

Behind the Byline: Shedding Light on Coaching and Mentoring Experiences of Outstanding School Paper Advisors

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Abstract. This qualitative study explored the dynamics of coaching and mentoring in journalism from the perspectives of five outstanding school paper advisers, recognized as the Country's Most Outstanding School Paper Advisers at the Secondary Level in SOCCSKSARGEN Region XII. The research aimed to understand their lifeworld, experiences, and future perspectives in nurturing student writers. Employing a transcendental phenomenological approach, the study analyzed in-depth interviews to uncover the advisers' holistic professional development, inclusive mentorship, and their roles' demanding yet rewarding nature. The findings highlighted three core objectives: (1) the lifeworld of advisers, emphasizing their comprehensive professional growth and mentorship practices; (2) the contexts of their lived experiences, focusing on pride in student achievements, community value, and personal growth; and (3) their future self-views, reflecting evolving careers, sustained leadership, and empowerment through writing and coaching. Despite challenges such as inadequate resources, these advisers demonstrated dedication and adaptability, finding fulfillment in transformative moments and collaborative efforts. The study recommends enhancing resource provision, professional development, policy support, and further research on technological impacts to deepen understanding of school paper advisers' complex roles in developing future journalists and writers.

Keywords: Coaching; Journalism; Mentoring; Philippines; School paper adviser; SDG #4.

1.0 Introduction

Journalism has been vital to society, keeping people informed and shaping their understanding of the world. However, it faced several challenges, particularly in schools where future journalists were trained. Many journalism programs struggled with limited resources, outdated curricula, and a lack of experienced mentors, making it difficult for students to receive the quality education they needed. Additionally, the rise of misinformation and the decline of traditional news sources created an uncertain environment for young writers, making it essential for journalism education to adapt to new realities.

Internationally, Humanes (2024) noted that journalism significantly promoted important causes affecting societies, such as global warming, political instability, and social justice. These issues must be explained to the public through journalism, ensuring journalists are trained and supported appropriately, as McIntyre (2020)

highlighted. The skills required to report on these issues entailed technical aspects and an understanding of the context and significance of the stories being narrated (Kayyali, 2024).

Recognizing the significance of campus journalism in nurturing future journalists, the Campus Journalism Act (Republic Act No. 7079 of 1991) mandated schools in the Philippines to support student publications and develop aspiring writers. However, despite this legal framework, significant gaps remained in its implementation (Dorado, 2023). Many school paper advisers faced difficulties securing consistent financial support due to the absence of a mandatory funding mechanism and the unintended effects of other laws, such as the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, which limited traditional funding sources. Inconsistent administrative backing and bureaucratic hurdles often hindered advisers' ability to manage publications effectively, while the burden of juggling multiple roles further detracted from their focus on mentoring student journalists (Natividad, 2021).

Limited qualitative research on advisers' experiences compounded these challenges, leaving their unique difficulties underexplored and unaddressed. Thus, although RA 7079 established a vital foundation for campus journalism, the persistent lack of adequate funding, institutional support, and professional development highlighted a critical gap between the law's intent and the realities faced by school paper advisers. This underscored the need for stronger enforcement, clearer policies, and enhanced support systems to fully realize the law's goals (Cubilla & Cubillas, 2021).

Aligned with these realities, this research aims to explore the lifeworld, lived experiences, and perspectives of the Country's Most Outstanding School Paper Advisers at the Secondary Level in SOCCSKSARGEN Region XII, focusing on their coaching and mentoring dynamics. By shedding light on their unique challenges and practices, this study aims to improve the quality of campus journalism and better equip student journalists for their professional endeavors. Ultimately, it seeks to contribute to nurturing a new generation of journalists adept at addressing local and global challenges through strengthened training and support systems.

These circumstances motivated the researcher to explore the dynamics of coaching and mentoring among outstanding school paper advisers, as the researcher saw potential in enhancing training programs for aspiring writers through this understanding. The research focused on shedding light on these aspects to improve the quality of campus journalism and better equip students for their professional endeavors. Ultimately, the goal of this study was to contribute to nurturing a new generation of journalists who were adept at tackling both local and global challenges.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design, specifically focusing on transcendental phenomenology. This approach is well-suited for exploring the experiences and perspectives of outstanding school paper advisers regarding their coaching strategies, challenges, and mentoring techniques. According to Serban and Apostolescu (2020), transcendental phenomenology, as developed by Husserl in 1913, emphasizes understanding human experiences without preconceived notions. This means researchers set aside their biases—a process known as *epoche*—to perceive the phenomena clearly, allowing the true meanings to emerge from the participants' perspectives (Moustakas, 1994). This method is particularly beneficial in educational settings, where understanding the nuances of personal experiences can provide rich insights into effective practices. Moreover, this approach aligns well with qualitative research goals, which seek to explore complex social phenomena and understand the depth of individuals' experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). By focusing on the advisers' voices, the study aims to highlight their unique challenges and strategies—ultimately contributing to a broader understanding of mentorship and coaching in journalism education.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted at the SOCCSKSARGEN Region XII, targeting schools with school paper advisers recognized as the Philippines' Most Outstanding School Paper Advisers at the secondary level. The Philippines is known for its strong commitment to journalism education. Many schools in the country actively participate in campus journalism, which helps students develop their writing and reporting skills. The Campus Journalism Act (Republic Act No. 7079, 1991) encourages schools to support student publications and train young writers. This law shows that the local government values journalism education, making it a suitable place for this study. To further support this research, DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2016 is relevant as it provides the guidelines for

implementing the Campus Journalism Act. This order emphasizes the importance of schools backing student publications and developing the skills of young writers. It aligns with the study's goals by highlighting how essential it is for schools to create a supportive environment for journalism education.

2.3 Research Participants

The participants in this study were five (5) school paper advisers from the Philippines who were recognized as the country's Most Outstanding School Paper Advisers at the secondary level in the SOCCSKSARGEN Region (Region XII) from 2016 to 2024. This selection is significant because it ensures that the study focuses on individuals who have demonstrated exceptional skills and dedication in coaching student writers. Creswell (1998) recommended a range of 5 to 25 participants for phenomenological studies, which is considered a reasonable starting point for collecting data and understanding lived experiences related to a specific phenomenon. To be included in the study, participants must meet the following criteria: First, they must have shown a strong willingness to participate, as their openness and commitment were essential for providing in-depth, authentic accounts of their coaching strategies, challenges, and professional insights. Second, they must have had a substantial background in journalism, with documented experience in coaching students in writing, editing, and publishing school newspapers. This ensured that only those with relevant expertise and practical engagement in campus journalism were included. Most importantly, participants must have received the Philippines' Most Outstanding School Paper Adviser award at the secondary level. This criterion guaranteed that the study focused exclusively on advisers who had achieved national recognition for excellence, innovation, and significant impact on their students' journalistic development and success. Selecting participants who have demonstrated excellence in their field often leads to more insightful and relevant findings (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). Moreover, the willingness of participants to share their experiences is crucial for qualitative research, as it allows for a deeper understanding of their perspectives and challenges (Mjelve & Tangen, 2020). This approach aligns with the principles of qualitative research, which emphasize participant engagement and the richness of their insights (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Additionally, the study involved two (2) debriefers to validate the data analysis and ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. The role of the debriefers was to review the data analysis process and provide feedback to confirm that the interpretations accurately reflected the participants' experiences and perspectives. The criteria for selecting debriefers were as follows: First, the debriefer must have expertise in qualitative research methods and data analysis. Second, they should not be directly involved in the study to maintain objectivity. Lastly, they must be familiar with the context of journalism and the challenges faced by school paper advisers. While Creswell (2014) recommends at least one debriefer for qualitative studies, the complexity of this research justified the inclusion of two debriefers to provide a more comprehensive review and enhance the credibility of the study's conclusions.

2.4 Research Instrument

The data gathering instrument for this study was a structured and semi-structured guide questions. Structured questions, which have a set order and wording, allow the researchers to easily compare the answers from different participants (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). This makes it easier to find patterns and themes in the responses. Semi-structured questions, on the other hand, are more open-ended and flexible. They let the researchers explore new ideas and insights during the interviews (Huang, 2019). This helps capture the richness and nuance of the participants' experiences. Using a combination of structured and semi-structured questions, the researchers can get the best of both approaches. The structured questions provide a clear framework for comparing responses, while the semi-structured questions allow flexibility and discover unexpected findings. This mixed approach is well-suited for the goals of this qualitative study, which aims to deeply understand outstanding journalism advisers' coaching strategies, challenges, and mentoring techniques.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The study followed a systematic approach to ensure that the information collected was reliable and relevant. First, the researcher obtained approval from the Dean of the Graduate School to proceed with the study. This step was essential to ensure that the research met the academic standards and ethical guidelines set by the institution. After receiving approval from the Dean, the researcher sent a formal letter to the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Sultan Kudarat, requesting permission to conduct the study within schools in the division. Gaining the superintendent's support was important to ensure the research could be conducted smoothly and without complications. Next, the researcher also sent an approval letter to the school principal of the institution where the outstanding school paper adviser was currently teaching. This step was crucial to ensure that the principal was informed about the study and could help facilitate the participation of the advisers. Once the necessary approvals

were obtained, the researcher identified the participants for the study. These were school paper advisers recognized as Outstanding School Paper Advisers. The researcher reached out to these advisers to explain the study's purpose and invite them to participate in an interview. The researcher used both structured and semi-structured guide questions during the interviews. The structured questions were clear and focused, allowing for easy comparison of answers across different advisers. This helped gather consistent information, making the data easier to analyze (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). In addition, semi-structured questions were included to allow for more open-ended and flexible responses, encouraging participants to share their thoughts and experiences in their own words. This approach led to deeper discussions and provided unexpected insights that structured questions might have missed (Finkbeiner, 2016). The interviews were recorded with the participant's permission and later transcribed for analysis. This ensured that the participants' voices were accurately captured, and their insights could be thoroughly examined. This structured data-gathering procedure ensured that the study was conducted ethically and that the data collected was rich and meaningful. This approach aligns with qualitative research methods, emphasizing participant engagement and the depth of understanding gained through discussion (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006).

2.6 Data Analysis

This study employed transcendental phenomenology as its qualitative methodology to explore the lifeworld, lived experiences, and perspectives of the Country's Most Outstanding School Paper Advisers at the Secondary Level in SOCCSKSARGEN Region XII. Data was collected through structured and semi-structured interviews with five outstanding school paper advisers. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for rigorous thematic analysis following Moustakas' (1994) procedures. The researcher began data analysis by immersing herself in the transcripts, repeatedly reading them to understand the advisers' lived experiences deeply. In line with the transcendental phenomenological approach, the researcher practiced *epoché*—bracketing personal biases and preconceptions to view the data freshly and openly. Significant statements and phrases that revealed essential elements of the advisers' coaching and mentoring experiences were identified and coded. These significant statements were then clustered into meaning units and preliminary themes reflecting the participants' worldviews and experiences. Throughout the analysis, themes were continuously compared and refined to ensure that they accurately represented the participants' perspectives. The researcher developed textural descriptions (what the advisers experienced) and structural descriptions (how they experienced it in context), culminating in a comprehensive synthesis that captured the essence of their coaching and mentoring phenomenon. Direct quotations from participants were included to illustrate and support the findings, providing vivid and authentic insights into their lifeworlds. This systematic and rigorous procedure ensured a faithful representation of the advisers' lived experiences, aligned with the study's purpose of understanding and improving campus journalism mentorship.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical safeguards were prioritized in this phenomenological study exploring outstanding school paper advisers' experiences in coaching and mentoring student writers. First, informed consent was obtained by explaining the research purpose, participation requirements, and potential implications before securing signed agreements (Creswell, 2014). Second, confidentiality protocols were implemented to ensure anonymity through pseudonyms and the aggregated reporting of sensitive discussions about pedagogical challenges (Subedi, 2025). Third, voluntary participation was emphasized, allowing advisers to withdraw at any point without consequence, given the study's focus on deeply personal and professional narratives (Ederio et al., 2023). Finally, respect for participants' expertise was maintained through trauma-informed interview techniques when addressing emotionally charged mentoring experiences (Epp et al., 2022), particularly when exploring advisers' future visions for student-writer development. These measures upheld research integrity while investigating the lifeworld, lived experiences, and professional aspirations central to the study's research questions.

2.8 Researcher's Positioning

The researcher acknowledges his positionality about the study, recognizing that his background, beliefs, and experiences may influence the research process and the interpretation of data (Holmes, 2020). With nine years of experience working in the Department of Education and seven years as a journalism coach, the researcher brings substantial practical knowledge and insight into educational and extracurricular contexts relevant to the study. Currently, he is undertaking thesis writing for a Master of Arts in Teaching, majoring in English, which further informs his academic perspective.

2.9 Trustworthiness of the Study

The trustworthiness of this transcendental phenomenological study on outstanding school paper advisers in the Philippines is carefully established through several contextualized strategies aligned with qualitative research rigor. The researcher used multiple data sources, including structured and semi-structured interviews, to ensure credibility. Including two independent de-briefers with expertise in qualitative methods and familiarity with the context further supports credibility by providing an objective review and validation of data analysis and interpretations. Transferability is supported by the detailed contextual descriptions of the Philippine educational setting, the Campus Journalism Act, and the specific criteria for participant selection, advisers recognized as the country's most outstanding, allowing readers to assess the applicability of findings to similar educational or cultural contexts. Dependability is demonstrated through the systematic and transparent documentation of the research process, from obtaining consent from the participant to data collection and thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke's method coupled with Moustakas' phenomenological approach. This detailed procedural account enables replication or audit by other researchers. Confirmability is addressed through member checking, where participants reviewed the findings to verify that their experiences and perspectives were accurately captured, minimizing researcher bias. Additionally, the researcher's explicit acknowledgment of personal biases and the practice of epoche align with the transcendental phenomenological framework, enhancing objectivity.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Emerging Themes on the Coaching and Mentoring Lifeworld of Outstanding School Paper Advisers

Five (5) emerging themes were identified through thorough data analysis and interpretation, synthesized from 21 initial and 12 clustered themes. These emerging themes are as follows: holistic professional development and identity formation, inclusive and empowering mentorship, the demanding and tiring nature of advisorship, the rewarding and meaningful nature of advisorship, and committed and flexible mentorship for student development. These themes encapsulate the lifeworld of the outstanding school paper advisers in coaching and mentoring student writers in the Philippines.



Figure 1. Schematic Diagram on the Lifeworld in Coaching and Mentoring

Holistic Professional Development and Identity Formation

This emerging theme highlights how School Paper Advisers (SPAs) experience their role as instrumental in shaping their professional growth and personal identity. It is organized into two clustered themes: professional purpose and fulfillment and identity and role integration, which are derived from four initial fulfillment and purpose: professional and personal identity integration, mutual growth and mentorship, and reflection and process appreciation. Participants expressed a profound sense of fulfillment and meaning in their advisorship roles. Veritas shared:

"Ahh, for me, my journey as a school paper adviser allowed me to fulfill my purpose as a teacher..."

This statement reflects how the role transcends mere job responsibilities, becoming a vital part of their vocational identity. Similarly, Catalyst noted:

"Being a school paper adviser profoundly affects me by deepening my sense of purpose and fulfillment as an educator."

These reflections suggest that advisorship is not simply a professional task but a calling that significantly enriches their personal and professional sense of worth. Moreover, the role serves as a powerful catalyst for skill development and career advancement. Veritas eloquently described this transformative impact:

"I think it is simple. It affects me in a way that it is my life. I cannot answer this question without considering the entirety of being a school paper adviser. I am not in my current position today without journalism, so if I were to name one half of my professional career, it would be campus journalism. It is that valuable to me-not necessarily because I need to win, but because it sharpens and enhances my skills and the totality of my being."

This testimony highlights how the challenges and responsibilities of guiding a school paper sharpen their professional competencies and contribute holistically to their growth. The advisors also expressed deep satisfaction in witnessing the positive impact of their mentorship on students' lives. Veritas shared a moving account:

"It's like the feeling of fulfillment is in the clouds, knowing the process you've gone through. Taking a small school all the way to the National School Press Conference, a journey that didn't end with their victory. After being hailed as outstanding Campus Journalists, many automatically became college scholars. Knowing that their lives have changed, that they have the assurance to continue their education because you were part of their journey, is incredibly rewarding."

This narrative highlights the profound personal and professional gratification of mentoring students toward success and transformation. Approximately three participants emphasized holistic professional development and identity formation, illustrating how the SPA role enhances their sense of purpose, refines their mentorship skills, and fosters personal fulfillment as educators. These findings align with existing research. Velasquez (2022) demonstrated that teachers' sense of fulfillment and purpose is closely linked to their overall job satisfaction and well-being, showing that educators who perceive their impact as meaningful experience greater personal and professional fulfillment. MacLeod (2020) further emphasized the critical role of professional development in enhancing teachers' sense of purpose and self-efficacy insight particularly relevant to school paper advisers, for whom continuous learning and skill-building are essential to navigating role complexities and fostering growth. Additionally, Budiongan & Corpuz. (2024) highlighted the importance of supportive environments in promoting educators' well-being. For SPAs, this underscores the necessity of recognizing and supporting their development to sustain their commitment and ensure the continued success of school journalism programs. The advisorship role is vital in fostering personal and professional growth among SPAs. Providing structured opportunities for professional development, mentorship, and peer support can further enhance their sense of purpose, skill refinement, and overall well-being, ultimately sustaining their dedication and contributing to the flourishing of school journalism.

Inclusive and Empowering Mentorship

This emerging theme is characterized by School Paper Advisors' (SPAs) dedication to fostering student-writers growth through individualized mentorship, addressing diverse learning needs, and cultivating creativity. It emphasizes the SPAs' adaptability in tailoring their mentoring approaches to meet the unique needs of each student while empowering them to become critical thinkers and effective communicators. The advisors consistently emphasized the importance of recognizing and responding to each student's unique needs. Veritas articulated this point, stating:

"The valid and relevant point is that every student, every campus journalist is different, and along that line, I need to see to it and strengthen every campus journalist in a way that every individual has a different perspective, has a different orientation, has a different point of view in terms of life. So, it's like the only change is in the mentoring aspect-how you mold them, what your approach is, because they are different, but the context remains the same, journalism as the fourth estate is important in society, not only in the competition arena but in life itself."

This demonstrates the SPAs' understanding that effective mentorship requires a personalized approach considering each student's strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles. The advisors also highlighted their commitment to fostering a safe and encouraging environment for student writers to express themselves.. Catalyst reflected on the transformative power of storytelling, noting:

"As a school paper adviser, several key thoughts resonate deeply with me, particularly the importance of fostering a safe and encouraging environment for student writers to express themselves... The notion that each student has a unique perspective worth sharing motivates me to guide them in honing their writing skills and building their confidence."

This aligns with findings from Revutska (2024), which revealed that creating safe spaces for expression significantly enhances students' socio-political awareness and analytical skills. Moreover, the advisors stressed the importance of equipping students with the skills and knowledge necessary to become informed, critical thinkers and active community participants. Catalyst further noted:

"Additionally, I frequently consider the long-term impact of our work together; by nurturing their journalistic abilities, I am not only helping them develop as writers but also empowering them to become informed, critical thinkers and active participants in their communities. This understanding reinforces my commitment to my role, reminding me that the skills they acquire extend far beyond the classroom."

This commitment reflects Vincent-Lancrin's (2021) emphasis on fostering critical thinking in education, which prepares students to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and form independent judgments. All participants highlighted their commitment to adapting their mentoring approaches to address the diverse needs of student writers. This theme stresses the SPAs' ability to foster creativity, encourage individuality, and empower students to engage with the world critically. This underscores the importance of SPAs' personalized mentorship in equipping students with these foundational abilities. The findings highlight the vital role of SPAs' commitment to student development. By providing individualized mentorship, fostering a safe and encouraging environment, and equipping students with the skills necessary to become critical thinkers, SPAs play a crucial role in shaping their students' futures and preparing them for meaningful societal engagement.

Demanding and Tiring Nature of Advisorship

This emerging theme encompasses various challenges faced by School Paper Advisors (SPAs) in their role, including overcommitment, personal cost, demands, and difficulties of mentorship. It emphasizes the difficulties SPAs encounter in balancing their responsibilities, managing the emotional demands of mentoring, and coping with the physical demands of the job. Participants shared the difficulties of managing their time effectively due to the demands of the advisorship. Vanguard acknowledged the personal impact, stating:

"I became deeply engrossed in the paper's content creation, layout design, and student mentorship-it almost felt like an addiction that consumed my thoughts."

This suggests that the advisors often struggle to separate their personal lives from their professional responsibilities, leading to constant mental preoccupation with their work. Furthermore, the advisors acknowledged the emotional strain and physical exhaustion of mentoring student writers. Vanguard stated:

"Mentoring student-writers would really test our patience and dedication because some students had potentials but have some difficulties in learning the craft yet we want them to win so we need to exert more effort to help them. That process is physically and mentally tiresome."

This highlights the emotional toll that can result from working closely with students, particularly when trying to help them overcome challenges and achieve their goals. Veritas described the physical demands of training the students:

"Physically, I mean it's training, stress, kasi diba paano mo maipapasa yung gusto mong mangyari maisulat ng mga bata you as adult syempre the context is the experience as to reading, kasi marami ka talagang mababasa o nabasa na hindi pa nila alam."

Vanguard also agreed that:

"Being physically drained during the papering seasons and press conferences is possible. That is really inevitable."

The demands and difficulties of mentorship also impact the SPAs' personal relationships and well-being. Catalyst stated:

"Being a school paper adviser significantly impacts my significant others by shaping my time commitments and emotional availability. The demands of coaching and mentoring student writers often require long hours dedicated to overseeing the school paper's production, attending meetings, and providing feedback on articles. This commitment can sometimes lead to less time spent with family and friends, as I strive to balance my responsibilities as an adviser with personal relationships."

The advisers may find maintaining a healthy work-life balance challenging, negatively affecting their relationships and overall well-being. Participants Veritas, Vanguard, and Catalyst highlighted the physical and mental exhaustion, the inevitability of physical drain, and the impact on personal relationships. This theme underscores the need for SPAs to develop effective coping strategies to manage stress, balance responsibilities, and maintain their well-being while fulfilling their commitment to student development. According to Hoffman (2015), coaching campus journalists requires technical skills and a deep understanding of journalistic structure and content dynamics. This aligns with the participants' accounts of being mentally preoccupied with press-related work as they juggle content creation, layout planning, and student mentoring responsibilities.

On the other hand, Bañez and Adjin-Tetty (2024) emphasized that campus journalism plays a vital role in shaping students' personal growth and development through extracurricular opportunities. Furthermore, Paguirigan and Paguirigan (2023) noted that coaching for school press conferences brings prestige to advisers but also imposes immense pressure to achieve competitive success. Ventista and Brown (2023) observed that structured coaching techniques can enhance student outcomes, but they demand significant time and energy from advisers. Personalized feedback, goal setting, and collaboration are essential components of effective coaching (Mofield & Phelps, 2021), yet these strategies further increase the workload of SPAs. The findings emphasize the importance of addressing the challenges faced by SPAs. Providing adequate support, resources, and training can help them manage stress, maintain balance, and sustain their well-being — enabling them to continue their valuable work in coaching and mentoring student-writers.

Rewarding and Meaningful Nature of Advisorship

This emerging theme is defined by the School Paper Advisors' (SPAs) perceptions of how competition and success impact both themselves and their students. It encompasses fulfillment and satisfaction in advisership, meaningful impact, and growth through campus journalism. As expressed by the participants, the advisers find a sense of validation in their students' achievements. Veritas shared:

"Parang, nasa alapaap yung feeling ng fulfillment knowing the process the pinag daanan Ninyo yung process na naitawid mo yung isang maliit na school hanggang sa National School Press Conference yung process na hindi nag tapus doon sa kanilang panalo ng tagumpay kundi alam mo after na na hills sila as outstanding Campus Journalist magiging scholar sila automatic sa college yung alam mo na nagbago ung buhay nila yung kasiguraduhan na maka pag aral sila because you are part of their journey."

This reflects the immense satisfaction they derive from seeing their students succeed and the knowledge that their guidance has played a crucial role in their achievements. Vanguard echoed this sentiment, stating:

"There were feelings of contentment and significance everytime making my mentee and the paper win in the press conferences...."

For these advisers, the victories of their students serve as a powerful affirmation of their skills, dedication, and impact as mentors. Success in competitions also builds confidence in the student-writers, enabling them to believe in their abilities and pursue their goals. According to Veritas, reflecting on her early experiences:

"ahhHMN, at that time, it is not new to me because when I was in high school I am also a campus journalist...yung students na yon yung nananalo na sya sa division level doon ko Nakita na may purpose ang life ko doon ko Nakita na siguro dito ako nilagay ng principal ko its because meron akong purpose na e share yong aking skills para sa mga estudyante."

This statement reflects how early competition success helped her discover her purpose as a school paper advisor, motivating her to share her skills with the students. Three participants mentioned a sense of fulfillment and achievement and feelings of contentment and significance. This indicates that achievements in journalism are not merely about winning awards but also about fostering personal growth, empowerment, and a sense of belonging. This finding aligns with the research by Paguirigan and Paguirigan (2023), who noted that coaching for school press conferences brings prestige to advisers and mirrors the importance of establishing clear roles and

expectations in coaching relationships. The impact of competition and success also underscores the importance of experiential learning theory, which suggests that learning occurs through experience, reflection, and application (Kolb, 2015). Finally, the validation and fulfillment experienced by advisers through their students' achievements reflect the significance of constructivism in shaping learning environments. Constructivism emphasizes that individuals build knowledge through experiences and interactions (Srouf et al., 2021).

Committed and Flexible Mentorship for Student Development

This emerging theme highlights School Paper Advisers' (SPAs) unwavering dedication to balancing perseverance and adaptability as they mentor student writers. Advisers see their journalism expertise central to their professional identity, shaping their leadership and empowering students and colleagues. Their commitment is evident in navigating challenges, such as managing student engagement amid academic pressures, fostering a supportive and adaptive learning environment, and maintaining consistent standards despite time constraints and varying skill levels. Participants wanted to pass on their knowledge and skills to future generations. Veritas stated:

"I always believe that I'm thankful for journalism because a big part of where I am now is because of my ability to write."

This demonstrates the advisor's recognition of the transformative power of journalism and their commitment to sharing this gift with others. The advisers also envisioned themselves continuing to mentor and coach students. Vanguard stated:

"I envision myself continuing to mentor and coach students who will require my expertise."

This reflects a deep-seated desire to continue making a difference in the lives of students, even beyond their formal responsibilities. Moreover, the advisers saw their background in journalism as adding value to their roles as leaders. Frontier asserted:

"My journalism training provides unique value to my work as an educational leader."

This highlights the advisers' belief that their journalism expertise has equipped them with valuable skills and perspectives that can benefit their students and colleagues. The advisers also expressed a desire to shift their focus from direct involvement to a more supervisory role. Nexus stated:

"What I want now is to focus on coaching in a sense of monitoring... I see myself still in journalism, but not as much in starting from scratch with the eagerness of a beginner."

This reflects a desire to sustain their impact through coaching and mentoring, rather than through direct involvement in the day-to-day operations of the school paper. Five participants highlighted the multifaceted challenges and responsibilities of School Paper Advisers (SPAs), emphasizing legacy-building through mentorship, adaptive teaching strategies, and sustained momentum. Flores and Uy (2022) emphasize that effective coaching of campus journalists requires more than just presentation skills - it demands a deep understanding of journalistic structure and content. Moreover, Paguirigan & Paguirigan's (2023) observation that coaching for school press conferences brings prestige to advisers mirrors the importance of establishing clear roles and expectations in coaching relationships.

3.2 Emerging Themes on the Lived Experiences of Outstanding School Paper Advisers in Coaching

Five (5) emerging themes were identified through rigorous analysis of 20 initial themes and 11 clustered themes, capturing the lived experiences of outstanding school paper advisers in the Philippines: pride and joy in student success, the value of mentorship and community support, growth through meaningful advisership, student success through personalized and inspiring guidance, sharing experiences and legacy. These themes encapsulate the advisers' dedication to nurturing student writers through adaptable, community-centered mentorship.

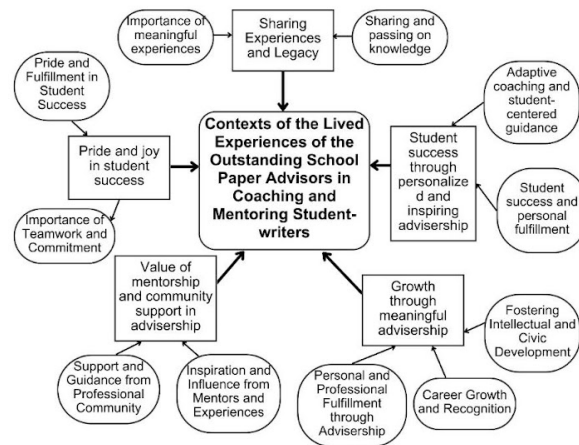


Figure 2. Schematic Diagram on the Lived Experiences in Coaching and Mentoring

Pride and Joy in Student Success

This theme captures the profound fulfillment and joy that School Paper Advisors (SPAs) derive from mentoring student writers, highlighting personal satisfaction and collaborative effort's power. It encompasses pride in student achievements, the importance of teamwork, and the deep sense of purpose that emerges from shared dedication. The role of a School Paper Adviser (SPA) serves as a source of immense pride and joy, marked by moments of student triumph and collective success. Participants described how witnessing their students' progress from skill mastery to winning prestigious competitions became a defining and rewarding aspect of their careers. Veritas, reflected on the historic significance of their students' accomplishments:

"My defining achievement as a barangay school paper adviser is witnessing my students win national titles like Most Outstanding Campus Journalist in the Philippines within a short timeframe. For a small barangay school, this feels historic- it proves journalism transcends institutional size or prestige. Bringing our school to the national stage three times (nearly four consecutive years) marks the pinnacle of my mentoring career."

This achievement not only challenged stereotypes about resource-limited schools but also demonstrated the democratizing power of journalism. These victories exceeded individual accolades, fostering a collective sense of pride and motivation. Vanguard expressed that their students' contest wins brought immense happiness and fulfillment, describing the achievement of their goals as the most rewarding experience. Similarly, Catalyst emphasized that regional and national recognition reinforced the value of teamwork and dedication, explaining how celebrating these successes motivated both advisers and students to continue striving for excellence. For SPAs, these moments validated their mentorship and highlighted the ripple effect of their work- transforming students' lives while reshaping their professional identities. The transformative impact extended beyond the students themselves. Advisers like Veritas view their role in campus journalism as a defining part of their professional journey, with the experience significantly shaping their skills and identity as educators. This dual process of nurturing students while evolving as educators aligns with research emphasizing the importance of structured coaching and collaborative learning environments (Shui Ng & Yu, 2021) in fostering success. By empowering students from marginalized backgrounds to compete on national stages, SPAs challenged systemic inequities and redefined what excellence in journalism education looks like. These transformative moments depend on a shared commitment to growth. As Catalyst noted, striving for excellence through late-night edits, setbacks, and breakthroughs held equal importance to the outcomes, collectively fostering resilience. Observing students develop into confident, skilled writers represented the most meaningful reward. Such experiences underscore the urgent need for institutions to invest in SPAs' professional development and provide adequate resources, ensuring that these transformative opportunities remain accessible to all students regardless of their school's socioeconomic context.

Value of Mentorship and Community Support in Advisership

This theme emphasizes how collaboration, shared wisdom, and strong support networks from colleagues, mentors, school leaders, and past teachers collectively shape the effectiveness and fulfillment of SPAs in their roles. SPAs emphasized how mentorship from peers, school leaders, and past mentors shaped their coaching

methods and resilience. Participants described how mentorship and collaboration were instrumental in their advisership. Veritas emphasized:

“the support of co-teachers and principals was crucial to their achievements, noting that such collaboration and encouragement made it possible to reach shared goals”.

Similarly, Vanguard highlighted the impact of mentors, mentioning a former school paper adviser now promoted to a supervisory role. Catalyst further underscored and stated that:

“the substantial influence of fellow educators and mentors on an adviser’s journey.”

These supportive networks provide emotional support and serve as vital sources of knowledge and best practices. Nexus shared how their winning moments inspired fellow school paper advisers starting in journalism, while Frontier credited their English teachers from high school as foundational influences. This reciprocal mentorship fosters a culture of continuous professional growth and shared learning. The importance of these networks aligns with research emphasizing the value of collaboration and mentorship in campus journalism. Studies have shown that building connections with other advisers and involving students in community activities are key strategies for overcoming challenges and enhancing student development (Baria & Gomez, 2022). Moreover, the pandemic highlighted the resilience and adaptability of campus publication advisers, who leveraged digital tools and community engagement to maintain student involvement and publication quality (Ramos & Suizo, 2023). Supportive networks and collaborations are vital for SPAs, providing a framework for shared learning, mutual support, and collective success. By fostering these relationships, SPAs can better navigate the challenges of their role and create a more enriching experience for themselves and their students.

Growth through Meaningful Advisership

The role of a School Paper Adviser (SPA) fosters both personal fulfillment and professional growth, making it a transformative experience for many. This theme highlights how advisership contributes not only to career advancement and emotional satisfaction but also to students' intellectual and civic development. Participants shared how their role as SPAs enriched their careers and deepened their sense of purpose as educators and mentors. They also inspired colleagues and nurtured students' critical thinking and civic awareness growth. Many SPAs described their advisership as a defining and fulfilling part of their professional lives. Veritas reflected on the transformative impact of campus journalism, describing it as life-changing for students and advisers. This role, according to Veritas:

“transcends routine professional duties and becomes a deeply personal journey that enriches their identity as educators and mentors.”

This sentiment underscores the profound fulfillment of guiding students in their journalistic pursuits. Similarly, Vanguard characterized their role as school paper advisers as the most transformative experience of their career, emphasizing how mentorship achievements brought both personal satisfaction and career growth. The ability to inspire others, especially fellow educators and aspiring SPAs, was also a significant source of pride. Nexus noted that their accomplishments were encouragement and guidance for new school paper advisers entering the field, highlighting the ripple effect of mentorship within the community. Vanguard further emphasized that:

“success in campus journalism directly contributed to their professional advancement, including promotion, demonstrating how achievements in student guidance can translate into career recognition.”

Moreover, the advisership cultivates essential skills such as leadership, resource management, and strategic thinking. These competencies enhance SPAs' professional trajectories and improve their capacity to mentor students effectively and foster a collaborative learning environment. Beyond personal and professional growth, SPAs take pride in shaping students' intellectual and civic development. Frontier emphasized that campus journalism expands knowledge, encourages divergent thinking, and fosters patriotism, nationalism, and freedom of expression. This highlights how the advisership serves as a platform for cultivating critical thinking, creativity, and civic consciousness among students. While the role is advantageous, it also presents challenges. Balancing academic duties, coaching responsibilities, and managing the school publication demands significant effort. However, participants expressed that the rewards far outweigh these challenges. Research supports that SPAs often employ strategies such as maintaining open communication with students and fostering collaborative

environments to effectively manage these demands (Carlobos & Callo, 2025). The personal and professional impact of being an SPA is profound, encompassing career advancement, emotional fulfillment, and meaningful contributions to student development. By inspiring students and fellow educators alike, SPAs create a lasting legacy. Their experiences illuminate the transformative power of campus journalism in shaping lives and underscore the importance of institutional support to sustain these vital roles.

Student Success through Personalized and Inspiring Advisership

The role of School Paper Advisers (SPAs) profoundly impacts student development and empowerment by fostering creativity, building confidence, and promoting academic growth. Through their mentorship, SPAs guide students to realize their potential, achieve success, and express themselves creatively. This transformative process enhances students' academic achievements and instills values that shape their personal and professional lives. Participants emphasized the life-changing impact of personalized and inspiring advisership on students. Veritas asserted:

“campus newspapers hold transformative potential, profoundly impacting both students and advisers by turning aspirations for writing excellence into tangible achievements through tailored mentorship and adaptive coaching”.

This statement highlights how campus journalism allows students to pursue their aspirations and realize their capabilities. Winning contests and publishing school papers were pivotal moments that boosted students' confidence and solidified their commitment to journalism. Catalyst highlighted the significance of students' first successful publication as a defining moment, where the tangible outcome of their work in print bolstered their confidence and reinforced their dedication to journalism. Similarly, Vanguard took pride in their students' contest victories, describing these achievements as deeply rewarding milestones in their mentoring journey, fueled by adaptive strategies and celebratory encouragement. SPAs also play a crucial role in tailoring their mentorship to individual needs, ensuring academic and personal growth. Nexus explained that:

“effective coaching involves adjusting teaching strategies to match each student's strengths, which led them to use differentiated instruction techniques that empower students to overcome challenges and develop critical skills”.

This student-centered guidance fosters not only academic excellence but also personal fulfillment. Beyond academic achievements, SPAs inspire students to think critically and embrace values such as patriotism and nationalism. Frontier emphasized that journalism enables students to broaden their intellectual horizons, cultivate national pride, and freely articulate their perspectives. This demonstrates how campus journalism is a platform for nurturing civic consciousness and creative expression among students through meaningful mentor-mentee connections. SPAs find validation in witnessing the success of their students. Frontier highlighted the deeply personal and intimate nature of advisership, describing how witnessing students' successes feels both validating and affirming, reinforcing the transformative power of student-centered mentorship in shaping lives. Research supports these findings by highlighting the role of SPAs in empowering students through structured adaptive coaching and fostering creativity (Basilan & Padilla, 2023).

Additionally, studies emphasize that SPAs create conducive environments for learning by providing emotional support and encouraging self-expression through personalized guidance (Baria & Gomez, 2022). Student development and empowerment are central to the role of SPAs. By guiding students toward academic success, instilling values, and boosting confidence through tailored mentorship and adaptive strategies, SPAs leave a lasting impact on their mentees' lives. Their dedication stresses the transformative power of campus journalism in shaping future leaders and thinkers while validating the importance of student-centered advisership in education.

Sharing Experiences and Legacy

The theme of sharing experiences and building a legacy underscore the importance of collaboration, mentorship, and personal growth for School Paper Advisers (SPAs). By leveraging their years of experience in campus journalism, SPAs foster a culture of knowledge-sharing that benefits fellow advisers and student writers and contributes to their own development as educators. This process creates a ripple effect, where mentees eventually become mentors, perpetuating a cycle of growth and mentorship. SPAs consistently emphasized the value of sharing their expertise with others. Nexus demonstrated a strong commitment to sharing its decade-long experience in campus journalism by regularly conducting seminars and workshops for fellow school paper

advisers and student writers. This act of sharing not only enhances the skills of others but also reinforces the adviser's role as a mentor and leader within the campus journalism community. One of the most fulfilling aspects for SPAs is witnessing their mentees carry forward the lessons they imparted. Frontier described a ripple effect of mentorship, noting that:

"my first mentees, now in college, have taken on coaching roles for new student writers."

This demonstrates how SPAs' mentorship transcends time, creating a lasting legacy as former students take on leadership roles themselves. Reflecting on their journey, SPAs acknowledged how these experiences defined them as individuals and educators. Veritas emphasized that:

"formative experiences in journalism-particularly pivotal events and stories-irrevocably shape personal and professional identity, with their intrinsic value remaining unmatched."

This reflection highlights how the act of mentoring others is not only about imparting knowledge but also about personal transformation and fulfillment. Sharing experiences fosters collaboration among SPAs, creating a supportive network that enhances campus journalism programs. Research supports this dynamic, emphasizing that experienced advisers often collaborate with peers to overcome challenges such as limited resources or tight deadlines (Akinyemi et al., 2019). Working together, advisers strengthen their programs while cultivating an environment of mutual learning. The ripple effect of sharing experiences extends beyond individual advisers to the broader school community. As mentees grow into mentors, they contribute to sustaining high standards in campus journalism. This aligns with findings highlighting how mentorship and collaboration among SPAs enhance student outcomes and institutional success (Snezhana & Nedeva, 2024). The theme of sharing experiences and building a legacy illustrates how SPAs contribute to a mentorship and collaboration culture that benefits individuals and institutions. Through passing on their knowledge, fostering relationships, and inspiring future leaders in campus journalism, SPAs create a lasting impact that transcends their immediate roles. This growth cycle enriches the lives of those involved and ensures the sustainability of excellence in school journalism programs.

3.3 Emerging Themes on Future Roles and Self-Perceptions of Outstanding School Paper Advisors

Four (4) emerging themes were identified through rigorous analysis of 17 initial themes and 11 clustered themes, encapsulating the evolving leadership and mentorship journeys of outstanding school paper advisors in the Philippines: evolving career with continued mentorship and leadership, leading and growing through writing, coaching, and mentoring, empowering leadership through career evolution and continuous development, empowering growth through adaptive leadership and mentorship, and building leadership through writing and coaching. These themes highlight how advisers foster professional growth, adaptability, and student empowerment by integrating writing, coaching, and leadership, ultimately shaping resilient and capable future leaders.

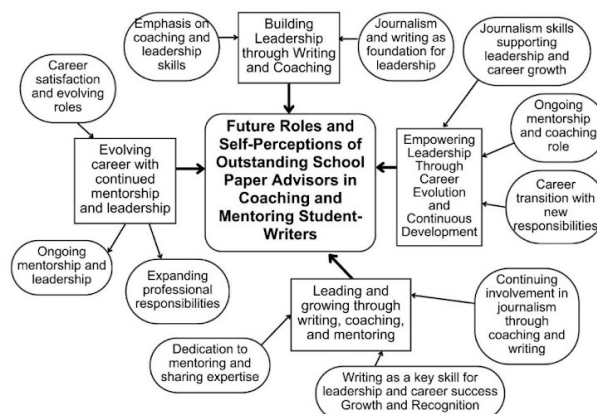


Figure 3. Schematic Diagram on the Future Roles and Self-Perceptions in Coaching and Mentoring

Evolving career with continued mentorship and leadership

This theme explores the visions of School Paper Advisers (SPAs) for their future roles, emphasizing evolving careers with continued mentorship and leadership. SPAs see themselves leveraging their expertise to mentor and coach students, creating lasting impacts that enhance personal fulfillment and professional growth. Participants expressed a strong sense of purpose in their current roles, with some envisioning continued involvement in journalism. Veritas emphasized that:

“my current role in campus journalism represents an ideal career fulfillment, prioritizing present purpose over speculative future trajectories.”

This sentiment highlights how SPAs find their roles transformative and fulfilling, often leading to career advancement and role evolution. For instance, Frontier mentioned how their journalism background adds value to their role as a principal, illustrating how these skills can be applied across different leadership positions. SPAs see themselves continuing to mentor and coach students, utilizing their expertise to foster growth and development. Vanguard affirmed its dedication to mentoring and coaching students by leveraging its expertise to support learners seeking guidance. This commitment to mentorship highlights the importance of passing on knowledge and experience to future journalists. Some SPAs have transitioned into new roles, leveraging their journalism skills in broader contexts. Veritas shared their experience of transferring to a local government unit (LGU) to prepare an inaugural speech for a city mayor. This transition demonstrates how the skills developed as an SPA can be applied in diverse professional settings. The experiences of SPAs have enhanced their professional skills and deepened their sense of personal purpose. This transformative growth is reflected in their visions for future roles, where they see themselves continuing to make meaningful contributions through mentorship and leadership. Research highlights the importance of continuous training and professional development for SPAs to adapt to evolving journalism landscapes (Horska, 2020). The role of SPAs in fostering student development and empowerment is also crucial, as they guide students toward realizing their potential and achieving success (Culver & Shepard, 2023). The theme of future career directions and roles features how SPAs envision their roles evolving to include mentorship, coaching, and leadership. By leveraging their expertise, SPAs create lasting impacts that contribute to personal fulfillment and professional growth, ensuring a legacy of excellence in campus journalism.

Leading and Growing through Writing, Coaching, and Mentoring

This theme reflects School Paper Advisers' (SPAs) commitment to leadership development through writing, coaching, and mentoring. SPAs see themselves guiding emerging talents, leveraging their journalism expertise to shape future generations through knowledge transfer. They emphasize writing as a core leadership skill and career accelerator while maintaining active roles in journalism education. Their experience in the field serves as a foundation for mentoring and coaching, demonstrating dedication to nurturing students' growth and evolving their professional impact through sustained expertise-sharing. Participants emphasized their desire to continue in roles that enable them to coach and mentor. Nexus articulated a shift toward mentorship-focused journalism, emphasizing a desire to guide emerging writers through strategic monitoring rather than foundational training. This approach highlights how SPAs value their experience and seek to apply it in guiding students. Vanguard also shared aspirations to be involved in editorial roles and research projects, demonstrating how their journalism background informs their leadership and mentorship goals. SPAs recognize the importance of their journalism expertise in leadership roles. Frontier asserted that leadership roles, including school heads, require mastery of skills cultivated through journalism—such as communication, critical analysis, and creative problem-solving. This perspective aligns with Veritas's acknowledgment of journalism's foundational impact, as they attributed their professional growth to writing proficiency developed through their experience in campus publications. SPAs are committed to mentoring students who will benefit from their expertise. Vanguard articulated:

“I commitment to leveraging my expertise through ongoing mentorship, positioning myself as a dedicated guide for emerging student journalists.”

This commitment to mentorship reflects the value SPAs place on shaping future generations of journalists and leaders. Research supports that SPAs' leadership and mentorship roles are crucial for student development. Effective coaching strategies, such as personalized feedback and goal setting, enhance students' skills and confidence (Travers, 2022). Moreover, fostering a collaborative learning environment is key to successful mentorship (Cojorn & Sonsupap, 2024). Their reflections reveal deep gratitude for journalism's impact on their

professional journeys and a dedication to nurturing the next generation, consistent with research that underscores the transformative role of innovative and visionary leadership in Philippine education.

Empowering Leadership Through Career Evolution and Continuous Development

This theme highlights educators' professional evolution into leadership roles through embracing new responsibilities, sustaining mentorship, and leveraging journalism expertise. It underscores how career transitions marked by expanded duties, ongoing coaching roles, and applying journalism skills collectively drive leadership development. SPAs view their background in journalism as foundational to their success and fulfillment in leadership roles. Veritas credited:

"my professional growth to journalism, emphasizing how writing proficiency became a cornerstone of their career trajectory."

This sentiment highlights how journalism skills have shaped their professional trajectory and provided opportunities for meaningful contributions, such as preparing inaugural speeches or advancing to leadership positions. Participants expressed a strong commitment to mentoring and coaching students, seeing these responsibilities as central to their future roles. Vanguard affirmed:

"my dedication to mentorship, positioning themselves as a guide for students requiring specialized support"

while Nexus emphasized:

"a strategic shift toward supervisory coaching, prioritizing skill refinement over foundational instruction."

These aspirations illustrate how SPAs aim to refine their coaching skills and leverage their experience to guide students effectively. The role of SPA often serves as a stepping stone for career advancement. Frontier highlighted that their background in journalism adds value to their role as a principal, a perspective supported by research and professional guidelines. This demonstrates how SPAs integrate their expertise into broader leadership roles, contributing to personal growth and institutional success. While SPAs derive immense satisfaction from their current roles, they also envision evolving into new opportunities that align with their strengths. Veritas attributed:

"my transition to local government work to being formally entrusted with drafting the city mayor's inaugural address is a critical task that aligned my expertise in communication and strategic messaging with administrative responsibilities."

This transition reflects how SPAs use their journalism skills to explore diverse professional paths while maintaining a sense of purpose. Research highlights the importance of aligning personal fulfillment with professional aspirations. Studies suggest that mentorship practices rooted in journalism expertise foster student skill development and contribute to advisors' professional satisfaction (Travers, 2022). This theme illustrates how educators evolve into leadership roles by embracing new responsibilities, sustaining mentorship, and leveraging journalism expertise, demonstrating adaptability and continuous growth.

Building Leadership through Writing and Coaching

This theme highlights the School Paper Advisers' (SPAs) how journalism and writing skills serve as a foundation for leadership development, alongside a strong emphasis on coaching and mentoring. Participants consistently linked their leadership growth to journalism and writing. Veritas attributed their success to writing abilities, while Frontier emphasized how journalism enhances strategic communication and collaborative leadership. Research supports this, showing that journalism education builds writing proficiency, critical thinking, and ethical decision-making, essential for effective leadership (Travers, 2022). The hands-on nature of journalism, including collaborative projects, further prepares individuals for dynamic leadership roles (Perreault & Tham, 2023). SPAs like Vanguard and Nexus emphasized their commitment to mentoring students and new advisers, aligning with studies highlighting coaching as critical for skill refinement and confidence-building. Structured mentorship provides professional networking and ethical guidance, ensuring the development of future leaders (Pandey & Sharma, 2022). Journalism's core writing, communication, and critical analysis skills translate to leadership. Frontier noted that journalism adds value to their role as a principal, reinforcing research on how writing and collaboration underpin school leadership. SPAs stressed lifelong learning to stay current with digital publishing and hybrid collaboration trends. Professional development programs improve publication quality and adaptability, ensuring leaders remain effective.

4.0 Conclusion

The lifeworld of school paper advisers highlights their dedication and adaptability in coaching and mentoring student writers. They integrate practical experience and formal training to foster student outcomes in journalism yet face challenges such as inadequate resources and maintaining student motivation. Their teaching philosophy emphasizes structured competencies and continuous professional development to address evolving instructional demands. Outstanding advisers describe their experiences through transformative moments and collaborative efforts shaping student empowerment. They derive fulfillment from witnessing students' growth into confident journalists, leveraging supportive networks, and overcoming challenges through resilience and community engagement. Advisers envision their future roles as leaders adapting to technological advancements and fostering legacy in campus journalism. They stress the need for ongoing training in modern media trends and advocacy for policy reforms to secure funding and support—their self-perception centers on empowering the next generation of journalists through innovation and ethical reporting.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The principal author contributes to the study's writing and implementation. The co-author edits, supervises the data.

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The authors assert no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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