

# Quantifying the Relationship Between Rizal's Educational Philosophy and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Awareness

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## ABSTRACT

José Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines, championed education toward national reform and self-determination. His literary works, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, emphasized the role of education in developing critical thinking, civic engagement, and national pride. For him, education was the way to free not only the classroom but students for a more holistic learning including artistic mind (Mansur, 2024). Rizal saw education as the key to creating Filipinos who could lead the country to freedom and self-determination. This paper explored Rizal's educational philosophy in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). It further investigated the extent to which Rizal's values were embedded in contemporary higher education in the Philippines, particularly in relation to students' awareness and participation in sustainability initiatives. Using a mixed-method approach and referencing recent studies, the paper highlighted how Rizal's teachings were integrated into modern curricula to enhance students' civic responsibility and engagement with global issues. The findings underscored curriculum reform, experiential learning models, and institutional support were needed to bridge the gap between historical education and sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Rizal's Philosophy, Educational Philosophy, Sustainable Development Goal Awareness, *El Filibusterismo*, *Noli Me Tangere*

## INTRODUCTION

José Rizal, a seminal figure in Philippine history, has maintained enduring cultural and historical significance. His literary works and philosophical tenets were continuously and deeply ingrained in the nation's identity to exert influence across generations. Republic Act No. 1425 (1956) mandates the incorporation of the subject *Rizal's Life and Works* into the educational curriculum, with the objective of fostering patriotism and nationalism among young Filipinos, thereby encouraging the application of Rizal's intellectual contributions to contemporary exigencies. This legislative act aimed at ensuring Filipinos' awareness, especially the youth, on Rizal's contributions to the nation's independence and apply his ideals in addressing contemporary social challenges (Balmeo, Almeda, Balangue, & Costales, 2024).

In contemporary discourse, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), promulgated by the United Nations in 2015, constituted a comprehensive global framework designed to address salient environmental, social, and economic challenges (Borla, 2023). These goals represent a universal call to action aimed to attain global peace and prosperity.

## Research Questions

This study investigated the nexus between Rizal's educational philosophy and the degree of awareness among students concerning the SDGs. Specifically, it sought to quantify the relationship between Rizal's teachings and students' comprehension of sustainability concepts, thereby addressing the following research questions:

1. To what extent are students aware of Rizal's educational philosophy and advocacy for national development?

2. What is the level of students' awareness and understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
3. Is there a significant correlation between students' familiarity with Rizal's teachings and their awareness of sustainability concepts?
4. How does the inclusion of Rizal's philosophy in the curriculum contribute to education for sustainable development (ESD)?
5. What recommendations can be made to enhance the integration of sustainability education in Rizal studies?

It was anticipated that this research would contribute to the enhancement of sustainability education within the Philippine curriculum, underscoring the enduring relevance of Rizal's philosophy in addressing contemporary global challenges.

### **Rizal's Educational Philosophy**

José Rizal saw education as a transformative force, emphasizing moral, civic, and scientific understanding. He believed education should cultivate good character and virtue, essential for personal integrity and social harmony advocating educators to serve as role models reflected in his "Letter to His Sister Soledad". Rizal also championed civic education, instilling national identity and pride, urging educated women to recognize their duties to their country and families, thus promoting social equality in his "Letter to the Young Women of Malolos". Furthermore, Rizal underscored reason and knowledge, criticizing the neglect of practical skills and national sentiment in the educational system of his time. In his school in Dapitan, he taught a wide range of subjects from reading and writing to mathematics and morals, alongside practical skills, demonstrating his commitment to a well-rounded, scientific education.

### **Sdg And the Role of Education**

"Education is pivotal for sustainable development, fostering awareness and responsible citizenship crucial for achieving the SDGs. The SDG 4 aimed for inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning (United Nations), while SDG 16 intended to promote peaceful and inclusive societies with access to justice and strong institutions (United Nations). Rizal's educational philosophy, emphasized education for national development and social progress (National Historical Commission of the Philippines, NHCP), aligned with these goals. His focus on civic responsibility encouraged active engagement in democratic processes, while his advocacy for lifelong learning would support continuous growth and adaptation. Furthermore, Rizal's commitment to equality in education would promote inclusive access for all, mirroring the SDGs' principles. Integrating Rizal's teachings could significantly enhance SDGs awareness and cultivate civic responsibility, lifelong learning, and equality, empowering individuals to drive social transformation towards a more sustainable and equitable world.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Related Literature**

José Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines, advocated education as the key to national progress. His works, particularly *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* emphasized the transformative power of education in fostering critical thinking, civic responsibility, and social change. Rizal believed that education was not only about enhancing skills but also instilling moral and ethical values as reflected in Rizal's advocacy for not only Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 or Quality Education and SDG 16 or Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (Guerrero, 2010). At the heart of his vision was the protection of fundamental rights, which resonated with contemporary educations focused on lifelong learning and global citizenship.

Given the universal call launched in 2015, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) had urged cooperation to incubate the next generation to challenge themselves toward sustainability in becoming socially responsible leaders. Efforts to promote the SDGs globally involved a diverse range of sectors, including education. Educational institutions, particularly universities, were called upon to raise awareness by embedding SDG values into curricula (SDSN Australia Pacific, 2017). For instance, a study by Kapu Arachchilage and Keerthipala (2024) investigated SDG awareness among faculty members in Australian universities, revealing general awareness but diverse levels of commitment across disciplines. Their research found that exposure to SDG content through specific courses or university programs contributed to higher levels of awareness, underscoring the importance of targeted educational interventions to integrate sustainability topics into curricula to bridge gaps in students' knowledge and motivate them to engage actively with the SDGs.

In the Philippines, SDG awareness among university students remained limited but was improving. Studies in other developing nations showed similar gaps, such as low awareness in Nigeria and partial understanding in Indonesia, underscoring the need to embed sustainability topics in higher education curricula (Agu, 2018). Education has supported the idea of lifelong learning, while Filipinos immersed in habits necessary to attain success at work and personal life. Investing in education seemed investing in the future of society by giving 'Pinoys' the opportunity to realize their full potential. Indeed, the importance of such ideas regarding education could be inferred from his creative writings. *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* of Jose Rizal have become a tool for modernizing society. In his famous poem "A La Juventud Filipina," Rizal expressed a vision for the Filipino youth of how education could be used to strengthen independence to build a heavier nation. Using Rizaliana, the tradition formed around Rizal which until this day, the values, mindset, and aspirations continuously have shaped in every Filipino learner the importance of the so called 'Rizal Philosophy'.

In addition, education for Rizal was not only learning but also inculcating civic consciousness and national pride. He sought for the reforms in education for Filipinos to learn modern sciences, literature and other countries' history to raise people's awareness on governances. Rizal stood as a dominant embodiment within reformism through his use of literature in bringing major impact to Filipino society. He saw the dire necessity of reforms in education to counteract the ignorance spread by previous colonizers' regulatory decrees and colonial educational system when he was writing his *La Solidaridad* which was an organ of that ilustrado reformists movement. He even lashed out against the "deficiencies" and "ills" of education, which he asserted and this led to intellectual stagnation among Filipinos and contributed to their alienation from national life. He emphasized in his literary works that education was the key to enabling the Filipino people to resist colonial oppression and work towards self-determination. He imbued education and planted the seed of awareness for people to demand of their rights fueling an intellect to drive and enlighten society and spearhead social and political reforms (Grace, 2023).

Rizal's two novels, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, underscored his ideals for Filipinos' kind of education which ultimately would change the society (Grace, 2023). In *Noli Me Tangere*, Crisostomo Ibarra, the main character, played as an instrument through which Rizal himself advocated for reforms in education. Rizal showed his support in building of scientific and technical schools in the town of San Diego, the same goals as that of Ibarra in *El Filibusterismo*, his second novel. He also captured the grievances Rizal had towards Spanish authorities only utilized it to dull the intellect of the Filipinos and hold them down. In *El Filibusterismo*, the character of Simoun depicted a more radical and disillusioned attitude towards reform. However, education continued to be an important subject. The main character's discussions with the students, who craved changes in education made readers realize that youth could be a powerful force to transform society (Deloso, 2023).

Similarly, in *El Filibusterismo*, even though Simoun eventually had rejected his plan for revolution, the concerns of the learners about how to change their colonial education system showed how Rizal was still convinced that a nation's bright tomorrow resided in an enlightened and educated citizenry. The novel highlighted his envisioned hope to empower the youth with his famous quote, "The youth is the hope of the future." He even criticized the friars in both novels for controlling education, perpetuating their power and overlooking critical thinking, scientific investigation, and moral integrity, qualities not valued during the colonial era (Borla, 2023).

In addition to his novels, Rizal's articles and letters demonstrated his enthusiasm for educational reforms. Juan Luna and Felix Resurrección Hidalgo at a banquet in 1884 were recognized for their outstanding accomplishment which made Rizal realized more that given a chance for proper education and global information would make Filipinos excel in different fields not only in the arts. For Rizal, in his article, "The Philippines, A Century", no despotism could break off with the colonial bandage and would stand as an independently strong national entity when Filipinos become educated. He also wrote about the significance of education in empowering women. He hailed the young women in his "Letter to the Young Women of Malolos". He pushed women to study and live to serve the society. This letter demonstrated Rizal's open-mindedness toward education and gender equality, demonstrating his opinion that everyone, regardless of gender or social status, should have the right to an education (Balmeo, 2024).

Indeed, Rizal's commitment to education was not a merely theoretical one but was manifested in the life pattern he lived. Probably one of the clearest proofs was his desire to study medicine in Europe, specifically ophthalmology, to cure his mother from her blindness. This personal mission itself spoke volumes about his belief in the practical application of knowledge in service to better other people's lives. Another evidence was when he put up a school during his exile in Dapitan where he personally taught the young boys of the place. His curriculum included reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, and agriculture-those which he believed would help his students to live life to the fullest and serve their communities. The practical education in Dapitan was representative of his general view of education that should be integrative founding both the mind and heart of every Filipino.

Furthermore, Rizal's concern for the people to be conscious of the necessity of reforming education also involved his activities with "La Solidaridad", the Propaganda Movement newspaper. Thus, in his essays published in the chronicle, he urged an educational system free from friar dominance to better equip Filipinos with the knowledge of science, mathematics, and the humanities besides religious doctrines. He constantly claimed that education would provide the necessary amp for the development of a true Filipino identity to prepare them for full participation in public life (Balmeo, 2024). Rizal's legacy on education was indeed beyond his time advocating for an educational approach to create socially and politically aware citizenry. His concept of education has remained influential in the Philippine school system until today and it would continue to exist in contemporary Philippine culture if and only if educational institutions would find ways to sustain this Rizal's philosophy to the Filipinos.

However, the difficulties Rizal outlined, such as unequal access to education and the powerup's control over educational institutions, has continued to exist. Rizal's call for reforms that would provide Filipinos with a well-rounded education has been relevant until now, as the country grappled with problems such as the quality of education in public schools, the need to place greater emphasis on science and technology education, and the imperatives of critical thinking in an age of disinformation. His view that education should be a gateway to upward social mobility and national progress still exist today, as the ongoing effort to sustain educational reforms remained at the forefront of the Philippine agenda for addressing poverty and inequality. Filipino youth still faced global challenges so it would be important for them to integrate concepts on sustainability to ready the young ones with the crisis and include this in educational curricula (Johnson and Smith, 2021).

Similarly, UNESCO (2017) highlighted that the infusion of sustainability-related topics in history and philosophy courses would enhance students' ability to link past struggles with present challenges. Even the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines advocated for interdisciplinary approaches to integrating sustainability into college students with MO No. 20, 2021. In this context, linking Rizal's educational ideals with sustainability could encourage students to apply historical insights to contemporary social issues (Gonzales, 2021).

To Lee (2021), the relationship between civic education and sustainable development has been widely studied. Educated students grounded in historical and philosophical perspectives were more likely to engage in social advocacy and leadership roles. In the Philippine setting, a study by Nayle (2023) revealed that "student leaders who demonstrated high levels of environmental ethics awareness, active participation in community and sustainability initiatives were only moderately needing heroic civic inspiration to motivate deeper involvement". Community-based learning models were proven effective in enhancing students' awareness on



SDGs. In addition, Castro (2023) showed that students participating in SDG-focused service-learning (e.g., literacy training and environmental actions) could promote sustainability awareness in both students and recipients. Students with increased understanding of SDGs, motivation to change practices, and stronger social responsibility were found active participants in nation building.

The power of the course to effect individual change in an ordinary Filipino make each study on Rizal worth examining especially when there was a need for the Philippines to dire for social upheaval such as deep-seated impunity for serious human rights violations drug war which could result to extrajudicial killings and increasingly institutionalized vilification of dissent (Ortiz, 2021). With similar belief, Ocampo (2024) recognized the importance of Rizal's educational philosophy even in traditional methods which to him should often limit its real-world applicability. He added most universities in the Philippines still had relied on rote memorization and textbook-based learning preventing students from fully grasping the social relevance of Rizal's ideas.

### Related Studies

Existing research highlighted Rizal's significant influence on civic engagement among Filipinos, with studies by Del Rosario et al. demonstrating how his emphasis on national identity fostered civic duty, and Cruz and Ramirez noting his novels' role in inspiring critical thinking and social participation. These findings suggested Rizal's teachings could promote civic responsibility crucial for achieving SDGs, particularly in fostering accountable institutions (SDG 16).

In addition, studies on SDG awareness in the Philippines and abroad, such as those by Lee et al. and Garcia & Velasquez, revealed varying levels of understanding and engagement with the SDGs, indicating a need to explore how cultural and historical factors could enhance this awareness. Building on these insights, this study aimed at quantifying the relationship between Rizal's educational philosophy and SDG awareness to bridge the gap and better understand how Rizal's teachings specifically could contribute to promoting awareness and understanding of the SDGs, thereby informing strategies for integrating Rizal's philosophy into curricula to advance sustainable development in the Philippines.

According to Alvero (2025), this study investigated how embedding SDGs into the curriculum affected students. It was found out that students recognized the importance of SDGs in education (mean scores  $\sim 3.5/4$ ), felt empowered to contribute to sustainability efforts in their communities, and identified gaps such as inadequate curriculum alignment and resource support. Moreover, Torres and Cortez (2021) analyzed how different universities had integrated sustainability education into the curricula. "Philippine universities that embedded sustainability using interdisciplinary, historically rooted courses (e.g. combining history, ethics, civic education, and environmental science) saw greater student engagement in sustainability efforts". Schools which adopted interdisciplinary approaches such as linking historical education with modern challenges had produced more proactive students with sustainability initiatives.

Similar study was made by Lee et al. in 2021 in South Korea. They examined how integrating sustainability concepts into social sciences and history courses impacted student awareness and engagement. Findings showed that when students were exposed to historical case studies on social reformers, they were more likely to connect past movements with current global sustainability goals. In fact, in the Philippine context, Mendoza and Santos (2023) found that merging community-based projects in Rizal Studies courses had led to increased student participation in local sustainability initiatives which supported the current study's recommendation that active engagement strategies should be employed to enhance SDG awareness.

A study by Garcia and Velasquez (2022) titled "The Role of Experiential Learning in Strengthening SDG Awareness", they exposed the impact of service-learning models in teaching social responsibility. Findings revealed that students involved in community-based projects aligned with sustainability goals showed higher retention of knowledge and greater motivation to apply what they learned in real-world settings. In addition, Ramos (2023) found that when students were given opportunities to engage in sustainability-themed projects, they developed a deeper understanding of the connections between history, civic duty, and modern global challenges.

In “Barriers to SDG Awareness and Implementation in Higher Education”, Villanueva and Tan (2021) assessed the barriers preventing effective integration of SDGs in higher education. They identified three (3) major obstacles: the lack of faculty training in sustainability education; the limited resources and institutional support for SDG-aligned projects; and the student disinterest in SDG implementation due to traditional, lecture-based teaching methods. These findings emphasized the need for curriculum innovation and more interactive teaching approaches.

The above review of related literature and related studies supported the findings of the present study highlighting the relevance of Rizal’s educational philosophy in promoting civic engagement, the need for curriculum integration to bridge the gap between historical education and SDG awareness; the effectiveness of experiential learning in fostering deeper understanding and application of sustainability concepts; and the challenges in traditional teaching approaches, which had hindered students’ engagement with modern global issues.

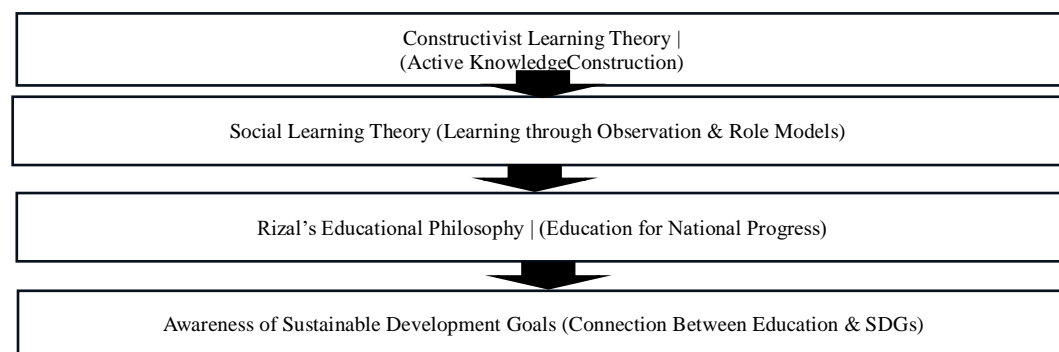
The study’s recommendations such as revising curricula, promoting experiential learning, and increasing institutional support for SDG-aligned initiatives were aligned with the existing research on best practices in sustainability education.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study anchored in two (2) key theories explaining the relationship between Rizal’s educational philosophy and students’ awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Piaget’s (1050) Constructivist Learning Theory. The research suggested that students actively constructed knowledge based on experiences.

Studying Rizal’s philosophy allowed students to contextualize historical education within modern sustainability issues (e.g., SDGs). And as to Social Learning Theory (Bandura,

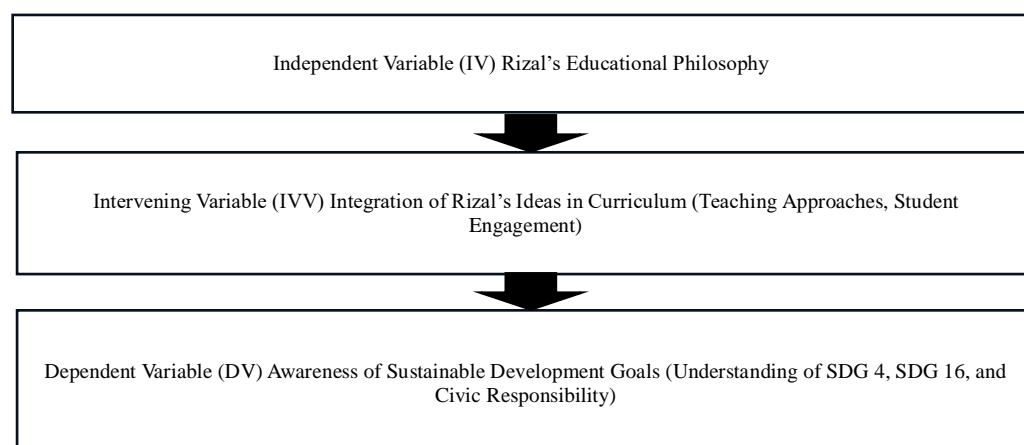
1977), the concept emphasized learning through observation, imitation, and social interaction. Rizal’s role as a model for education and civic responsibility influenced students’ perceptions of sustainability and nation-building. Constructivist Learning Theory suggests that students could engage through learning Rizal’s works. Social Learning Theory emphasized how Rizal, as a national hero and role model, had influenced students’ perspectives on national and global issues. Rizal’s philosophy of education (education as a tool for national progress) served as a bridge between historical learning and modern sustainability efforts. This led to higher awareness and engagement with SDGs, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).



## The Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the independent, dependent, and intervening variables in the study. As to the Independent Variable (IV): Rizal’s Educational Philosophy (focused on civic responsibility, critical thinking, and education for progress). While the Dependent Variable (DV) was SDG Awareness (students’ understanding of and engagement with sustainable development). And the Intervening Variable (IVV) was the Curriculum Integration (how Rizal’s philosophy was taught and connected to sustainability education).

The diagram shows Rizal's Educational Philosophy (IV) served as the foundation, emphasizing the role of education in national development. The way Rizal's ideas were integrated into the curriculum (IVV) influenced how students perceived and applied these concepts in real world sustainability issues. Higher curriculum integration leading to greater awareness of SDGs (DV), particularly in education (SDG 4) and civic engagement (SDG 16).



The framework emphasized that while the Theoretical Framework would establish the foundation using constructivist and social learning theories. The diagram illustrates how students learn and apply Rizal's teachings, the Conceptual Framework visually represented how Rizal's philosophy, curriculum integration, and SDG awareness interacted in the study.

## THE METHODOLOGY

This section outlined the research design, sampling method, data collection process, and analytical techniques used to examine the relationship between Rizal's educational philosophy and students' awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive quantitative research design to measure and analyze the relationship between students' familiarity with Rizal's educational philosophy and their awareness of the SDGs. The researcher used descriptive quantitative approach for the following reasons: (1) It would allow for the numerical measurement of student awareness levels; (2) It would be helpful in establishing patterns, trends, and correlations between variables; and (3) It would enable statistical analysis to determine the significance of relationships. The study involved administering structured surveys to gather data, which was then analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

### Sampling Method

The study employed a stratified random sampling method, ensuring students from different year levels and academic programs were represented. The target population were students enrolled in Rizal Studies courses at Bulacan State University Main Campus. To determine the sample size, the researcher used the formula  $(n = N / (1 + Ne^2))$  to determine an appropriate sample size, ensuring statistical validity. A total of 100 students participated in the study. For the stratification criteria, students taking Rizal Studies were randomly enjoined regardless of their courses. There was gender balance of 50 male and 50 female students to ensure equal representation of the respondents.

### Data Collection Process

As to the survey design, a structured questionnaire was developed, divided into three (3) main sections: (1) Demographic Profile (age, gender, year level); (2) Rizal's Educational Philosophy Awareness (measured using Likert-scale questions); and (3) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Awareness (Likert-scale

questions). The questionnaire was validated by experts in education and research before distribution. A pilot test was conducted with 10% of the sample size to check for clarity, reliability, and validity of survey items. After minor revisions, the final questionnaire was approved. Surveys were distributed both online (Google Forms) and in person. Respondents were given clear instructions and assured anonymity. A response rate of 75 % was achieved.

## Ethical Considerations

To consider ethics in research, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Confidentiality and voluntary participation were emphasized. The study adhered to ethical guidelines on research involving human subjects.

## Data Analysis Techniques

Using Descriptive Statistics, frequency and percentage distribution was utilized to analyze demographic data. Mean scores were also used to measure the level of awareness of Rizal's philosophy and SDGs. Inferential statistics using Pearson Correlation Analysis was considered to determine the relationship between awareness of Rizal's educational philosophy and SDG awareness. T-Test and ANOVA were conducted to assess significant differences based on gender, year level, and academic program. This methodology ensured that the study was systematic, reliable, and valid, providing empirical insights into the relationship between Rizal's philosophy and sustainability education.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Below was the structured questionnaire used in the study, along with the summarized results and findings presented in a tabular format.

Table 1 below shows the demographic profile of respondents. As to the gender, 45% were male and 55 were female. As to age, 30% were between 16 and 18 years old; 50% were between 19 and 21; and 20% were 22 years old and above. And as to year level, 35% were First Year while 30% were Second Year. The remaining percentages were distributed as to 20% Third Year and 15% Fourth Year.

Table 1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Category	Option	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	45%
	Female	55%
Age	16-18 Years Old	30%
	19-21 Years Old	50%
	22 Years and Above	20%
Year Level	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	35%
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	30%
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	20%
	4 <sup>th</sup> Year	15%

As shown Table 2 below most students have a high level of awareness of Rizal's educational philosophy and its relevance to national development. The key findings were: 85% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they were familiar with Rizal's philosophy on education; 88% believed Rizal's advocacy for education remains



relevant in contemporary society; and 80% stated that studying Rizal helped them appreciate the role of education in national development.

These results suggest that students recognize Rizal's emphasis on education as a transformative tool for society. Rizal's works, particularly *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, illustrate the importance of accessible education in addressing social injustices. The high awareness levels indicate that educational institutions effectively convey Rizal's principles to students. However, while students acknowledge Rizal's advocacy for education, it is important to explore whether they apply his teachings beyond the classroom—particularly in areas related to sustainable development.

Table 2 Rizal's Educational Philosophy Awareness

Survey Question	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean Score	Interpretation
1. I am familiar with Jose Rizal's advocacy for education as a means of national development.	55%	30%	10%	3%	2%	4.33	High Awareness
2. Rizal's ideas about education are still relevant in today's society.	60%	25%	10%	3%	2%	4.38	High Awareness
3. My study of Rizal has improved my perspective on the role of education in societal progress.	50%	30%	15%	3%	2%	4.23	High Awareness

Table 3 below shows that while students had a general awareness of SDGs, their ability to recall specific SDGs was moderate. Key findings were: 80% of students claimed they heard of the United Nations' SDGs; 70% could identify at least three SDGs, while 30% had limited knowledge of specific goals; and 88% agreed that SDGs are essential for addressing national issues like poverty, education, and climate change.

The data indicate that while most students were familiar with the SDGs, their understanding of specific goals was moderate. This suggests that although sustainability topics were discussed in their academic curriculum, they were not deeply integrated into the Rizal subject. One possible reason for this moderate awareness was that the Rizal course primarily focused on historical and nationalistic perspectives rather than global sustainability frameworks. However,

Rizal's ideas on education, responsible citizenship, and social reform strongly aligned with SDGs, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

There was a need to enhance the integration of sustainability topics within Rizal studies, linking his philosophy more explicitly to modern global issues.

Table 3 Awareness of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Survey Question	Strongly Aware (5)	Aware (4)	Neutral (3)	Unaware (2)	Completely Unaware (1)	Mean Score	Interpretation
4. I have learned about the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).	45%	35%	15%	3%	2%	4.18	Moderate to High Awareness
5. I can identify at least three SDGs and their significance.	40%	30%	20%	5%	5%	3.95	Moderate Awareness
6. The SDGs are relevant in addressing national issues like poverty, education, and climate change.	50%	30%	10%	7%	3%	4.17	High Awareness

Table 4 below reflected a strong positive correlation between students' knowledge of Rizal's educational philosophy and their awareness of SDGs. The study revealed the following: 87% of students agreed that Rizal's teachings helped them understand the importance of sustainability in education; 90% saw a connection between Rizal's advocacy for education and SDG 4 (Quality Education); and 80% reported that studying Rizal increased their awareness of sustainability issues. The following were the key findings. High awareness of Rizal's educational philosophy that most students recognized the relevance of Rizal's advocacy for education. Moderate awareness of SDGs while students were generally aware of the SDGs, many struggled to recall specific goals. Lastly, strong relationship between Rizal's teachings and SDG awareness were observed from students who deeply understood Rizal's philosophy were more likely to be aware of sustainability issues and the importance of SDGs.

Table 4 Relationship Between Rizal's Educational Philosophy and SDG Awareness

Survey Question	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean Score	Interpretation
7. Rizal's teachings help me understand the importance of sustainability in education.	55%	30%	10%	3%	2%	4.33	High Correlation
8. Rizal's advocacy for education and civic responsibility is aligned with SDG 4 (Quality Education).	58%	32%	7%	2%	1%	4.44	Strong Correlation
9. Learning about Rizal's philosophy has increased my awareness of sustainability issues.	50%	30%	12%	5%	3%	4.19	Moderate to High Correlation

A correlation test was conducted to quantify the relationship between students' understanding of Rizal's educational philosophy and their awareness of SDGs. The results revealed a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.78$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) between these two variables. The result showed that students who deeply understand Rizal's philosophy were more likely to be aware of sustainability issues and the SDGs. To Rizal "Education was the main tool for social and civic awareness". His ideals on education, civic responsibility, and nation-building resonated with the principles of sustainable development. There was a clear connection that fully maximized in the present academic setting. The results indicated students' SDG awareness could be further strengthened if Rizal's teachings were directly linked to sustainability discussions of this study.

### **Rizal's Relevance to Modern Curricula**

José Rizal's enduring relevance to modern curricula lies in his emphasis on education, civic responsibility, and national identity, which provides a strong foundation for addressing contemporary sustainability challenges. His educational philosophy empowers individuals, promotes critical thinking, and fosters nationalism, aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) like SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) (United Nations, n.d.). Rizal's commitment to sustainable agriculture in Dapitan exemplifies his practical approach to improving communities (NHCP, n.d.). While specific details on the Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) integration efforts through memoranda like CHED MO No. 20, 2021, are not detailed here, the mandate to include Rizal's life and works in tertiary education (Republic Act No. 1425, 1956) and teaching strategies reflects a broader effort to instill nationalism and ethical frameworks, essential for cultivating a sense of responsibility and inspiring students to contribute to a more sustainable future.

### **Challenges And Gaps**

Several key challenges continue to undermine the teaching of Rizal's life and works. One major issue is the continued use of rote learning, where students memorize facts without engaging with Rizal's ideas, diminishing the subject's contemporary relevance (Villanueva and Tan, 2018). This problem persists, with research showing that memorization hinders the development of critical thinking (Patel and Kumar, 2025). Another significant challenge is the lack of sufficient training for teachers, who often lack subject mastery and modern pedagogical skill. These problems are exacerbated by curriculum constraints, as rigid and overloaded curricula limit the exploration of Rizal's philosophy and its relevance to citizenship and social justice (Santos, 2021). Systemic resource limitations, such as inadequate materials and funding, further impede the implementation of Rizal Studies (Dept. Of Education, 2022).

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study revealed a significant positive correlation between students' understanding of Rizal's educational philosophy and their awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Students demonstrated strong appreciation for Rizal's philosophy and its relevance to national development; however, gaps in comprehensive understanding of the SDGs highlight the need for deeper integration of sustainability concepts into the Rizal curriculum. Findings further suggest that students with deeper knowledge of Rizal's pedagogical principles also display greater awareness of sustainability issues, underscoring the potential of Rizal Studies as a platform for fostering intergenerational transmission of values. To address existing gaps and maximize this potential, there is a clear call for curriculum innovation—moving beyond rote memorization toward strategies that emphasize experiential learning, project-based activities, and interdisciplinary approaches linking Rizal's ideals with environmental, economic, and social sciences. Integrating SDG concepts, embedding case studies, and promoting community engagement initiatives such as literacy programs, environmental advocacy, and service-learning projects would make Rizal Studies more meaningful and transformative. Finally, the implementation of pilot programs and future research is recommended to test innovative teaching models, measure their effectiveness in enhancing sustainability awareness, and identify best practices for broader adoption. By explicitly embedding sustainability education into Rizal Studies, students will not only develop a deeper appreciation of Rizal's contributions but also a stronger commitment to responsible citizenship and sustainable development.

## Reflection as a Teacher

Commencing on Jose Rizal's life and literary masterpieces, I as a teacher have been profoundly moved by his fervent advocate of national consciousness. Rizal emerges as champion for not just being a historical figure but for his fearless navigation to transform the society with his pen as his powerful instrument. His revolutionary way of educating the Filipinos was notable since he did not wholly embrace the idea of mass movements. Instead, his literary creations awakened specially the youth to uphold his philosophies by arming themselves with education.

The equality in education we relish until now is indebted to the foresight and initiatives not only of this hero but also of those who preceded the past generations with the same ideals. As an educator, very close to his life and works, this made me realize my great responsibility to sustain in the minds of the present as well as the future generations his values, his beliefs, his love for country more so, his philosophies in education. He made me realize his profound influence in shaping Filipino's national consciousness. The global greatness we presently are experiencing in different fields because of education continue to resound in the present and in the future. We owe a lot to this great guy the drive for social equity and justice through quality education. His literary works enlightened us of the social intricacies, the obstacles of ignorance and discrimination, and the foreign rules harming the Filipino people. He has become the status-quo of what a students should be despite his exile and execution. It made me realize how farsighted he was and how he saw this nation's bright future. He made me think through his ageless works my great mission to carry the torch for national consciousness to make each learner become a country's pride.

By honoring Rizal's legacy, I now fully understand with his timeless lessons how important it is for citizens to be involved and be knowledgeable. It is now time to rethink and look for ways to be involved in sustaining his philosophies and continue if not exceed the expectations of such prodigious man.

## Practical And Social Implications of the Study

The research titled "Quantifying the Relationship Between Rizal's Educational Philosophy and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Awareness," as to practical implications, the study provides valuable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers. By identifying how Rizal's philosophies such as holistic education, moral responsibility, and civic engagement align with the SDGs, this study offers a practical framework to integrate local historical thought into contemporary educational strategies. Schools and universities could use the findings of this study to design learning modules or learning materials that not only promote academic excellence but also foster awareness and action towards sustainability. In similar manner, the study presents critical insights of the direct applications in the fields of education and policy development. Through Rizal's educational ideals emphasizing moral integrity, intellectual growth, and civic responsibility which correspond with the objectives of the SDGs, the research offers a framework for embedding both national values and global goals into educational the curricula. The alliance could enhance students' critical thinking and social consciousness, by equipping them necessary skills to address modern challenges through culturally relevant and globally attuned perspectives. Finally, this alignment supports the development of pedagogical approaches that not only enhance academic competence but also cultivate sustainability-minded individuals. Educators and curriculum developers could leverage these findings to foster a more integrated learning experience that bridges local heritage with global aspirations.

As to social implications and on a broader societal level, this research reinforces the idea that national identity and global responsibility could coexist and even strengthen one another. By drawing connections between Rizal's philosophy and the SDGs, the study promotes a culturally rooted approach to global citizenship. This could inspire a renewed appreciation for Filipino heritage while encouraging active participation in addressing environmental, social, and economic issues. Ultimately, the research supports the development of a more socially aware and ethically grounded populace, contributing to inclusive, sustainable progress both locally and globally. The social significance of this research lies in its affirmation that national identity and global responsibility are not mutually exclusive but can be mutually reinforcing. By contextualizing the SDGs within the framework of Rizal's philosophy, the study fosters a culturally grounded model of global citizenship. Such perspective encourages individuals particularly the youth to engage with pressing social, economic, and

environmental challenges through a lens that honors Filipino values and historical consciousness. In doing so, the research contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable development by emphasizing the role of cultural relevance in shaping socially responsible and ethically driven communities.

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