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Implementation of Campus Journalism Act among the Public Secondary Schools in Region III: An Evaluation

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I. INTRODUCTION

Sound journalism education contributes towards professional and ethical practice of journalism. Such journalism is better suited to foster democracy, dialogue and development (UNESCO, 2015).

The United States, as the pioneer in journalism education, provided legal protection of the student press from the censorship of government authorities. Student journalists have the right to discuss matters in their newspaper, both school-sponsored and underground, that were previously forbidden to them. They can responsibly report anything interests and concerns their readers.

In the Philippines, campus journalism has an invaluable contribution in the restoration and preservation of free speech and expression inside and outside our nation's campuses. As early as the periods of Spanish, American and Japanese Occupations, campus journalists have braved repressive conditions in order to expose the grim realities under colonial government (Ridon, 2013).

Through Republic Act No. 7079, otherwise known as the Campus Journalism Act of 1991 which was enacted on July 5, 1991, the freedom of the press at the campus level and the promotion of the development and growth of campus journalism stated in its declaration of policies would supposedly be to upheld and protected.

Thus, this study aimed to evaluate the implementation of the Campus Journalism Act among the public secondary schools of Region III. It specifically answered the following questions:

1. How is the implementation of the Campus Journalism Act evaluated in terms of the following:

- a) *Editorial Policies*

The Rules and Regulations for the Implementation of Republic Act No. 7079 (*Campus Journalism Act of 1991*) emphasized that editorial policies pertain to the set of guidelines by which a student publication is operated and managed, taking into account pertinent laws as well as the school administration's policies.

- i. *Operations*

Eighty seven school heads confirmed that the editorial policies on operations were implemented among the public secondary schools in Region III. School paper advisers and students from 87 public secondary schools in Region III also provided a very satisfactory rating for the implementation of the editorial policies on operations.

- ii. *Management*

The school heads clearly manifested their 100 % agreement that the editorial policies on management were properly implemented. In addition, the school paper advisers and students indicated their very satisfactory rating in terms of the guidelines set for the management.

- b) *Editorial Board*

- i. *Composition*

The editorial board of the schools included the duly appointed faculty adviser, a qualified editor and a representative of the Parents-Teachers' Association as stated on Rule 3 of CJA's implementing guidelines. The findings further showed that the schools had a qualified editor in the editorial board. However, the school paper

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advisers provided only a satisfactory rating for the editorial board composition. In contrast with the satisfactory response of the school paper advisers, the students gave a very satisfactory rating on the implementation of the editorial composition.

ii. *Selection Procedure*

Majority of the school heads believed that the editorial board selection procedure must be done through a qualifying examination conducted by a committee composed of the student publication adviser, who shall act as chairperson, the past student-editor as vice-chairman, one (1) faculty member and two (2) former student-editors. Based also on the SPAs' responses, only limited number of schools formed a committee composing of the student publication adviser, who acted as chairperson, the past student-editor as vice-chairman, one (1) faculty member and two (2) former student-editors. In contrary, the students believed on the very satisfactory implementation of the editorial board selection procedure in their respective schools.

iii. *Duties and Responsibilities*

Majority of the school heads, school paper advisers, and students believed that the editorial board had played the duties and responsibilities stated in the Campus Journalism Act.

iv. *Security of Tenure*

All the school heads said that their schools observed the satisfactory academic standing for the members of the student publication for them to retain their membership. Eighty seven percent of the school heads also believed that the members of the editorial board shall not be expelled or suspended solely on the basis of articles they write, or on the basis of the performance of his/her duties in the publication staff.

c) *Publication Adviser*

i. *Selection Procedure*

Majority of the school heads believed that the provision of R.A. 7079 on the publication adviser selection procedure was executed in their respective schools. The school paper advisers and the students even provided a very satisfactory rating on the selection procedure they had been through before appointing as the publication advisers.

ii. *Work Load*

Majority of the school heads believed that the implementation of the publication adviser's workload was observed and revised in their respective schools. School paper advisers even provided a very satisfactory rating on the implementation of the publication adviser's workload.

iii. *Duties and Responsibilities*

Majority of the school heads agreed that the publication adviser's duties and responsibilities were implemented in their respective schools. The 87 % of the

school heads indicated their observance of the R.A. 7079. The school paper advisers and the students also provided a very satisfactory rating as to the implementation of their duties and responsibilities based on R.A. 7079.

d) *Training, workshop, and seminar*

Majority of the school heads believed that training, workshop, and seminar on Campus Journalism were executed in their respective schools. In fact, all of the school heads agreed that the Department of Education conducted school, division, regional, and national workshop or seminars as well as press conferences and periodic competitions.

SPAs' trainings, workshops, and seminars which were held at the institutional, divisional, and regional levels, culminating with the holding of the annual national elementary, secondary or tertiary School Press Conferences in places of historical and/or cultural interest in the country were rated outstanding.

e) *Funding and Appropriations*

i. *Sources of Funds*

Majority of the school heads, publication advisers and students agreed that the funds for student publication came from savings of the respective school's appropriations, student subscriptions, and donations. Subscription fees collected by the school administration were also released automatically to the student publication concerned based on the school paper advisers' responses. Furthermore, the editorial board, with the assistance of the student publication staff, prepared the students publication budget for each semester/year. However, the budget that shall be posted on the school bulletin board and published in the student publication has only gained a satisfactory rating among the SPAs.

ii. *Utilization of Funds*

All the school heads agreed that publication fees, savings, donations, grants and other funds collected from other sources for the student publication were for its exclusive use as stated on Rule V, Section 6. They also assured that disbursements of their student publication funds were made according to accounting and auditing regulations (Rule V, Section 2). However, only 64 % or 56 out of 87 school heads believed that the publication funds were deposited in the account of the student publication in an authorized depository bank through at least two (2) authorized signatories of the editorial board. The school paper advisers and students proved that their schools utilized the publication funds based on R.A. 7079 by giving a very satisfactory rating.

Publication fees, savings, donations, grants and other funds collected from other sources were used exclusively (Rule V, Section 6) as evidenced by the very satisfactory rating given by the school paper advisers and the students.

iii. *Report of Expenses*

The school heads assured that a financial report of expenses were prepared by the editorial board and student publication staff at the close of the school year for the elementary and secondary levels (Rule V, Section 5). The financial report of expenses was also properly audited by a COA/authorized auditor for the public schools.

2. What are the Campus Journalism Act provisions revised by the public secondary schools in Region III?

Majority of the schools fully observed the provisions on editorial policies (Section 2 and Section 3e), editorial board (Section 3d), publication adviser (Section 6), training, and workshop, and seminar (Section 8), and funding and appropriations (Section 5). However, the mandates on editorial policies and publication management procedures, editorial board composition and selection procedure, publication advising task and function as of technical guidance, budget posting and publishing, and depositing publication funds were revised by some schools.

3. What strategies could be proposed to ensure the effective implementation of the Campus Journalism Act among the public secondary schools in Region III?

Determining the editorial policies and publication fund management procedures, requiring the publication staff to submit a list of publication adviser recommendees, conducting a qualifying examination among the aspiring publication members, organizing a seminar on publication adviser's duties and responsibilities focusing on technical guidance, and requiring the editorial board to post and publish the publication budget on the school bulletin board and student were the strategies proposed to ensure the effective implementation of the Campus Journalism Act.

4. What are the implications of the implementation of the Campus Journalism Act in educational management?

Based on the findings, majority of the schools fully executed the said provisions which implied that educational managers were implementers of the Campus Journalism Act of 1991. The results further signified that educational institutions, as the primary avenue for these policies to happen, embodied the authority to execute the mandates on editorial policies (operations and management), the editorial board selection procedure, editorial board duties and responsibilities and security of tenure. Educational managers even showcased their supervisory skills as they observed how the publication advisers of their respective schools performed their duties and responsibilities.

School administrators then, as planners and decision-makers, were able to provide training,

seminars, and workshops among the members of the editorial board which included school, division, regional, and national workshop or seminars as well as press conferences and periodic competitions. The school administrators and teacher-advisers were also managed to find sources of funds that involved school's appropriations, student subscriptions, donations, and other sources of funds.

The results of this study even implied that there must be a transformation needed in terms of the system among the schools in which administrations totally controlled all the aspects of educational management. They need to revisit existing laws to avoid stepping into the boundary set by the Philippine constitution. They also need to be aware of other supporting legal mandates as to their functions specifically in terms of the CJA mandates in which the editorial board has the authority over its policies and finances.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are based on the findings presented: There are different strategies that could be done to ensure the effectiveness of the implementation of R.A. 7079.

1. The schools followed the Philippine Constitution which provided for and protected press freedom.
2. The schools were encouraged to establish a student publication and school and the editorial board took various programs and projects aimed at improving the journalistic skills of students concerned and promoting responsible and free journalism.
3. The schools aimed to improve the journalistic skills of the students and to promote responsible and free journalism.
4. The findings also implied that the school heads, as the primary person in-charge of the implementation, found the publication adviser as necessary for the effectiveness of the publication.
5. The school heads' agreement on having a Parents-Teachers' Association (PTA) representative as member of the editorial board signified that PTA took an active role in developing programs, advocacy and training, and working on policy that supports the educational needs of children and promotes family engagement and strong partnerships between schools and the communities they serve.
6. The school heads found the editorial board, as a channel for unifying all members of the school and the community towards desirable educational and cultural development objectives as the board's primary duty and responsibility.
7. The editorial boards developed intelligent and responsible student leadership and good citizenship in a free and democratic society. The editorial boards were provided the opportunity to exercise

- their rights and discharge their responsibilities as members of self-governing communities. The editorial boards did not only need to acquire a body of knowledge but also they need to acquire relevant intellectual and participatory skills.
8. The editorial board served as an advocate of social consciousness and upheld the interests of the Filipino people.
 9. The schools and the editorial boards were oriented toward promoting and upholding student rights and welfare.
 10. The school heads were open for guidance among the publication staff.
 11. Some of the advisers had gone beyond what was just expected of them to do. Since the term "technical guidance" is not defined in Sec. 3 (Definition of Terms), the results implied that some school administrators and faculty advisers had liberally defined it based on their own understanding or misunderstanding of the journalism profession. Clearly, doing so had compromised the editorial independence of student publications.
 12. The revisions done by the schools on some of the existing CJA provisions indicated that there were mandates not fully implemented.
 13. The implementation of Campus Journalism Act of 1991 provided implications to educational management.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions presented, the following recommendations are given:

1. The proper orientation should be done by the regional and division offices among the school administrators regarding the provisions stated in R.A. 7079 which include the provisions on editorial policies (Section 2 and Section 3e), editorial board (Section 3d), publication adviser (Section 6), training, and workshop, and seminar (Section 8), and funding and appropriations (Section 5). Through this, the school heads would gain a deeper understanding on publication policies, procedures, publication adviser and staff selection procedure, publication adviser teaching load, and other important matters indicated on CJA which may or may not directly affect the school as a whole.
2. Once the editorial board is organized, it is important for the school paper advisers and student-members to revisit the CJA before starting their tasks in the publication. The editorial board then must organize a briefing of the mandates stated on R.A. 7079 which could be led by a lawyer or anyone who is an expert of the CJA provisions.
3. School administrators should also establish a student publication (Rule IV, Section 1). If the school has already an existing publication, school administration must make sure its functioning effectively.
4. The school administrators, together with the editorial board should also undertake various programs and projects aimed at improving the journalistic skills of students' concerned and promoting responsible and free journalism (Rule II, Section 1) which can be done by organizing in-service trainings for teachers and students.
5. The school administrators should also let the editorial board to determine freely its editorial policies and management of the publication's funds (Rule IV, Section 2). This can be accomplished by asking the editorial board to submit its General Plan of Activities at the beginning of the school year, with the indicated budget for each activity.
6. The school administration together with publication adviser and student-members should also revisit R.A. 7079 (Section 3d) in terms of the editorial board composition so that they could identify if the board is complete already with a duly appointed faculty adviser, qualified editor and a representative of the Parent-Teacher Association, who will determine the editorial policies to be implemented by the editor and staff members of the student publication concerned.
7. The school administrators and the publication adviser must see to it that a qualifying examination for aspiring editorial member is conducted by a committee composed of the student publication adviser, who shall act as chairperson, the past student-editor as vice-chairman, one faculty member and two (2) former student-editors (Rule VII, Section 1).
8. The members of the student publication staff must also be informed that they have to maintain their satisfactory academic standing in order to retain their membership in the staff as stated on Rule VIII (Section 1) but shall not be expelled or suspended solely on the basis of articles they had written, or on the basis of the performance of their duties in the publication staff.
9. In selecting a publication adviser, the school heads must also require the publication staff to submit a list of recommendees (Rule VI, Section 1).
10. The school heads must also check the workloads given to the publication advisers if their advising tasks are considered as one teaching load as emphasized on Rule VI (Section 2).
11. The publication advisers must also know their limitations as R.A. 7079 only requires them to function only as technical guides.
12. The school paper advisers must also understand that as the teacher-advisers, exercising special parental authority over student staffers who are minors shall, jointly with the Parent-Teacher Association are held fully responsible for the

- contents of the student publication (Rule VI, Section 1). Therefore, they have to check carefully the content of the articles submitted to them by the student-writers especially to avoid plagiarism.
13. The Regional Office, with the support of the division offices, must require all schools (advisers and students) to participate on periodic competitions, press conferences and training seminars sponsored by the Department of Education (Rule IX, Section 1).
 14. The school administrators must also find ways to fund the student publication which may be from the savings of the respective school's appropriations, student subscriptions, donations, and other sources of funds (Rule V, Section 1).
 15. The school administrators must also require the editorial board, with the assistance of the student publication staff, to prepare the students publication budget for each semester/year.
 16. The school administrators and the publication adviser must check if the budget of the publication includes expenses for the printing costs of the student publication, transportation and needs of the staff and the teacher-adviser during their work at the printing press, office and photo supplies, attendance of the student publication representatives at the annual division, regional, and national press conferences or workshops, honoraria or allowances for staffers and teacher-adviser, and other incidental expenses. Disbursements of student publication funds shall be made according to accounting and auditing regulations (Rule V, Section 2).
 17. The schools must also assure that the publication funds are deposited in the account of the student publication in an authorized depository bank through at least two (2) authorized signatories of the editorial board (Rule V, Section 3).
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