

Original Article

Self-Survey Metacognitive Writing Strategies and Journalistic Capability of Student Correspondents in Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This study examined how metacognitive writing strategies influence the journalistic capability of high school student journalists in public secondary schools in Poblacion District, Division of Davao City. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, data were gathered from student journalists through adapted survey instruments. Metacognitive writing strategies were assessed through planning, monitoring, and evaluating, while journalistic capability was assessed through knowledge, writing skills, and behavior toward campus journalism. The instruments underwent reliability testing and showed strong internal consistency. Findings revealed very high levels of metacognitive writing strategies and journalistic capability. Among the metacognitive domains, evaluating received the highest rating, while behavior toward campus journalism was rated highest among the journalistic capability domains. Correlation analysis showed a strong positive and significant relationship between metacognitive writing strategies and journalistic capability. Regression results further indicated that planning, monitoring, and evaluating significantly influenced journalistic capability, with evaluating as the strongest predictor. The findings support explicit metacognitive strategy instruction in campus journalism programs.

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1. Introduction

Campus journalism remains a vital learning space where students apply language, critical inquiry, ethical judgment, and public communication in authentic school-based contexts. The Campus Journalism Act of 1991 formally positions the school press as a means to develop journalistic skills, strengthen ethical values, and encourage critical and creative thought among Filipino learners (Republic Act No. 7079, 1991). In current media environments, however, the competencies required of student journalists have expanded. Digital news flows, platform-based distribution, audience fragmentation, and the rapid circulation of unverified information have changed what young writers must know and do. The Digital News Report 2025 describes a news environment marked by platform dependence and reduced reliance on traditional news pathways, which makes evidence-based and analytically responsible communication more important for emerging journalists (Newman et al., 2025). For learners, this context requires more than participation in school publications. It requires disciplined control of idea generation, source evaluation, article organization, language choices, and revision.

Journalistic capability refers to the competence of students to understand journalistic principles, produce accurate and coherent written outputs, and demonstrate constructive behavior toward campus journalism. Miranda (2023) conceptualized this capability through knowledge, writing skills, and behavior towards campus journalism, a structure that fits school press contexts because students must know journalism conventions, apply writing skills across genres, and sustain commitment to publication tasks. Recent work on public secondary school campus journalists also shows that student writers construct their identity through the demands of deadlines, peer collaboration, school publication norms, and the perceived civic value of journalistic participation (Dasalla & Protacio, 2025). These demands make journalistic capability a multidimensional educational outcome rather than a narrow measure of article production.

At the same time, media and information literacy has become central to journalism education. UNESCO (2021) frames media and information literacy as a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed to access, evaluate, use, and create information responsibly. This broader literacy framework is relevant to student journalism because school publication work requires students to select sources, evaluate credibility, organize evidence, and communicate ideas for a specific audience. Student journalists who lack these competencies may produce texts that are grammatically acceptable but weak in accuracy, focus, organization, or ethical responsibility. Thus, campus journalism instruction must develop both technical writing competence and the reflective habits needed for responsible media production.

Metacognition offers a strong theoretical basis for that development. Flavell (1979) defined metacognition as awareness and regulation of one's cognitive processes. In writing, this awareness becomes visible when learners plan their approach, monitor their progress, and evaluate their output. Al Moqballi et al. (2020)

used these three domains to examine metacognitive writing strategies among secondary learners and found that planning, monitoring, and evaluating function as distinct yet connected forms of writer self-regulation. Huang and Zhang (2022) further showed that metacognitive strategy use in writing can shift students from surface-level attention to grammar alone toward wider discourse-level awareness, including audience, task purpose, and text structure. These findings matter in journalism because the quality of a news article depends on decisions made before, during, and after drafting.

Planning allows student journalists to clarify purpose, anticipate audience needs, sequence information, and set manageable goals before drafting an article. Monitoring enables them to check the relevance, coherence, accuracy, and language quality of their work while the text is still in progress. Evaluating allows them to judge whether the completed article meets standards of clarity, factuality, and relevance. These processes mirror the broader cycle of self-regulated writing. Chung et al. (2021) found that self-assessment, planning, goal setting, and reflection before and after revision can improve students' writing self-efficacy and writing outcomes. Han (2024) also reported that metacognitive writing strategy instruction can improve performance and motivation in EFL contexts. In collaborative writing situations, Teng and Huang (2023) found that metacognitive strategy instruction can support accuracy, complexity, and fluency, which are also important for newsroom-style school publication tasks.

Philippine evidence likewise points to the relevance of metacognitive awareness in writing development. Villaruz and Palma (2024), in a structural equation model of Filipino language academic writing skills, reported that metacognitive awareness of writing strategies contributes significantly to students' academic writing skills. This is important because student journalists in Philippine public schools often write under resource, training, and time constraints. They must apply language skills within publication routines that include idea selection, article drafting, editing, and collaboration with advisers and peers. Despite the growing literature on writing strategy use and campus journalism, fewer studies directly test the influence of metacognitive writing strategies on journalistic capability as an integrated school-based outcome.

This study addresses that gap by examining whether planning, monitoring, and evaluating predict journalistic capability among high school student journalists in public secondary schools in Poblacion District, Division of Davao City. The study focused on student journalists from Grades 7 to 12 who actively participated in campus journalism activities during the 2025-2026 academic year. Specifically, it determined the levels of metacognitive writing strategies and journalistic capability, tested the relationship between the two variables, and identified which metacognitive domains significantly influenced journalistic capability. The findings are intended to guide journalism advisers, language teachers, and school leaders in the design of strategy-based writing instruction and school press programs that develop reflective, accurate, and ethically responsible student journalists.

2. Methodology

A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was used to determine the levels of metacognitive writing strategies and journalistic capability and to examine the relationship and predictive influence between these variables. This design was appropriate because the study measured naturally existing strategy use and journalistic competence without manipulation of the learning environment. The participants were 134 high school student journalists from Grades 7 to 12 in public secondary schools in Poblacion District, Division of Davao City, during the 2025-2026 academic year. The sample was drawn from a population of 200 student journalists. Slovin's formula with a 0.05 margin of error was used to determine the sample size, and quota sampling was applied to obtain representation across schools and grade levels. Students were included when they were enrolled in a public secondary school in the district, actively involved in the school publication or campus journalism activities, and had participated in journalistic tasks such as writing, editing, or reporting during the academic year. Students with irregular participation in journalism activities, those enrolled in programs without standard campus journalism tasks, and those unavailable during the data collection period were excluded.

Data were gathered through an adapted standardized survey questionnaire composed of two major scales. The first scale measured metacognitive writing strategies in terms of planning, monitoring, and evaluating. It was adapted from the Metacognitive Strategies of Writing Survey used by Al Moqbali et al. (2020), which operationalizes writing strategy use through the three domains central to the present study. The scale contained 27 items answered through a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The second scale measured journalistic capability in terms of knowledge, writing skills, and behavior towards campus journalism. It was adapted from Miranda's (2023) journalistic capability framework, which assessed students' understanding of campus journalism, ability to produce journalistic texts, and disposition toward school press participation. This scale contained 15 items, also answered through the same five-point Likert scale. Mean scores from 4.20 to 5.00 were interpreted as very high, 3.40 to 4.19 as high, 2.60 to 3.39 as moderately high, 1.80 to 2.59 as low, and 1.00 to 1.79 as very low.

The instrument underwent content validation by three specialists in journalism education, educational psychology, and measurement and evaluation. The validators reviewed the items for clarity, relevance, alignment with the conceptual framework, and suitability for high school student journalists. Their comments informed revisions in item wording and sequence. A pilot test was then conducted with 30 high school student journalists who met the same inclusion criteria but were not part of the main sample. The pilot test assessed face validity, item clarity, and instrument usability. Reliability analysis showed excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.94 for the metacognitive writing strategies scale and 0.96 for the journalistic capability scale.

The data collection process followed institutional and school-level protocols. Ethical clearance was secured before field implementation, followed by approval from the Graduate School Dean, the Schools Division Superintendent, and the concerned school heads. The researcher coordinated with school personnel for the distribution and retrieval of questionnaires. Before participation, respondents received clear information about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality safeguards, the right to withdraw, and the absence of academic penalty for non-participation. Consent and assent procedures were observed. The questionnaires were administered in a controlled setting that allowed independent responses. Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness, coded, and encoded for statistical analysis. No personally identifiable information was linked to the responses, and electronic files were stored in password-protected devices while physical records were secured in locked storage.

The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to describe the levels of metacognitive writing strategies and journalistic capability. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables. Multiple linear regression was used to identify which domains of metacognitive writing strategies significantly influenced journalistic capability. The level of significance was set at 0.05. All results were reported using the numerical values generated from the statistical output and interpreted in relation to the stated research objectives.

3. Results

Table 1 summarizes the level of metacognitive writing strategies by domain. Evaluating obtained the highest mean of 4.27 with a standard deviation of 0.62, followed by monitoring with a mean of 4.22 and a standard deviation of 0.62, and planning with a mean of 4.20 and a standard deviation of 0.63. The overall mean was 4.23 with a standard deviation of 0.62.

Table 1. Summary of the level of metacognitive writing strategies among student journalists.

Domain	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Planning	0.63	4.20	Very High
Monitoring	0.62	4.22	Very High
Evaluating	0.62	4.27	Very High
Overall	0.62	4.23	Very High

Table 2 summarizes the level of journalistic capability by domain. Behavior towards campus journalism obtained the highest mean of 4.30 with a standard deviation of 0.65, followed by knowledge with a mean of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 0.63, and writing skills with a mean of 4.22 and a standard deviation of 0.62. The overall mean was 4.26 with a standard deviation of 0.63.

Table 2. Summary of the level of journalistic capability among student journalists.

Domain	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Knowledge	0.63	4.25	Very High
Writing Skills	0.62	4.22	Very High
Behavior Towards Campus Journalism	0.65	4.30	Very High
Overall	0.63	4.26	Very High

Table 3 presents the correlation between metacognitive writing strategies and journalistic capability. The metacognitive writing strategies variable obtained a mean of 4.23 and standard deviation of 0.62, while journalistic capability obtained a mean of 4.26 and standard deviation of 0.63. The correlation coefficient was 0.80, the coefficient of determination was 0.64, and the p-value was 0.000.

Table 3. Correlation results.

Variables	r	p-value
Metacognitive Writing Strategies	0.80	0.000
Journalistic Capability		

Table 4 presents the regression analysis of the domains of metacognitive writing strategies as predictors of journalistic capability. The reported regression equation was: Journalistic Capability = 0.95 + 0.24(Planning) + 0.27(Monitoring) + 0.29(Evaluating). The model summary values were R = 0.82, R² = 0.67, F = 52.38, and p-value = 0.000.

Table 4. Regression results.

Predictor	B	SE	Beta	t	p-value
Constant	0.95	0.31		3.06	0.000
Planning	0.24	0.28	0.20	2.89	0.000
Monitoring	0.27	0.30	0.22	3.10	0.000
Evaluating	0.29	0.31	0.24	3.21	0.000

4. Discussion

The findings show that student journalists reported very high use of metacognitive writing strategies, with evaluating as the strongest domain, followed by monitoring and planning. This profile is theoretically coherent because journalistic tasks require writers to judge the adequacy of their completed work, check accuracy, and refine language before publication. Flavell's (1979) view of metacognition as cognitive monitoring and control explains why these learners may perform well when they consciously examine their own text. The high scores also align with Alipio (2021), who reported frequent use of planning, monitoring, and evaluating among

secondary EFL learners. In the present study, the strongest item in evaluating concerned the review of word use, which suggests that student journalists place considerable attention on language accuracy after drafting. That pattern is consistent with Huang and Zhang's (2022) finding that explicit strategy-oriented instruction can help students develop more deliberate text control, although evaluation still requires targeted support to move beyond surface-level correction toward global review of content, purpose, and audience.

The high rating for planning is important because journalistic writing is highly dependent on decisions made before drafting. Students who consider genre, purpose, audience, examples, and paragraph focus are better positioned to produce articles that meet publication expectations. Chung et al. (2021) showed that planning, goal setting, and reflection can improve self-efficacy and writing outcomes, and this helps explain why planning was positively associated with journalistic capability in the regression model. However, the lowest planning mean concerned recall of model essays, which may point to a practical instructional gap. Student journalists may benefit from structured exposure to model news, feature, editorial, and sports articles, not for imitation, but to help them notice genre-specific organization, lead structure, source integration, and ethical attribution. In campus journalism programs, this can be operationalized through short prewriting conferences, article templates, and guided analysis of quality school paper outputs.

Monitoring also obtained a very high level, and the highest monitoring item concerned grammar checks. This reflects an important editorial habit, but it also suggests that students may equate monitoring with language correctness. Han (2024) argued that metacognitive writing strategy instruction supports both performance and motivation when learners learn to regulate the process rather than merely correct the product. For student journalists, monitoring should include real-time checks of factual accuracy, source relevance, narrative flow, and balance of information. UNESCO's (2021) media and information literacy framework reinforces this broader view because responsible communication requires learners to evaluate information quality and not only linguistic form. The relatively lower item on adjustment of the writing plan suggests that students may benefit from more flexible revision routines, especially when new facts, interviews, or editorial feedback require changes in the original article direction.

The very high level of journalistic capability indicates that respondents perceived themselves as competent across knowledge, writing skills, and behavior towards campus journalism. Behavior received the highest domain mean, which implies strong interest, affective commitment, and willingness to participate. Fredricks et al. (2004) explained engagement as a multidimensional construct that includes behavioral, emotional, and cognitive elements, and this framework helps interpret why positive behavior toward campus journalism can support sustained participation in school publication tasks. Dasalla and Protacio (2025) likewise found that campus journalists construct their school press identity through demanding but meaningful publication experiences. The present findings suggest that student journalists in the district do not

merely view journalism as a technical task. They also attach value to participation, school contribution, and skill development.

Knowledge and writing skills were also rated very high, but their means were slightly lower than behavior. This pattern has practical implications. Strong enthusiasm for campus journalism does not automatically guarantee equally strong technical mastery of journalistic genres, verification procedures, headline construction, lead development, or editorial ethics. Miranda (2023) reported that journalistic capability includes knowledge, writing skills, and behavior, and the present results support the usefulness of this three-domain view. In a digital news environment where platform-based content can blur the distinction between verified information and opinion, Newman et al. (2025) highlight the need for analytically responsible journalism. For school publications, this means journalism advisers should translate student motivation into structured competence through article conferences, feedback cycles, peer editing, and publication rubrics that emphasize factuality, clarity, relevance, and fairness.

The correlation result indicates a high positive relationship between metacognitive writing strategies and journalistic capability. This is consistent with the proposition that journalistic competence is not built only through exposure to campus journalism but also through strategic control of the writing process. Villaruz and Palma (2024) found that metacognitive awareness of writing strategies contributes to academic writing skills among Filipino learners, and the current study extends that logic to campus journalism. When students plan, monitor, and evaluate their writing, they can better manage the cognitive load of article production, from idea selection to final revision. The R^2 value of 0.64 suggests that a substantial share of the variation in journalistic capability is linked with metacognitive writing strategies. This does not imply causality, but it provides strong evidence that strategy use and journalistic competence develop together in the school press context.

The regression model adds a more precise explanation of the relationship by showing that all three metacognitive domains significantly influenced journalistic capability. Evaluating emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by monitoring and planning. This order is pedagogically meaningful. In journalism, the final quality of an article often depends on the writer's capacity to examine the completed text against standards of accuracy, coherence, audience relevance, and ethical responsibility. Pregoner et al. (2024) found that planning, monitoring, and evaluating can improve EFL writing performance by supporting self-awareness, self-confidence, and control over writing quality. Teng and Huang (2023) also demonstrated that metacognitive strategy instruction can strengthen writing outcomes when embedded in collaborative work. For student journalists, evaluating may have the strongest predictive value because publication work requires students to revise beyond first drafts, accept feedback, and refine a text before it reaches readers.

Although evaluating was strongest, monitoring and planning remained significant predictors. This means that journalistic capability benefits from a full metacognitive cycle rather than a single strategy. Planning prepares students to define

the angle, audience, and genre of the article. Monitoring helps them detect problems while drafting. Evaluating allows them to judge the final article before submission or publication. These processes correspond with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural view of learning, especially when strategy use is supported by advisers, editors, peers, and newsroom-style interaction. The implication is that campus journalism instruction should not treat metacognition as a private mental activity alone. It can be strengthened through social routines such as peer critique, editorial conferences, article checklists, and guided reflection after publication.

Taken together, the findings support an instructional model in which metacognitive writing strategies are taught explicitly within authentic journalism tasks. A high-impact campus journalism program should not rely only on contests, publication deadlines, or general writing practice. It should train student journalists to ask strategic questions before writing, use monitoring checkpoints during drafting, and apply evaluation rubrics before publication. The results further suggest that students already possess favorable dispositions toward campus journalism, and that this motivational base can be leveraged to deepen competence. By linking metacognitive strategy instruction with media and information literacy, schools can help student journalists become not only better writers, but more responsible producers of public information.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that high school student journalists in public secondary schools in Poblacion District, Division of Davao City demonstrate very high levels of metacognitive writing strategies and journalistic capability. Among the metacognitive domains, evaluating obtained the highest rating, followed by monitoring and planning. Among the journalistic capability domains, behavior towards campus journalism obtained the highest rating, followed by knowledge and writing skills. The findings further show a high positive and statistically significant relationship between metacognitive writing strategies and journalistic capability. Planning, monitoring, and evaluating significantly influenced journalistic capability, with evaluating as the strongest predictor. These results affirm that student journalists who consciously regulate their writing through preparation, process checks, and final review are more likely to demonstrate stronger knowledge, writing competence, and constructive engagement in campus journalism. Schools may therefore strengthen campus journalism outcomes by embedding explicit metacognitive strategy instruction into newsroom tasks, article conferences, peer editing, reflective writing routines, and publication-based assessment.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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