus events and news through their social media pages. He shared, "Just for a try, we created a Facebook page and uploaded previous works and encouraged other students to share their works also. We shared content samples from online sources in our Messenger group chats."

Based on the study of Tanaleon et al. (2023), before, during, and after the pandemic, campus advisers experienced lack of sufficient budget for programs which resulted in challenges when implementing projects and events. Similarly, Adviser C mentioned that their publication faced budget constraints because of the pandemic's economic impact. He said, "It was a challenge to maintain the same print quality and frequency of issues. We had to get creative in finding alternative funding sources and exploring digital advertising opportunities."

The pandemic had a profound impact on the publication production, but despite this, it also taught campus publication advisers to be resilient and adaptable. As Adviser A reaffirmed, "I see my role evolving to not just teach journalism skills but also to instill the ability to face and adapt to unexpected challenges. It's a valuable lesson for our students' future careers."

With the gradual return to in-person events three years after the pandemic, campus publication advisers had been working on planning and coordinating campus-journalism related activities for their publication team. This involved organizing workshops, seminars, and networking opportunities to provide their student journalists with hands-on experience and exposure to the industry. As the advisers narrated these initiatives help build students skills and confidence, setting them up for success in the evolving world of journalism. Adviser D mentioned, "Though it was a tough time, the pandemic has a sliver lining effect, opening stronger connections and linkages particularly in the field of campus journalism."

Sustaining Professional Development

Sustaining the professional development of campus publication advisers in post-pandemic times was crucial for their continued success. Most of the participants narrated that as professionals they had to not only adjust to new realities but also proactively seek opportunities for growth, inclusivity, and sustainability in their roles.

Adviser H believed that they needed to adapt to digital platforms, embrace hybrid models, emphasize the need for mentoring and wellness focus, financial sustainability, and post-pandemic event planning. He said,

I had to quickly adapt to this new landscape. I enrolled in several online courses and attended webinars to learn about digital publishing tools, social media strategies, and remote collaboration techniques. These skills have not only helped me guide our publication team but also opened new opportunities for innovative content creation and audience engagement.

Furthermore, the pandemic reshaped how these campus publication advisers worked, striking a balance between remote and in-person support for their publication team. As Adviser F shared, their team began hosting virtual meetings, which allowed more flexible participation and collaboration among members. “This hybrid approach ensures that even when some students are off campus, they can still actively contribute and be part of the publication’s growth,” he said.

Gradually recuperating from the pandemic, Adviser H emphasized the importance of mental health and wellness.

I found myself playing a more significant role in mentoring students not only as journalists but as individuals coping with a post-pandemic world. I integrated wellness discussions and self-care practices into our publication meetings, creating a more supportive and nurturing environment.

Undeniably, the economic challenges brought by the pandemic prompted campus publication advisers to explore new revenue streams for our campus publication. He continued,

I’ve been attending workshops and seeking advice from industry professionals on fundraising, grant applications, and building partnerships with local businesses. This strategic approach has

helped secure our publication's financial future in these uncertain times.

Theory in Practice

Through the application of Albert Bandura's (1988) Social Cognitive Theory, the process of observational learning took place, as campus publication advisers observed how their peers or other professionals in the field coped with post-pandemic challenges, such as returning to in-person activities, shifting publication dynamics, or addressing mental health concerns. In addition, modeling successful adaptations, such as flexible scheduling, hybrid collaboration models, or creative problem-solving, played a role in the advisers' responses to the new normal. Ultimately, advisers recognized reciprocal determinism through the bi-directional influence between themselves, their students, and the publication process. External factors such as changing health guidelines or institutional policies could have influenced their decision-making.

Recognizing the interconnected nature of their roles, advisers might have implemented reciprocal changes such as fostering open communication with students, seeking feedback, and adapting strategies based on the evolving needs of the community.

Meanwhile, the informants stated that navigating post-pandemic journalism on campus was a dynamic journey. The pandemic forced them to go digital and rethink content strategies, which paved the way to campus publication advisers to have the "adaptive leadership" quality, which was introduced by Heifetz & Linsky (2009). This means that campus journalism advising involved leadership that adapted to changing circumstances and helps organizations navigate through challenges effectively. True to the statement of Adviser B,

As an adviser, I had to adapt quickly, learning about video production and podcast editing. Responsiveness became key as we realized the need to address urgent matters on our social media page, sometimes within hours. It's been a journey, but we're now more flexible and forward-thinking.

One of the most important framings of adaptive leadership is the idea that leadership is not a job or based on authority, but it is a practice that can be done by anyone. Leadership is not based on authority, but it is "radically different from doing a job really, really well" (Heifetz et al., 2009). Adaptive leadership focuses on the need for change within organizations and

encourages actions that disrupt the status quo to incite forward momentum. With the narratives of campus publication advisers, it clearly explains that successful adaptation requires building on the past and observing what is expendable or extraneous as changes are made while still recognizing the “heritage” of an organization. Adaptive leadership emphasizes flexibility in response to change. Advisers showed that they were ready to adjust their strategies, workflows, and priorities as the post-pandemic situation continues to evolve.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers come up with the conclusion that participants strongly believed in the critical role campus publication advisers played as mentors, guides, and facilitators of student journalism. The challenges of the pandemic prompted advisers to rethink traditional approaches and develop new strategies for sustaining campus publications. By prioritizing student well-being, offering tailored support, and leveraging digital tools, advisers were able to enhance student engagement and the overall quality of publications. The findings of this research highlighted several key points, which can be summarized in a conclusion:

First, the study underscored the significant hurdles faced by campus publication advisers prior, during, and after the pandemic. These challenges included the abrupt shift to remote work, limited resources, and uncertainties about the future. Despite these obstacles, advisers demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability. They quickly transitioned to virtual environments, utilized digital tools, and devised innovative solutions to continue publishing.

Second, the research revealed the critical role of advisers in maintaining student engagement during remote learning. Their narratives underscored the importance of fostering a sense of community and belonging, even in virtual spaces. Advisers played a pivotal role in guiding students through the new realities of remote collaboration, helping them stay connected and motivated.

Third, the study highlighted the mentorship role of advisers. Their experiences reflected the positive impact of mentorship on students’ personal and professional development. Advisers provided guidance, encouragement, and a platform for students to express themselves, further reinforcing the significance of campus publications as outlets for creative and intellectual growth.

Fourth, this research showcased the enduring value of campus publications. Despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic, advisers and students demonstrated their commitment to upholding the tradition of storytelling, journalism, and creative expression. The adaptability and resilience displayed in this context underscored the resilience of the campus publication institution.

Finally, the narratives of these advisers offered insights for the future of campus publications. They underlined the importance of continued investments in digital tools, professional development, and mentorship programs. The lessons learned during the pandemic can inform strategies to enhance the resilience of these publications and their adaptability to future challenges.

Considering what preceded, the researchers recommend the following:

Primarily, schools must invest in digital tools and platforms for content creation, editing, and distribution. Also, institutions must offer training sessions and workshops for capacity building enhancement of campus paper advisers and its staff to enhance their digital literacy and writing/editing skills, especially in the context of online publishing.

To strengthen the implementation of RA 7079, the Department of Education must incorporate journalism topics in the curriculum for the development of 21st century skills. Finally, campus publication and school administrators must work on recognizing the added stressors student journalists may face and offer resources for mental health and work-life balance as they adapt to the post-pandemic world.

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