

Inclusion of the Life and Works of Jose Rizal to the Improvement of the Students' Moral Character, Personal Discipline, Civic Conscience, and Duties of Citizenship

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Abstract

This research study explores the effects of including the life and works of Jose Rizal in the curriculum of tertiary-level institutions on their moral character, personal discipline, civic conscience, and duties of citizenship as Filipino students. The study aims to provide valuable insights into the transformative power of studying Rizal's life and works and inform educational practices and curriculum design. Using a quantitative research design, the study gathered data through in-depth survey questionnaires from 44 students enrolled in the GRIZAL course at Saint Louis University. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data and identify common themes. The findings indicate that studying Rizal's life and works had a temporary but positive influence on the students' decision-making. The majority of students expressed a strong sense of civic responsibility and a willingness to participate in civic activities such as voting and volunteering. They also developed a heightened awareness of social injustice and a belief that justice should be impartial. Most students were ready to take action and stand up for what is right, drawing inspiration from Rizal's ideals and teachings. The study emphasizes the importance of including Rizal's teachings in the curriculum to promote positive values, responsible behavior, and active citizenship among students. It provides insights for educators and policymakers to enhance the implementation of the GRIZAL course and foster a deeper understanding of Filipino history, identity, and civic engagement. Overall, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on the role of education in shaping students' character and nurturing a sense of national pride and social responsibility. By studying Rizal's life and works, students develop a stronger moral compass and a greater commitment to contributing positively to society.

Keywords: *positive influence, civic responsibility, social justice, positive values, citizenship, civic engagement*

Introduction:

The life and works of Jose Rizal had to be taught as a subject in our educational system because of Republic Act No. 1425, which was enacted by President Ramon Magsaysay on June 12, 1956. This aims to include a study of his life and works in the curricula of public and private school, which is based on the Official Gazette of the Philippines that indicates "there is a need for a rededication to the ideals of freedom and nationalism for which our heroes lived and died;" and that his works "are a constant and inspiring source of patriotism with which the minds of the youth, especially during their formative and decisive years in school, should be suffused" ("Republic Act No. 1425: GOVPH").

The enactment of the Rizal Law was driven by the desire to prevent Filipinos, especially the youth, from overlooking at the contributions of Dr. Jose Rizal. The primary objective of including the Rizal course in educational institutions is to imbue young Filipinos with a sense of patriotism and nationalism, inspiring them to utilize Rizal's ideas to address contemporary challenges. Rizal's historical significance lies in being Asia's pioneering advocate for nonviolent methods of effecting political change. The Rizal Law serves as a platform for young individuals to grasp the essence of Rizal's mission.

In today's generation, many Filipino students see studying Rizal, or having it as a part of the curriculum as irrelevant. They see the Rizal subject as a burden or hassle to them that only adds extra work to their studies. Most Filipinos have not yet realized the essence and effect of Rizal's life and literary works in their lives. According to Doblado (2020), Rizal's works and life continue to be relevant in modern society as he addresses the social ills in the past that unfortunately continues to prevail in the Philippines, with the only difference that the ones causing them are Filipinos themselves, and that through Rizal's works many Filipinos could see how Rizal sacrificed his life for the independence of the Philippines. Furthermore, a panel of prominent intellectuals concluded that Filipinos showed a deficiency of patriotism and appreciation of their country and were not in sympathy with their national government (Mulder, 2013). Therefore, it is important for Filipino students to find inspiration that will help them hone their moral character, enhance their personal discipline, practice civic conscience, and fulfill their duties as Filipino citizens. Here comes the necessity of igniting the eagerness of Filipino students to foster their awareness regarding the dazzling history of their motherland and the national heroes such as Jose Rizal, who has significantly contributed to understanding our collective experience and identity as Filipinos.

The historical occurrences, as well as Jose Rizal's characteristics and values, might inspire Filipino students to make positive changes in their life. Hence, the aim of the study is to ascertain whether the Life and Works of Rizal would have an impact on the current generation of Filipino students in order to support and augment RA 1425 and uphold the principles that Filipino students ought to be recognized for.

The research's general direction is to provide valuable insights into how the study of the life and works of Jose Rizal influences the holistic development of students, encompassing their moral character, personal discipline, civic conscience, and duties as Filipino citizens. By examining these aspects, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the transformative power of studying Rizal's life and works. The findings will not only shed light on the educational impact but also inform strategies for promoting positive values, responsible behavior, and active engagement in civic responsibilities among students. Ultimately, this research has the potential to shape educational practices and curriculum design, fostering a generation of ethically conscious and socially responsible Filipino citizens.

Objectives of the Study:

The study aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To explore whether learning about the Life and Works of Rizal contributes to improve ethical decision-making and behavior among students;
2. To investigate the potential of studying the life and works of Rizal to enhance students' discipline and their ability to manage their time and goals effectively; and
3. To examine the impact of learning about the life and Works of Rizal on students'

commitment to social justice, community service, and awareness of societal issues and determine how studying the life and works of Rizal influences students' engagement as active and responsible citizens.

Significance of the Study:

The study was conducted to assess the Effects of the Inclusion of the Life and Works of Jose Rizal to the Improvement of the Students' Moral Character, Personal Discipline, Civic Conscience, and Duties of Citizenship. Thus, this study could be a tool for the following:

Students. The relevance of the study to the students is that it encourages them to self-reflect, which cultivates awareness of whether the implementation of RA. 1425 has created a meaningful impact in the student's life to the point where there is a degree of transformation in the student's consciousness and practices, or the lack thereof.

Teachers and Educators. During the evaluation of the curriculum, results from the study may be able to reveal the actual results of the inclusion of GRIZAL in the curriculum, whether the objectives of the act have been achieved or not, and how it can be improved so that it inspires changes in students.

Community. This study is relevant to the community as it can help shed light on how studying the life and works of Rizal in schools have impacted the students in understanding their roles and responsibilities as Filipino citizens, and they'll also be able to understand the effects of studying Rizal's life and works on the students' moral character which is essential in promoting ethical behavior in the community.

Future Researchers. This action research output will serve as a reference for future researchers. The outcome of this study sheds light on the role of studying Rizal's life and works in shaping students' understanding of their roles as Filipino citizens, fostering ethical behavior and promoting community engagement.

Scope and Delimitation:

The scope of this study was strictly constrained to determining the impacts of the life and works of Jose Rizal on students in terms of four aspects, particularly moral character, personal discipline, civic conscience, and the duties of citizenship solely. The following limitations were identified:

1. The study did not cover the lives and works of other national heroes nor determine different aspects of a student's life that might improve except the four aspects mentioned above.
2. The study used a small sample size; hence, it is possible that the results do not accurately reflect all of the students at Saint Louis University; rather, they only reflect the attitudes and actions of the chosen participants. The chosen respondents were level II SONAHBS students at Saint Louis University who were enrolled in the GRIZAL subject with class code 5007.
3. The research relies on data obtained through survey responses. There were only five questions made, and they were designed as close-ended and multiple choices only. Therefore, there was a limitation in exploring students' personal views and opinions, but despite it, the accuracy and reliability of data will be guaranteed.
4. The depth and scope of data gathering and analysis may have been constrained by the limited time for this study. Additionally, due to time constraints, a thorough investigation of the attitudes and values of students was restricted.

In spite of those limitations, this study offers information regarding the effects of life and works of Jose Rizal to the students, with the purpose of augmenting the RA 1425 and

preserving the principles that Filipino students should be recognized for.

Methodology:

A quantitative research design was employed to gather in-depth insights and a comprehensive understanding of the effects of the Inclusion of the Life and Works of Jose Rizal to the Improvement of the Students' Moral Character, Personal Discipline, Civic Conscience, and Duties of Citizenship. This research design enabled the researchers to collect detailed data that goes beyond numerical measurements, allowing deep understanding of the effects of the Life and Works of Jose Rizal to the respondents.

Respondents of the study:

There are 44 respondents in this study, of which are level 2 School of Nursing, Allied Health, and Biological Sciences (SONAHBS) students enrolled in the GRIZAL course with the class code 5007. This study used purposive sampling, a type of non-probability sampling that relies on the researcher's judgment when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives (Nikolopoulou, 2023). The primary criteria for choosing the participants include being a student at Saint Louis University and must be currently enrolled in the course GRIZAL.

Data Collection:

This study utilized the quantitative method using in-depth survey questionnaires with a subset of participants to gather qualitative data. The respondents of this survey, being the 44 students enrolled in GRIZAL 5007 class, answered the five (5) questions constructed to gather the needed data. This study intends to thoroughly explain how studying Jose Rizal's life and works affects Filipino students' ethical decision-making, discipline, dedication to social justice, and civic involvement using a qualitative questioning technique. The results will highlight the importance of infusing Rizal's ideas into the educational system to build positive values and active citizenship among young people and can help inform educational policies and curriculum development.

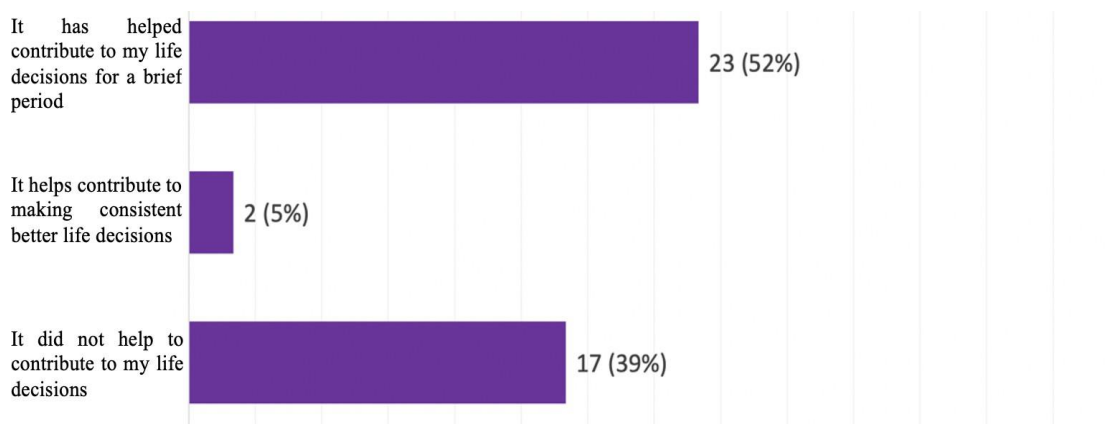
Data Analysis:

This study used thematic analysis to examine both explicit and implicit meanings in the data gathered from students. This study particularly used a deductive approach of thematic analysis, and it is defined by Caulfield (2020) as a technique for analyzing data that involves coming to the data or codes with some preconceived themes- topics, ideas, or patterns of meaning, based on theory or existing knowledge. Moreover, thematic analysis can be used to investigate issues related to participants' lived experiences, perspectives, behavior, and practices, as well as the social processes that shape specific phenomena (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Results and Discussion:

The presentation and discussion of findings follow the data obtained from the questions asked from the respondents in their accomplished questionnaires.

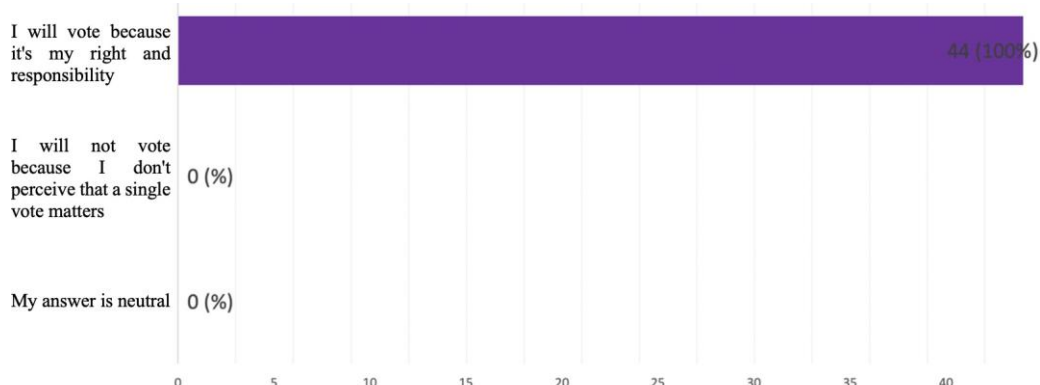
How did your learning of the Life and Works of Jose Rizal contribute to making better life decisions?



The question of how learning about the life and works of Jose Rizal contributes to making better life decisions yielded varied responses among the surveyed students. Among the 23 respondents (52%), a majority acknowledged that their learning of Jose Rizal's life and work positively impacted their decision-making, albeit for a brief period. This indicates some initial influence or inspiration derived from studying Rizal's life, subsequently affecting their decision-making process. It is worth noting, however, that only a small percentage of students (5%) reported a sustained impact on their decision-making, indicating a long-lasting influence on their lives.

On the other hand, a considerable number of students (39%) responded that learning about Jose Rizal did not contribute to their life decisions. This suggests that for a significant portion of the surveyed students, studying Rizal's life did not significantly impact their decision-making process. The probable reason for this is their very limited knowledge about the heroism of Jose Rizal and that they may not have focused well during the class discussions.

Given the chance to vote for the coming election in your university, what would be your response?



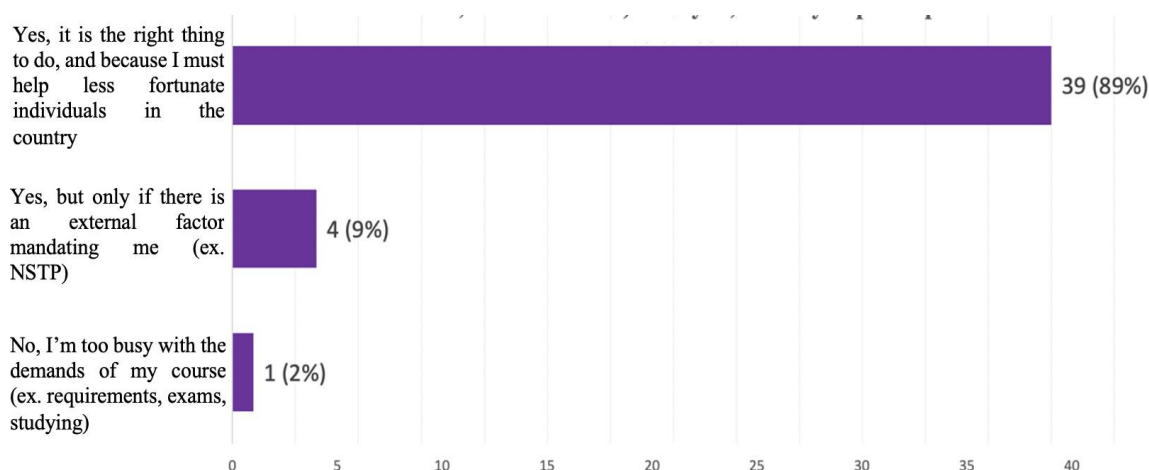
The 44 Saint Louis University students were given a hypothetical situation in which they would have the opportunity to vote in an upcoming election at the university. Taking into account the tallied responses, it revealed that there was a 100% vote or a unanimous answer of "I will vote because it's my right and responsibility." It can be significantly related to the practice of civic conscience since voting is a civic duty and an expression of civic

involvement. Meanwhile, it's clearly evident that no one selected the other options, particularly "I will not vote because I don't perceive that a single vote matters" and "My answer is neutral."

On the contrary, there seems to be a prevailing belief that today's youth are politically disengaged, if not apathetic. In fact, based on the study of Bautista (2020), the Filipino youth in Caloocan City tend to be politically skeptical and are less likely to take part in Sangguniang Kabataan (Youth Council) activities and elections.

However, the result of this study can mean that Louisiana students would likely exercise their suffrage or the right to vote. The respondents of this study undertook the GRIZAL subject, which can mean that GRIZAL could enhance students' civic engagement. Additionally, there exists a corroborating study regarding the result of this research. According to the study of Cabo (2018), the Filipino youth continue to believe in democracy and the legitimacy of the electoral process for choosing the nation's leaders and are still interested in political participation not just in voting but in other engagements that support democracy and good government by having critical views about the behavior of politicians and political candidates.

**If there is an event whose aim is to help other people in need
(bloodletting, food drive, donation drive) near you, would you participate
as a volunteer?**

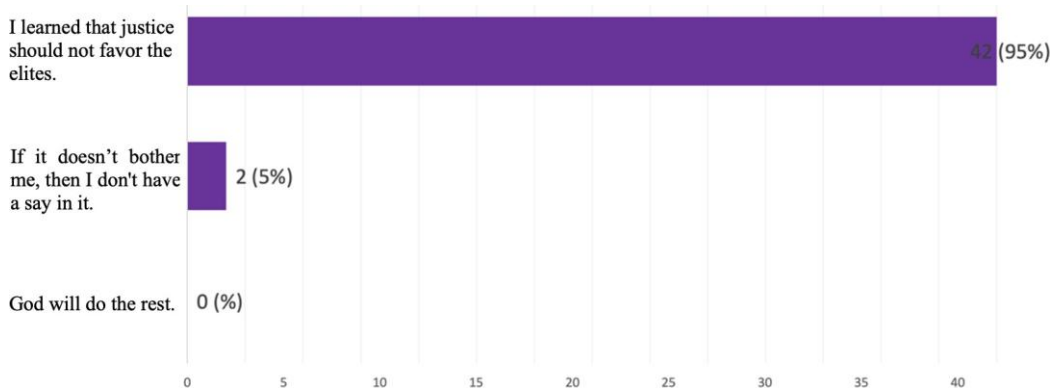


Based on the tallied results from the respondents, it's evident that out of the 44 students of SONAHBS, 39 respondents or 89% of them would aim to help the less fortunate individuals in the country, while 4 of them or 9% of the respondents would only help people if there are external factors, like if it's a requirement for a subject. There is one respondent who can't volunteer since the demands of his/her course is great. Thus, it shows that most of our respondents have this spirit of volunteerism, which means they are willing to meet the needs of others, may it be through sharing their time, money skills or anything that is possible for them to share, without expecting anything in return.

Volunteerism is an act wherein either an individual or group of people take the initiative to share their resources (time, skills, money, etc.) to address the needs of others without expecting anything in return (Engels, 1983). Rizal has also shown this sense of volunteerism as he volunteered to leave the Philippines on a mission to revive our motherland and open the eyes of Filipinos. As stated by Cruce and Moore (2007), educating the youth to be responsible and caring citizens is the main mission of higher education, and

volunteerism has shown to be one of the potent transformative tools as it's been found that volunteerism has had a positive impact on the students' development.

How has the study of Jose Rizal's life and works shaped your perspective on social injustice?

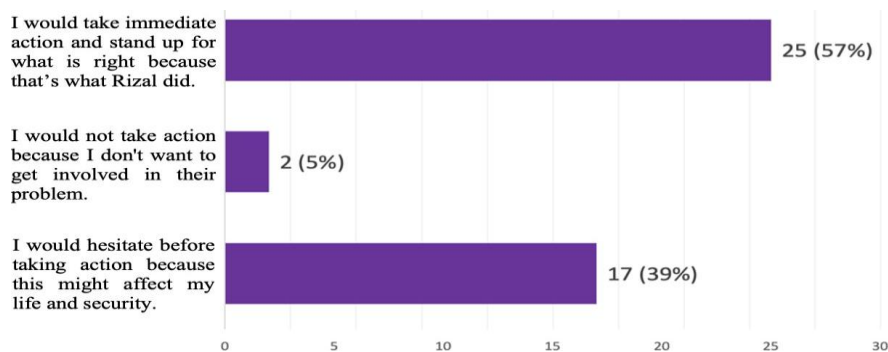


In this question, 95% of the Louisian respondents claim that they have learned that justice should not favor the elite. The remaining 5%, or 2 of the respondents, agreed that if it does not bother them, they do not have a say in it, while none answered that God will do the rest. Consequently, this shows that the life and works of Dr. Jose Rizal has profoundly impacted the majority of the respondents' perspectives on social justice.

As explained in the key findings of a World Bank publication in 2022, the Philippines has significantly reduced poverty, but income inequality has only recently begun to fall. Furthermore, this implies that the country's system favors the elite as both the state and the party system continue to lack coherent organizational structures that might pursue sustained social reforms (Kuhonta, 2016). As former president Ramon Magsaysay said, "The rich get richer, the poor gets in prison." The double standards as injustice or maladministration of justice occurred during Rizal's time, depicted in his novels, which were considered scathing critiques of friar domination and corrupt governance (Pante, 2020).

Centuries later, after Rizal's martyrdom, class stratification remains one of the most significant social issues in the country. The Philippine justice system remains bent toward the interests of the elite, which its citizens continuously fight for. As students and citizens of our country, Rizal's acts must continue to shape our outlook and broaden our perspectives as he emphasized the importance of education and the intellectual growth of a society in pursuit of enlightenment and socioeconomic improvement.

How likely are you to take action and stand up for what is right based on the values and principles you have learned from studying Jose Rizal's life and works?



Among the 44 Louisan respondents, 25 (57%) students responded that they would immediately act and stand up for what is right, just as Rizal did, followed by 17 (39%) students choosing the option of hesitating before taking action. Lastly, 2 (5%) students chose the option of not taking action due to not wanting to be involved in other people's problems.

Based on the overall results, most respondents believe they are proactive in acting and standing up for what is right based on the values and principles they learned from GRIZAL. Morals found in literary texts can be instilled in readers. Additionally, a change in personality is possible through reading when mediated by emotions experienced during the process (Mar et al., 2008). By studying the overarching themes and ideologies in Rizal's works and life and connecting it with their own experiences to evoke emotions, students can have a nuanced understanding and appreciation of the values and principles of his literary works. Subsequently, students can apply their learnings in advocating for themselves and their fellow Filipinos.

It is evident that there is a divide between student's who chose to take immediate action and those who hesitated first. A possible reason for that is because of the difference between circumstance and capabilities, not everyone is at a place wherein they can do what Jose Rizal did, and fight against an opposing opinion.

The subject on the Life and Works of Jose Rizal, known as GRIZAL in the tertiary curriculum may not be considered a major subject nor a specialized subject but it is deemed important for all because Jose Rizal himself is an epitome of what nationalism is. His journey in life was devoted into reaching his dream and aspiration of a better life for the Filipinos during that time. His works as well as actions were inspirations for the development of moral character, personal discipline, civic conscience and duties of citizenship. This subject, indeed, also aims for the development and enhancement of these values among its Filipino citizens especially among the youth who would be the future leaders of the country.

Conclusion

The study of Jose Rizal's life and works among the Saint Louis University students surveyed has had a substantial influence on their viewpoints, values, and decision-making processes. While responses varied, most students agreed that knowing about Rizal had a favorable impact on their decision-making, although only momentarily. This suggests that researching Rizal's biography provided some early inspiration and impact.

The survey also indicated that the pupils had a high sense of civic obligation and participation. All respondents stated their desire to vote in a forthcoming university election, highlighting the significance of fulfilling their civic rights and responsibilities. This finding undermines the commonly held belief that young political disengagement is widespread, and shows that students' exposure to Rizal's ideas through the GRIZAL course may have increased their civic involvement.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents showed a readiness to join as volunteers in activities targeted at assisting those in need. This indicates a voluntary spirit and a desire to positively affect society, which is consistent with Rizal's own sense of volunteering and devotion to serve others.

The study also revealed that the student's understanding of social injustice was shaped by studying Rizal's life and works. They considered that justice should not favor the elite, emphasizing the Philippines' continuous battle against class inequality and the necessity for social changes. Rizal's books' criticisms of friar tyranny and corrupt administration continue to connect with students, motivating them to struggle for justice and social equality.

Finally, most students expressed a willingness to take action and stand up for what is right, inspired by Rizal's beliefs and ideas. While some students were hesitant or chose not to act, the study reveals that exposure to Rizal's teachings provided in them a proactive perspective and a determination to fight for what is right and equal.

In summary, the study illustrates the lasting importance of Jose Rizal's life and works to shape the views, attitudes, and decision-making processes of the students. It emphasizes the power of studying Rizal's ideas to promote civic involvement, volunteerism, a better awareness of social injustice, and a proactive approach to pushing for what is right. The study's findings shed light on the positive influence of incorporating Rizal's teachings into the educational curriculum, underlining the necessity of learning and appreciating historical personalities' contributions to creating the values and principles of future generations.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

Foster discussions and assignments encouraging students to reflect on how Rizal's life and principles relate to their lives and contemporary societal issues. By establishing personal connections and highlighting the relevance of Rizal's teachings to their individual experiences, students may be more inclined to integrate his wisdom into their decision-making process. It is important to acknowledge that individual responses to the influence of studying historical figures may vary. However, by implementing these recommendations, educational institutions can amplify the positive impact of learning the life and works of Jose Rizal, fostering a greater connection between his teachings and students' decision-making processes.

It is highly recommended to augment the implementation of teaching GRIZAL to the students, whether in public or private schools, to further enhance the civic conscience of the youth. The researchers also suggest that it would even be better if GRIZAL was to be taught before a student reached the age of 15 because "the Commission on Election (COMELEC) clarified those aged 15 to 30 years old can vote for the Sangguniang Kabataan (Youth Council) elections, while those who can vote for the barangay elections are those aged 18 years old and above" (Don, 2022).

To continue instilling a sense of volunteerism in the students, so that through it the students would not only develop their love for their country, but also learn the value of helping others willingly and not expecting anything in return, just the smiles and gratitude of the people they've helped.

To foster a better perspective among students, the GRIZAL course should be offered continuously in tertiary level institutions. By delving deeper into the connection between current social issues and events in Rizal's time, the course helps students develop civic consciousness and fulfill their duties as citizens. It also encourages students to form their own unbiased opinions on social topics by comparing present-day situations with Rizal's era. Empowered by Rizal's teachings, students gain control over their political decisions and are inspired to stand up for what is right for the country and its people.

The schools should provide an opportunity for students to address and settle certain affairs to promote autonomy, and to awaken the spirit to fight for their rights. Including them in the decision-making regarding their education; allowing them to decline decisions they don't feel comfortable with, and giving them the freedom to do so in a form of peaceful protests, or it can even be through a debate.

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