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Mitigating Barriers to Campus Journalism: A Comprehensive Framework for Collaboration Between Journalists and University Authority

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ABSTRACT

Campus journalism plays a vital role in the information dissemination and transparency of universities. The present study aimed to explore the barriers faced by campus journalists while collecting news, explore the ways to mitigate the barriers and propose a framework to enhance collaboration with the university administration. Following a mixed-method approach, quantitative data were collected from 217 campus journalists working on 15 Bangladeshi university campuses, using a convenience sampling technique. Contrarily, qualitative data were collected from 25 campus journalists through an FGD and 5 representatives of the administrative authority through an interview at a public university in Bangladesh. The findings revealed that scattered sources of information, lack of cooperation from authorities, insufficient training, and political pressure are grave obstacles to campus journalism. Solutions emerging from the analysis include arranging training programs, developing communication skills and collaborating with other associations and university authorities. However, the university administrators suggested ethical journalism, prompt press announcements, and open communications strategies. Finally, the study introduced a conceptual framework in order to bring these perspectives together and provide a lens for ensuring effective campus journalism supported by institutional safeguards and cooperative efforts.

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Campus journalism; barriers; comprehensive framework; information seeking; university campuses; mixed-method study; Bangladesh

Introduction

Information gathering is at the heart of journalism, enabling reporters to collect, verify, and share relevant news with audiences (Rosenstiel 2014). This meticulous process is vital to producing credible and timely work for campus journalists, who must balance academic demands with their reporting duties (Tasmim and Atikuzzaman 2023). In an era of misinformation, campus journalists play a crucial role as gatekeepers and sense-makers within the academic information ecosystem. They mediate between university policies, student perspectives, and the broader community (Wardle and Derakhshan 2017). Beyond mere reporting, campus journalism is an indispensable pillar of academic life,

fostering student expression, democratic engagement, and institutional accountability (Chavez et al. 2024).

Campus journalists are special individuals as they serve as a mediating point between the university management and the students. They also monitor university administration and demand transparency by reporting significant student affairs (Tasmim and Atikuzzaman 2023). However, altered journalistic practices have brought about the existence of hardships for campus journalists in maintaining the values of accuracy and objectivity, which are part and parcel of their mission (McDevitt 2002). Security concerns, political pressures and institutional influence forced many to kill public interest stories in the making or compromise journalistic integrity (Ramos and Suizo 2024; Waisbord 2022). This is made even more difficult by the relative lack of access to central resources, such as databases or mentorship positions necessary for training in key skills, particularly fact-checking (Case and Given 2016). Moreover, there are various obstacles leading to self-censorship and poor coverage, namely postponed access to e-official documents, lack of help from authorities, and pressure to follow the guidelines and orders of institutions (Mangompit, Flores, and Jaca 2024). In addition, due to the relative lack of practice, young journalists tend to experience an information flow with which they cannot cope (Le Cam 2011, July). At the same time, political obstacles are especially dangerous since they may not guarantee the objectivity of journalists and influence their personal safety (Hamada 2022; Waisbord 2022). Therefore, overcoming these barriers remains the central facet of promoting campus journalism and creating a more transparent academic setting.

In the context of Bangladesh, campus journalism holds significant importance as it operates at the intersection of education, activism, and media. University campuses have long been hotbeds of political awareness and civic mobilization, with student journalists playing a crucial role in reporting and shaping discourse on issues such as tuition hikes, governance, freedom of expression, and social justice (Ghosh 2023). The “Quota Reform Movement” that emerged in July 2024 marked a pivotal moment, as students protested the reinstatement of a public service job quota system deemed discriminatory (Hossain 2025). Protests rapidly spread across campuses, including Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, and Begum Rokeya University, escalating into broader demonstrations on major nodes (e.g., Shahbagh) and highways nationwide (The Daily Star 2024). Campus journalists and student-run media outlets played instrumental roles by reporting protest developments in real-time, amplifying student voices and exposing governmental responses. Their coverage not only informed but also empowered collective action, but faced severe suppression, including access restrictions, institutional pressure, and censorship. However, despite its critical role, campus journalists in Bangladesh often face institutional, political, and logistical barriers, making it necessary to examine the challenges they encounter and the strategies they adopt to continue their work.

Despite the growing recognition of journalism’s role in promoting transparency, limited scholarly attention has been given to the specific challenges of campus journalism in developing countries such as Bangladesh. Addressing these barriers and fostering constructive collaboration with university administrations is essential to ensure accountability, safeguard student voices, and strengthen institutional information practices. This study is therefore both timely and useful, as it not only identifies the obstacles faced by campus journalists but also proposes a practical framework for enhancing cooperation

and sustainable campus journalism. In general, this study elaborated on the experiences of journalists affiliated with different universities in Bangladesh to delineate the problems they face in their information-seeking process. Specifically, it was based on the inputs obtained through FGD conducted with a group of campus journalists and interviews conducted with certain university administrators. The researchers also took a closer look at the problems they encountered in this area and focused on generating a framework that would boost the efficiency and effectiveness of campus journalism in particular.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to identify the barriers campus journalists face while collecting news, explore the ways to mitigate the barriers and propose a framework to enhance collaboration with the university administration. The specific objectives are:

- i To identify key difficulties faced by campus journalists while collecting news on their campuses.
- ii To gather their suggestions for mitigating the identified barriers.
- iii To analyze the roles of the university administrators in mitigating these difficulties.
- iv To develop a framework for enhancing collaboration between campus journalists and university administrations.

Literature Review

Information searching is a crucial aspect of journalism, and campus journalists equally require access to dependable data to perform accurate reporting. Case and Given (2016) indicated that successful information-searching strategies possess certain features including the collection of data across a wide variety of sources. However, campus journalists face varying challenges that border on institutional restrictions, time limitations, and lack of technological access, which also grossly influence their journalistic output. Mahadevagouda and Pavithrabai (2024) analyzed data from 610 journalists in Karnataka and found key barriers as limited availability of necessary information, insufficient search skills, and language barriers. Alami, Mobarez, and Tanai (2019) identified that political influence and restricted source access place limitations on journalism in politically sensitive areas. Similarly, campus journalists experience challenges when the mother institutions hinder information. Additionally, Watts and Wernsman (1997) described strained relationships between journalists and administrators which block transparency and free information exchange.

Balancing academic responsibilities with extracurricular duties, such as journalism, often requires effective time management and prioritization strategies (Macan et al. 1990). Meanwhile, Lievrouw and Paris (2020) recommended task management techniques as a tool to decrease stress levels and increase efficiency. Technology access has also been needed in modern journalism in most areas that have not been available to many campus journalists in the form of digital tools or databases. For example, Pjesivac et al. (2024) argued that poorly resourced technology reduces the effectiveness of verification processes and quality reporting. Kumpulainen and Late (2022) investigated the most important barriers to information access and reported information searching,

correct understanding of the subject to increase confidence, and slow speed of the internet.

Cognitive barriers, such as low self-efficacy and limited experience, further contribute to negative information-seeking behavior. Savolainen (2015) described how, in the absence of a mentor, young journalists experience challenges in articulating their information needs and evaluating sources of information. Han et al. (2024) highlighted how online harassment has become a significant issue for journalists, often exacerbated on social media platforms. The findings suggest developing better tools for journalists to cope with such challenges. Often, journalists have to cope with an overabundance of information online, which complicates the processes of verification and filtration (Holton et al. 2021). Similarly, Eppler and Mengis (2008) explored the challenges of information overload and underlined the importance of critical thinking and fact-checking as essential skills for navigating complex information environments.

Previous studies reported that training and/or courses on journalism smoothen journalists' jobs. For instance, Sasaka, Otiye, and Ng'eno (2017) underscored that thorough training may allow journalists to work his or her way around an information system. Larondo Ureta and Pena Fernandez (2018) affirmed the use of investigative courses and mentorship deals to enhance technical and critical abilities. Claassen (2001) studied a model of training students who study journalism, while Frith and Meech (2007) studied graduates from courses in Scotland. These studies have established that a journalism graduate degree forms an excellent preparation to be a successful journalist. Such a study also established that graduate journalists get newsroom cultures easily. Banda et al. (2007) argued that journalism education in Southern Africa has to grapple with forging a new academic identity for itself by breaking its overdependence on Western-oriented paradigms of journalism education and training.

Meanwhile, another crucial key to reporting quality and accuracy is access to modern technology and digital resources. The institution should ensure activities that would provide journalists with the tools they need to fill information gaps. Thurman (2017) has observed that digital platforms continue to be so vital in helping campus journalists cover news content. Francisco, Lenhoff, and Schudson (2012) have pointed out that these resources along with university support as newsroom models and partnerships with organizations are very essential to facilitate the process of retrieving information by journalists. Other major strategies entail networking programs that involve collaboration between journalism schools, libraries, and campus media. According to Renee'C (2020), such networking programs introduce student journalists to experienced professionals who mentor them in the development of effective reporting practices. Mentorship programs are therefore considered the best in instilling confidence, bridging the skill gap, and increasing information-seeking capacities in students.

Several studies have also been done worldwide on how journalists adapted to challenges such as disinformation, mental health impacts, and operational constraints during the COVID-19 pandemic (Dwivedi 2023; Price and Antonova 2022; Sujoko 2022). In Bangladesh, a few studies explored the information-seeking challenges of different groups of people in different contexts. For example, Rahman, Ara, and Khan (2020) investigated the information-seeking challenges of small-scale farmers, Chisty et al. (2021) identified information-seeking challenges during the pandemic, Atikuzzaman, Yesmin, and Abdul Karim (2023) explored information-seeking challenges of tribal women and

Howlader and Islam (2019) investigated the information-seeking challenges of undergraduate students. However, the study of Tasmim and Atikuzzaman (2023) explored the behavior of campus journalists while seeking information and identified several challenges, including improper training, lack of authority cooperation, insufficient time and overloaded information. No other study has been found that explored the challenges faced by campus journalists and suggested a framework to mitigate these challenges by enhancing the collaboration between campus journalists and university administrations. This study aims to address the gaps left by previous research.

Methodology

This study adopted the mixed-method approach by integrating qualitative and quantitative research methods for a detailed analysis of the statements provided by campus journalists and university authorities. Quantitative results were measured by preparing a well-structured survey questionnaire, where Google Forms were used to collect data from campus journalists. The questionnaires contained open- and closed-ended questions to allow variability in the responses.

The qualitative part of the research used both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to delve into the more profound insights of campus journalists and university administrators. In this regard, FGDs were conducted with campus journalists to capture the collective attitude, behavioral traits, and perspectives. As indicated by Hollstein (2011), this approach was useful in exploring common challenges and experiences faced by journalists. The group setting allowed participants to discuss common themes and concerns of their work. Further insights came from semi-structured, in-depth interviews with key university administrators. According to Berger (2015), interviews deliver a level of insight into the subjective experiences of individuals that observation alone can hardly achieve. These interviews were meant to give the administrative perspective on the journalism activities within the university and give a balanced view of the issues under investigation.

Quantitative Data Collection

A total of 217 campus journalists from 15 different universities in Bangladesh participated in the quantitative survey. The survey was distributed via several social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and e-mail, relying on the convenience, availability, and personal willingness of the journalists. The survey instrument consisted of two sections. The first section captured demographic and other variables, such as university name, gender, age, formal training, years of involvement in campus journalism, language for collecting news, and position title, which were included to contextualize the responses. The second section focused on perceived barriers to campus journalism, measured through eight items on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). These items addressed challenges such as lack of training and administrative cooperation, scattered sources of information, political influence, and limited access to resources. These variables were self-developed and refined through expert consultation to ensure relevance to the Bangladeshi university context. Informed consent was obtained from the participants after explaining the purpose of the study. They were also informed

that no personal or confidential data would be collected by the questionnaire. Data were analyzed based on descriptive and inferential statistics via SPSS 25 software.

Qualitative Data Collection

The respondents for the qualitative data belonged to two groups: 25 campus journalists and 5 representatives of the administrative authority of a public university in Bangladesh. The campus journalists included those who have been actively involved in press release activities. Administrative authorities included advisors of the journalist association and the proctor of the university. The thematic analysis has revealed their consistent and divergent perspectives. Semi-structured interviews with five administrative authorities were performed, which provided a deeper understanding of the administrative perspective and policies related to campus journalism. This study adopted stakeholder theory (Freeman 1984) as an analytical lens to interpret the findings from both groups. This theory suggests that organizations and institutions operate within a network of relationships involving multiple groups, each with different interests, expectations, and influence. In the case of campus journalism, stakeholders include campus journalists, university administrators, the student body, and, in some cases, the wider media landscape. By applying this framework, the study places individual perspectives within broader stakeholder relationships.

Quantitative Findings of the Study

Demographic Data of the Campus Journalists

Table 1 provides the list of universities whose respondents participated in the survey. The total number of respondents is 217. Among them, the highest number of respondents came from X University (25, 11.5%), followed by the University of Rajshahi (20, 9.2%), Jahangirnagar University (19, 8.8%), and the University of Chittagong (18, 8.3%). Other notable contributors include Comilla University and Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University, each contributing 16 respondents (7.4%).

Table 1. List of universities from which journalists participated in the survey.

University Name	Frequency	Percent
X University	25	11.5
University of Rajshahi	20	9.2
Jahangirnagar University	19	8.8
University of Chittagong	18	8.3
Comilla University	16	7.4
Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University	16	7.4
University of Dhaka	15	6.9
Shahjalal University of Science and Technology	14	6.5
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University	13	6.0
Islamic University	13	6.0
Barishal University	13	6.0
Pabna University of Science and Technology	12	5.5
Jagannath University	11	5.1
Stamford University	10	4.6
Begum Rokeya University	2	.9
Total	217	100.0

The smallest contribution came from Begum Rokeya University with only two respondents (0.9%).

Table 2 illustrates that out of the total respondents, 192 (88.5%) are male, and 25 (11.5%) are female, indicating a significant majority of male participants in the survey. In terms of age distribution, the largest group of respondents, 121 (55.8%), falls within the age range of 23–25 years, followed by 71 respondents (32.7%) in the 20–22 years category. A smaller portion of the respondents, 25 (11.5%), are aged more than 25 years. Most of the journalists received formal training on journalism (188, 86.6%) and the rest (29, 13.4%) didn't receive it. In terms of experience, a significant proportion of them had 2–3 years of experience (81, 37.3%) followed by 1–2 years of experience (71, 32.7%).

Table 3 shows the respondents' language for collecting and reporting news. The majority of respondents, 181 (83.4%), use Bangla as their primary language, while 36 (16.6%) prefer English. According to Table 4, 170 respondents (78.3%) identified themselves as campus correspondents, followed by 38 respondents (17.5%) who work as reporters. Other roles, including sub-editor, content producer, principal correspondent, assistant editor, and trainee journalist, account for a very small proportion (4.2%).

Difficulties Faced by Campus Journalists While Collecting News

The respondents were asked to mention the difficulties they usually face while collecting news on their campus on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to strongly agree = 5. Table 5 reveals the highest-rated issue, "information scattered in many sources" (mean = 3.83, SD = 0.696), reflects a widespread and consistent challenge, emphasizing the need for centralized and accessible information systems, followed by "lack of authority's cooperation" (mean = 3.82, SD = 0.687) and "lack of proper training" (mean = 3.72, SD = 0.751) underline significant barriers to effective performance, pointing toward systemic and skill-related gaps. Other noteworthy difficulties include "lack of time" (mean = 3.62, SD = 0.761) and "lack of skills" (mean = 3.61, SD = 0.859), both of which suggest resource and capacity constraints. Additionally, "political pressure" (mean = 3.55, SD = 0.865) and "physical and sexual harassment" (mean = 3.56, SD = 0.901) present concerning issues with broader implications for workplace safety and ethical standards. Further, "lack of timely press releases" (mean = 3.46, SD = 1.004) is the lowest-rated difficulty but has the highest standard deviation, indicating greater variability in how respondents perceive this issue.

Table 2. Demographic data of the campus journalists (quantitative survey).

Variable	Classification	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	192	88.5
	Female	25	11.5
Age level	20–22 years	71	32.7
	23–25 years	121	55.8
	More than 25 years	25	11.5
Formal training	Yes	188	86.6
	No	29	13.4
Experience	Less than 1 year	21	9.7
	1–2 years	71	32.7
	2–3 years	81	37.3
	3–4 years	39	18.0
	5 years or more	5	2.3

Table 3. Language for collecting and publishing news.

Language for collecting news	Frequency	Percent
Bangla	181	83.4
English	36	16.6
Total	217	100.0

Pearson correlation analysis was performed to see whether there is any relationship between the barriers faced by journalists and their demographic data. The test results, presented in [Table 6](#), revealed no significant relationship between the total barrier scores and journalists' gender, age, formal training and experience. This result suggests that these factors have little or no influence on the barriers faced by journalists. It also implies that journalists, regardless of background or experience, generally face similar challenges while collecting news.

Qualitative Findings of the Study

The qualitative strand of this study, based on focus group discussions (FGDs) with 25 campus journalists and interviews with five university administrators, provided deeper insights into the challenges and opportunities for campus journalism. While the survey data revealed key barriers such as lack of cooperation from authorities, scattered information sources, insufficient training, and political pressure, the qualitative findings reveal how these issues are experienced by student journalists and perceived by university administrators. The analysis is organized into two sections: (1) perspectives of campus journalists, and (2) perspectives of university administrators. The findings are interpreted through the lens of stakeholder theory (Freeman 1984), which emphasizes the negotiation of power, responsibility, and collaboration among different stakeholders within the university ecosystem. [Figure 1](#) illustrates the process of theme development in the current study.

Perspectives of Campus Journalists

To explore potential solutions faced by journalists across the campuses, the researchers conducted a focus group discussion (FGD) with 25 campus journalists to understand their perspectives on overcoming these challenges. Among the participants, 10 were female (40%) and 15 were male (60%) journalists; all were actively involved in student-led media outlets for 3–5 years with the role of campus correspondent (17, 68%) and reporter (8, 32%). The findings from the FGD are reported below based on the major themes.

Table 4. Position title of the respondents.

Position title of the respondents	Frequency	Percent
Campus correspondent	170	78.3
Reporter	38	17.5
Other positions	9	4.2
Total	217	100.0

Table 5. Key difficulties faced by the campus journalists.

Key difficulties	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lack of proper training	3.72	.751
Lack of authority's cooperation	3.82	.687
Lack of time	3.62	.761
Information scattered in many sources	3.83	.696
Political pressure	3.55	.865
Lack of timely press releases	3.46	1.004
Lack of skills	3.61	.859
Physical and sexual harassment	3.56	.901

Theme 1: Training and Skill Development

Campus journalists consistently highlighted the importance of structured training to strengthen their professional competencies. Respondents suggested journalism or media literacy courses, online resources, mentorship programs, and access to institutional databases as effective strategies. As one participant noted:

Taking journalism or media literacy courses would provide us with the theoretical and practical tools to improve information-seeking techniques. Besides, mentorship programs with experienced journalists could help guide us on how to gather, analyze, and verify information.

When asked about specific training needs, participants emphasized fact-checking, writing, observation, and communication skills. Another journalist shared:

We need more focus on fact-checking and observation skills, as these are critical for producing accurate and responsible reporting.

These responses point to a capacity gap in student journalism. According to the stakeholder theory, the lack of institutional support for training leaves journalists without the tools necessary to fulfill their watchdog role.

Theme 2: Balancing Academic and Journalistic Responsibilities

Another significant theme was time management. Journalists described the difficulty of merging academic duties with reporting responsibilities. Respondents emphasized the importance of prioritizing tasks and creating peer networks for support. One participant explained:

Table 6. Correlation between the barriers faced by journalists and their demographic data.

Barriers faced by journalists		1	2	3	4	5
1. Gender	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (two-tailed)					
2. Age	Pearson Correlation	-.108	1			
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.114				
3. Formal training	Pearson Correlation	-.014	-.233**	1		
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.832	.001			
4. Experience as a journalist	Pearson Correlation	-.130	.092	-.305**	1	
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.057	.179	.000		
5. Total barrier score	Pearson Correlation	.026	.039	-.009	.060	1
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.706	.563	.899	.379	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

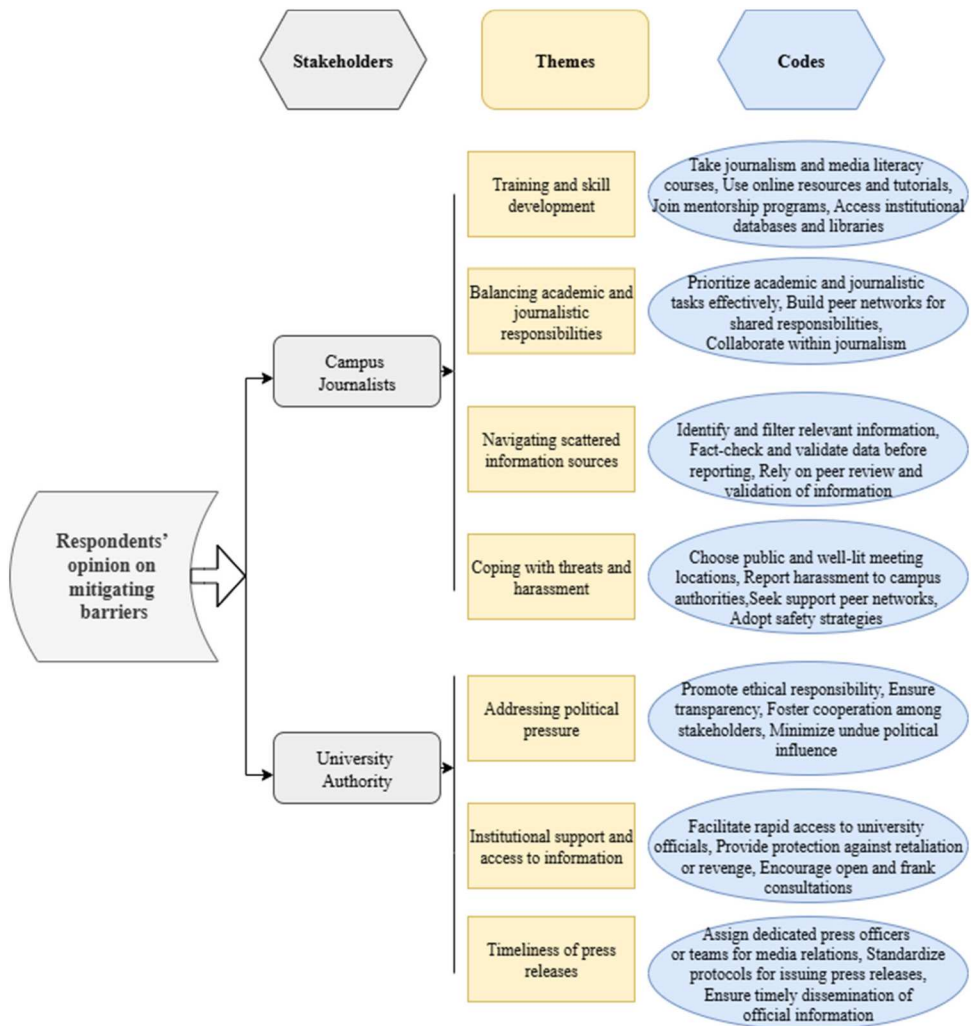


Figure 1. Development of themes based on respondents' opinions on mitigating barriers.

Networking with other journalists and collaborating within journalism organizations helps in sharing tasks and managing time better.

This suggests that campus journalism operates within a dual-role pressure: students must satisfy both academic expectations and journalistic responsibilities. The findings imply that support structures, such as collaborative networks and formal recognition of journalism as a co-curricular activity, could ease this pressure.

Theme 3: Navigating Scattered Information Sources

Journalists also reported challenges in accessing reliable and centralized information, often encountering fragmented sources and inconsistent responses from university offices. A participant noted:

It's important to identify what information is relevant and fact-check it thoroughly before using it in reports.

This indicates that information asymmetry, where authorities hold information unequally or restrict access, forces journalists to rely heavily on peer validation and fact-checking. From a stakeholder perspective, this reflects a lack of institutional mechanisms that recognize journalists as valid stakeholders entitled to timely and accurate information.

Theme 4: Coping with Threats and Harassment

Participants also described experiences of harassment and bullying, ranging from subtle pressures to safety concerns. They identified strategies such as choosing public meeting places, seeking authority support, and asserting confidence when interacting with unfriendly actors. One respondent explained:

If harassment occurs, we must report it to the proper authorities, such as campus security or authorities. Choosing public, well-lit meeting locations can also add a layer of protection, as it reduces the risk of harassment.

This underscores the vulnerability of student journalists in politically charged or argumentative reporting contexts. Without formal protection mechanisms, journalists rely on informal strategies of risk mitigation.

Perspectives of University Administrators

University authorities are administrative bodies of the campus and are responsible for mitigating all kinds of harassment against the students, including campus journalists. As the quantitative data from the campus journalists revealed some barriers that need the university authority's assistance to be mitigated, several administrators from the university were interviewed. The findings are reported below based on the key themes.

Theme 5: Addressing Political Pressure

Administrators acknowledged that political pressure is a significant challenge for campus journalism, and they suggested approaches focused on ethical responsibility, transparency, and multi-stakeholder cooperation. As one official emphasized:

Minimizing political pressure requires a robust approach that balances ethical obligations and transparent operations. Cooperation among the parties concerned is of the essence in ensuring that the integrity of institutional operations is upheld.

These insights reveal that administrators view political interference not only as a student issue but also as a broader governance concern. Within stakeholder theory, this represents the administration's attempt to balance reputational management with journalists' demand for accountability.

Theme 6: Institutional Support and Access to Information

In discussing their supportive role, administrators suggested that universities should facilitate rapid access to officials, protect journalists from revenge, and provide transparent communication channels such as hotlines or dedicated offices. One administrator explained:

This viewpoint indicates that campus authorities should establish an enabling environment for journalists, characterized by cooperation, frank consultations, and openness. Safety and access to timely information are crucial in the creation of good campus journalism.

Here, administrators articulated a vision of collaborative journalism, where the institution ensures openness and protection. This matches the journalists' perspective, though it also reveals a gap between ambitious support and reported experiences of unsupportiveness.

Theme 7: Timeliness of Press Releases

Finally, administrators discussed the need for communication strategies to ensure the timely dissemination of information. Suggestions included entitling press officers, developing hands-on communication plans, and standardizing protocols. One of them stated:

A well-structured communication strategy, joined with timely issuance of press releases, is necessary. Having a person or team dedicated to press management will ensure efficiency and reliability in the delivery of pertinent information to the general public.

This reflects an organizational communication challenge, i.e., institutions recognize the importance of structured information flows but often lack the systems to implement them. For student journalists, delays in press releases worsen dependence on informal and split sources, strengthening the barriers identified in both the survey and FGDs.

Summary of the Qualitative Findings

The qualitative data highlight the complex ecosystem in which campus journalism operates. Journalists emphasized training needs, time management struggles, scattered information sources, and harassment concerns, while administrators pointed to ethical journalism, transparency, and structured communication as solutions. According to the stakeholder theory, these findings underscore the interdependent yet tension-filled relationship between campus journalists and university authorities.

Discussion and Recommendations

The present study aimed to explore the barriers faced by campus journalists while collecting news and propose a framework to overcome these challenges. In a mixed-method approach, quantitative data were collected from 217 campus journalists working on 15 university campuses in Bangladesh. On the other hand, qualitative data were collected from 25 campus journalists through an FGD and 3 representatives of the administrative authority through an interview at a public university in Bangladesh.

The first objective was related to identifying key difficulties faced by campus journalists while collecting news on their campuses. Findings revealed a number of challenges, including scattered information, lack of authority's cooperation, and insufficient training, time constraints, inadequate skills, political pressure, and harassment. Pearson correlation analysis revealed no significant relationship between the total barrier scores and journalists' gender, age, formal training and experience, suggesting that these factors have little or no influence on the barriers faced by journalists. These difficulties highlight potential areas for improvement in journalism training and education initiatives to provide

journalists with better instruments for obtaining information. Addressing these problems and identifying the source of issues, campus journalists can potentially cover the campus news at a faster pace and of higher quality. Our findings are, however, in line with findings in a current study by Tasmim and Atikuzzaman (2023) that the authors found the key barriers to the information seeking activities by campus journalists in Bangladesh to be poor time, poor cooperation by authorities and poor information seeking training. Likewise, Mallikarjun and Kumar (2020) found that employees having no help of higher authorities impede the very process of information search.

Aside from a dearth of the required training and professional development opportunities, campus journalists in Bangladesh are additionally disadvantaged by their limited knowledge and experience on recently developed technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is all set to be a driving force in the news industry by revolutionizing journalism globally in the way it produces news, fact checks, personalizes content and automates processes. Nevertheless, the student-run media in Bangladesh, for the most part, do not have sufficient institutional backing or inclusion of technology in the curriculum to train future journalists for these technological shifts. Goni and Tabassum (2020) studied the level of preparation among students of journalism in Bangladesh and found an alarming gap between what is being taught and the digital journalism environment, including AI tools. Without AI literacy, campus journalists are handicapping themselves and their readiness for professional roles in a twenty-first-century newsroom.

The second objective was related to gathering their suggestions for mitigating the identified barriers. The thematic analysis of the qualitative data revealed several key areas including better training programs, proactive communication strategies, and ethical collaboration between stakeholders as measures to overcome barriers. This finding emphasizes the need for effective collaboration among the stakeholders to ensure quality journalism across the university campuses. Though previous research on how to mitigate challenges in campus journalism is scarce, some studies investigated barriers and opportunities of knowledge-based journalism (Van Witsen and Takahashi 2018) and immersive journalism (Herrera Damas and Benítez de Gracia 2022).

The third objective was related to analyzing the roles of the university administrators in mitigating these difficulties. Results revealed that authorities emphasized fostering transparency, ensuring safety, and creating a dedicated press management system to support campus journalists. This finding is crucial as the challenges in journalism in Bangladesh are increasing at an alarming rate (Azim 2022; Safa and Akter 2015; Zarif 2024). University administrators undoubtedly offered helpful suggestions for reducing barriers to campus journalists, but the institutional pressures they are ensconced in cannot be overlooked either. Especially within the Global South, university bureaucrats largely work with scant resources, juggle innumerable responsibilities, and have to adapt to changing journalistic and civic demands. These factors might inhibit their ability to provide proactive support even when they know it is necessary. Valeza, Bermudo, and Yango (2021) argued that press freedom lies somewhere along a spectrum between policy and ethics, influenced not only by the kind of institutional friction that pushes administrators in one direction or another, but partly by the realities of the operational environment in which any editor or administrator operates. Bringing an awareness of these two simultaneous challenges is necessary for a more nuanced understanding of the campus journalism ecosystem that recognizes the local economic and social context.

The study's fourth objective was to design a framework for fostering collaboration between campus journalists and university authorities. The findings from both campus journalists and university administrators pointed to a set of recurring themes that informed the construction of the framework. On the one hand, campus journalists emphasized barriers such as scattered information sources, inadequate cooperation from authorities, limited training, and political pressure, while also suggesting the need for capacity-building and stronger networks. On the other hand, university administrators stressed the importance of ethical journalism, timely press announcements, and open communication strategies. Integrating these perspectives, we propose a comprehensive framework that highlights collaboration as the central mechanism for mitigating barriers and enhancing transparency. The framework brings together the identified barriers, the solutions emerging from journalists, and the expectations of administrators to provide a roadmap for institutional support and cooperative practices. Figure 2 presents this framework, showing collaboration based on two key factors: campus journalists' necessities and university authorities' support. These factors are connected through a central node, a collaboration framework that suggests their interdependence. This approach echoes earlier research that emphasizes the role of institutional support in journalism and the need for practical, adaptive frameworks in dynamic fields like immersive journalism (Paino Ambrosio and Rodríguez Fidalgo 2021).

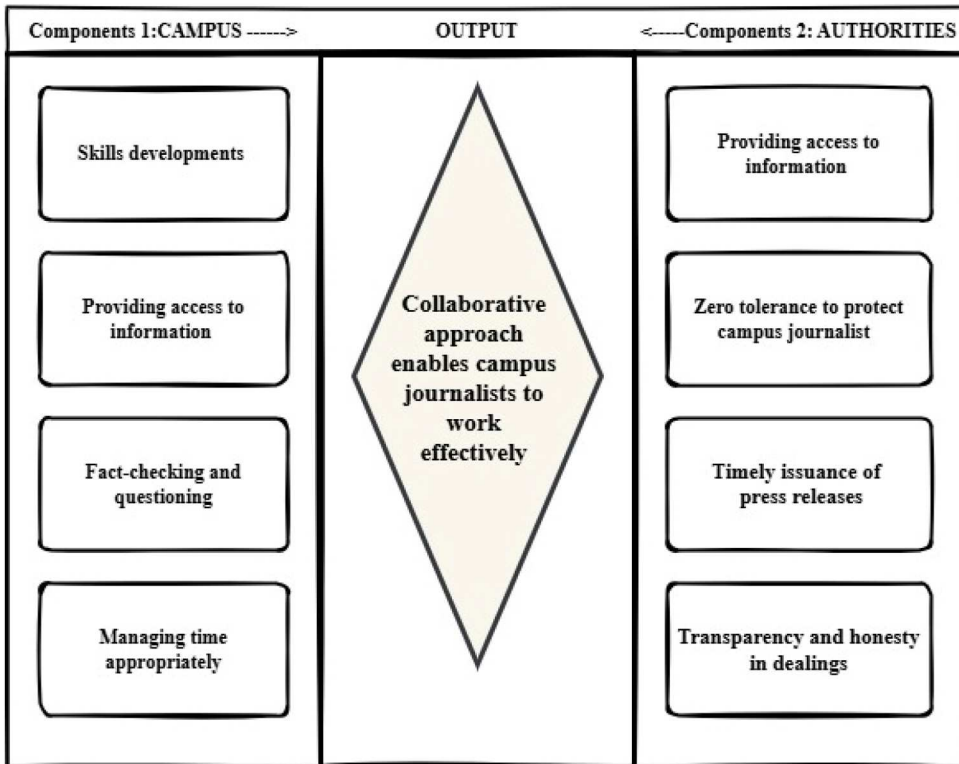


Figure 2. A comprehensive framework to enhance collaboration between campus journalists and university authorities.

It is important to note that this framework is conceptual, developed from the integration of empirical findings from both survey and qualitative data. While it offers a useful lens for understanding and improving the campus journalism ecosystem, future research is needed to validate the framework across diverse university contexts. Longitudinal studies and comparative analyses could test how effectively the proposed elements work in practice and whether the framework can be adapted to different institutional and cultural settings.

Implications of the Study

The implications of this research are substantial for academia and practice. The research contributes to an under-explored field of media, communication and educational research: the demographic profile, gender, socio-economic, and racial inequities around campus journalists' engagement with critical issues; the challenges that campus journalists operate within, and the institutional barriers that impact campus journalists. It shows difficulties with resources, political pressure, and harassment, and urges reforms in university systems that are essential. The goal is to bring attention to the problem and spur action by policymakers, education leaders and other stakeholders to improve the working conditions of on-campus journalists, which is why the research is being published here. This paper addresses this through a new collaborative framework based on the ground pitches from campus journalists and university administrators. By publishing this framework, the study will set a roadmap for the cultivation of a system of ethical journalism and access to effective communication practices vital both for students and higher education institutions alike. It also fills a gap in the literature by conducting a systematic review of the institutional and systemic barriers that are built into campus journalism.

Conclusion

The present study examines the current state of campus journalism, focusing on demographics and challenges, and proposes a comprehensive framework to improve collaboration with university authorities. The research identified several systemic and operational obstacles facing campus journalists. These major issues include fragmented sources of information, lack of cooperation with authorities, insufficient training, and resource constraints such as time and skills. Additionally, political pressure and harassment within the campus highlight the need for systemic and cultural change in universities.

This underscores the importance of establishing a more standardized communication system, as the practice of issuing press releases varies widely among universities. The study also presents qualitative responses from respondents and university authorities about potential solutions to these problems. It emphasizes the professional development of campus journalists through training programs, enhancing skills in research and verification, and ensuring personal safety. Conversely, university administrators emphasize transparency, moral conduct, and proactive support structures. Suggestions include creating dedicated press management teams and ensuring the availability of information.

Campus journalists seek to report the news as they see fit, while university officials aim to maintain effective control over their institutions. The study concludes by proposing a

collaborative process to bridge the gap between these stakeholders and foster mutual trust. The core idea of this partnership is the recognition by both parties that they rely on each other to create an environment where campus news can thrive, adhering to principles of truth, fairness, and safety. Future research is necessary to assess how effectively the proposed framework functions in practice. Longitudinal studies tracing Bangladesh journalism over the years and applying the framework could provide valuable insights into its long-term impact.

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