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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE ROLE OF CAMPUS AND LOCAL JOURNALISM IN ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND INITIATIVES

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RA- Republic Act
PNEJ - Philippine Network of
Environmental Journalists

ABSTRACT

Statement of the Problem: The issue on the continuing degradation of the earth's natural resources and the environment are being recognized as world's serious problem. Our country is not left out in acknowledging this thus; several efforts have also been made. These include the creation and implementation of environmental laws, RA 9003(Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000). Environmental awareness is quite a distortion but through proper and massive information dissemination, the aim can be attained. This evaluative study aims to evaluate the coverage of environmental issues present in the articles of the campus and local municipal newspaper. The environmental articles cover topics on the general environmental issues such as pollution, flooding and storm, tree planting and solid waste management. Since these articles generally have their own nature or purpose, the language functions embedded were also identified. **Methodology and Theoretical Orientation:** The main method used in the study is qualitative-content analysis. Campus papers in a state university and the municipal local government were surveyed from 2011 to 2014 to determine the coverage of campus and the local government paper in promoting environmental awareness and initiatives. There were 36 environmental articles examined for this study. Articles include news, development communication, features, opinion, and literary articles. One of the aims of the study was to identify the language functions, different emotions and mental attitude. From the lines of the selected articles presented in the study help the reader to inform different environmental issues and disasters. An informal interview to the students, advisers and people in the locality were conducted to support the results of the content analysis. The study revealed that campus papers, as evident in environmental articles promote and inform readers, thus heightening their awareness and perception of the risk. Furthermore, the study also revealed that environmental corner of the newspaper was very useful in promoting information to develop the people awareness thus, motivate them to work on their initiatives to promote environmental protection. Students and local journalist with the creativity and proper framing of the environmental issues can serve on different purposes as seen in the different language function. With the needs of times, journalism is surely here to stay. It is recommended that journalists must be encouraged to be aware of environmental issues and concerns. The prominence of environmental articles should be sustained and prioritized in the campus paper.

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INTRODUCTION

Journalism is gathering, processing, and dissemination of news, and information related to news, to an audience. The word applies to the method of inquiring for news, the literary style which is used to disseminate it, and the activity (professional or not) of journalism. The media that journalism uses vary diversely and include content published via newspapers and magazines (print), television and radio (broadcast), and their digital media versions news websites and applications. The focus of this study is Environmental journalism which is the collection, verification, production,

distribution and exhibition of information regarding current events, trends, issues and people that are associated with the non-human world with which humans necessarily interact. To be an environmental journalist, one must have an understanding of scientific language and practice, knowledge of historical environmental events, the ability to keep abreast of environmental policy decisions and the work of environmental organizations, a general understanding of current environmental concerns, and the ability to communicate all of that information to the public in such a way that it can be easily understood, despite its complexity. Environmental journalism falls within the scope of environmental communication, and its roots can be traced to nature writing. One key controversy in environmental journalism is a continuing disagreement over how to

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distinguish it from its allied genres and disciplines. The issue on the continuing degradation of the earth's natural resources and the environment are being recognized in the world as a serious problem. Our country is not left out in acknowledging this, thus several effort save also been made. These include the creation and eventually the implementation of environmental laws such as RA 9003 (ecological Social Waste Management Act of 2000), RA 8749 (Phil. Clean Air Act of 1999) and RA 8041 (The Water Crisis Act of 1995) whose advocacy is to heighten awareness of people to the environment issues specifically disaster issues. The good of achieving environmental preservation and protection of quite a blue but through people and massive information, this good can be attained. The school writer then is challenged to contribute in realizing this good. With this, the paper yearns to evaluate the nature of coverage of the articles/ pieces in campus papers that promote environmental initiatives and awareness.

Several environmental summits have been hosted to discuss present initiate and further steps to mitigate or even adapt to these condition. However, outputs (2009) assert that through international community support these gathering. They were not able to counter balance the impact of the billions who do not have the awareness and the sense of responsibility to support their governments in taking for reading action. Further, without that wider support, governments are unlikely to go further, than making rhetorical commitments that merely pay attention to the obvious seriousness of the problem. As environmental concerns grow, the need for a well – informed general public becomes more critical. A major challenge is how to deliver complex concepts and impart the sense of urgency of these challenges in a way that engages the reader. School, Campus and local journalism as a part of bigger community and instrumental to this endeavor is protecting and preserving the environment in protecting and preserving the environment and natural resources. Environmental journalism is not a new field. By the mid-to- late 1970's, a series of factors had forced even reluctant media managers to treat environmental stories as mainstream news.

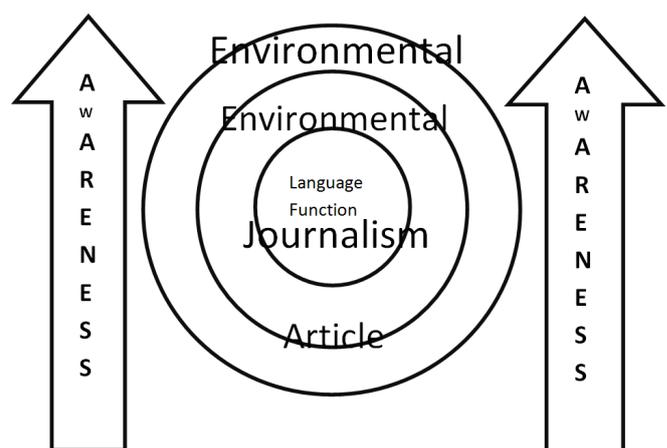
Environment reporting then is a means to achieved heightened awareness of the community to take action on this problem. In the international media, several stories and articles have been published to promote environmental awareness. In Ghana, coverage of environmental news includes general sanitary problems, water quality, land quality waste disposal and deforestation (Domfeh, 1999). It is believed that with the ongoing coverage of environmental issues, people can have "behavioral change" towards this urgent concern. In Hongkong, peer influence, local environment involvement concrete environmental knowledge parental influence environmental awareness and media exposure to environmental messages affect the green purchase behavior of young consumers (Lee, 2011). Gupta stated that is already becoming imperative to create a broader and deeper degree of awareness among students and general population on why climate change is a serious problem and what can be done about it. The importance of the local media arises in creating awareness about the environmental issues and forming public opinion in order to find solutions. Due the immediacy component of news, creating public opinion about the environment through local as opposed to national media is considered to be a more effective method (Öztürk and Çitak, 2010). In Bangladesh, natural disaster was the major climate change issue that received the most coverage, along with

agriculture, biodiversity, global warming and climate change (Miah *et al.*, 2011). As detailed on the PNEJ website, the organization highlights the importance and advancement of public understanding of environmental issues by providing support to journalists of all media in their efforts to cover complex issues of the environment responsibly. PNEJ offers services for working journalists through seminars/conferences, study tours, links to other media organizations working locally and internationally, awards for the best environmental reporting, and other activities. PNEJ works to strengthen the connection between media and society, including businesses, academia, government, and local people, to participate in environmental protection activities in the Philippines - in part by highlighting not just environmental problems but also creating stories that suggest solutions. Another effort focuses on strengthening communication and collaboration between PNEJ and journalists from other countries through a network of environmental journalists. Haigh (2010) surveyed US newspaper to determine the frames used in covering alternative energy. International trade, the U.S economy and political strategy were the common frames.

Theoretical framework

The research study is premised on the social learning theory developed by Albert Bandura. In his theory of learning suggest the people learn within a social context on the learning facilitated through concept such as modeling observational learning and imitation. Furthermore, other theory that guides this is study is the environmentalism which is a philosophy, ideology and social movement regarding concerns for environmental protection and improvement of the health of the environment, particularly as the measure for this health seeks to incorporate the concern of non-human elements.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



In this exploratory study, the primary aim is to evaluate the coverage of environmental issues present in the articles. The environmental articles cover topics on the general environment. However, to understand the extent of environmental articles being studied, the concept of environment is defined. The author adapted the definition the free dictionary.com which is the environment. All the physical, chemical and biological condition that together thus, the author selected the following purposes to limit the coverage of environmental articles;

- Pollution of air, water, soil with chemical

- Agricultural method such tree planting and clean- up
- Flooding and Storm
- Solid waste management

Since these articles generally have their own nature or purpose, the language functions embedded were also identified. Instead of frames, it could also be deducted how language is played to affect the reader. Its holiday parts it, inferring the functions of the language helps reader understand the words themselves and their relationship to the world. Knowing what these words truly mean will let readers to the right course of action. As reader understand the functions of the language, the purpose of the article is achieved, that is the reader will recognize the severity and urgency of the environmental issues presented. The whole process of creating the article where it is of any type then can promote environmental awareness among readers.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study is to evaluate the coverage of environmental issues present in the news articles, feature articles ,opinion and literary works of different Elementary, Secondary school University and Municipalities of the fourth district of Laguna. This study also aims to identify the language function used by the student and local journalists to provide the needed information about environment awareness to the school and local government. Indeed, this study also aims to recognize the contribution of campus and local journalism in the awareness of the community to the environmental issues.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main method use in the study is qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis defines itself within this framework as an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models, without rash quantification. School, Campus and Local papers in Elementary, National High School, State University and Local Government were surveyed from 2010 to 2014 to determine the coverage and language function in promoting environmental awareness and initiatives.

University / College	Name of Publication
Laguna State Polytechnic University High School	The Baybay Granary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Famy National High School • Santa Maria National High School • Siniloan National High School • PotenEliseo National High School • Mabitac National High School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ang Butil (The Grain) • Gintong Panitik (The Golden Pen) • The Pioneer • The Carver • Ang Hagdanan (The Stairs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siniloan Elementary School • Paete Elementary School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AngGuilingan (The Grinder) • Paet: We carve the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Santa Maria Laguna • Siniloan, Laguna 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pahayagang Marilag (Marilag Newspaper) • OrasngSiniloan (SiniloanTimes)

There were one (1) university paper; five (5) National high schools paper two (2) Elementary paper and two (2) local government paper in the study. As for the process (mechanism and methods) informal interviews with some of the student

writers, adviser and local journalist, and readers were done using quota sampling (quota sampling describe as method similar to the stratified random sampling. The only difference is that the selection of the member of the samples in stratified is done randomly) in determining environmental awareness through publication and releases of campus, school and local papers. In the analysis of the language function, the model of holliday's language function was used.

Type of Language Function	Definition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrumental • Regulatory • Interactional • Personal • Imaginative • Informative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language used to get things done, that is satisfying needs. • Language used to control other's behavior • Language used to form and maintain social relationships. • Language used to express thoughts and opinions • Language used to express creative often fantastic thoughts • Language used to convey information

DISCUSSION

Nature of Coverage of Environmental Articles. There were 40 articles examined for the study. There were 21 news articles, 3 DevCom articles, 5 feature articles, 3 opinion articles and 4 literary articles (poems).

Title
1 Environmental Discipline, Key Solution(2010)
2 Typhoon submerges classrooms (2010)
3 Marilag Eco Park inaugurates(2011)
4 LSPU- SC joins, NGP (2011)
5 Gov. ER conducts gift giving and Docu Film on Environment Issues (2011)
6 5M Integrated Canal System construction in Poblacion starts (2013)
7 Sen. Neric Acosta, LLDA, World Bank Officials, plant trees near River Control Project (2014)
8 Global Warming gets worse! (2014)
9 P300 Million River Control Project begins at Sta. Maria (2013)
10 PES supports the International Coastal Clean Up Day (2013)
11 Yes-O, SPG joins tree planting (2013)
12 Global warming roasts the earth(2010)
13 SMNHS students compete in Environmental Quiz Bee (2013)
14 Brgy. Tungkod conducts tree planting (2011)
15 Beauty of nature felt (2011)
16 Garbage segregation reinforces (2014)
17 Cleanlines, Next to Success (2011)
18 CTE joins tree planting activity (2012)
19 Reforestation Program conducted (2011)
20 Young scout trains for disaster preparedness (2014)
21 3Rs Formula: Effective Way of Ending Garbage (2011)

The news article, focus mostly on the environment practices of LGU and academic institution, such activities as mention in different news articles were tree planting, segregation and recycles. In addition, the proximity of the stories stretches from the institutional to the local government level. As gleaned from the year that these articles were published, sustainability of environmental articles is very important in promoting awareness among readers. Circulating knowledge the news media according to Tuchman can influence people's opinion about issues and that attention to science and environmental news is associated with beliefs more consistent with the global warming science and higher risk perception. (Zhao, LEiserowitz, Maibach, Roser- Renouf, 2011). Thus, the way the media frame a news story about environment issues has the potential to influence the audience's perception risk.

"LSPU heeded executive order no. 26, which declares the implementation of a national greening program (NGP) a

government priority as it put in the place of its own initiative through the NGP Summit is per headed by research and extension services office together with DENR, DAR, DA, and DepEd”

LSPU-SC joins NGP

-TBG

“Paete Elementary School supported the International Clean Up Day 2013 as an empowerment of the people in showing concern for saving our coastline”

ES Supports environmental awareness

-PAET: We curve the Future

“January 8, 2014 – Presidential Adviser for Environmental Protection and LLDA General Manager Sec. Neric Acosta visited Sta. Maria together with the World Bank officials and employees of the LLDA to see the development of the River Control Project in the town.”

Sen. Neric Acosta, LLDA, World Bank Officials, plant trees near River Control Project

-PahayagangMarilag

Dev Com Articles

Title	
1	DamongMadagundong (Thundering Grass)
2	Disposable Garbage, Useful in the New Age
3	There's Gold in Hay

The DevCom articles is the study covered environmental usage and innovation that suggested to be adopted by the community to preserve and protect the natural resources. The author strongly believes that this article is one way of disseminating scientific information to the public. The articles are based on facts but are framed in such a way the environment initiatives are explained in a common language that is understood by many.

“Omelchen aims to create a simple yet useful equipment that is safe for the environment and can be used as an alternative to electronic speakers sold in the market.”

DamongMadagundong

- AngButil

Feature Article

Title	
1	Mister Police (Police for Environment)
2	Leptospirosis
3	Marilag Eco Park
4	Save, Laguna Lake!
5	Dos and Don'ts Before and During a Typhoon

For Feature articles, it also presented facts on the environment but evolving from this are the discussion of the severity of the environmental crisis. It also suggested means to preserve the environment and to take action against the problem.

“This activity will support the hunger mitigation program of the government and the preservation of our ecosystem and keeping up with the disasters risk reduction program to address the climate change.”

Mister Police (Police for Environment)

-PahayagangMarilag

“The Marilag Eco Park will serve as a destination that will lead us to take care of our nature and surroundings.”

Marilag Eco Park

-PahayagangMarilag

Opinion Article

Title	
1	Garbage, What A Burden?
2	Goodbye Plastic, Hello Eco Bag.
3	It's Time to Make a Move

As for opinion articles student and local journalist focused on current state of the environment as they were observed as the most important topics on environmental concern.

“Plastic is a great help to the lives of the people, but it also causes great harm.

Goodbye, Plastic, Hello Eco Bag

- PahayagangMarilag

“If I am not mistaken, there's only one reason behind all these. These are the fruit of the people's negligence on our nature.”

OrasnaparaKumilos

-Orasngsiniloan

Literary Article

Title	
1	Thirst for Care
2	Pollution
3	Surroundings
4	An answer to the Nature's Plea

For literary articles, it express a strong disappointment of the student and local writers as it is reflected in the lines of literary pieces.

They also abuse the gifts of nature

Never thought of its sake

That when it gets worse, we'll be affected

Let's stop ruining our nature

UhawnaKalikasan

- AngButil

All articles express a positive tone of a language. The positivity refers all to the ultimate goal of preserving and protecting the natural resources. Objectives of the activities in the news reported, results of the research initiatives and personal expression are geared towards recovering from the environmental crisis. The general public, which campus and local journalists are, view language from a perspective that is fundamentally positivist in orientation (Reagan, 2009) which effects to higher hopes that people can still do something for the environment. With these varied number, the coverage of environmental issues are extended to the different kinds of reporting. However, student and local journalists are more adept in covering events that actually happened as news articles rather than expression of personal beliefs as in opinion and literary articles. It is important to note that the Pahayagang Marilag has a specific environmental column on their papers that provide more environmental issues and concerns.

Language function of the environmental articles

One of the aimed of the study was to identify the language functions different emotions and mental attitudes. Though there is a specific function innate in the nature of the article, several functions could the identified in one article only. Hence, one environmental article could serve different

functions. Selected lines from the articles presented in this study were analyzed using the model of Holliday to exemplify the functions of the language used in the article. There are more informative functions of the language visualized in the article. This implied that the language in the environmental article appeared in the papers are usually to inform the general public.

“Due to the alarming episode of the natural disaster this year member of the YES-O and SPG of Paete ES spearheaded a joint tree planting activity at Brgy, Quinala Paete, Laguna”

Paet: We carve the Future – December 2013

“Almost two hundred Boy Scouts from different schools in Siniloan joined the District Camporal. The scouting aims to give everyone the opportunity to serve the nature.”

Anggilingan Vol. VII, December 5, 2013...Yvonne Aizle

“The Integrated Canal System in Real, Velasquez Strict was started on the last week of June that will serve as the main rainwater system to prevent the flood in the Poblacion Area.”

Pahayagang Marilag (Marilag Newspaper)-December 2014

These selected lines from the news articles used to convey information to the public and indeed part of people awareness on different activities about environmental issues and concerns. In the study conducted in India, it is stated that newspapers assume great importance as they deal everyday with dissemination of current information. With this result informative function of language is a part of every news article.

“...I feel so bad. You know, when I go home here before, I always felt good. But now, it harms my health, I slowly run out of breath...”

AngButil (The Grain) June-December Issue

“If I am not mistaken, there's only one reason behind all these. These are the fruit of the people's negligence on our nature.”

Orasng Siniloan (Siniloan Times) Vol.4...2013

The personal function is also manifested in the language used in the article that is the student local journalists express their thoughts and opinions about the environmental issue. Feeling of disappointment can easily convey on the manner of personal opinion.

“...Think... Act... Stand up... It's time for a change. It's not yet too late. Love and take care of our nature...”

Anghagdanan...June-December 2012

A regulatory and instrumental function of language are used in this article that is, the language used to control and influence others' behavior and to get things done. In the study by Daniel Riffe and Tom Hrach, the result of the study shown that individual feeling and reaction to environmental issues is highly influence by media coverage

“...Himignhangin, iyongpakinggan..

Daingnito'yiyongmalalaman

Sakinito'yiyongmadama

Pulusyonghanginiyongmakikita...”

(Listen to the hymn of the wind

You'll hear its wailing

You'll feel its pain

Air pollution, you'll see)

Anahaw Vol.4- The New Polytech...Pearl Ann

“.....Rainbow as it fades, like a murmur of dying crying rivers....”

Piyesa Vol.2- The Baybay Granary... Hera

And lastly, as expected, the imaginative function is evident in the poems written with environmental themes. The emotion of the student writers and their diction is a language that expresses creative and fantastic thoughts. Of all language function interactional function was not identified in any of the language used in environmental articles. The local and student writers evidently play with the language to leave an impact for the reader to achieve realization and bizarreness for the reader to be more interested and pro-active in dealing with the environmental issues.

Process involved in the coverage of environmental articles

The process being presented here are the mechanisms and methods undergone and employed in the campus, school and local paper to cover environmental issues. For news articles, as these requires, gain data from factual information. Thus, student writers can only make and publish these kinds of articles if events happen. An activity/ event on an environmental initiative must happen to facilitate the awareness of readers. This is to say on this part, that student writers are limited on this aspect of environmental coverage. For feature and opinion writing, the interest of a student writer and his advocacy of promoting environmental awareness are considered. An event that concerns the environment also serves as the triggering factor for some student and local writers to create this kind of writing. For literary texts such as poems, it is notable that poems cover themes such as disappointment and hate because they were concern on the environment. Few poems involve environmental themes. Keating (1997) identified limitations in environmental journalism which include science reporting, foreign territory for most journalists. Too often, reporters get the science wrong. Another weakness in environmental journalism he identified is the small number of seasoned writers and broadcasters in the field. The right mindset and a great behavioral change are indeed requirements for student local writers to venture into environmental journalism. Though the student writer has understood the science of the issue, the play of words to awaken the minds of readers to take action is very much needed. However, beset with limitations, environmental journalism is expected to forward. Again, Keating did not lose hope as he sees today's young journalists growing up in a world of environmental information, and although they do not always have a degree in environmental studies, they are much better equipped to ask intelligent questions than their predecessors.

RESULT OF INFORMAL INTERVIEW

Question #1. How many releases your campus/ school/ municipalities have per year?

Answer:

“...Actually, our publication releases are limited due to limited fund for this concern. The DepEd's No Collection Policy affects the number of our publication releases.”

Adviser

“We receive a newspaper just once a year. I don't know why.”

Student

"... We try to release at least twice a year."

Municipal Official

"...I thought the municipal office has no newspaper. I haven't read any."

Resident

Question #2. What is the role of school paper/ local paper in the information dissemination of environmental issues and concern?

Answer:

"...For me, school paper really helps our student to be aware on different environmental issues at concern, kaya nga I suggest namagkaroonangaming paper ng environmental concerns corner." (For me, school paper really helps our student to be aware on different environmental issues at concern, that's why I suggested that our newspaper shall have an environmental concerns corner.)

Adviser

"...We include environmental issues and concern is our publication because for me this is our way of helping the community and the municipality to be aware in some environmental issues especially disaster concern."

Disaster Office of Sta. Maria

"...When I read a newspaper that my child brought home, I then knew what global warming is. It's shocking!"

Aling Maria

"...I guess newspapers help us by preparing use for disasters like flood."

Elementary Pupil

"...We don't usually include environmental issues in our writings".

High School Student

"... They are write poems about nature very well."

Elementary Pupil

Question #3. In the rating of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest how will you rate your awareness on environmental issues base on the information you read in your school/ local paper ?

Answer:

"... 5 because we include environmental corner in our publication"

Municipal Officer

"... Just 2, because I haven't read good news about the environment, mostly on storms."

Elementary Pupil

"...2 because our school paper includes more on science and technology rather than environment."

High School Student

"... Perhaps 2, because we we're given a newspaper just once a year, and sometimes, I can't find articles about nature in it.)

High School Student

"...5 because our municipal's newspaper always have news on environment."

Resident

Question #4. Is the language in the coverage of environmental issues on your school/ local papers easily understood?

Answer:

"...Yes, because our newspaper is written in Tagalog. It's easier to understand."

Resident

"...yes, since most of our news articles are informative we used simple informative words in most of our news article."

Tourism Office of SML

"... Sometimes, there are words we can hardly understand."

Elementary Pupil- ES

"...Yes, of course, because as student writers, I know that language used is important for the readers, that's why we used simple and understandable words in our article."

Student Writer-TBG

"...I have a child that explains it to me [when there's something I can't understand."

Resident

Conclusion

Every one of us has a great responsibility to protect and preserve the natural resources and the environment. With the above findings that environmental journalism is practiced by student writers is a huge contribution to these concerted efforts. Campus, school and local papers, as evident in the different environmental articles are instruments that promote and inform readers of environmental initiatives, technologies and activities thus heightening their awareness and perception of the risk. However, student writers are constrained to promote such awareness due to lack of enough knowledge, personal beliefs, attitude and events that cover such a theme. Student and local writers however find ways to tackle environmental issues and concerns through personal and imaginative writings. Student and local writers with the creativity and proper framing of the environmental issues can serve different purposes as seen in the different language functions.

Recommendations

With the needs of the times, environmental journalism is surely here to stay, is therefore recommended that student writers must be continually supported and encouraged to be aware of environmental issues and concerns. Student and local writers must also be trained in the writing of research articles to continually promote environmental initiatives as common people are looking for more solutions and alternatives to mitigate or adapt to the problem. The prominence of environmental articles should also be sustained and be prioritized in the campus paper. This study, as a baseline data could be developed into further research on student writers' belief and attitudes to know the source of their diversity in the making of these articles. The level of awareness of student writers and the target readers could also be determined to put more directions to environmental journalism. Lastly, campus paper advisers are also encouraged to participate on environmental initiatives to heighten awareness and serve as models for their student writers.

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