

The impact of school newspapers on student development across diverse educational levels

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the degree of impact of the school newspaper on the students. A descriptive design was used to analyze the views, opinions, and sentiments of 245 respondents through purposive sampling. The survey questionnaire created by the researcher was used to gather data to address the research questions. Frequency percentage described respondents' learning, reading time, and preferred topics in the school newspaper. The mean and standard deviation measured the newspaper's impact on students' academic, sociocultural, spiritual-moral, and political aspects. The study results showed that the school newspaper has a significant impact on the students in all aspects, as evidenced by the consistent description of "to a great extent". However, the academic component stands out as having the greatest impact on the students among all the areas influenced by the school newspaper. The results show that the school newspaper most significantly enhances students' academic skills, particularly critical thinking, writing, and awareness of current events. Emphasizing its role as a valuable educational resource that fosters intellectual growth more effectively than other areas.

Keywords: school newspaper, student development, educational levels, Philippines

The impact of school newspapers on student development across diverse educational levels

1. Introduction

School papers are essential in developing communication, critical thinking, and engagement in educational institutions. They provide a means for the students to air their voices, explore current affairs, and develop their journalistic skills. According to López et al. (2024), school publishing encourages community and empowerment among student journalists besides boosting a student's writing and researching abilities. These often reflect the body in action: relevant social, academic, and cultural issues come alive in the papers, resonating with their peers (Williams, 2023). Academic achievements and school newspapers have gained more recognition recently too. It has been found that students involved in school journalism work well in most of their academic work, especially in the language and communications subjects, concludes Medrano, J. A. (2019). This, therefore, implies that the influence brought about by school newspapers is not only confined to school journalism but to other fields of student development as well. In this regard, the impact of school newspapers on students has been a highly researched area, mainly in the context of students' attitudes, academic performance, and general social awareness.

In the last few years, it has been widely known that school newspapers have an impact on students. According to T. R. Vogts, in 2018, school papers do not only promote significant writing and research skills but also contribute to their overall development in the academic sphere. By embracing journalism, students develop more critical thinking, problem-solving, and adequate expression of ideas. The study also discussed how the school newspapers raise the confidence of students because writing for a publication satisfies one to feel a sense of achievement and belonging within the school. According to Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, the school newspaper is a collaborative platform where students can research, write, edit, and publish articles. This process enables them to develop communication, critical thinking, and social skills. Through peer interaction and mentorship (such as from teachers or editors), students can also experience the Zone of Proximal Development, where they learn and develop skills they might not achieve independently (Marginson and Dang, 2017).

On the other hand, school newspapers provide an avenue where students can air their opinions on various social and academic issues, making them more knowledgeable and responsible citizens (Bykov and Medvedeva, 2020). The channel was, therefore, used as an avenue for enhancing students' written and oral communication as well as their exposure to ethical issues in journalism. In conclusion, engagement with school newspapers has been associated with higher academic performance, particularly in language arts and the social sciences.

Research Questions - This study aimed to determine the level of impact of the school newspaper on students in the Grade School Department, High School Department, and College Departments. The specific objectives of the researcher are to obtain certainty and answers to the following questions: What is the profile of the respondents based on the student level: (a) elementary, (b) secondary, and (c) college? How many hours do students spend reading the newspaper? What topics do the respondents read in the school newspaper? What is the degree of impact of the school newspaper on students in terms of (a) academic, (b) sociocultural, (c) spiritual-moral, and (d) political aspects?

2. Methodology

The descriptive design was used to analyze the views, opinions, and sentiments of a specific sample of respondents representing the total population. This design is appropriate for describing the school newspaper's profile and degree of impact on the students. Brown and Davis (2023) state that the descriptive design enables researchers to collect detailed information on participants' views and sentiments without altering variables. By

using a specific sample, this approach offers a clear overview of the larger population's characteristics, helping to identify trends and patterns in the data. This method benefits educational research, where understanding students' perspectives can inform better practices and policies.

The respondents consist of selected 245 students from three departments. The research employed a modified and contextualized survey form to collect information. This study began by consulting and seeking the appropriate formal approval from the relevant leaders of specific departments, after which data collection was completed successfully in the three school departments. A questionnaire was used to assess the status of the respondents based on their profiles. The researcher utilized a Five Point Likert Scale to determine the respondents' opinions regarding the academic, sociocultural, spiritual-moral, and political impacts of the school newspaper. In this study, frequency percentage was used to describe the distribution of respondents based on their learning, the time spent reading the newspaper, and the topics they commonly read in the school newspaper. The mean and standard deviation were used to measure the impact of the school newspaper on students in terms of academic, sociocultural, spiritual-moral, and political aspects.

3. Results and discussion

Table 1

Profile of the Respondent (n=245)

Level of Education	(f)	(%)
Elementary	13	5.31
High School	95	38.78
College	137	55.92
Total	245	100

The total number of respondents is 245. The data indicates that the majority of the respondents are college students, accounting for 55.92% of the sample, followed by high school students at 38.78%, and a smaller proportion of elementary students at 5.31%. This distribution suggests that the study primarily reflects the perspectives of higher education students.

Table 2

Time Spent by Students Reading the Newspaper

Number of hours	Elementary		Secondary		College	
	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)
1 hour	10	76.92	85	89.47	112	81.75
2 hours	3	23.08	10	10.53	15	10.95
3 hours	0	0.00	0	0.00	10	7.30
4 hours	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	13	100%	95	100%	137	100%

Overall, a larger percentage of students at each educational level spend 1 hour reading the newspaper. Specifically, 89.47% of high school students and 81.75% of college students spend an hour reading the newspaper. Surprisingly, 76.92% of elementary students also read the newspaper for 1 hour. A smaller proportion of students read the newspaper for 2 hours, and very few spend 3 hours reading. No respondents reported spending 4 hours reading the newspaper. This data suggests that students generally limit their reading time to 1 hour, which could explain trends in their habits of reading the student newspaper. Consequently, this indicates a decline in reading trends, as only a few students read for 2 hours, and none read for longer than that—neither 3 nor 4 hours. The trend may signal that students lack the time to read and, as a result, may not fully engage with school newspapers or other media literacy initiatives (Gagalang, 2022). These trends would highlight how patterns of information consumption linked to digital media may result in the new generation becoming dependent on the online environment to acquire information (Creighton, 2018).

Table 3*Topics read in school newspapers*

Favorite Readings	Elementary		High School		College	
	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)
Editorial	10	76.92	32	33.68	35	25.55
Feature Article	8	61.54	16	16.84	21	15.33
News	12	92.31	37	38.95	40	29.20
Sports News	12	92.31	32	33.68	15	7.61
Science and Technology	11	84.62	24	25.26	25	18.25
Poetry and Short Stories	13	100	41	43.16	42	30.66

Preferred readings among the students are presented in Table 3. From the table, it is noted that there is a greater preference for reading Poetry and Short Stories as compared to other sections of the newspaper. In elementary school, 13 students, or 100%, prefer reading these, followed by News and Sports News with 12 students, or 92.31%. The most read material remained poetry and short stories, with 41 students, or 43.16%, followed by news with 37 students, or 38.95%, and editorial and sports news with 32 students, or 33.68%. At the college level, Poetry and Short Stories are still the most widely read ones where 42 students, or 30.66% of the respondents read them; this is followed by 40 students, or 29.20%, who are interested in reading News. Lastly, 35 students, or 25.55%, prefer reading Editorials. Table 3 indicates that respondents find poetry and short stories more interesting to read because they are provided as homework by teachers in class. Hintz and Tribunella (2019), also proved that school newspapers contain readings of Poetry and Short Stories as texts that aid the students to voice out their feelings and opinions on behalf of suitable skills and knowledge. According to Williams, reading newspapers is both fun and a lesson learned. Pinoliad (2021), stated that children like reading poetry and short stories because they can relate to them. Most of them are familiar themes.

Table 4*Degree on Impact on students in the Academic Aspect*

I benefit from the school newspaper because:	Elementary			High School			College		
	Mean	SD	Description	Mean	SD	Description	Mean	SD	Description
1. It has improved my communication skills.	2.46	1.04	To a great Extent	1.87	1.04	To a great Extent	1.66	0.66	To a very Great Extent
2. It has provided me with sufficient and knowledge and understanding.	2.36	1.03	To a great Extent	1.93	0.83	To a great Extent	1.85	0.81	To a great Extent
3. It has enhanced my appreciation for and habit of reading	2.00	0.91	To a great Extent	2.05	0.84	To a great Extent	1.99	0.92	To a great Extent
4. It has developed and improved my ability to write articles.	2.15	1.14	To a great Extent	2.63	0.67	To a great Extent	2.35	0.93	To a great Extent
5. It keeps me informed about events inside and outside the school.	2.00	0.91	To a great Extent	2.28	0.85	To a great Extent	2.01	0.95	To a great Extent
Total	2.19	1.01	To a great Extent	2.15	0.85	To a great Extent	1.97	0.85	To a great Extent

Note: 1.00-1.79 = To a very Great Extent, 1.80-2.59 = To a Great Extent, 2.60-3.39 = To Some Extent, 3.40-4.19 To a Little Extent, and 4.20-5.00= Not at all

The study's findings show the positive impact the school newspaper has for students at any educational level when it comes to communication, the acquisition of knowledge, reading habit, writing, and awareness about events. Benefits that elementary school, high school, and college students reported benefiting "greatly" from their school newspaper ranged in degree from the elementary, to the high school, to the college student. College students have the most marked development in their communication skills, with a mean score of 1.66, which falls into the "To a very great extent" category. The highest mean score is reported by high school students (2.63) in the development of writing skills, showing a somewhat higher but still positive impact. All groups report similar high benefits in increasing knowledge and understanding, improving reading habits, and keeping students informed about school and external events. Consistently rated as "To a great extent," overall impact is portrayed for the school newspaper among all groups, with college students indicating slightly greater benefits in certain areas like communication and knowledge. These findings indicate that, although beneficial at all educational levels, there might be some slight difference in its impact and which students it particularly benefits-mostly the benefits of communication skills attributed to college students, whereas writing skills were mostly credited to high school students. These findings are compatible with recent research by Clark et al. (2023). This study stresses the benefits of extracurricular activities, including school newspapers, in terms of augmenting

communication, writing skills, and critical thinking within students.

Table 5

Degree of Impact of the School Newspaper on Sociocultural

I benefit from the school newspaper because:	Elementary			High School			College		
	Mean	SD	Description	Mean	SD	Description	Mean	SD	Description
1. It has improved my interaction with other people.	2.18	1.19	To a great Extent	2.43	0.74	To a great Extent	2.00	0.96	To a very Great Extent
2. It has provided me with sufficient knowledge and understanding of different cultures.	1.83	1.03	To a great Extent	2.17	1.11	To a great Extent	2.05	0.95	To a great Extent
3. It has given me a better understanding of my own culture.	2.08	0.79	To a great Extent	2.15	0.92	To a great Extent	2.05	0.96	To a great Extent
4. I have shown the value of compassion toward others.	2.50	1.09	To a great Extent	2.15	0.85	To a great Extent	2.02	1.00	To a great Extent
5. I am encouraged to participate in various school activities.	2.50	1.09	To a great Extent	2.16	1.11	To a great Extent	2.07	0.93	To a great Extent
Total	2.22	1.04	To a great Extent	2.21	0.95	To a great Extent	2.04	0.96	To a great Extent

Note: 1.00-1.79 = To a very Great Extent, 1.80-2.59 = To a Great Extent, 2.60-3.39 = To Some Extent, 3.40-4.19 = To a Little Extent, and 4.20-5.00 = Not at All.

The results show that the sociocultural programs had a highly positive effect on students at all three levels: elementary, high school, and college, and all groups reported outcomes described as "To a Great Extent." The means for the elementary group were the highest in most areas, especially in demonstrating empathy and participation in school activities (M = 2.50). High school and college students also reported positive effects, ranging from M = 2.00 to 2.43, indicating a consistent positive impact on interpersonal relationships, cultural understanding, and empathy. The overall mean scores for all groups were similar, ranging from 2.04 (college) to 2.22 (elementary), indicating that sociocultural programs have an equivalent impact on students at various levels of education. These results resonate with the current study of Johnson et.al (2023), which indicates that sociocultural programs are essential for developing empathy, cultural awareness, and social participation among students from all educational levels.

Table 6

Degree of Impact of the School Newspaper on Spiritual-Moral

I benefit from the school newspaper because:	Elementary			High School			College		
	Mean	SD	Description	Mean	SD	Description	Mean	SD	Description
1. I became familiar with the religion of my school.	2.00	1.00	To a great Extent	1.84	0.85	To a great Extent	2.14	0.85	To a Great Extent
2. It strengthened my faith	2.62	1.12	To a great Extent	2.09	0.93	To a great Extent	2.60	0.93	To a great Extent
3. My behavior was developed	2.18	1.17	To a great Extent	1.89	0.84	To a great Extent	2.03	0.84	To a great Extent
4. I became aware of the corruption happening around me.	2.00	0.91	To a great Extent	1.83	0.76	To a great Extent	2.06	0.76	To a great Extent
5. I learned to follow the school's rules.	2.23	1.24	To a great Extent	1.93	0.80	To a great Extent	2.08	0.80	To a great Extent
Total	2.21	1.09	To a Great Extent	1.92	0.84	To a great Extent	2.18	0.84	To a great Extent

Note: 1.00-1.79 = To a very Great Extent, 1.80-2.59 = To a Great Extent, 2.60-3.39 = To Some Extent, 3.40-4.19 = To a Little Extent, and 4.20-5.00 = Not at All.

Table 6 shows a significant impact of the school newspaper on the students' spiritual and moral development at all levels including elementary, high school, and college, with each group reporting benefits "To a Great Extent" (mean scores between 1.77 and 2.62). Among them, elementary students experienced the highest impact in the following areas: faith strengthening with M = 2.62, and learning to follow school rules with M = 2.23. High school students also indicated good benefits where the mean score for faith strengthening was 2.09 and following rules 1.93. College students scored highest in familiarity with the school's religion (M = 2.31) and following school rules (M = 2.62). Overall, mean scores at all levels, elementary = 2.21, high school = 1.92, and college = 2.23, indicate consistent and positive effects on the spiritual and moral development of students. This study is consistent with recent studies by Anderson et al. (2022), who pointed out that educational activities, like school newspapers, influence students' ethical and spiritual values.

Table 7*Degree of Impact of the School Newspaper on Political*

I benefit from the school newspaper because:	Elementary			High School			College		
	Mean	SD	Description	Mean	SD	Description	Mean	SD	Description
1. I was encouraged to help maintain peace and a democratic community.	2.31	1.38	To a great Extent	2.14	0.87	To a great Extent	2.27	0.97	To a Great Extent
2. I became an instrument to stop the spread of false issues circulating in the school.	2.23	1.24	To a great Extent	2.60	0.74	To a great Extent	2.32	0.91	To a great Extent
3. I learned to weigh the difference between freedom and responsibility.	2.23	1.01	To a great Extent	2.03	0.83	To a great Extent	2.19	0.88	To a great Extent
4. I was encouraged to have integrity.	1.77	0.93	To a great Extent	2.06	0.78	To a great Extent	2.04	0.91	To a great Extent
5. My ability to lead in the school was developed.	2.62	1.19	To a great Extent	2.08	0.88	To a great Extent	2.21	1.03	To a great Extent
Total	2.23	1.15	To a great Extent	2.18	0.82	To a great Extent	2.21	0.94	To a great Extent

Note: 1.00-1.79 = To a very Great Extent, 1.80-2.59 = To a Great Extent, 2.60 -3.39 = To Some Extent, 3.40-4.19 To a Little Extent, and 4.20-5.00= Not at All.

The results in Table 7 show that a school newspaper has a profound positive impact on the development of students' political interests at elementary, high school, and college levels as respondents from all three levels claim benefits "To a Great Extent" with their mean scores ranging from 1.77 to 2.62. Most significant effects on elementary students, for instance, were recorded regarding leadership ability ($M = 2.62$), and helping to maintain peace and a democratic community ($M = 2.31$). High school students also benefited, especially in improving communication skills ($M = 2.60$), while college students had strong scores in similar areas, with a mean of 2.32 for communication skills and 2.27 for maintaining peace and democracy. The total mean scores for elementary (2.23), high school (2.18), and college students (2.21) show a consistent and strong influence on their political and leadership development. These findings support a recent study by Benito, Liwan and Naval (2023) that highlights the educational activities of school newspapers to instill political awareness, leadership, and social responsibility among students.

Table 8*Degree of Impact of the School newspaper on Elementary Students*

Item	Mean	SD	Description
Academic	2.19	1.01	To a Great Extent
Sociocultural	2.22	1.04	To a Great Extent
Spiritual-Moral	2.21	1.09	To a Great Extent
Political	2.23	1.15	To a Great Extent
Total	2.25	1.11	To a Great Extent

Note: 1.00-1.79 = To a very Great Extent, 1.80-2.59 = To a Great Extent, 2.60 -3.39 = To Some Extent, 3.40-4.19 To a Little Extent, and 4.20-5.00= Not at All.

The overall impact of school newspaper on elementary students seems to be positive, at all aspects-academic, sociocultural, spiritual-moral, and political rates as "To a Great Extent," with mean scores ranging between 2.16 up to 2.35. The highest impact among the four was seen in the sociocultural aspect, $M = 2.35$, followed by $M = 2.29$ for the political; $M = 2.21$ for the spiritual-moral; and $M = 2.16$ was for the academic. The overall mean score for the overall impact was 2.25, thus sustaining the positive impact of school newspapers on the development of students in the areas identified. These results are in tandem with findings from recent studies by Lundberg and Abdelzadeh, A. (2024). , where extracurricular activities, including school newspapers, are seen to contribute to the holistic growth of students, which includes academic, social, moral, and political growth.

Table 9*Degree of Impact of the School Newspaper on Elementary Students*

Item	Mean	SD	Description
Academic	2.15	0.85	To a Great Extent
Sociocultural	2.21	0.95	To a Great Extent
Spiritual-Moral	2.23	1.20	To a Great Extent
Political	2.18	0.82	To a Great Extent
Total	2.20	0.96	To a Great Extent

Note: 1.00-1.79 = To a very Great Extent, 1.80-2.59 = To a Great Extent, 2.60 -3.39 = To Some Extent, 3.40-4.19 To a Little Extent, and 4.20-5.00= Not at All.

The school newspaper plays a great role among high school students on academic, sociocultural, spiritual-moral, and political aspects. The newspaper heightens scholarly performance with a mean score of 2.15 (SD = 0.85). It brings about cultural awareness and respects diversity with a mean score of 2.21 (SD = 0.95), making students more aware of social issues. Regarding spiritual-moral development, the newspaper encourages the moral development of the students, mean = 2.23, SD = 1.20. On the political level, the newspaper enhances civic knowledge, mean = 2.18, SD = 0.82, which motivates citizens to participate in governmental and current affairs functions. The overall mean of 2.20, SD = 0.96 expresses that the newspaper brings literate, sympathizing, and participating citizens, Mondal (2024).

Table 10

Degree of impact of school Newspaper on College Students

Item	Mean	SD	Description
Academic	1.97	0.85	To a Great Extent
Sociocultural	2.04	0.96	To a Great Extent
Spiritual-Moral	2.18	1.84	To a Great Extent
Political	2.21	0.94	To a Great Extent
Total	2.10	0.90	To a Great Extent

Note: 1.00-1.79 = To a very Great Extent, 1.80-2.59 = To a Great Extent, 2.60 -3.39 = To Some Extent, 3.40-4.19 To a Little Extent, and 4.20-5.00= Not at All.

Based on Table 10, the school newspaper contributes meaningful impacts on students in college on academic, sociocultural, spiritual-moral, and political dimensions. On academic performance, it enables performance with a mean of 1.97 (SD = 0.85), however less strongly than reported in high school settings. Sociocultural, it encourages openness and appreciation of other cultures. The mean score obtained was 2.04 (SD = 0.96). Spiritually and morally, it cultivates ethical thinking among students via a mean of 2.18 (SD = 0.84). Politically, it strengthens civic awareness through discussion on governance and current issues: a mean score of 2.21 (SD = 0.94). The mean score of 2.10 (SD = 0.90) indicates that according to Goril et al. in 2018, this is an entity that is considered a resource for holistic college student development where academic and personal growth are supported and enhanced.

Table 11

Overall Impact of the School Newspaper on Students

Item	Elementary		Secondary		College		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Academic	2.16	1.04	2.15	0.85	1.97	0.85	2.09	0.91
Sociocultural	2.35	1.18	2.21	0.95	2.04	0.96	2.20	1.03
Spiritual -Moral	2.21	1.08	2.23	1.20	2.18	0.84	2.21	1.04
Political	2.29	1.14	2.18	0.82	2.21	0.94	2.18	1.01
Total	1.11	2.25	2.20	0.96	2.10	0.90	2.18	1.01

As given in Table 11, the maximum mean is seen in the Academic Aspect with a mean of 2.09 (SD = 0.91), which is labeled as "To a Great Extent". It can be interpreted that the school newspaper is highly helpful for academic learning because of the related articles or works about languages, science, mathematics, and more. Political Aspect has the lowest mean, with a mean value of 2.23 (SD = 0.97). It indicates that the political factors did not have a significant impact on the students' writings, reading, and interpretation of the content. In general, the influence of the school newspaper on all levels is said to be "To a Great Extent." The mean value for it was 2.18 (SD = 0.99).

4. Conclusions

The results show that the school newspaper affects students the most in the Academic Aspect based on the presentation and analysis of the collected data. This means that it has a significant influence as a teaching material that can help mold the overall personality of the students. It leaves a substantial effect because the

content they read or write is learned within the classroom walls. Therefore, the school newspaper, as an auxiliary teaching material, should be used effectively for students' academic learning while promoting their sociocultural, spiritual, and political development.

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