

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to compare the environmental coverage of Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle. Specifically, it determined the frequency of articles published; determined the dominant source of information of the articles published; compared the nature of environmental articles in terms of treatment, placement, inclusion of illustrations and photographs; determined the dominating fields in environment mostly covered by the two local weekly newspapers; determined the section of the newspaper where most environmental articles can be found, and; identified the challenges faced by both publications in environmental reporting.

A modified coding sheet was used to analyze 56 articles published in Zigzag Weekly and 46 articles published in Baguio Chronicle. The editor-in-chief of Zigzag Weekly, associate editor and three reporters of Baguio Chronicle were also interviewed.

For the frequency of articles, both publications did not have an environmental article on every issue. Articles were written and published during the outbreak of the controversial issue.



Out of the different categories, the dominant sources of information of the articles published in both publications were official voices and documents.

On the nature of coverage, most articles in both publications were treated as news feature and were found on the news page, inside pages. On the other hand, few of the articles in both publications had photographs and illustrations on it.

Results also showed that the dominating fields of environment covered by both publications were on social and ecological concern.

Meanwhile, there were several identified challenges faced by both publications in environmental reporting. These include space limitations, technicality and complexity of an environmental issue, tough deadlines, unfamiliar source of information, negative reporting, lack of environmental reporters and financial crisis.

Based from the results, the study recommends that the two publications may consider publishing more environmental articles with the voice of the masses and more illustrations, photographs or graphics in it. On the other hand, budding journalist may also opt to undergo trainings about environmental reporting to overcome their problems in this specialized kind of reporting.



INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Environmental reporting may talk about people's interactions with anything present in their surroundings, which affects the environment. It includes coverage of health, economics, politics, commerce, development, physical resources and a wide variety of scientific research (Philippine Environmental Journalists Inc., 1988).

The newspaper is one of the most credible sources of information when it comes to covering the different issues and events in our society as emphasized by the PEJI. It is a fact that the media plays a critical role in informing and helping to mold public opinion especially as stressed by PEJI, in guarding the environmental concerns for future generations.

However, according to Bartolo (2011), a former professor of journalism in Saint Louis University and a broadcaster of DZWT, several local newspaper editors feel that environmental reporting is a simple task; thus, they often assign any reporter who is available to cover an environmental story at the time it breaks. As PEJI see it, doing such do not serve the readers well.

In Baguio City, there were 12 community newspapers existing from the time of the study. These are: Baguio Midland Courier, Baguio Reporter, Zigzag Weekly, Skyland News, Cordillera Today, Northern Philippine Times, The Junction, The Gazette, Northern Dispatch, Inquisitor, Baguio Chronicle, and Sunstar Baguio.

In the status of environmental reporting, Baguio Midland Courier (BMC) is known for its environmental section which covers environmental concerns primarily in the



Cordillera. BMC is the oldest running publication in the city and is considered one of the most credible sources of information in the community.

Other local publications covering environmental events are Zigzag Weekly, Sunstar Baguio, Northern Dispatch, Baguio Chronicle among others. However, few are being published and no section for environment reports is being allocated for the said publications unlike for BMC.

Given the above scenario, the need to evaluate the environmental coverage of these other local publications is of importance to check if such publications are serving the readers well in terms of environmental information as emphasized by PEJI.

Environmental reports are usually treated as straight news; thus, being placed in news sections.

It is of crucial importance that public awareness be created as a prerequisite for changing people's attitudes and outlooks with regard to the environment and development. In this regard, the mass media plays an important role in promoting such in favor of sustainable development.

Statement of the Problem

The study compared the environmental coverage of Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle circulated all over Baguio-Benguet and nearby provinces. Specifically, the study answered the following questions:

1. What is the frequency of articles in both publications?
2. What is the dominant source of information of articles published?
3. How does the nature of the coverage of the two local weekly newspapers vary in terms of treatment, placement and inclusion of illustrations and photographs?



4. What is the common field in environment that is mostly covered by the two local weekly newspapers?

5. What are the challenges of these publications in covering environmental stories?

Objectives of the Study

In general, the study compared the environmental coverage of Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle circulated over Baguio-Benguet and nearby provinces. Specifically, the study:

1. Determined the frequency of articles in both publications.
2. Determined the dominant sources of information of the articles published.
3. Compared the nature of environmental articles in terms of treatment, placement and inclusion of illustrations and photographs.
4. Determined the dominating fields in environment that were mostly covered by the two local weekly newspapers.
5. Identified the challenges of these publications in covering environmental stories.

Importance of the Study

The result of the study aimed to show how wide the coverage of the Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle on environmental reporting is. It also aimed to determine if the articles can meet the information needs of the readers. Also, the study can be of great help for the development of environmental reporting in community and soon to the national-based newspapers as well.

The result may also serve as a basis for environmental reporters to improve their skills in writing articles about the environment so that it can serve the purpose.



Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study focused on environmental articles published by two local weekly newspapers. It covered the January 2011 to December 2011 issues of Baguio Chronicle and Zigzag Weekly. It was limited in comparing the sections of the newspaper where the environmental articles were found, dominant source of information of articles published, treatment, placement, inclusion of illustrations and photographs, frequency of articles and field of environment mostly covered.



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Environmental Communication

As defined by the Working party on Development Cooperation and Environment (1999), environmental communication is the planned and strategic use of communication processes and media products to support effective policy making, public participation and project implementation geared towards environmental sustainability. This two way social interaction process aims not so much at information dissemination rather it focuses on motivating social groups to take part in solving or preventing environmental problems.

The role of environmental communication is to advance environment protection and promote sustainability. Hence, it is crucial to understand the relationship between our daily practices and the sustainability of the natural world. These issues should be addressed and deliberated (Universiti Sains Malaysia, 2008).

Environmental Reporting

According to the Ministry of Environment in Japan (2004), environmental reporting refers to the systematic and holistic statements of environmental burden and environmental efforts in an organization's activities. This includes environmental policies, objectives, programs and their outcomes, organizational structures and systems in environmental activities. Environmental articles are published and are reported periodically to the general public.

Environmental reporting includes coverage of health, economics, politics, commerce, development, physical resources, and a wide variety of scientific research. Also, people's interactions with the living and non-living components of their environment,



which alter the environment by using, redistributing, disturbing its resources, constitute a topic for environmental reporting (Philippine Environmental Journalists, Inc., 1988).

Importance of Media

According to Chiras (2001), the involvement of media in motivating people to take part in environmental protection and management is very important. The task is so vast that without the help of it, the effort and investment of environmental experts and planners would not achieve very much.

The newspaper, one of the most important medium in the society remains the source of most of the daily information. It can provide depth information on items that comes from different sources based on its function. Local news may directly be reported from the community and some are indirectly gathered through the wire devices.(Whitney, 1975).

Role of Community Newspapers

A newspaper's basic allegiance is to the local community and its focus must be on the local news since it is of the most immediate interest to the lives of its geographically circumscribed audience (Whitney, 1975).

Whitney (1975) further emphasized that community newspapers fill a void that the big metropolitan dailies leave; each fulfills essentially different roles. Major newspapers cannot cover all the news of a dozen city councils and a half dozen school boards, the speakers and activities of several hundred civic, women's, veterans, labor, cultural, or charitable organizations considering that these very activities are meaningful to suburban dwellers



Hence, effective communication should not only be informative. It should also be done on an interpersonal level as well as on a community level and further on a national level (Flor, 2004).

Present Situation of Environmental Coverage

Many newspaper editors feel that environmental reporting is a simple task and therefore, anyone can do it. As a result of this, not many newspaper or even general interest magazines have a full time environmental reporter(Philippine Environmental Journalists, Inc., 1988).

Asian newspapers for that matter, are typically understaffed, with only 12-24 reporters and have very few specialist writers as stated by Philippine Environmental Journalists, Inc., (1988).

With this situation, editors often assign any available reporter to cover a environmental story at the time it breaks. As PEJI sees it, doing this do not serve their readers well.

Quintos (2012) stated that journalists need to research more to overcome the complexity and technicality of such issues. This should be done to help people understand the present situation of their environment.

On the other hand, PEJI (1988) stated that editors could help overcome their tendency towards negative reporting by being an educator and explaining that environmental reporting is a long-term issue, not just a series of crises. They added that journalists should write articles on positive environmental happenings, even if these are small steps on a very long road to a final solution. These small steps according to them are



newsworthy and are giving readers a sense that something is being done to preserve the environment.

Dominant Source of Information Published

Environmental story ideas, both positive and negative in nature are all around us. PEJI (1988) enumerated some common sources of traditional story ideas which include press releases, reports, and statements by local and national government.

For press releases, these often provide enticing clues to follow up for an effective article. However, they should only be the starting points for stories, not the entire stories themselves. These ideas should be more fully developed with background research interviews before a journalist could write the story (Philippine Environmental Journalists, Inc., 1988).

Likewise, a list of research projects at a university, academic journals, scientific meetings and lectures, articles that appear in local and international newspapers are a good source of information for journalists to start collecting data to write (Philippine Environmental Journalists, Inc., 1988).

According to PEJI (1988), using several sources of information is important for environmental reporting. However, general assignment reporters use only one or two sources mainly because of short deadlines and that these reporters often do not know where to find knowledgeable sources. They further emphasized that general assignment reporters do not have much time to build up sources, even local ones, who can help them interpret technical information.



Treatment/Placement of Articles

PEJI (1988) once noted that environmental stories are not much emphasized in local and national publications.

As Teodoro and De Jesus (2001) described, news coverage by the local press follows this pattern: news is presented in such a way to invite and hold the reader's attention. It should arouse interest to generate the pros and cons of the practice. Subsequently, adoption of the practice should take place.

For environmental issues, reporters need to deal with the complexity of it considering that these have long, tenuous string of interrelated concerns which all have an impact on people's lives (Philippine Environmental Journalists, Inc., 1988).

These environmental stories require in-depth treatment, with careful attention over time to the developing stories and their side issues (Philippine Environmental Journalists, Inc., 1988).

According to Kindipan (2004), local newspapers should publish more in-depth features or opinion articles to explain and interpret an issue in a detailed manner.

Common Field in Environment Mostly Covered by Newspaper

For many years, environmental problems were largely local, regional, or national issues. Solutions required actions on similar scale. Today, though, many environmental problems still affect the entire globe and require international efforts to solve (Chiras, 2001).

According to Mayer (2001) the environmental problems we face today are many. They include human population growth, deforestation, water pollution, rising demands for



non-renewable resources, toxic effects of hazardous chemical, global climate change, and stratospheric ozone depletion.

With this, the importance of “process reporting” in monitoring the environment cannot be overemphasized. This is different from traditional reporting which is “events oriented,” as its reports manifest reality, such as the number of virgin forests or the extent of illegal logging (Braid, 1987).

“Process reporting”, captures what may not be visible to the naked eye. For example, the reporter writes about the poverty and destruction of the forests, man’s relationship with others and links this event to the urban migration of youth, because they cannot see any opportunity for a better life in their communities (Braid, 1987).

If we have more process-oriented journalists, we could have prevented the rapid deterioration of our natural processes (Braid, 1987).

Section of Newspaper where most Environmental Articles can be Found

According to Dashefsky (1993), environmental concerns are one of the hottest issues dominating columns in the newspapers and in radio and television programs as well. The barrage of environmental issues people read or watch in the daily news are most commonly found if not on the opinion pages, in the news page.

One after another, environmental problems have hit the headlines. The extent to which these problems appear in the popular press indicates the extent of public awareness. The environmental movement has worked hard to bring problems to people’s attention (Tepperman and Blain, 1999).



In China, there is a great interest in specialized environmental reporting. China Environmental News is a national newspaper with 600,000- copy distribution. In addition, there are 96 environmental journals and publications at the provincial, municipality and autonomous region level. About 40 full-time and part-time environmental journalists are at work in China. No other Asian nation has an extensive environmental reporting activity as China (Philippine Environmental Journalists, Inc., 1988).

Inclusion of Illustrations and Photographs

Since pictures can simplify and effectively convey a message of a story more than words, it is strongly recommended that an inclusion of photo or illustration in a story should be given importance. This is to help readers, even those with low education, understand more the story (Dinamling, 2007).

Operational Definition of Terms

Social Concern. These articles talked about the effects of environmental issues to the attitudes, behaviours of individuals which took the interests, intentions, or needs of other people into account. These could also be articles tackling actions and activities of people that have an impact to the environment

Ecological concern. These articles talk about the connection of environmental issues to the elements surrounding it, including the living and non-living things.

Educational concern. These articles may inform its readers on another environmental issue. It may also talk about new advances in the field of environment that gives learning to readers.

Economic concern. These articles talked about the correlation of the present situation of environment and its effects on economics as set by the researcher.



Agricultural concern. These articles talked about the effects of environment to agriculture.

Health concern. These articles tackled the effect of environment to the health of people.

Political concern. These tackled issues on the actions of the government in helping lessen environmental degradation. Most likely, these were about some laws to help save the environment.

Cultural concern. The articles included here were about the relationship of customs, beliefs, social norms, and material traits of a religious, social or racial group with environmental issues.



METHODOLOGY

Locale and Time of the Study

The study was conducted at the offices of the two publications, Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicles.

Zigzag Weekly is located at Dali building alongside Ferguson Road, Guisad, Baguio City. It can be reached by 15-30 minute ride from Benguet State University.

Baguio Chronicle is located at Puso ng Baguio building alongside Session road, Baguio City. It can also be reached by 15-30 minute ride from Benguet State University.

The duration of the study was from December 2011 to February 2012.

Subject of the Study

The study compared a total of 56 and 46 environmental articles published in Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle, respectively. It covered the January 2011 to December 2011 issues of both publications. These newspapers are circulated over Baguio-Benguet and nearby provinces and are chosen based on circulation, regularity of publication and language used which is English.

Zigzag Weekly, the third oldest running publication in Baguio City is edited and published by Atty. Antonio Pekas. Zigzag Weekly is a weekly publication which uses English as its medium. It is circulated in Baguio City and rest of the Cordillera Administrative Region and also has an online publication.

Baguio Chronicle is also a weekly publication that uses English as its medium. It is circulating in Baguio City and Benguet province. Baguio Chronicle is the newest



publication circulating over Baguio City as it was established on 2009. The editor of the publication is Atty. Marissa Dacayanan-Madrid.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were three general assignment reporters and the associate editor of Baguio Chronicle and the editor-in-chief of Zigzag Weekly. They served as the key informants.

The journalists were chosen purposively as they should have an experience in writing for the environment.

The associate editor and editor-in-chief of each publication were interviewed to determine how they choose environmental issues to be covered.

Data Collection

The environmental articles published were coded and analyzed by the researcher. It was manually coded which started from December 2011 to February 2012 giving a two-month time frame.

The fields of environment covered by both publications were set by the researcher. Likewise the parameters of these fields were also set. These fields of environment include social, ecological, economic, educational, agricultural, health, political and cultural.

Interviews were conducted to gather information on challenges faced by both publications in environmental reporting.



Data Gathered

Articles were coded and analyzed to determine whether they were treated as straight news, news feature, feature, and column/opinion or as an editorial article. It was noted if the articles published included photographs/illustrations. It also noted how many articles were published during the timeframe of the study.

Data on challenges faced by both publications in environmental reporting were gathered through interviews from journalists and editors.

Data Analysis

The data were collected and analyzed using a coding sheet and was interpreted and measured through descriptive statistics.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Frequency of Articles

Figure 1 shows the frequency of articles in both publications per month. It can be noted that environmental stories were not regular in both publications since not all of their weekly issues contain such articles in it.

Zigzag Weekly published more environmental articles compared to Baguio Chronicle. This result is related to the circulation of publication of Zigzag Weekly wherein it does not only circulate in Baguio- Benguet and the nearby provinces but it also covers environmental issues on these places.

Moreover, the frequency of the articles published in Zigzag Weekly was a result of the preference of the reporter, as well as the editor to cover environmental issues. As Atty. Pekas of Zigzag Weekly said, they cover environmental issues that affect a large number of individuals. This, according to him, is because of the fact that the most important aspect in covering the environment is the people.

The frequency of articles published in both newspapers raised during the rainy season, especially at the time the environmental issue on trash slide occurred, based on the analyzed trend of stories by the researcher.

Most of the articles were published at the time the tragedy came out. After an environmental issue happens, news coverage is constant and suddenly fades out after one or two months. A few follow-ups were exhibited in both publications like the case of the trash slide incident.



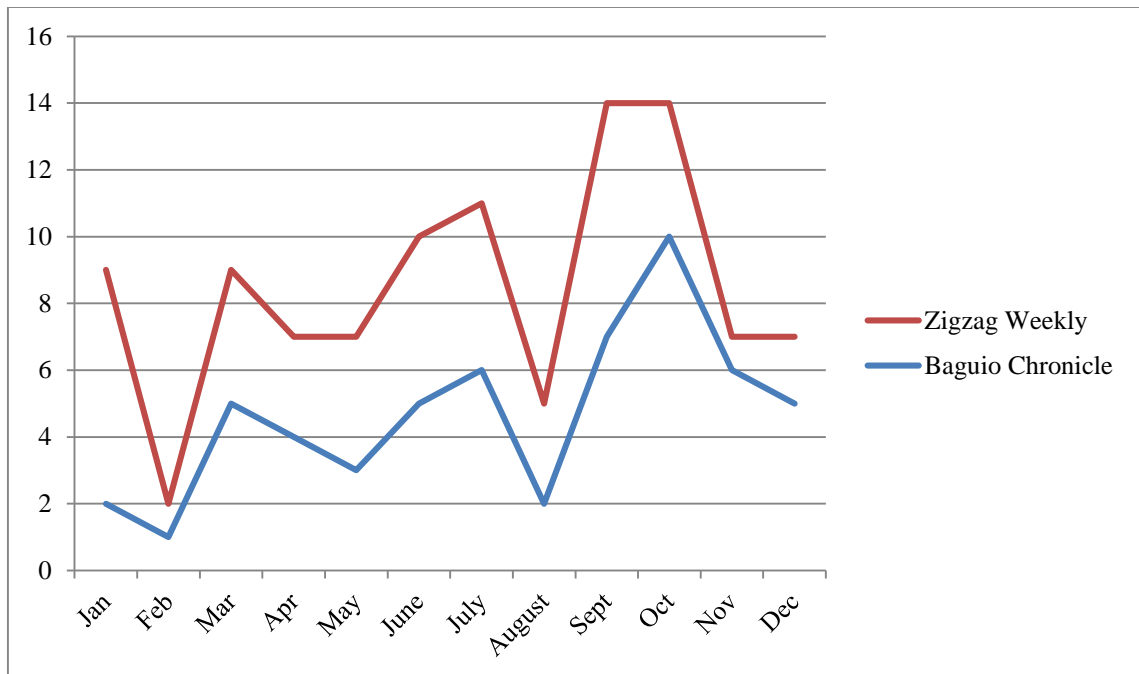


Figure 1. Number of articles in both publications every month

Although both newspapers had environmental articles published in it, still, there were lesser number of articles covering this specialized issue compared to other regular beats such as crime and politics among others.

With this, it can be inferred that environmental reporting are not much in the two local publications as it only arises when certain event/ issue breaks. This corroborates the statement of PEJI (1988) that environmental stories are not much emphasized in local as well as national publications.

Dominant Source of Information

Figures 2 and 3 show the dominant sources of information of the articles published in Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle, respectively. The source of information was determined in terms of the voices reflected.



Out of the 56 environmental articles in Zigzag Weekly, a total of 41 (73.21%) articles were from official voices, usually from government officials while Baguio Chronicle had 33 (71.74%) out of 46 articles analyzed.

A sample of these articles from official voices is shown below.

With Executive Order No. 23 which declared a moratorium on cutting trees in natural and residual forest areas, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has allotted P2-million for the wages of Bantay Gubat personnel and extension officers in the region.

This was the pronouncement of DENR-CAR Regional Director Clarence Baguilat adding that this is a way to protect the future for future generations.

Results also show that both newspapers used a combination of the different sources of information. Zigzag had 12 (21.43%) articles that came from a combination of the different sources of information while Chronicle had 10 (21.74%) articles.

Zigzag Weekly got most of their information from both official voices and technical people which include environment specialists and academic researchers. On the other hand, Baguio Chronicle combined the use of official voices and documents such as written researches of academic scholars.

The figure also shows that Zigzag Weekly had a low percentage on technical people, or the masses, or from documents while Baguio Chronicle took none from the masses, as well as from technical people.

Previous research results show that government officials are still the primary source of information for journalists may it be a regular beat or a specialized/developmental topic. In the case of environmental reporting in Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle, both



newspapers had high percentage on official voices. These include government offices and officials. This result asserts the statement of Listino (2003) that official voice, a form of traditional source of information, is still the primary source for journalists as of today.

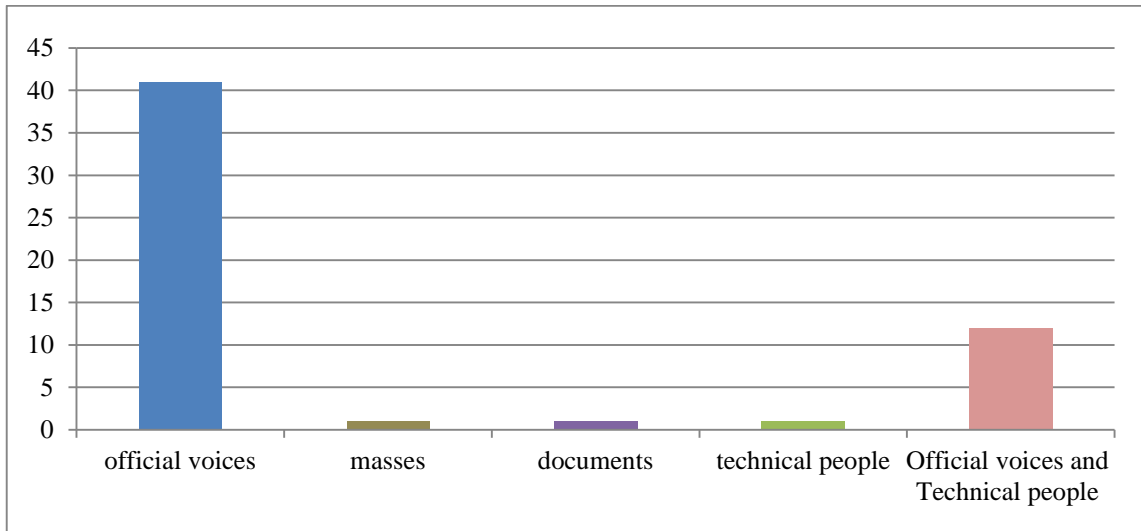


Figure 2. Dominant Source of Information of article published in Zigzag Weekly

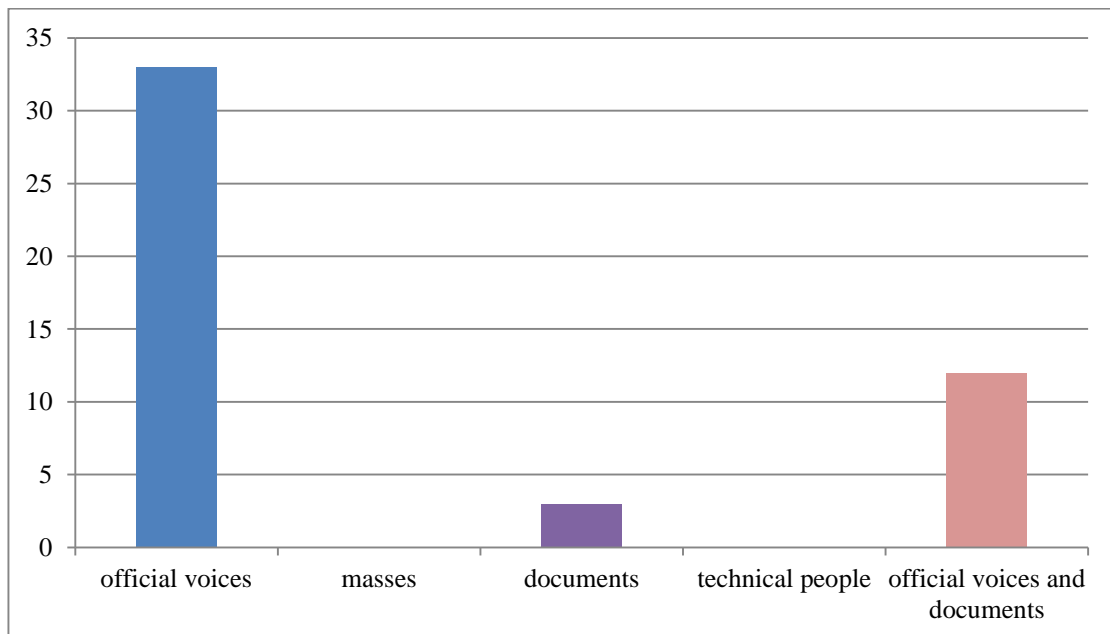


Figure 3. Dominant Source of Information of article published in Baguio Chronicle



Article Treatment

Meanwhile, it can be noted that for both Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle, reporting for the environment is given importance as their articles were treated in such a way that an issue is introduced and is explained for the readers.

Table 1 shows that the environmental articles in Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle were mostly treated as news feature with 62.5% and 54.35%, respectively.

Straight news was second in rank for both of the newspapers. Zigzag Weekly had 11 (19.64%) while Baguio Chronicle had 12 (26.09%).

On the other hand, both newspapers had a low percentage of opinion, feature and editorial articles.

This result may be connected to the problems faced by some journalists as stated by Ofelia Empian and Jessa Mardy Polonio. Both of these journalists from Baguio Chronicle said that they had a difficult time looking for a proper source of information for their environmental stories. According to them, less time in researching and interviewing more credible sources for their environmental stories, including their deadline, caused them to treat their articles as straight news or news feature if given more time.

This result corroborates the study of Kindipan (2004) that local newspapers have less feature articles, therefore, they should publish more in-depth features or opinion articles to explain and interpret an issue in a detailed manner.



Table 1. Treatment of Articles in the two publications

ARTICLE TREATMENT	ZIGZAG WEEKLY		BAGUIO CHRONICLE	
		N=56		N=46
		PERCENTAGE		PERCENTAGE
Straight news	11	19.64%	12	26.09%
News feature	35	62.5%	25	54.35%
Feature	2	3.57%	3	6.52%
Editorial	2	3.57%	2	4.35%
Column/opinion	6	10.71%	4	8.7%

Example of this article from Baguio Chronicle is shown below:

The city, thru the Environment and Parks management Office or CEPMO, is embarking on a strategy to help clean the city's water ways and tributaries of wastes while providing alternative means of clean energy for households.

The alternative technology introduced is the 'bio-digesters' or a device to collect methane gas from animal manure and other wastes. It works best when fuelled with pig manure but human waste and other biodegradable materials can also be used in extracting bio-gas at the same time producing high-quality fertilizer as by-product...

Bio-digesters can be used by residents who are near rivers and canals so they won't dump their liquid wastes directly into it...

Article Placement

Most of the time, an article is placed in a certain space of a newspaper based on its perceived significance to the readers' lives. Also, it is perceived to be of greater importance when it is placed on the headlines.



In the case of the two publications content analyzed, Table 2 shows that both publications placed their environmental articles in the inside pages with Zigzag Weekly having 47 (83.93%) out of 56 articles while Baguio Chronicle had 41 (89.13%).

Results also show that selected articles were seen on the front page. These were usually highly controversial issues about the environment covered by both publications. An example of the environmental article placed on the headlines is the trash slide incident in Baguio City. According to Quintos of the Baguio Chronicle, this was placed on their front pages because of its great impact and prominence to the readers. This issue was placed on the front page of both newspapers and remained in the same page for about two consecutive volumes.

Few of the several topics usually covered by both publications placed in the headlines are usually about controversial matters on the city's politics and economic issues, mainly about price hikes of goods and services. These topics cover the front pages because of its relevance to the readers of both publications as said by Quintos of Baguio Chronicle and Atty. Pekas of Zigzag Weekly and so environmental issues cannot compete with it.

Meanwhile, no articles were placed as fillers to both publications.

Baguio Chronicle does not have any article in the back page because it is meant for advertisement purposes only while Zigzag Weekly has two (3.57%).



Table 2. Placement of articles in the two publications

PLACEMENT OF ARTICLES	ZIGZAG WEEKLY		BAGUIO CHRONICLE	
	N=56	PERCENTAGE	N=46	PERCENTAGE
Front page	7	12.5%	5	10.87%
Back page	2	3.57%	-	-
Inside page	47	83.93%	41	89.13%

This result shows that both publications give importance to environmental issues in terms of its placement in their publication.

Inclusion of Illustrations/Photographs

Both newspapers included photos to articles mostly found on the headlines.

Only four (7.14%) of the articles in Zigzag Weekly were accompanied with visuals, all of which were photographs with captions. Three of these were headlines with photographs that showed overall scene and one feature story showing people in action.

Results also showed that seven (15.22%) articles published in Baguio Chronicle have visuals. These include five (10.87%) articles, three headlines and two feature stories with photos showing overall scene and there were also two (4.35%) editorial articles with editorial cartoon included in it.

Articles on the inside pages of the two publications did not included photos in it.

On the other hand, photographs placed before headline articles indicated that both were stressing the impact of the issue and they were letting people understand more the situation of the city.





Figure 4. Headline about Trash slide incident

SILV L. QUINTOS, Associate Editor
with reports from
LARRY D. MADARANG
OFELIA C. EMPAN
JESSA MARDY O. POLONIO
ACEALEGRE

COMING out from a rain-drenched and disastrous four-day weekend, the Baguio City Council last Wednesday declared Baguio City under a State of Calamity following a typhoon beating by *Typhoon Mirinae* in the heaviest and most breaching of the Irian Solid Waste Dumpsite retaining wall that sent an estimated 15,000 tons of garbage rolling into Brgy. Tadiangan in the nearby town of Tuba, Benguet Province.

The city council also wants an investigation of the "thrashslide" which took the lives of youngsters Jefonie Leon Laglangan Cael, 18; Noemi Cael, 20; Reveller Genesis Tacio Flores, 13; Apollinario Tacio Flores, 10; and Franco Tacio Flores, 16.

While the Flores children's grandmother Antonia was initially listed as "missing", her body was retrieved last September 1. John Flores was also reported as injured.

Also killed by the coming Solivoe 32 and Alex Dawen Magno in a cave-in incident at Bakakeng Norte and falling rocks near the Santo Tomas Central School along Marcos Highway, respectively, while Joel Samson was pinned down by a fallen pine tree at Sto. Rosario Village. Samson is now confined at the Baguio General Hospital for serious

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THRASHSLIDE!...

body injuries.

Earlier on the same day, Benguet Province was declared as under State of Calamity following reports of agricultural damages close to P120 million and the death of three and several others injured while the province's main artery road Halsema Highway was rendered impassable due to landslides in separate locations. More than 500 motor vehicles have been reported stranded along Halsema Highway.

Killed were Rodolfo Gaguisa a resident of Gare Ucab, Itogon, Benguet; Alex Magno, a resident of Pula, Poblacion, Tuba, Benguet; both were victims of landslides and; Martin Biling, a resident of Camp 3, Tuba, Benguet; was hit by falling debris.

Injured were Caroline Daugbis, Regina Palawag, Pilya Malute, Percebel Cayboen, Joseph Comicho and Linda Salwaga.

As of this writing, close to 40 families have been reported affected while damages to crops and infrastructure have reached P11 million. In the capital town of La Trinidad, evacuees have been temporarily housed at the Pugsis Elementary School and a nearby private school.

The Department of Agriculture-CAR has likewise reported crop damages in Kalinga (P11.5 million), Apayao (P8.7 million), Ifugao (P5.4 million), Abra (P10.8 million), Mt. Province (3.3 million), Apayao (P63.1 million).

DA-CAR Information Officer Robert Domoguen said more than 14,409 hectares of farm lands all over the region were affected by the typhoon which may even rise if all the provinces will be able to submit their comprehensive reports of damages specifically on agricultural crops.

The two eastern far-flung municipalities of Paracelis and Tadiangan in Mt. Province are yet to submit their typhoon damage reports because of the amount of losses on the same barangay.

In Tubbly town, Mayor Ruben Praod said there are unstable portions of the Tubbly-Kapangan Road but are passable. He added that his office is closely monitoring the bridge at Sitio Suyoc, Caponga because of threat of strong water current at its foundation.

On the Irian incident, Praod conveyed his deepest sympathy to the families of the casualties. He also conveyed sadness on the national attention that the incident caused which could negatively affect tourism. "We know that Baguio is the heart of Benguet; if Baguio is affected by the issue, the surrounding areas will be affected as well," he said.

In a very urgent letter the following day, Sunday, August 28, Baguio City Mayor Mauricio Domogan pressed the button urging the City Council "to declare Baguio City under the State of Calamity and to allow the implementation of urgent activities and projects addressing the damages caused by Typhoon Mirinae and the evaluation and assessment."

Meanwhile, Tuba sent a message for Baguio to get to the rescue. "Tuba Mayor Florentino Bentez said, 'Grant our the science and stop dumping at the site.' Grant our the science shall lead to the eventual closure of the dumpsite."

Horrifying Account

WHAT was originally expected by Baguio folks and city visitors as a rare long weekend (extended by two days Monday and holidays — the National Heroes Day last Monday and the observance of the *Eid Al-Fitr* marking the end of the Ramadan on Tuesday), turned ominous when "Mina" started dumping buckets of rain as the city woke up Friday morning.

"Typhoon 'Mina' swept across Northern Luzon ahead of the 102nd Baguio Charter Day celebrations which could have featured festive activities such as the unprecedented and synchronized civic parades coming from four directions and converging at the Baguio Athletic Bowl.

With the aid of a *PowerPoint*, City Environment and Parks Lacsamana unraveled in shocking detail in Wednesday's Special Session how the 'thrashslide' happened.

According to her, security personnel detailed at the dumpsite heard a cracking sound at around 11 o'clock on the morning of August 27 and immediately reported their observations to the personnel of CEPMO who were sent to monitor the area at the onset of the typhoon.

The CEPMO personnel reported that the casualties occurred at the houses which were located right below the retaining wall and directly within the path of the cascading garbage. Prolonged heavy rains then sent the garbage rolling lava at about 100 meters per hour ending up at the world-famous wood carving village along Asin Road in Brgy. Tadiangan. About 30 meters of the said road was rendered impassable. The post BenCab Museum is also located in the same barangay.

Lacsamana theorized that "the abnormal volume" of runoff water from the neighboring areas contributed mostly to the accumulation of water at the 2.3-hectare dumpsite which caused the destabilization or loosening of the garbage at the base of the facility, pushing the retaining wall to its breaking point.

During the City Council's Special Session, City Engineer Leo Bernardez said that rainfall that Friday was measured at 191mm. At around midday the next day, August 27, the Irian Dump Site retaining wall was breached. Rainfall on that day, according to Engr. Bernardez, was measured at 225mm (compared to the 159mm highest from April to July this year).

Meanwhile, a 'holding area' was established to manage odor and leachate contamination. Leachate is any liquid that is passing through matter, extracts solutes, suspended solids or any other component of the material through which it has passed. Leachate is a widely-used term in environmental science which refers to a liquid that has dissolved or entrained harmful substances which may then enter the environment.

Bentez said the tragedy must serve as a wake-up call which is most commonly used in the context of land-filling of

"THIS is our version of the Payatas Tragedy," said a Tadiangan male during the clearing operations of the avalanche Monday afternoon.

Payatas is a barangay nearby barangays Commonwealth, Batasan Hills and Bagong Silangan in Quizon City. Payatas was host to a dump site where garbage of the said city was in the area.

While no casualties were recorded in a typhoon-triggered 'thrash slide' at the Payatas dump site in August 1999, more than 30 families lost their homes.

Eleven months later, on July 3, 2006, another 'thrash slide' occurred and more than 500 families lost their homes; 234 have been confirmed dead while 85 remain missing and are still believed to be under the dump.

To date, nobody has been held responsible for the Payatas Tragedy.

Even before the 2010 polls, Tadiangan residents, as if foreseeing the avalanche, barricaded the dumpsite to stop the entry of garbage trucks coming in to dump the day's garbage of the city.

The avalanche, according to Presidential Adviser on Environment Neric Acosta, is a national disaster needing immediate attention, solution and prosecution, and ironic to the Baguio Charter Day's anniversary theme—"Sustaining the Growth of Baguio through Teamwork."

"It is important that somebody should answer for the disasters," said lawyer Jose Molintas, a scion of old Baguio *Ibaloi* clan and UN expert on Indigenous Peoples Mechanisms. "Either criminal negligence or otherwise, the executive department must go on leave or resign to pave way for an independent inquiry."

Molintas said environment officials who allowed the use of the open dumpsite should also answer to the people.

But Mayor Domogan said this is not the time to point an accusing finger at his administration which further allowed the continued use of the dump site after he assumed office last year.

Republic Act 9003 (the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000) prohibits open dumpsite. But Baguio City has not really closed its Irian dumpsite, although claiming phase-out. The Domogan administration has in fact bought a P160-million Japan-manufactured recycling facility said to turn biodegradable materials into fertilizer.

Mayor Domogan also said his administration is on the verge of sealing a deal for a sanitary landfill that will finally decommission the dumpsite.

In a brief interview with the *Baguio Chronicle* on August 31, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Regional Director for Cordillera Clarence Baguilat said his agency has recommended to the city government the total closure of the dumpsite years ago. He refused to comment as to why the city government continued to use it.

He said DENR did not hesitate a bit in giving advice to the city government right after the "thrashslide" — perhaps the latest new word that rendered the latest editions of dictionaries obsolete.

Figure 5. Inside article about the Trash slide incident



This affirms the study of Dinamling (2007) which emphasizes the relevance of using illustrations or photographs in print media. She stated that an inclusion of a photograph or illustration in a story is important to help readers that even those with low education understand more the story. Althiede (1996) as cited by Listino (2003) noted that the use of picture is another form of framing information, convey and simplify a desired message



Figure 6. Sample of article with photograph

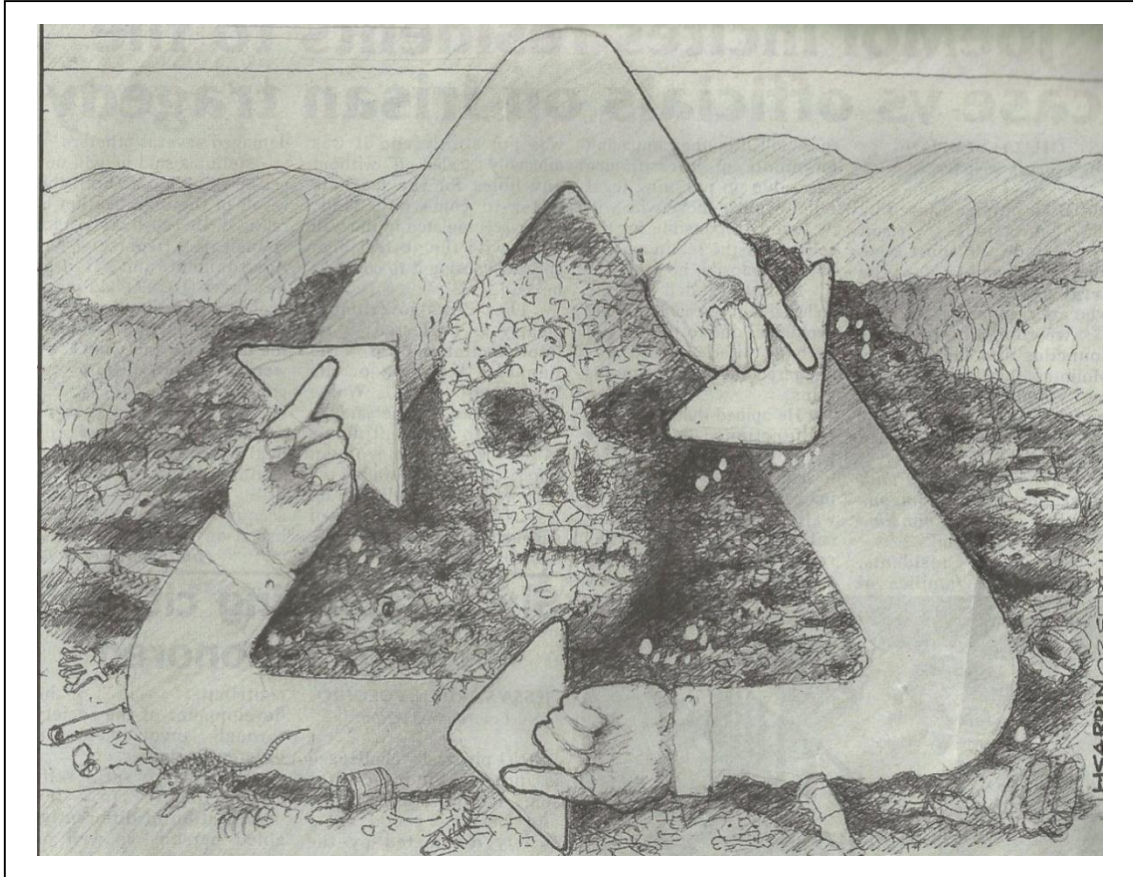


Figure 7. Sample of Editorial cartoon

Field of Environment Covered

Figures 4 and 5 show the dominating fields in environment covered by Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle.

The environmental articles were analyzed according to the different fields set by the researcher, as covered by both publications. These articles were classified as social, ecological, educational, economic, agricultural, health, political and cultural concern.

Social concern. Based on the parameters set for this study, articles that focused on social concern were those that talked about the effects of environmental issues to the attitudes, behaviours of individuals which took the interests, intentions, or needs of other

people into account. Also, these could be articles tackling actions and activities of people that have an impact to the environment.

Both newspapers had high percentage of environmental articles on social concern. Some of the articles of both publications covered the issue on how people can help save the environment through social responsibility as it is a collective duty. Zigzag Weekly had 24 (42.86%) while Baguio Chronicle had 14 (30.43%) articles (*see Appendix C, K*).

Ecological concern. Articles on ecology, based on the parameters set for this study, talked about the connection of environmental issues to the elements surrounding it.

Fourteen articles (25%) in Zigzag Weekly and 11 (23.91%) in Baguio Chronicle were on ecological concern. Most of these articles discussed about the present situation of the ecology (*see Appendix D, L*).

Educational concern. Articles on educational concern inform its readers on another environmental issue. It may also talk about new advances in the field of environment that gives learning to readers.

Few of the articles content analyzed were classified under this. Only five (10.87%) articles in Baguio Chronicle were on educational concern while Zigzag Weekly had two (3.57%). These articles discussed climate change (*see Appendix F, M*).

Economic concern. Five (8.93%) articles in Zigzag Weekly are on economics while Baguio Chronicle has none. These articles talked about the correlation of the present situation of environment and its effects on economics as set by the researcher (*see Appendix E*).

Agricultural concern. Articles that fall under agricultural concern, based on the parameters set for this study, talked about the effects of environment to agriculture.



Result shows that there were only few articles that fall under this field. Both newspapers showed low percentage of articles under this aspect with only four (7.14%) in Zigzag Weekly while Baguio Chronicle has only one (2.17%) article.

The result backs the result of the study of Dinamling (2007) where environment is less focused in writing some local publications (*see Appendix G, N*).

Health concern. Environmental reports have less percentage focus on this aspect. Both publications only have two articles each. These articles usually talked about the effect of environment to the health of people based on the criteria set by the researcher (*see Appendix H, O*).

Political concern. Articles in this aspect were quite more in number compared to health and agricultural concern. Four were in Zigzag Weekly and five were in Baguio Chronicle. These tackled issues on the actions of the government in helping lessen environmental degradation. Most likely, these were about some laws to help save the environment based on the criteria set by the researcher (*see Appendix I, P*).

Cultural concern. Articles under this aspect had the lowest percentage for both publications. The articles included here were about the relationship of customs, beliefs, social norms, and material traits of a religious, social or racial group with environmental issues based on the parameters set by the researcher. The articles discussed the good effects of Cordillera Indigenous practices in preserving the environment (*see Appendix J, Q*).

Generally, the findings show that the dominating field in environmental reporting in both local publications is more on social concern. This is mainly because of the expected elements of an environmental article as enumerated by Atty. Pekas. These include being objective, balance, should have a great impact to a large number of people, should have



prominence, as well as proximity. All of these is an implication that environmental reporting is a social issue, thus classified under social concern.

Ecological concern could also be noted for its high percentage as shown in the results.

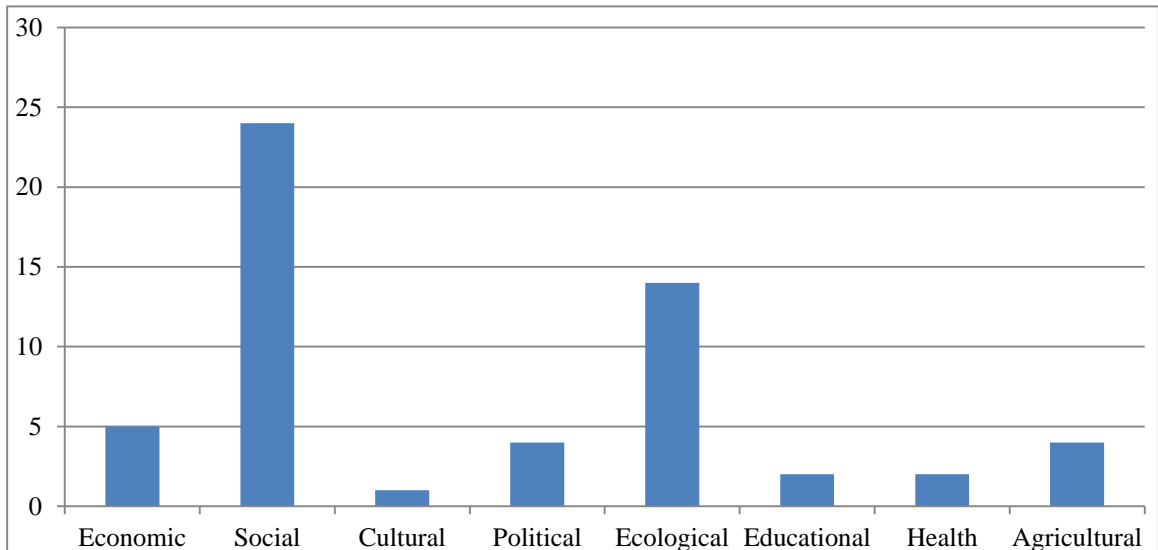


Figure 8. Fields of Environment covered in Zigzag Weekly

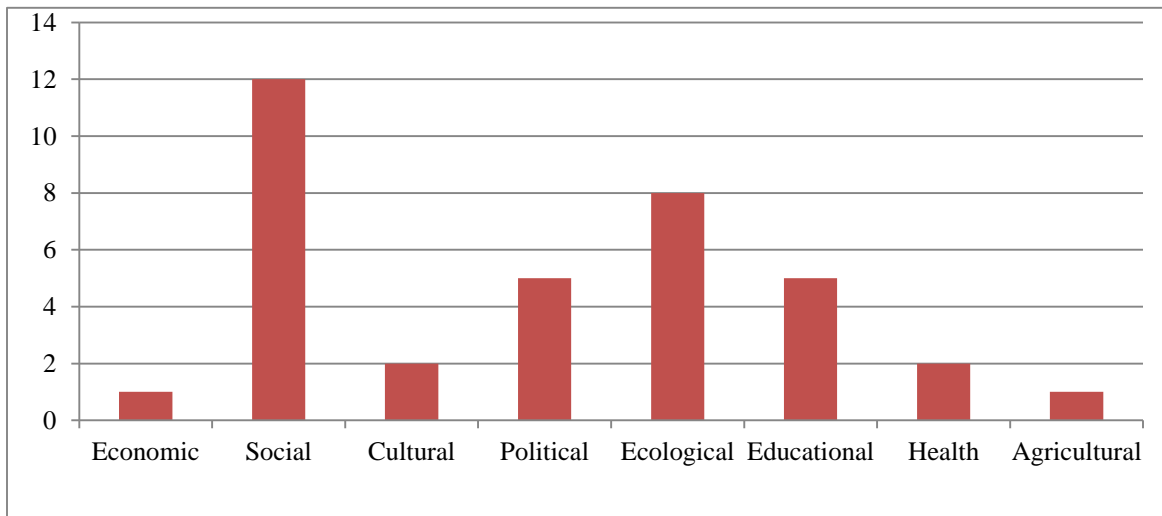


Figure 9. Fields of Environment covered in Baguio Chronicle



Section of Newspaper where most Environmental Articles are Found

Using the coding sheet, the section of newspaper where most environmental article can be found was identified.

Figures 6 and 7 show the section of newspaper where most environmental articles can be found in Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle, respectively. The former had 40 (71.43%) articles found on the news page, six (10.71%) on the headline, and six (10.71%) on the opinion page.

Chronicle had 29 (63.04%) found in the news page, five on the feature page, four (8.70%) on the headline, and four (8.70%) on the opinion page.

Based on the results, it is perceived that like any other regular beats, environment reports were also placed in the news page. This is linked to the result in the treatment of environmental articles that because of certain problems of writers on information source and deadline, they treat environmental articles as straight news and news feature thus, placed on the news page.

On the other hand, fewer articles were found on the headlines. These were usually environmental issues that were very controversial and had great impact to the society according to the editors.

Opinion pages and feature pages also had less environment reports on it. These reports were published at the time a very controversial issue occurred. This reverses the statement of Dashefsky (1993) that environmental issues are most commonly found in the opinion pages. In the case of Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle, environmental articles did not have much space in the opinion page.



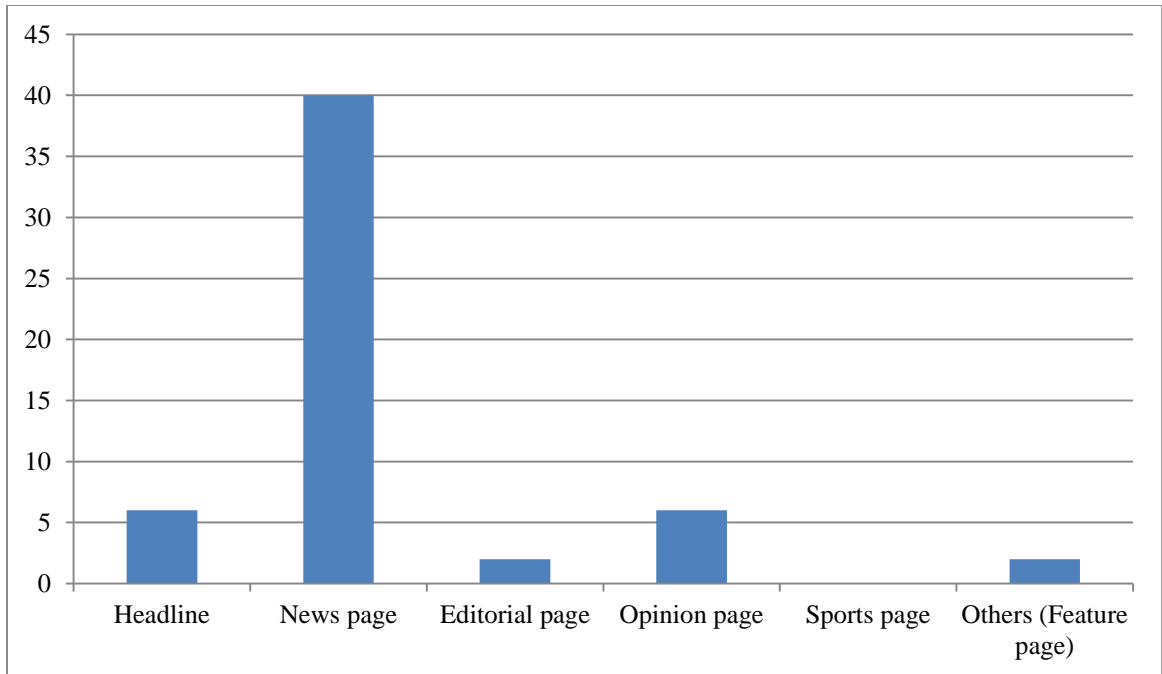


Figure 10. Sections of newspaper where environmental articles in Zigzag Weekly are found

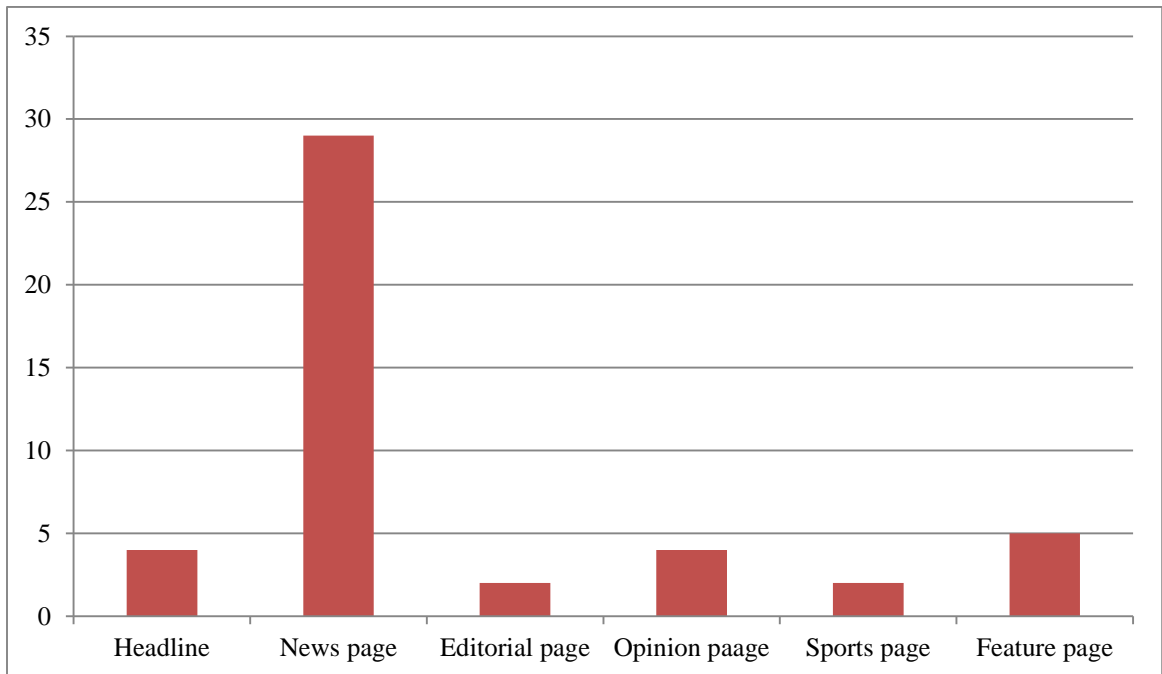


Figure 11. Section of newspaper where environmental articles in Baguio Chronicle are found



about 2 o'clock in the morning of September 2 and ravaged Surigao City with its strongest winds and by sunrise, the city was a landscape of devastation with hundreds killed.

Typhoon Undang (international code name Agnes); November 3 to 6, 1984; 230 kph; 895 deaths; P1.9 billion damage. A little over a month after Niting ravaged the Visayas and Northern Mindanao, Undang entered the country as a very strong typhoon and reached almost "super typhoon" status ravaging Southern parts of Samar Island by early morning of November 5.

Super typhoon Ruping (international code name Mike); November 10 to 14, 1990; 220 kph; 748 deaths; P10.8 billion damage. Ruping was the country's most devastating typhoon inflicting more damage than any other typhoon had done since 1947.

Super typhoon Sening (international code name Joan); October 11 to 15, 1970; 275 kph; 768 deaths; P1.89 billion damage. Sening has been written in the country's history books as the strongest typhoon to cross the country clocking winds up to 275 kph.

Super typhoon Loleng (Babs); October 15 to 24, 1998; 250 kph; 303 deaths; P6,787 billion damage. Typhoon Loleng was a roaring howler by late October 19 at the Philippine Sea heading for Bicol Region.

Super typhoon Sisang (international code name Nina); November 23 to 27, 1987; 240 kph; 979 deaths; P1.119 billion damage. Sisang was a powerful howler that made landfall at the northern tip of Sorsogon by the evening of November 25 and spawned a large storm surge that ravaged Legazpi City. The typhoon huge and menacing eye hovered directly over Legazpi City and unleashed horror and damage to Albay with

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Continued on Page 15

Figure 12. Sample of opinion article in Baguio Chronicle



Challenges of Both Publications in Environmental Reporting

From the interview with Zigzag Weekly editor-in-chief Atty. Antonio Pekas, Baguio Chronicle associate editor Sly Quintos and Larry Madarang, Jessa Mardy Polonio and Ofelia Empian, three reporters of Baguio Chronicle, some challenges faced by both publications were identified.

Space limitations. According to Atty. Pekas, considering the space to be occupied by stories, not all environmental issues were covered by Zigzag Weekly.

The need for more in-depth stories and explanation about an environmental issue causes it not to be tackled by the publication. He said that there were more controversial issues that affect a larger number of people rather than an environmental story.

Technicality and complexity. One of the problems enumerated by the reporters of Baguio Chronicle was the technicality and complexity of an environmental issue.

According to Madarang, because of its wide coverage, he is having a difficult time covering an environmental issue. He need to understand the issue for himself first before writing it. He said that he cannot be considered an effective conveyer of information to his readers if he himself does not understand the topic he is writing on.

With this problem, Quintos advised the reporters to do a lot of researches. The technicality of an environmental issue according to him may be best explained and understood by researching for the meaning of some highly-technical words. Moreover, Quintos said that journalists should also choose the information so that the readers can understand well the published story. He further emphasized this by saying that “Reporting is actually educating the people.”

Deadline. One of the main problems stated by Empian and Polonio is the



deadline. They said that tough deadlines cause them to rush in gathering information, and at times, they disregard the use of researches for their articles.

As a result of this, they treat their articles as straight news and news feature. They have less explanation for environmental issues, and so, some are complicated to understand.

Source of Information. Another problem these journalists faced was their source of information. Polonio and Empian, being budding journalists, were having difficult time gathering information because some of their intended sources were hesitant in bringing out information.

Moreover, they do not know whom to interview for their environmental topic. Of the several possible sources of information, they were confused on where to find the most reliable sources.

According to PEJI (1988), using several sources of information is important for environmental reporting. However, reporters assigned to cover general events use only one or two sources mainly because of short deadlines and that these reporters often do not know where to find knowledgeable sources. They further emphasized that “general assignment” reporters do not have much time to build up sources, even local ones, who can help them interpret technical information.

Negative reporting. Quintos said that negative reporting is another problem that many budding journalists do. He emphasized that one must not be an alarmist. Alarmist, according to him, is someone who writes an issue in a negative manner as to distress its readers.



He said that negative thoughts should not always be a part of the article. Although negative information cannot be avoided, a journalist must be balanced, and objective in reporting. Quintos emphasized that the reporters should also bring the positive side of an environmental issue so that in one way or another, education among the readers may still be present.

This can be asserted by PEJI's statement that editors could help overcome their tendency towards negative reporting by being an educator and explaining that environmental reporting is a long-term issue, not just a series of crises. They added that journalists should write articles on positive environmental happenings, even if these are small steps on a very long road to a final solution. These small steps according to them are newsworthy and are giving readers a sense that something is being done to preserve the environment.

Lack of Environmental Reporters and Financial crisis. Last important problem faced by both publications is the lack of environmental reporters as related to financial crisis.

According to Atty. Pekas, he assigns general assignment reporters to cover environmental issues and does not hire specialized beat reporters because it will mean more finances to them.



SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was conducted to compare the environmental coverage of Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle. Specifically, it determined the dominant source of information of the articles published; compared the nature of environmental articles in terms of treatment, placement, inclusion of illustrations and photographs, and frequency of articles; determined the dominating fields in environment mostly covered by the two local weekly newspapers, and; determined the section of the newspaper where most environmental articles can be found.

Following the principles of content analysis, a modified coding sheet instrument was used to assess and compare the environmental coverage of the two local weekly newspapers.

A total of 102 articles were coded from January to February 2012 in two local weekly newspapers, Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle. The environmental articles coded were published from January 2011 to December 2011. Fifty-six articles were published in Zigzag Weekly and forty six articles were published in Baguio Chronicle. These articles were content analyzed.

For the frequency of articles, both publications did not have an environmental article on every issue. Articles were written and published at the time the story came out and some follow-ups were also present.

The dominant sources of information of the articles published were categorized according to official voices, masses, technical people, and documents. Most of the



information in the articles both in Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle came from official voices and a combination of the different sources.

On the nature of coverage, most articles both in Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle were treated as news feature. For the placement, most environmental articles in Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle were found on the inside pages.

Few of the articles in both publications had photographs as well as illustrations on it. In Zigzag Weekly, there were only four articles with photographs, all of which had captions and showed overall scene. These articles were mostly placed in the headlines. In Baguio Chronicle, seven articles included photos and illustrations. Five had photographs, all with caption and mostly showed overall scene. Two had editorial cartoons included in the editorial articles.

The dominating field of environment covered by Zigzag Weekly were on social, ecological and economic concern while Baguio Chronicle focused on social, ecological and educational concern.

The section of the newspaper where most environmental articles found in Zigzag Weekly and Baguio Chronicle was the news page.

For the challenges faced by both publications in environmental reporting, both publications said that there problems were space limitations, technicality and complexity of an environmental issue, tough deadlines, where to find reliable source of information, negative reporting, and lack of environmental reporters and financial crisis.



Conclusions

Based on the results, the following conclusions were derived:

1. Environmental articles are not much emphasized in local publications based on the analysis of the study.

2. Government offices and officials are still considered by most reporters as reliable source of information.

3. Placement of articles depends on the criteria set by the publication. Environmental stories are not mostly seen in opinion pages but treated as news or news feature stories.

4. The use of photographs and illustrations vary from one publication to another depending on the impact of the photo.

5. Selection of stories under the different fields of environmental reporting depends on the impact of the story being covered.

6. Challenges faced by local publications in environmental reporting are several and varied; from the topics, the writers themselves, as well as the editors of the publications covering it.

Recommendations

Based on the derived conclusions, the researcher recommends the following:

1. The two publications may consider the inclusion of the voice of the masses in environmental articles to better understand how an issue affects the people.

2. The two community newspapers may include more illustrations, photographs or graphics in environmental stories for the people to perceive or understand more the story in particular and the present situation of the environment in general.



3. Community newspapers may consider publishing more environmental articles to educate and inform the people since print is still considered by a large number of people as reliable source of information.

4. Budding journalist may opt to undergo trainings about environmental reporting to overcome their problem on technicality and complexity of environmental issues.

5. Related study should also be conducted in other local and national publications to check how environmental issues are being covered to assert the information stated in this research.



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