Exploring the Digital Journalism Capabilities of Secondary School Paper Advisers in Benguet

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the digital capabilities of school paper advisers. Descriptive-comparative research design was used to explore the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers in Benguet and the population was 127 school paper advisers from the 69 secondary schools in the two districts of Benguet.

A census sampling technique was utilized to identify since the target population is manageable in size. Questionnaires were administered as a research instrument to collect data from the selected population. The data was analyzed through statistical tools. Mean, f-test and t-test were calculated and data were presented in the form of tables.

Results show that the overall level of digital capabilities among school paper advisers is slight with regards to operating with information, communication, digital content creation, technical problem-solving and safety. Furthermore, no significant differences were observed based on the level of the school paper advisers across respective districts.

Keywords: digital journalism, digital capabilities, school paper advisers, campus journalism

INTRODUCTION

Teachers who take on the role of school paper advisers often need help with a common dilemma, irrespective of their experience in school journalism: How can I effectively fulfill my responsibilities in this position? In addition to the challenges they face as educators, such as securing funding and finding staff, their skills play a crucial role in their effectiveness as school paper advisers. Journalists are expected to be adept at utilizing digital platforms in today's media landscape. Therefore, it is essential for school paper advisers, who mold the journalists of tomorrow, to enhance their digital knowledge and skills continuously.

A significant transition developed from print to digital media in the initial two decades of this century (Grundy, 2022). Now, print media is fast innovating to cater to the needs of the digital age when it comes to journalism. For instance, the renowned international media organization, The New York Times, has acknowledged the necessity of adjusting to the evolving media environment. In the Philippines, more and more print media have also expanded to digital platforms such as The Manila Times, Inquirer, Sunstar, Philstar, and Manila Bulletin. Although news companies swiftly transitioned resources to digital platforms, they recognized that change is perpetual, requiring a greater attention, cleverness, and innovation to maintain corporate long-term continuity in this digital world.

Indeed, the impact of the digital age is not limited to the international and national landscape but also echoes down to campus journalism. In recent years, there has been a lot of optimism that digital platforms for publishing and distributing content could provide a new avenue for journalism (Ramírez, 2021). Thus, campus media organizations have been using Social Media pages such as Facebook and Instagram as their main medium in news dissemination. As have observed not only in the Cordillera but in the country, media organizations of high schools and universities have been increasingly active in providing their readers articles and contents through their official media organization pages. These social media platforms allowed the dissemination of news to a

broader audience. They enhanced accessibility and increased viewership and participation. This further proves that even campus journalism is not spared of the wave of the digital age's impact.

Campus journalism plays a critical role in student development. In the Philippines, it is institutionalized through Republic Act No. 7079, also known as the Campus Journalism Act of 1991. The act mandates that schools provide avenues for students to develop their journalistic skills as part of their holistic education. It emphasizes journalism to enhance students' literacy, critical thinking, and media awareness (Department of Education, 1991). With this mandate, school paper advisers are responsible for cultivating both the technical and creative aspects of journalism to develop the students pursuing this noble path.

In the past, school paper advisers were primarily concerned with guiding students in traditional print journalism, focusing on writing, editing, and publishing print school newspapers. However, the emergence and rising trend of digital media has reshaped the landscape of journalism, particularly within educational settings.

Traditional journalism is distinguished from digital journalism in that it uses technologies like email, computers, tablets, smartphones, and digital voice recorders, blogs, self-publishing tools, and low-cost digital video recorders for digital publication (Mari, 2019). For instance, School Press Conferences used to only have traditional journalism (print and broadcast) for the categories and now we are seeing a rise in mobile journalism. This trend has now added expectations for school paper advisers to possess a wide range of digital knowledge and capabilities to keep up with current media production and distribution trends. School paper advisers are now mentoring students not only in writing for print but also in producing content for online platforms, now including blogs, social media, and multimedia channels.

Guillén-Gámez et al., (2020) recognizes this shift in the dynamics of journalism and advocates for the need of advisers to be well-versed in the use of digital tools such as content management systems (CMS), video editing software, and graphic design programs, as well as understanding the ethical implications of digital journalism among others. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the need for digital knowledge and capability among educators. The shift to remote learning and online content creation has placed additional pressure on school paper advisers to adapt to the digital environment. Advisers who lack digital skills may struggle to support students in producing competitive outputs, thereby limiting the potential of campus journalism as an educational tool.

In the context of campus journalism, digital knowledge enables student journalists to engage with audiences through various online platforms, from blogs to social media and multimedia formats. This transformation has significantly broadened the scope of journalism beyond traditional print media, requiring advisers to develop capabilities in digital tools like video editing, data visualization, and social media management.

However, despite the growing importance of digital competence, many school paper advisers face challenges in acquiring the necessary digital skills. These challenges are often rooted in insufficient access to digital tools, lack of formal training, and limited professional development opportunities. Duncan & Barnett (2020) have seen that advisers in rural areas or underfunded schools are particularly disadvantaged, as they may not have the same access to resources and training as their counterparts in urban schools.

Meanwhile, Alcontin's (2021) research in Davao revealed that the acquisition of digital competence of secondary level teachers is considerably dependent on the teacher's professional development programs and individual training. In the research, the teachers acknowledge disparity in terms of their knowledge and skills of digital teaching. Thus, a demand to emphasize the assessment of teachers' knowledge levels, particularly regarding their interactions with ICT tools, is essential for evaluating their preparedness.

An important component of this study is the profile of the respondents. A study by Jiménez-Hernández et al. (2020) on the digital competence of future secondary teachers in Spain found that there are differences concerning specific training on the various digital competence areas related to gender, branch of knowledge, and age. A number of studies (Aldowah et al., 2017; Rizvi, 2019) and reports (Digital skills in 2023: impact of education and age, 2024) have proved that profiles such as age, gender, and experiences have direct and indirect

impact on their digital capabilities. It is then seen that profiles of the respondents are essential factors to consider in evaluating the digital knowledge and capabilities of school paper advisers.

Although digital technology has made groundbreaking journalism possible, a few studies argue that there are dangers of encouraging digital journalism. While it is essential to keep in mind the digital knowledge and capabilities of educators due to the changing landscape, others argue that focusing too much on this could detract from the core principles of journalism, such as accuracy and ethics.

For instance, United Nations (2022) found that digital journalism has undoubtedly raised new risks, such as targeted digital surveillance of journalists and online gender-based attacks against female journalists (UNESCO, 2023), as well as the role of digital platforms as gatekeepers (Wallace, 2017) that control the availability, accessibility, diversity, and dissemination of news with little transparency and no public accountability. Furthermore, the digital era has seen the rise of inaccurate information being disseminated to the public, leading to increased public confusion and a decline in trust towards media sources (Balod & Hameleers, 2019; Dhiman, 2023; Hag, 2024).

With these risks, it further highlights the need for researchers exploring the digital capabilities of school paper advisers and to curate comprehensive media literacy education programs that fits their field. These measures are essential to combat the identified risks and safeguard the integrity and credibility of news sources.

Most researchers are enticed with the perceptions of teachers, the effectiveness of the utilization of educational technology and even the impact of technology integration in the teaching performance. This has been considered by researchers as digital knowledge and capabilities but on higher education research (Spante et al., 2018), university educators (Basilotta-Gómez-Pablos et al., 2022; Tomczyk, 2021) and teachers in training (Fraile et al. (2018; Bañuls, 2021) but all with the same results of the respondents (teachers) showing a lack or inefficiency in digital competence. While these studies may not be specific to School Paper Advisers, these findings indicate a significant shortfall in the comprehension of specific digital concepts essential for teachers, therefore potentially affecting those who are or will be appointed as School Paper Advisers.

Several have ventured into digital knowledge and capabilities in the context of journalism but have mainly focused on its effect and changes in production, distribution, and consumption (Hendrickx, 2023). Numerous studies (Abella & Rosa, 2023; Ballano et al., 2022; Yazon et al., 2019) have also explored the digital knowledge and competencies of Filipino educators in the Philippines. While these studies may have similarities with this study, they did not venture into the cruciality and implications of having a high or low result in School paper Adviser's digital knowledge and digital capabilities.

Furthermore, the Philippines has yet to continue providing digital literacy programs to bridge the digital gap. In addition, there have been limited resources which are available about the current phenomenon under investigation. Campus Journalism in the Cordilleras are in danger of being left out due to the significant lack of school paper's adviser in their competitiveness in campus journalism. In Benguet, no studies have attempted to investigate the area of digital knowledge and digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers. Hence, the study aims to serve as a basis on future up-skilling of secondary school paper advisers in Benguet. We are already falling behind in traditional journalism, what more in the growing trend of digital journalism.

This study can be utilized to gauge and present the current digital knowledge and capabilities of secondary school paper advisers in Benguet in order to assess the gaps or lacking components from the school paper advisers. This can ultimately lead to the development of targeted training programs to enhance their skills and keep them updated with the latest trends in journalism. By bridging these gaps, educators can better prepare the next generation of journalists for success in the digital age.

This study then seeks to address the gap in digital knowledge and capabilities among secondary school paper advisers in the Philippines. By assessing their current level of digital proficiency, this research will identify areas where improvements can be made and propose strategies for enhancing their skills. The findings of this study will have implications for educational policy, professional development, and the future of campus journalism, particularly in adapting to the demands of the digital age.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This section examines how various factors such as age, school type, years of experience as a journalism adviser, and the number of training attended are interrelated and contribute to their digital knowledge and capabilities. Each of these variables not only affects the individual respondent's proficiency but also interacts with the others to form a more complex picture of how digital tools are being integrated into school journalism programs. By analyzing these interconnections, we can better understand the strengths and challenges faced by both advisers and student journalists in adapting to the digital age.

The profile of the respondents (age, school, years as journalism adviser, and trainings attended) acts as dependent variables that influence their digital knowledge and capabilities, specifically in terms of communication, digital content creation, technical problem-solving, and safety. Understanding the interrelationships between these variables helps to clarify how different aspects of an adviser's or student journalist's background can shape their proficiency in digital skills, critical for effective participation in today's digital journalism landscape. This discussion is supported by relevant studies that provide insights into how these profiles influence digital competencies.

Age is a key factor that can impact digital literacy, particularly in fields like journalism where rapid technological advancements require continuous adaptation. Studies suggest that younger individuals, often termed "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001), generally exhibit higher digital communication and content creation skills, being more familiar with social media, digital storytelling, and online platforms.

In terms of communication, younger advisers and student journalists tend to be more comfortable with modern communication platforms (such as email, instant messaging, and collaborative tools), while older advisers might rely more on traditional forms of communication unless they have been adequately trained in newer technologies (Selwyn, 2009).

The type of school, including its location (urban vs. rural) and access to technological resources, directly affects the digital capabilities of both advisers and student journalists. Schools in urban areas or those with higher funding generally have more access to digital technologies, thus enabling more robust digital knowledge development in areas such as digital content creation and technical problem-solving. By contrast, rural or underfunded schools may lack adequate infrastructure, which can limit the ability of both advisers and students to fully engage in digital journalism.

Urban schools may offer advisers and students more opportunities to engage in content creation using advanced software, while those in rural schools might focus more on traditional methods unless external training or funding bridges the gap (Hohlfeld et al., 2008). These disparities directly influence the ability of respondents to create digital content (such as multimedia news stories) and solve technical issues related to digital tools (Tondeur et al., 2008).

An adviser's years of experience can be a double-edged sword when it comes to digital capabilities. Experienced advisers may be proficient in traditional journalism skills but less familiar with new digital tools. However, those who continuously engage in professional development tend to keep up with evolving technologies (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). These advisers, particularly if they have participated in digital-specific training, can enhance their abilities in areas such as communication and technical problem-solving by applying their traditional journalism expertise to digital formats.

Newer advisers, having likely entered the profession in a more digitally saturated era, might be more adept at integrating digital tools for content creation and problem-solving, but could lack depth in traditional journalism skills. Therefore, the length of experience and exposure to professional development affects how advisers and student journalists navigate digital journalism.

Training is arguably the most significant variable influencing digital knowledge and capabilities. Advisers and student journalists who have attended regular, high-quality training in digital journalism are more likely to excel

in digital content creation, technical problem-solving, and safety (Desimone, 2009). Training helps bridge generational gaps in digital skills and can mitigate disparities in access to resources at different schools.

For example, advisers who have undergone workshops on digital safety are more equipped to teach students about issues like online privacy, copyright, and ethical reporting in digital journalism. Similarly, training on technical aspects, such as using digital content management systems (CMS), enables advisers to troubleshoot and guide students through digital problems, ensuring a more seamless production of digital content.

These four factors—age, school context, years as an adviser, and training—are interrelated and collectively influence the digital knowledge and capabilities of respondents. For example, advisers with more years of experience may have weaker digital knowledge unless they actively pursue ongoing training, which can compensate for any age-related gaps in digital skills (Keengwe & Onchwari, 2009). Similarly, the school's technological resources can either amplify or limit the impact of an adviser's training on their digital communication and content creation abilities.

In sum, the profile variables of age, school type, years of experience, and training attendance do not operate in isolation. Instead, they interact to shape the digital knowledge and capabilities of both journalism advisers and student journalists, affecting their communication skills, ability to create digital content, problem-solving abilities, and understanding of digital safety.

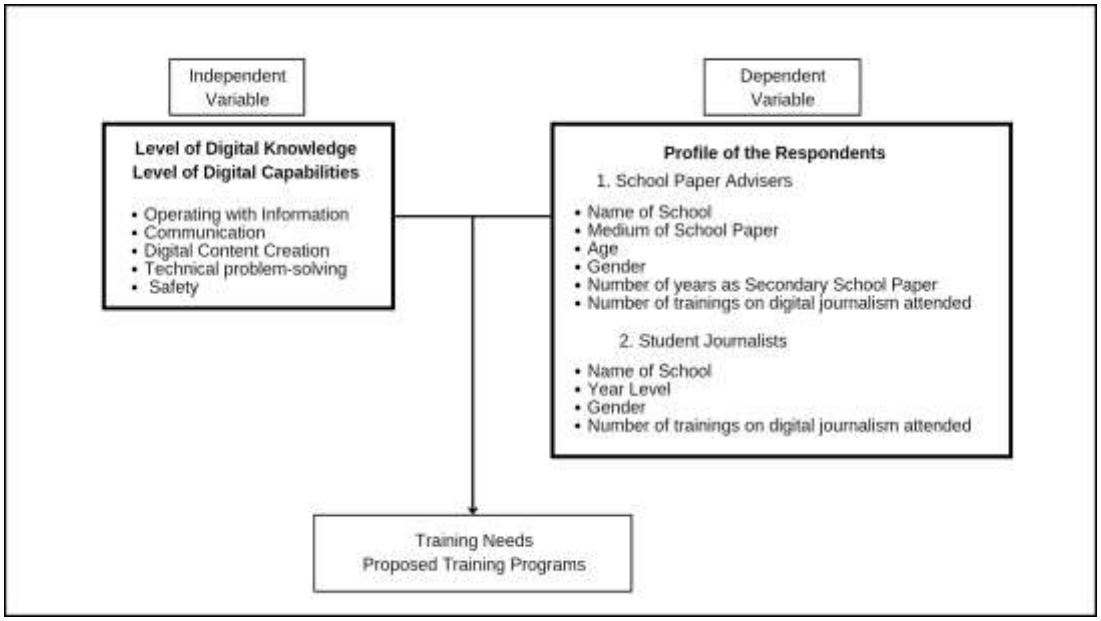

Fig. 1. Paradigm of the Study

Research Questions

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:

1.1. age;

1.2. gender;

1.3. years as secondary school paper adviser;

1.4. number of trainings attended in digital journalism; and

1.5. district?

2. What is the level of the digital capabilities of the of secondary school paper advisers in terms of:

2.1. Operating with Information

2.2. Communication

2.3. Digital content creation

2.4. Technical problem-solving

2.5. Safety?

3. Is there a significant difference level of the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers when grouped by:

5.1. Profile; and

5.2. District?

4. What are the proposed training programs to enhance the digital capabilities of the secondary school paper advisers?

Null Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference level of the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers when grouped by:

1.1. profile; and

1.2. district?

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design, the research environment, the participants of the study, the data gathering procedure, the data gathering instrument, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Research Method

This study utilized a descriptive-comparative research design to explore the digital capabilities of school paper advisers in Benguet. According to Cantrell (2020), this method focuses on describing the characteristics of groups under study and determining relationships or differences among them, rather than establishing causal relationships.

The descriptive-comparative design was deemed appropriate as it aligns with the study's primary objective: to assess the digital knowledge and skills of school paper advisers while exploring potential relationships between demographic factors and their digital capabilities. The demographic factors considered include the name of the school, district, the medium of the school paper, age, gender, number of years as a secondary school paper adviser, and the number of training sessions on digital journalism attended.

A descriptive approach is essential to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of digital literacy and capability of school paper advisers. This perspective enables the study to systematically document and analyze the extent of digital knowledge and skill levels within the target population. Moreover, the comparative aspect of the research design facilitates the comparison of the digital knowledge and capabilities of school paper advisers in Benguet in terms when grouped by district and medium of the school paper.

Since the target population is manageable in size, the study will employ a census sampling technique. This will ensure that all school paper advisers in the 69 secondary schools in Benguet are surveyed, which enhances the generalizability and reliability of the study findings.

Research Environment

The study on the digital knowledge and capabilities of school newspaper advisers was conducted in Benguet, a province located in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) of the Philippines.

Benguet is known for its mountainous terrain, which includes key 13 municipalities (Atok, Bakun, Bokod, Buguias, Kapangan, Kibungan, Kabayan, La Trinidad, Itogon, Sablan, Tuba, and Tublay). The province's geographic and socio-economic diversity plays a significant role in shaping the educational environment, particularly the technological infrastructure and resources available to schools.

Geographic and Technological Context

Benguet is home to 69 secondary schools, each with varying levels of access to digital tools and internet connectivity. These schools are spread across both urbanized and rural areas, with some located in relatively developed regions like La Trinidad, while others are in more remote, hard-to-reach municipalities. The province's rural setting and topography can pose challenges in accessing high-speed internet and modern educational technology, which may affect the integration of digital tools in educational practices, including school journalism. In urban areas, schools tend to have better access to digital technologies such as computers, internet facilities, and software tools needed for journalism. Conversely, in remote areas, many schools may face limitations in these resources, potentially hindering the development of digital knowledge and capabilities among school newspaper advisers (Mustafa, 2024).

The socio-economic conditions of Benguet's population, primarily composed of indigenous groups like the Ibaloy, Kankanaey, and Kalanguya, influence the availability of resources and access to training in digital literacy for educators. Schools in less economically advantaged areas may have fewer resources for professional development and less access to modern technology, which could impact school newspaper advisers' ability to engage students in digital journalism. Additionally, budget allocation for ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and resources from the Department of Education (DepEd) vary across schools in Benguet, with some receiving more support for digital integration than others. Understanding these disparities is crucial in analyzing the digital knowledge of school newspaper advisers and their capacity to lead student publications in a digital-first era.

The Benguet division is part of the DepEd's K-12 program, which emphasizes the use of technology in teaching and learning processes. However, the degree to which digital literacy has been incorporated into journalism education varies among schools. Professional development initiatives aimed at enhancing teachers' digital competencies are ongoing as heard by the researcher from some school paper advisers, but the extent to which school newspaper advisers have participated in these initiatives remains a key area for investigation. Moreover, as school newspapers play a vital role in student development, particularly in enhancing students' communication, critical thinking, and digital skills, the role of the adviser becomes even more crucial. Given that digital journalism has increasingly become the standard, it is essential to assess whether advisers in Benguet have the requisite digital skills to guide their students effectively.

Factors Considered for the Study in Benguet Division

1. Digital Divide: The digital divide between well-equipped schools in urban centers and under-resourced schools in remote areas may impact the digital readiness of advisers. This study will help highlight areas where digital tools are lacking and propose solutions to bridge these gaps.

2. Access to Technology: While some schools in Benguet have embraced digital tools in education, many others still rely on traditional methods. By evaluating the digital capabilities of newspaper advisers across the division, the study aims to assess the readiness of these schools to transition to digital journalism.

3. Professional Development Opportunities: This research considers the availability and effectiveness of professional development programs for school newspaper advisers, specifically those focusing on digital literacy

and technology integration. The study will explore whether advisers have received adequate training to use digital platforms and tools effectively.

Research Respondents

Respondents of this study are School Paper Advisers and co-advisers of Secondary Schools in Benguet. The researchers believe that they are the most appropriate respondents of this study based on this study's research questions. School paper advisers are responsible for guiding and mentoring students in the production of school publications as mandatory based on Republic Act No. 7079. In addition, the digital skills and capabilities

The criterion will be used in choosing the study's respondents is he or she must be an adviser or co-adviser of any School Paper (English/Filipino medium) in any Secondary School in Benguet.

Data Gathering Procedures

The survey was distributed to school paper advisers across the 69 secondary schools in Benguet. The researcher personally delivered the questionnaires where feasible, and for remote areas, the questionnaire was distributed online through Google Forms. All participants received a clear explanation of the study's purpose and their role in it, ensuring informed consent and confidentiality.

Data Gathering Instrument

This study utilized a questionnaire adapted from the framework outlined in Digital Competences of Journalists by Matić and Perković (2021). The instrument was selected for its strong alignment with the study's objective of exploring the digital capabilities of the respondents. Its validity and reliability have been well-established, as corroborated by several related studies cited in this research. The first part of the questionnaire explores the profile of the respondents, specifically the name of school, age, gender, number of years as school paper adviser, and number of trainings attended relative to digital journalism. The second part dwells on the measurement of digital capabilities of the respondents on significant areas of digital journalism which include communication, digital creation, technical problem-solving, and safety. To ensure its relevance to the specific context of secondary school paper advisers in Benguet province, the original questionnaire was carefully reviewed and modified. Adjustments were made to align the instrument with the research objectives and address the specific problems identified in the study.

Statistical Treatment

Each section also has its own skills and these can be measured by using ordinal scale (Not Capable, Least Capable, Moderately Capable, Very Capable). The data was analyzed using both quantitative methods:

1. Descriptive Statistics: Frequency distributions, percentages, means, and t-test was used to summarize the digital knowledge and capabilities of the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The discussions of the results of the study are presented in this chapter. This chapter also includes the presentation of the analysis, interpretations and implications of the study.

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents in the two districts of Benguet. As shown in the table below, there were 127 total number of respondents wherein district 1 had 37 and district 2 had 90.

As to age, a significant portion of respondents, comprising 62.99 percent, were in the 36-45 age group with a total frequency of 80. The second largest age group represented was 26-35 years, with a total frequency of 29 respondents comprising 22.83 percent of the sample, suggesting a younger subset actively participating in the survey. In addition, respondents aged 46 and above comprised the smallest group, with a frequency of 18

representing 14.17 percent of the total. This distribution illustrates a predominantly middle-aged respondent pool, with smaller yet notable contributions from both younger and older age brackets.

In terms of gender, it is evident that females represented a significant majority. Specifically, there were 110 respondents comprising 86.61 percent of the total, were female. In contrast, male respondents comprised a much smaller proportion, with 17 respondents comprising 13.39 percent of the sample. This indicates a strong female majority among those surveyed, highlighting a notable gender imbalance within the respondent group.

In addition, most of the respondents had more than 5 years as secondary school paper adviser with a total frequency of 57 comprising 44.88 percent. This group was followed by 38 respondents, or 29.92 percent, who had 3 and 4 years of experience as secondary school paper advisers. Those with 1 to 2 years in the position comprised 22.05 percent of the total, representing 28 respondents. A much smaller portion, just 4 respondents or 3.15 percent had less than one year of experience as secondary school paper advisers.

A large proportion of 58 or 45.67 percent, had attended only 1-3 training sessions. Close behind 57 or 44.88% respondents had no training in Digital Journalism. In contrast, only a small fraction of respondents had more extensive training, 7 or 7.87 percent respondents had attended between 4-6 sessions. Meanwhile, a mere 2 or 1.57 percent respondents had completed 7 or more training sessions, marking them as the most experienced group within the study.

Furthermore, a significant portion of the respondents, totaling a frequency of 79 comprising 62.20 percent, predominantly work with English school papers. Notably, 48 respondents comprising 37.80 percent, are responsible for Filipino school papers. This indicates a notable preference or focus on English materials among the respondents.

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

Profile	**District 1**	**District 2**	**Total**	
			Frequency	**Percentage**
Age				
26-35 years old	7	22	29	22.83
36-45 years old	24	56	80	62.99
46 years old and above	6	12	18	14.17
Gender			0	
Male	3	14	17	13.39
Female	34	76	110	86.61
Years as Secondary School Paper Adviser			0	
less than a year	2	2	4	3.15
1 - 2 years	2	26	28	22.05
3 – 4 years	16	22	38	29.92
more than 5 years	17	40	57	44.88
Number of Trainings attended in Digital Journalism				

None	13	44	57	44.88
1-3	19	39	58	45.67
4-6	4	6	10	7.87
7	1	1	2	1.57
Medium of School Paper Currently Handling				
English	27	52	79	62.20
Filipino	10	38	48	37.80
Total	**37**	**90**	**127**	**100.00**

Level of the Digital Capabilities of Secondary School Paper Advisers

Table 2 presents an analysis of the level of the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers, specifically focusing on their capability in operating with information.

The findings reveal that school paper advisers from both districts were most capable of using social media for research and fact checking, and to find new ideas. This is evidenced by their highest mean scores with District 1 obtaining a score of 2.95 and District 2 obtaining 2.92, resulting in the highest overall combined mean score of 2.94. School paper advisers shared that in a fast-paced digital market, they have to provide timely and relevant information to their student journalists. They also stated that they use social media to gain access to diverse perspectives and new content ideas from reputable news sources, educational accounts, and professional communities on platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn, which they incorporate into school publications to make them more engaging and reflective of real-world issues, as well as to improve their ability to support their student journalists in creating credible, impactful work.

According to Ebo (2024), social media is very important for modern day journalism because it is a vehicle for finding newsworthy content and allows for dissemination of news and consequently, easy accessibility for the public. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube are important tools for journalists as sources of information (Kiunga, 2023).

Apparently, the school paper advisers from both districts were slightly capable in cloud data storage, as reflected in their lowest mean scores with District 1 obtained a mean score of 2.01, and District 2 scored slightly lower at 1.98, resulting in a lower combined overall mean of 2.00. In both districts, many school paper advisers shared that they were more accustomed to traditional, physical methods of managing information, like using paper files and hard drives, rather than digital methods. Additionally, some schools lack resources, materials and insufficient access to devices with high-speed internet, making it difficult for advisers to explore cloud options confidently. Some school paper advisers also shared that they have limited data storage capability and they mostly use google drive as user friendly. Matić and Perkoviće (2021), found out that school paper advisers create traditional media products broadcast on TV rather than online content.

Table 2: Level of the Digital Capabilities of Secondary School Paper Advisers in terms of Operating with Information

Operating with Information	**District 1**	**District 2**	**Combined**	
	Mean	**Mean**	**Mean**	**Descriptive Equivalent**
1. Web browsing, retrieval and organization of found information	2.79	2.78	2.78	Moderately Capable

2. Critical evaluation of the reliability and validity of Internet sources and information	2.73	2.71	2.72	Moderately Capable
3. Database search	2.64	2.62	2.63	Moderately Capable
4. Fact-checking and photo authentication	2.67	2.67	2.67	Moderately Capable
5. Cloud data storage	2.01	1.98	2.00	Slightly Capable
6. Use of social media for research and fact checking, and to find new ideas	2.95	2.92	2.94	Moderately Capable
Average Mean	**2.63**	**2.61**	**2.62**	**Moderately Capable**

Overall, the level of the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers is moderate in terms of operating with information as reflected by the overall average mean of 2.62 with district 1 obtained an average mean of 2.63 and district 2 obtained an average mean of 2.61. School paper advisers narrated that resources for formal training on advanced digital tools are not always readily accessible, and they rely on self-directed learning to keep up with technology trends and proactively seek opportunities for growth, inclusivity, and sustainability in their roles. According to Pingol (2018), to keep the advisers more knowledgeable on the different aspects of campus journalism it is recommended for him to upgrade his skills by attending campus journalism related seminar workshops, reading journalistic articles and even browsing from the internet latest trends and issues on campus journalism.

Communication

Table 3 presents an analysis of the level of the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers with a particular emphasis on their communication.

As gleaned on the table, school paper advisers from both districts were most capable of posting content on social media as evidenced by the highest mean scores with district 1 obtained a score of 3.17 and district 2 obtained a score of 3.15 with the highest combined overall mean of 3.15 and interpreted as moderate. School paper advisers stated that with the increasing reliance on digital platforms for communication, they have adapted by learning basic social media management and digital design skills to keep their school's social media platforms vibrant and active and facilitate better comprehension of their audience and the development of a relationship of trust, are undeveloped. In connection, Matic and Perkovic (2021) found out that in the area of communication, the advisers are proficient in competences related to social media, which contributes to the better placement of journalistic products.

On the contrary, the school paper advisers from both districts were slightly capable of using analytics and web statistics to drive the news agenda as reflected by the lowest mean scores with district 1 obtained a score of 1.69 and district 2 obtained a score of 1.70 and with the lowest combined overall mean of 1.70. In both districts, school paper advisers stated that due to lack of training on the use of self-ware analytics, resources, and tools, they prioritize teaching their student journalists the fundamentals of journalism such as news writing, editing, and ethical reporting rather than advanced digital analytics, which necessitates specialized knowledge and skills that are rarely included in their own training. In addition, in many schools, advisers' ability to incorporate online analytics into their curriculum is hampered by irregular access to computers, reliable internet, or up to date software.

Table 3: Level of the Digital Capabilities of Secondary School Paper Advisers in terms of Communication

Communication	**District 1**	**District 2**	**Combined**	
	Mean	**Mean**	**Mean**	**Descriptive Equivalent**
1. Digital communication with others	3.00	2.98	2.99	Moderately Capable

2. Posting content on social media	3.14	3.15	3.15	Moderately Capable
3. Engaging audiences on social media	2.54	2.53	2.53	Moderately Capable
4. Monitoring audience engagement analytics	1.98	1.98	1.98	Slightly Capable
5. Using analytics and web statistics to drive the news agenda	1.69	1.70	1.70	Slightly Capable
6. Copyright and licenses	2.38	2.38	2.38	Slightly Capable
7. Familiarity with the changes in the behavior of the digital media audience	2.27	2.27	2.27	Moderately Capable
8. Understanding the importance and impact of social media	3.01	3.00	3.00	Moderately Capable
Average Mean	**2.50**	**2.50**	**2.50**	**Slightly Capable**

In general, school paper advisers from both districts were slightly capable of digital school papers with regards to communication as evidenced by the combined average mean of 2.50, which was consistent across both districts. In these districts, the majority of the school paper advisers were in their middle ages wherein the generation gap also plays a role as some advisers who are less familiar with emerging platforms stick to traditional methods of communication, such as emails and printed memos. Also, some schools in under-resourced schools rely on basic tools while advisers in well-equipped schools might have better opportunities to integrate advanced communication technologies.

Digital Content Creation

Table 4 presents an analysis of the level of the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers with regards to digital content creation.

As observed, school paper advisers from both districts were most capable of using mobile technology for reporting as evidenced by the highest mean scores with district 1 obtained a score of 2.63 and district 2 obtained a score of 2.61 resulting in a highest combined overall mean of 2.62. Many school paper advisers, particularly in schools with limited access to desktop computers or reliable internet, rely on mobile phones as their primary tool for communication and organization. With mobile technology, advisers can easily access and update reports on-the-go, whether through simple apps for creating and sharing documents or using messaging platforms. Some advisers stated that mobile technology offers them a more flexible and accessible solution, meet deadlines and streamline their workflow, making them more efficient and adaptable in their roles, especially in schools where time constraints and resource limitations hinder traditional methods of reporting. In line with this, Franklin, (2017) mentioned that media output made a huge impact due to the prevalence of mobile phones, and it is becoming more common and revolutionary in journalism since readers do not need to buy newspapers to be informed.

Meanwhile, school paper advisers from both districts were slightly capable of CMS use-management and coding as evidenced by the lowest mean scores with both districts obtained the same score of 1.43. Some school paper advisers narrated that they were not fully aware of the CMS and coding for journalism and without prior experience, due to lack of specialized training in CMS platforms or coding tailored to journalism. Also, they have mentioned that school journalism programs often prioritize print over digital formats, reducing the perceived need for CMS or coding knowledge. Guillén-Gámez et al., (2020) recognizes that the dynamics of journalism and advocates for the need of advisers to be well-versed in the use of digital tools such as content management systems (CMS), video editing software, and graphic design programs, as well as understanding the ethical implications of digital journalism among others.

Mainly, the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers is slightly with regards to digital content creation as indicated by an overall average mean score of 2.05. Specifically, District 1 obtained an average mean of 2.06, while District 2 had a slightly lower average mean of 2.05. Some school paper advisers mentioned that

they still prioritize traditional formats due to inadequate time, training and experiences in digital tools and platforms, leaving them less confident in creating or managing digital content.

Table 4: Level of the Digital Capabilities of Secondary School Paper Advisers in terms of Digital Content Creation

Digital content creation	**District 1**	**District 2**	**Combined**	
	Mean	**Mean**	**Mean**	**Descriptive Equivalent**
1. Producing stories for multiple platforms	2.45	2.44	2.45	Slightly Capable
2. Multimedia content creation	2.26	2.25	2.25	Slightly Capable
3. Use of mobile technology for reporting	2.63	2.61	2.62	Moderately Capable
4. Live reporting from a distant place on the move (mobile or "backpack "reporting)	1.76	1.75	1.76	Slightly Capable
5. Working with audio content	2.50	2.47	2.49	Slightly Capable
6. Working with video content	2.57	2.56	2.57	Moderately Capable
7. Working with digital photography	2.50	2.52	2.51	Moderately Capable
8. Working with graphics	1.79	1.78	1.79	Slightly Capable
9. Podcast production	1.66	1.67	1.66	Not Capable
10. Blogging	1.83	1.84	1.84	Slightly Capable
11. Live video production	1.91	1.89	1.90	Not Capable
12. Search engine optimization (SEO)	1.54	1.52	1.53	Not Capable
13. CMS use-management and coding	1.43	1.43	1.43	Not Capable
14. Webpage creation	2.00	1.99	2.00	Slightly Capable
15. Data visualization (production of Infographics)	1.73	1.72	1.72	Not Capable
16. Real-time reporting by live-tweeting or blogging	1.69	1.68	1.68	Not Capable
17. Copyright and licenses	2.31	2.32	2.32	Slightly Capable
18. Familiarity with changes in online news content and style	2.35	2.34	2.34	Slightly Capable
19. Understanding changes in media business models	2.13	2.12	2.13	Slightly Capable
Average Mean	**2.06**	**2.05**	**2.05**	**Slightly Capable**

Technical Problem-Solving

Table 5 presents the level of the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers in terms of technical problem-solving.

As observed, school paper advisers in the two districts were slightly capable of adapting software and applications to their own needs, as evidenced by the obtained combined overall mean of 2.13 with district 1 and district 2 obtained the same mean score of 2.13. With the varying levels of digital literacy among the school paper advisers, as they were not familiar with the full range of digital tools available and felt overwhelmed by the rapid pace of technological change. This could also be due to the limited access to ongoing technical support and lack of training on computer software and applications, leading to frustration and reluctance to adopt new tools when addressing software or device issues.

In the same way, school paper advisers in the two districts were slightly capable of solving problems when technical devices or digital tools do not work. This is reflected by the obtained combined overall mean of 1.83, with each district individually obtained the same mean score of 1.83. Advisers mentioned that due to their limited training and exposure to advanced troubleshooting techniques. They rely on the school's technical support staff or more tech-savvy colleagues to address issues, leaving them less confident in independently resolving technical glitches.

Generally, the level of the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers in terms of technical problem-solving is slight as evidenced by the obtained combined overall average mean of 1.98 with both districts having the same average mean of 1.98. School paper advisers stated that they lack confidence in using technology to troubleshoot or resolve technical issues. Furthermore, school paper advisers who are not digital natives struggle with unfamiliar software or digital tools, making it more difficult for them to maintain or innovate within the school paper project, as some of them have no training and are not provided with ongoing guidance or updates on best practices. This corroborates in the findings of Matic and Perkovic (2021) that the advisers are unable to solve technical problems themselves, e.g. to troubleshoot.

Table 5: Level of the Digital Capabilities of Secondary School Paper Advisers in terms of Technical problem-solving

Technical problem-solving	**District 1**	**District 2**	**Combined**	
	Mean	**Mean**	**Mean**	**Descriptive Equivalent**
1. Adapting software and applications to own needs	2.13	2.13	2.13	Slightly Capable
2. Solving problems when technical devices or digital tools do not work	1.83	1.83	1.83	Slightly Capable
Average Mean	**1.98**	**1.98**	**1.98**	**Slightly Capable**

Safety

Table 6 presents an analysis of the level of the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers focusing on digital safety.

The result revealed that advisers from both districts were most capable of digital awareness of cyber threats as evidenced by the highest mean scores with district 1 obtained a score of 2.99 and district 2 obtained a score of 3.01 resulting in a highest combined overall mean of 3.00. Advisers stated that they are accountable for leading their writers through online research, data collection, and content sharing, that is why they recognize the

importance of safeguarding their work from plagiarism, misinformation, and potential online exploitation. Some advisers also stated that their schools frequently require paper advisers to attend these workshops as part of larger professional development initiatives, which provide them with the expertise to successfully address cyber concerns. As school paper advisers, their lies in their hands a great responsibility in inculcating journalism ethics and principles to aspiring campus journalists, a good training ground for the chosen field of work (Taru, 2016). Also, Advincula and Adtoon (2024) stated that advisers are instrumental in shaping students' journalistic skills, ethical values, and overall understanding of journalism and mainstream media.

On the other hand, school paper advisers from both districts were slightly capable of protection of business communication as evidenced by the lowest mean scores with district 1 obtained a score of 2.16 and district 2 obtained a score of 2.17 resulting in a lowest overall mean score of 2.16. School paper advisers stated that in many cases, they are left to manage the complexities of school paper production on their own, with no clear institutional structure or direction on professional communication standards. This issue can be related to the fact that many advisers are frequently thrown into their responsibilities without getting explicit instruction on business communication standards, resulting in unintentional lapses in preserving sensitive information or communicating effectively with external stakeholders.

Generally, the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers in terms of digital safety is moderate as indicated by an overall average mean score of 2.60. Particularly, District 1 obtained an average mean of 2.59, while District 2 had a slightly higher average mean of 2.60. School paper advisers explained that they use older or shared gadgets that may lack updated security measures, exposing them to threats. Furthermore, their experiences indicate that without regular contact with IT specialists, users miss out on opportunities to learn practical security measures such as file encryption or secure data exchange online.

Table 6: Level of the Digital Capabilities of Secondary School Paper Advisers in terms of Safety

Safety	**District 1**	**District 2**	**Combined**	
	Mean	**Mean**	**Mean**	**Descriptive Equivalent**
1. Awareness of cyber threats	2.99	3.01	3.00	Moderately Capable
2. Protection of digital devices from cyber threats	2.58	2.59	2.58	Moderately Capable
3. Protection of business communication	2.16	2.17	2.16	Slightly Capable
4. Personal data and privacy protection	2.74	2.75	2.75	Moderately Capable
5. Health and environment protection	2.49	2.50	2.49	Slightly Capable
Average Mean	**2.59**	**2.60**	**2.60**	**Moderately Capable**

Summary of the Level of the Digital Capabilities of Secondary School Paper Advisers

Table 7 presents an analysis of the level of the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers focusing on operating with information, communication, digital content creation, technical problem-solving and safety.

Among the dimensions, advisers from both districts were most capable of digital operating with information as evidenced by the highest mean scores with District 1 obtained a score of 2.63 and district 2 obtained a score of 2.61 with the combined overall mean of 2.62. School paper advisers stated that with the dynamic nature of journalism and emerging technologies, they need to use digital tools for tasks such as editing articles, designing layouts, and managing submissions in order for the students to utilize online research platforms and verifying information accuracy effectively and making them adept at integrating technology into journalistic education. This also conforms to the finding of Ladia (2015) that there is a need for campus journalists and their

advisers to become fully aware of campus journalism, including its current trends to address the issues concerning its implementation. Advisers with the right and updated skills can effectively guide students in navigating the complexities of the modern media landscape fostering a deeper understanding of journalism's societal role. The importance of advisers in developing journalistic skills among students is significant.

Notably, school paper advisers from both districts were slightly capable of technical problem-solving as evidenced by the lowest mean scores with both districts obtained the same score of 1.98. In some schools in these districts, particularly those with limited budgets and inconsistent access to up-to-date technology, school paper advisers work with outdated equipment or software, making it challenging to keep up with modern publishing standards. Also, school paper advisers shared a lack of specialized training in technical skills, such as troubleshooting software or managing digital platforms, which hinder their ability to address technical challenges efficiently.

Table 7: Level of the Digital Capabilities of Secondary School Paper Advisers

Dimensions	**District 1**	**District 2**	**Combined**	
	Mean	**Mean**	**Mean**	**Descriptive Equivalent**
1. Operating with Information	2.63	2.61	2.62	Moderately Capable
2. Communication	2.50	2.50	2.50	Slightly Capable
3. Digital content creation	2.06	2.05	2.05	Slightly Capable
4. Technical problem-solving	1.98	1.98	1.98	Slightly Capable
5. Safety	2.59	2.60	2.60	Moderately Capable
Average Mean	**2.35**	**2.35**	**2.35**	**Slightly Capable**

Remarkably, the level of the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers focusing on operating with information, communication, digital content creation, technical problem-solving and safety is slightly as evidenced by the combined average overall mean of 2.35 with both districts obtained the same mean score of 2.35. School paper advisers narrated that they do not have a sufficient background in journalism. Also, due to the disparities in the varying levels of technology proficiency among school paper advisers, wherein some are more tech-savvy especially young teachers than others, leading to a knowledge gap that impedes the advancement of digital skills as a whole. This could also be due to their gap between the pedagogical integration of digital resources and their availability; that is, school paper advisers may have access to technology but are insufficiently prepared to use it in a way that improves the advisory or learning process. This conforms to the finding of Ladia (2015) that there is a need for campus journalists and their advisers to become fully aware of campus journalism, including its current trends to address the issues concerning its implementation. Advisers with the right and updated skills can effectively guide students in navigating the complexities of the modern media landscape, fostering a deeper understanding of journalism's societal role.

Significant Difference on the Level of the Digital Capabilities of the Secondary School Paper Advisers

This section presents the significant difference on the level of the digital capabilities of the secondary school paper advisers when grouped by profile and district.

Profile

Table 8 shows the level of the digital capabilities of the secondary school paper advisers when grouped by profile.

The computed p-values of 0.93, 0.85, 0.99, 0.92 and 0.93 attests that there is no significant difference on the

level of the digital capabilities of the secondary school paper advisers when grouped by age, gender, years as secondary school paper adviser, number of trainings attended in digital journalism, and medium of school paper currently handling. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted at a 0.05 level of significance. This implies that regardless of age, gender, years as secondary school paper adviser, number of trainings attended in digital journalism, and medium of school paper currently handling, the digital capabilities of the secondary school paper advisers is at a similar level. The majority of the school advisers mentioned the same comments, stating that the standardized nature of the digital tools and platforms used in journalism and education ensures uniformity in skill acquisition regardless of demographic factors. This could also be due to the institutional policies and curricula emphasizing the integration of technology into teaching practices as school paper advisers are often required to engage with digital tools irrespective of their personal attributes or the medium of their school paper.

Table 8: Significant Difference on the Level of the Digital Capabilities of the Secondary School Paper Advisers when grouped by Profile

Profile	**Mean**	**Level**	**f-value/ t-value**	**p-value**	**Remarks**	**Decision**
Age			0.07	0.93	Not Significant	Accept H_o
26-35 years old	2.29	SC				
36-45 years old	2.29	SC				
46 years old and above	2.32	SC				
Gender		SC	0.19	0.85	Not Significant	Accept H_o
Male	2.31	SC				
Female	2.29	SC				
Years as Secondary School Paper Adviser		SC	0.05	0.99	Not Significant	Accept H_o
less than a year	2.33	SC				
1 - 2 years	2.30	SC				
3 – 4 years	2.30	SC				
more than 5 years	2.29	SC				
Number of Trainings attended in Digital Journalism		SC	0.17	0.92	Not Significant	Accept H_o
None	2.29	SC				
1-3 years	2.30	SC				
4-6 years	2.29	SC				
7 years and above	2.24	SC				

Medium of School Paper Currently Handling		SC	0.08	0.93	Not Significant	Accept H_o
English	2.29	SC				
Filipino	2.29	SC				

*p-value is significant at 0.05 level

Note. LC= Least Capable

Moreover, the generational shifts in attitudes toward technology, with both younger and older advisers embracing digital innovation as a professional necessity, might play a role in creating a more homogeneous skill set among advisers. Deloria et al. (2024) found no significant differences in coaching styles based on different age groups, years of service, and grade levels.

District

Table 9 presents the level of the digital capabilities of the secondary school paper advisers when grouped by district. Across the two districts, the computed p-values of 0.99 which validates that there is no significant difference on the level of the digital capabilities of the secondary school paper advisers. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted at a 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the level of the digital capabilities of the secondary school paper advisers is similar across the two districts. According to school paper advisers, one critical factor is likely they share similar access to professional development opportunities, resources, and support systems. Their skills were similar across districts because many of the training programs they attended were repetitious, introductory, or concentrated on general journalism rather than changing digital trends. Additionally, they shared that both districts face comparable challenges, such as limited access to advanced digital technologies, time constraints, or a lack of exposure to specialized digital tools for journalism.

Table 9: Significant Difference on the Level of the Digital Capabilities of the Secondary School Paper Advisers when grouped by District

District	**Mean**	**Level**	**f-value/t-value**	**p-value**	**Remarks**	**Decision**
District 1	2.35	SC	0.02	0.99	Not Significant	Accept H_o
District 2	2.35	SC				

*p-value is significant at 0.05 level

Note. LC= Least Capable

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

1. Most of the secondary school paper advisers were female in their middle-aged years with more than 5 years of their role.

2. The level of the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers is slight with regards to operating with information, communication, digital content creation, technical problem-solving and safety.

3. Regardless of age, gender, years as secondary school paper adviser, number of trainings attended in digital journalism, medium of school paper currently handling and district, the level of the digital capabilities of secondary school paper advisers is similar.

4. The proposed training programs are essential to enhance the digital capabilities of the secondary school paper advisers.

Recommendations

1. Strategies to attract a broader demographic to this vital role, such as promoting inclusivity and integrating journalism into early teacher training, could infuse fresh perspectives and further strengthen the impact of school publications.

2. Secondary school paper advisers should undergo targeted professional development to strengthen their digital capabilities. This training should be structured to gradually build confidence and skills, utilizing hands-on workshops and accessible resources. This would help advisers stay current with rapidly evolving digital tools and media practices, keeping school papers relevant and engaging.

3. Encourage secondary school paper advisers to join a shared platform or forum for ongoing collaboration, where they can share resources, insights, and best practices. This would enhance skill-sharing across districts and foster a stronger network of digital support.

4. The proposed training programs may be considered for funding in order to enhance the digital capabilities of the secondary school paper advisers.

5. Future researchers could explore the specific digital competencies that secondary school paper advisers need to effectively guide students in research and publication.

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