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Learning Philippine History with Generative AI: College Students' Reported Experiences of Verification, National Identity, and Civic Responsibility

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative descriptive study examined the experiences of college students with historical learning, information verification, and civic formation in the context of generative AI. The research involved 315 students from 14 academic programs at a private higher education institution in Laguna, Philippines. Data collection was conducted using an expert-validated written interview guide administered via Google Forms, and the data were analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis. Participants indicated that readings in Philippine history facilitated connections between past and present issues, recognition of persistent national problems, comprehension of historical accounts, and reflection on Filipino identity. They perceived AI as a tool for facilitating information access, clarifying concepts, and enabling exploratory enquiry, while also expressing concerns about inaccuracies, biases, fabricated claims, and dependency. The participants' verification practices included comparing accounts, consulting academic sources, examining authorship, and exercising caution before accepting online content. Historical learning was linked to reflection on civic responsibilities and freedoms, as well as intentions to engage in public affairs and defend rights. Participants recommended responsible AI use, source evaluation, misinformation detection, interactive activities, and connections with current issues. This study provides a contextualized account of students' perceptions of historical learning, AI use, verification, and civic orientations. These accounts do not establish changes in historical competence, verification performance, or civic behaviour. The findings underscore guided source evaluation and critical examination of AI-generated historical information as areas for instructional consideration; their effectiveness requires further evaluation.

Keywords: *generative AI, civic orientations, historical learning, information verification, Philippine history.*

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INTRODUCTION

Analyzing historical events necessitates addressing questions that continue to hold significance today: which narratives are deemed credible, whose experiences are acknowledged, and how historical assertions influence perceptions of national identity (Haapala, 2021; Ortega-Sánchez et al., 2020). These enquiries demand a focus on evidence, context, and divergent interpretations. Additionally, they pertain to how individuals position themselves within historical narratives and comprehend their obligations to others. Popa (2022) frames these dynamics within the concept of historical consciousness, highlighting the meanings constructed across the past, present, and future. In the context of Philippine higher education, the course Readings in Philippine History offers a curricular framework for exploring these dynamics through primary sources and contested representations of the national past.

Recent Philippine scholarship has explored these issues using various historical materials. Alvero (2026b) analyzed students' perceived engagement with Philippine primary sources concerning heritage, identity, historical consciousness, and civic engagement. In another study, Alvero (2026d) investigated the portrayal of identity, resistance, and nation-building in political caricatures. These methodologies emphasize the significance of specific sources and their contexts. However, students' interactions with historical representations also occur beyond assigned materials, encompassing social media, search engines, and generative artificial intelligence (AI). This expansion prompts enquiries into the interpretation and evaluation of historical information.

Generative AI provides immediate explanations, summaries, and responses to inquiries. University students have reported these functions as beneficial for academic support while also expressing concerns about accuracy and dependency (Chan & Hu, 2023). Reviews further highlight potential educational applications, alongside issues of inaccuracy, bias, and misuse (Crompton & Burke, 2024; Lo, 2023). In the context of historical learning, an accessible explanation may serve as an entry point into unfamiliar material; however, accessibility does not equate to quality. Therefore, whether students perceive AI-generated content as provisional interpretations, convenient answers, or authoritative information requires empirical investigation rather than assuming educational benefits, as previously noted.

Information verification was central to this study. Evaluating a historical claim involves examining its origins, supporting evidence, context, and relationship with other accounts. Intervention studies have investigated explicit instruction in lateral reading and online source evaluation (McGrew & Breakstone, 2023; Wineburg et al., 2022), while McGrew and Kohnen (2024) discuss broader, structural, and contextual considerations of the same. These distinctions matter: consulting several websites does not necessarily constitute independent corroboration, and expressed caution does not establish an accurate judgment. Moreover, misinformation beliefs and corrections involve cognitive, social, and affective processes that complicate the assumption that awareness alone protects learners from misleading claims (Ecker et al., 2022). Evidence from the Philippines further contextualizes this concern. Bringula et al. (2022) examined the susceptibility to political disinformation among students

from four private universities in Manila and identified relationships involving online practices, political preferences, and expert consultation. Although their study did not concern historical information or generative AI specifically, it supports the examination of how students judge credibility, rather than assuming that familiarity with digital technologies ensures reliable evaluation.

Historical interpretation and verification also intersect with national identity and civic orientation. Accounts of historical struggles may hold significance for belonging, rights, responsibilities, and participation, but these dimensions should not be treated as equivalent. Alvero (2025a) examined differentiated self-reported citizenship domains, while Alvero (2025b) considered perspectives on citizenship integration in general education. Such differentiation is relevant because national pride does not independently establish democratic commitment, stated civic understanding does not demonstrate accurate knowledge, and willingness to participate does not establish enacted participation.

Research has already connected AI with historical thinking. Tirado-Olivares et al. (2023), for example, examined student-produced and ChatGPT-generated historical arguments through a shared source and task. Alvero (2026c) also examined the associations between self-reported historical thinking, AI, digital historical literacy, and civic outcomes. These studies provide relevant points of comparison; however, they leave a distinct descriptive question: how do students articulate their experiences of historical learning alongside AI use, credibility judgments, national identification, and public responsibility? The present study addresses this question within Readings in Philippine History at a private higher education institution in Laguna, Philippines, without assessing historical competence or establishing causal relationships.

The interpretive framework draws on Rüsen's account of historical consciousness, as discussed by Popa (2022), through historical experience, interpretation and orientation. Applied here, these dimensions concern encounters with representations of the Philippine past, reported efforts to interpret historical accounts, and the meanings associated with present responsibilities and future intentions. Critical digital literacy complements this perspective by focusing on source authority, evidence, bias, AI-generated inaccuracies, and decisions to accept or share information. These concepts help examine the possible relationships among interpretation, verification, and civic meaning without presuming a necessary progression between them.

Within civic orientation, national identification denotes expressed Filipino belonging; civic knowledge denotes stated understandings of rights, institutions, and public issues; civic dispositions denote values and commitments; intended participation denotes willingness or plans; and enacted participation denotes self-reported actions. Knowledge accuracy and reported actions were not independently verified. The framework supplies sensitizing concepts for interpreting primarily inductively developed themes, rather than predetermined coding categories or a retrospective claim that theory guided the original interview design.

Accordingly, the study addressed six questions within three domains. Historical learning comprised the following questions: (1) How do students describe the perceived relevance and

limitations of Readings in Philippine History? and (2) How do they describe AI use or non-use, including assistance, difficulties, and risks? Information verification comprised the following questions: (3) What questionable or conflicting information do students report encountering, and what checking practices, uncertainties, and constraints do they describe? Civic formation comprised the following questions: (4) How do students describe Filipino identification, rights, duties, and historical appreciation? and (5) What connections, if any, do they describe between historical learning, public issues, civic dispositions, and participation? A cross-domain question asked: (6) What instructional changes, if any, do students recommend? These questions accommodate beneficial, limited, absent, adverse, and contradictory experiences. The study contributes contextualized accounts of perceived connections and reported practices, with curricular implications that remain distinct from demonstrated educational outcomes.

METHOD

The study employed a qualitative descriptive design using an online qualitative survey. This design was selected to develop a contextualized account of how college students described historical learning, artificial intelligence (AI), information verification, Filipino identification, and civic orientations. The inquiry focused on participants' expressed meanings, reported practices, concerns, and recommendations rather than testing causal relationships, assessing competence, or developing a formal explanatory theory. Open-ended written responses allowed participants time to formulate their accounts and enabled participation across academic programs. However, the absence of follow-up questioning limited opportunities to clarify ambiguous statements or explore particular historical and verification episodes.

The study was conducted at a private higher education institution in Laguna, Philippines. Participants comprised 315 college students drawn proportionately from 14 academic programs. Proportionate stratified sampling used academic program as the basis for allocating participation relative to the eligible student population. Eligibility required current enrollment, completion of or ongoing enrollment in Readings in Philippine History, willingness to provide written responses, and informed consent. The sample was intended to represent a range of program contexts rather than establish statistical generalizability. Its breadth was accompanied by variation in response length and detail; sample size alone was not treated as evidence of analytical depth or completeness.

Data were generated through a researcher-developed questionnaire containing six open-ended questions administered via Google Forms. The questions addressed historical learning and contemporary relevance; experiences of AI-assisted historical learning; encounters with questionable information and reported verification; Filipino identification and citizenship responsibilities; attention to public issues and civic engagement; and recommendations for course improvement. These six question areas provided the initial organization of data collection and subsequent reporting. They were distinguished from

themes, which were developed through analysis of the meanings expressed within participants' responses.

The questionnaire was reviewed by five specialists with backgrounds in history and social science education, qualitative and educational research, measurement, and instrument development. They assessed clarity, relevance, appropriateness, coverage, and alignment with the study's purpose. Their recommendations informed revisions to question wording, sequence, and scope. The revised questionnaire was pilot-tested with college students excluded from the final sample to examine comprehensibility and online-form functionality. Feedback informed the final version. Because the instrument elicited open-ended accounts rather than scaled measurements of latent constructs, internal-consistency coefficients were not calculated.

The original questions were organized around the substantive concerns of historical learning, AI use, information credibility, and citizenship. Rüsen's account of historical consciousness, considered through historical experience, interpretation, and orientation, and the complementary lens of critical digital literacy were subsequently used to interpret the developed themes. These concepts did not supply an initial codebook or predetermined categories. The framework clarified the conceptual relationships among the question areas without retrospectively determining what participants' responses should contain. In particular, it supported distinctions between historical meaning-making and demonstrated reasoning, reported checking and verified performance, and national identification, civic understandings, dispositions, intentions, and reported actions.

Ethical clearance and institutional permission were obtained before data collection. The researcher coordinated with the relevant administrators and faculty members to distribute the questionnaire to eligible students. The opening section of the Google Form explained the study's purpose, procedures, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and participants' rights. Electronic informed consent was required before accessing the questions. Students completed the questionnaire independently and could decline participation or leave questions unanswered without any academic penalty. Withdrawal arrangements were communicated in accordance with the consent procedures and the extent to which the submitted responses remained identifiable.

Responses were downloaded and organized in a spreadsheet for screening and manual analysis. Blank, duplicate, unintelligible, or substantively nonresponsive material was screened according to its relevance and interpretability. Screening decisions were documented, distinguishing the exclusion of an entire submission from the omission of an unusable answer within an otherwise usable submission. Personal identifiers were removed from the analytical dataset, and responses were assigned participant codes. The analysis preserved the connection among answers submitted by the same participant, allowing examination of relationships within individual accounts.

Reflexive thematic analysis proceeded recursively through familiarization, initial coding, development of candidate themes, theme review, definition and naming, and preparation of an analytical narrative. Coding was primarily inductive: meaningful segments were labelled

according to their expressed content rather than assigned to the conceptual framework. Related codes were combined to develop descriptive patterns. Candidate themes were reviewed against their supporting extracts and the wider dataset for coherence, distinctiveness, and relevance. The six questionnaire areas remained reporting headings, while the themes within them represented the descriptive patterns developed through analysis. Themes were not treated as equivalent to questionnaire items or as evidence that the proposed relationships of the framework had been established.

A concise example illustrates the distinction between a question area and an interpretation. In the response, "It makes it easier to learn and interpret information but the credibility is slightly shady," the first clause supports a code concerning perceived learning assistance, while the second supports a code concerning uncertain credibility. Considered together, the clauses support the interpretation that perceived usefulness and distrust coexist within this participant's account. This interpretation is more specific than the questionnaire topic of AI-assisted learning and does not require assuming that the participant successfully verified the information. Similarly, the reported comparison with Google Scholar was interpreted as a checking practice rather than proof that the sources or historical conclusions were accurate.

Cross-domain interpretation examined whether participants explicitly linked learning, AI use, verification, and civic meanings within their own responses. The appearance of related themes in different participants' accounts was treated as a comparison across the dataset, not evidence that those experiences were connected within individuals. Themes concerning national pride, civic duties, intended participation, and reported actions were interpreted separately. Where responses lacked identifiable historical sources, disputed claims, or verification outcomes, interpretation remained at the level of general perceptions and stated practices. The analysis did not introduce historical specificity absent from the data.

The themes were refined through repeated engagement with the responses and attention to supporting, divergent, and ambiguous accounts. Their analytical significance depends on patterned meaning, relevance, and interpretive coherence rather than numerical prevalence. Representative quotations were selected to show the basis of each interpretation and were retained as written, with any omissions or editorial clarifications identified transparently. Participant codes linked to the anonymized analytical record.

Credibility was supported through repeated comparisons between interpretations and original responses and through peer debriefing focused on alternative readings and unsupported claims. Peer debriefing provided critical discussions rather than independent coding verification or a test of inter-rater agreement. An audit trail recorded the questionnaire development, screening decisions, coding, thematic revisions, and interpretive notes. The sole researcher remained responsible for the analysis and considered how his institutional position, involvement in history education, and commitments concerning civic learning could influence interpretation. Data were stored securely with access restricted to the researcher, and confidentiality procedures governed the use of anonymized quotations in reporting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Reflexive thematic analysis of the written responses from 315 participants generated themes across six reporting areas organized within three interconnected domains: historical learning encompassed historical understanding and AI-assisted learning; information verification addressed encounters with online misinformation and reported verification practices; and civic formation examined Filipino identification and civic orientations, alongside participants' recommendations for the course. The recommendations also cut across the learning and verification domains. Together, the themes illuminate how the participants connected their interpretations of the Philippine past with judgments about digitally mediated information and reflections on identity and public responsibility. This integration concerns the relationships expressed in participants' accounts rather than a demonstrated progression from historical learning to effective verification or civic action. Individual responses could contribute to multiple themes, allowing connections and tensions across the domains to remain visible. Themes were developed and refined by focusing on patterned meaning, relevance to the research questions, and interpretive coherence rather than frequency counts.

Table 1 presents the participants' reported experiences of learning Philippine history across six themes: perceived connections between past and present; historical interpretations of recurring national problems; reported critical reflection on historical sources; expressed curiosity about the Philippine past; expressed appreciation of Filipino historical struggles; and perceived relevance of historical lessons to future decisions. These themes capture participants' perceptions and attributed meanings rather than demonstrating improvements in historical knowledge or reasoning. Although the excerpts mention inequality, corruption, and Filipino struggles, they provide limited detail about particular historical events, sources, or interpretive processes.

Table 1. Themes on the Influence of Readings in Philippine History on Students' Historical Understanding.

Themes	Indicative Codes	Thematic Description	Representative Verbatim Responses
Perceived Connections Between Past and Present	past–present connections; historical roots of contemporary issues; continuity	Participants described their perception of connections between historical events and contemporary conditions. The excerpt expresses a general connection without identifying a particular event or explaining its relationship.	"*It helped me understand our past better and see how historical events are still connected to issues we face today*."
Historical Interpretations of Recurring National Problems	inequality; corruption; recurring national concerns	Participants associated contemporary Philippine problems, such as inequality and corruption, with historical events. However, the excerpt does not specify the events, sources, or mechanisms underpinning this association.	"*It helped me understand that many present-day issues such as inequality and corruption are connected to historical events*."
Reported Critical	perceived critical thinking; attention to	Participants attributed critical reflection on historical sources to the	"*It also taught me to think critically about*

Themes	Indicative Codes	Thematic Description	Representative Verbatim Responses
Reflection on Historical Sources	historical sources; past–present interpretation	course content. The excerpt indicates a perceived contribution but does not demonstrate how a source was examined or how competing interpretations were evaluated.	*historical sources and connections between the past and present*."
Expressed Curiosity About the Philippine Past	historical curiosity; interest in further study; desire to understand past events	Participants expressed interest in studying Philippine history and learning about earlier periods. This excerpt supports curiosity rather than an independently established increase in historical knowledge.	"*It influenced me to study about Philippine history and also it made me curious about what really happened in that era*."
Expressed Appreciation of Filipino Historical Struggles	appreciation of Filipino struggles; perceived importance of national history	Participants associated historical learning with the appreciation of Filipino struggles and the importance of studying national history. The excerpt does not identify a specific struggle or establish changes in national identification or civic commitment.	"*It made me appreciate the struggles of Filipinos and understand why learning our history is important*."
Perceived Relevance of Historical Lessons to Future Decisions	lessons from the past; avoiding repeated mistakes; anticipated practical relevance	Participants regarded historical knowledge as potentially useful for present and future decision-making. This expresses an anticipated application rather than evidence of historically informed decision making in practice.	"*Knowing our history can help us in our present day, so that we can avoid to repeat the same mistakes*."

Source: Written interview responses of participants.

Table 2 presents the participants' reported experiences and concerns regarding AI-mediated historical learning across six themes: perceived speed and convenience of information access; perceived clarification of difficult content; reported use of AI for historical questions and explanations; perceived usefulness accompanied by credibility concerns; reported comparison with academic search results; and expressed concern about dependence and uncritical acceptance. These themes capture perceived assistance, reported practices, and concerns rather than demonstrated improvements in historical learning or declines in independent thinking. One excerpt explicitly combines perceived ease of learning with uncertainty about credibility, illustrating a tension between usefulness and trust within the same account. However, the excerpts provide limited detail about specific Philippine historical topics, source comparisons, or verification outcomes.

Table 2. Themes on the Influence of Artificial Intelligence on Learning Philippine History.

Themes	Indicative Codes	Thematic Description	Representative Verbatim Responses
Perceived Speed and Convenience of Information Access	quick answers; accessibility; convenience	Participants described AI as providing quick access to unfamiliar information. This excerpt does not identify a historical topic or establish greater efficiency compared with other resources.	"*Artificial Intelligence (AI) helped me quickly learn things I don't know by using it*."
Perceived Clarification of	explanations; perceived	Participants perceived AI-generated explanations as helpful when they	"*It provides detailed explanations of*

Themes	Indicative Codes	Thematic Description	Representative Verbatim Responses
Difficult Content	clarification; difficult content	encountered difficult material. The excerpt does not specify the historical content involved or demonstrate an improved comprehension.	*things I personally find hard to understand*."
Reported Use of AI for Historical Questions and Explanations	historical questions; requests for explanation; perceived ease of inquiry	Participants described asking AI questions about Philippine history and requesting explanations of unfamiliar topics. This excerpt indicates the reported use of AI rather than demonstrated expansion or improvement of historical enquiry.	"*I can easily ask the AI questions about our history, [and] I can also ask the AI explanation of some topic that I don't understand*."
Perceived Usefulness Accompanied by Credibility Concerns	perceived ease of learning; interpretation; uncertain credibility	Within the same account, a participant paired perceived learning convenience with uncertainty regarding credibility. This illustrates the tension between usefulness and trust, although no particular inaccurate historical claim or verification episode was identified.	"*It makes it easier to learn and interpret information but the credibility is slightly shady*."
Reported Comparison with Academic Search Results	source requests; comparison; Google Scholar	One participant described requesting sources from AI and comparing them with the materials found on Google Scholar. This indicates a reported checking practice; however, the excerpt does not identify the sources, evaluation criteria or outcome of the comparison.	"*Sometimes, I ask AI to give me credible sources and compare it to what I found on Google Scholar*."
Expressed Concern About Dependence and Uncritical Acceptance	perceived dependence; reliance on AI; acceptance of claims as factual	Participants expressed concerns that people might rely on AI and accept its outputs as factual. The excerpt presents an observation about others rather than evidence of the participant's own dependence or a decline in independent thinking.	"*AI made people dependent; they rely on it, as if all of the information there is 100% facts*."

Source: Written interview responses of participants.

Table 3 presents participants' reported encounters with questionable online information and their verification practices across six themes: reported encounters with contradictory online accounts, expressed caution toward widely shared content, reported comparison before accepting information, reported consultation of academic articles, reported scrutiny of author credibility, and expressed need for repeated verification. These themes describe self-reported practices and stated principles rather than demonstrated verification performances. The excerpts provide limited detail about specific Philippine historical claims, sources, or checking outcomes; consequently, contradictory accounts cannot automatically be classified as misinformation, and expressed caution does not establish changes in online behaviour patterns.

Table 3. Themes on Students' Experiences with Online Historical Misinformation and Conflicting Accounts

Themes	Indicative Codes	Thematic Description	Representative Verbatim Responses
Reported Encounters with	conflicting information; contradictory	Participants described encountering inconsistent information online. The excerpt does not identify a particular	"*I have encountered different information online that sometimes*

Themes	Indicative Codes	Thematic Description	Representative Verbatim Responses
Contradictory Online Accounts	accounts; uncertainty	historical claim or establish whether the differences represent factual errors, competing interpretations, or incomplete accounts.	*contradicts each other*."
Expressed Caution Toward Widely Shared Content	viral content; widespread sharing; questioning popularity as credibility	One participant expressed caution about treating virality or widespread sharing as grounds for trust. The excerpt does not identify a platform, historical topic, or a specific misleading post.	"*I learned to not trust the informations right away just because it got viral or many people shared them*."
Reported Comparison Before Accepting Information	double-checking; comparison; verification before belief	One participant linked encounters with perceived misinformation to the reported practice of checking and comparing information. The excerpt does not specify the sources used, their independence, or whether the comparison resolved the uncertainty.	"*After seeing misinformations online, I always double check and compare informations before believing it*."
Reported Consultation of Academic Articles	academic articles; perceived trustworthiness; source consultation	Participants described consulting academic articles when judging the trustworthiness of information. The excerpt does not identify particular publications or explain how their relevance, evidence and credibility were assessed.	"*I read academic articles to determine if the information is trustworthy*."
Reported Scrutiny of Author Credibility	author authenticity; source scrutiny; rejection of a claim	A participant described checking an author's authenticity and judging the information untrustworthy. The excerpt does not specify the author, historical claim, or criteria used; therefore, the accuracy of that judgment cannot be assessed.	"*I have read misinformation data but immediately check the authenticity of the author who posted it and determined that it's not trustworthy*."
Expressed Need for Repeated Verification	multiple checks; caution before belief; perceived insufficiency of double-checking	One participant advocated for repeated checking before accepting information. This expresses a verification principle rather than demonstrating consistent practices, successful misinformation detection, or changes in sharing behaviour.	"*I learned that we should always multi-check everything before believing. Double check is not enough these days*."

Source: Written interview responses of participants.

Table 4 presents the participants' expressed national identification and civic orientations across six themes: reported national pride associated with historical learning; expressed understanding of citizenship as rights and responsibilities; expressed appreciation of struggles for freedom; expressed readiness for electoral participation and rights advocacy; expressed responsibility to contribute to the country; and expressed respect for history, culture, and fellow Filipinos. These themes distinguish national identification, stated civic understandings, civic dispositions, and intended participation rather than demonstrating strengthened civic commitment or enacted participation. Although some participants explicitly associated historical learning with national pride and appreciation of freedom, the excerpts provide limited detail about particular historical events or civic activities. National

identification was therefore not treated as evidence of democratic commitment or responsible civic behaviour.

Table 4. Themes on the Influence of Philippine History on Students' Roles and Responsibilities as Filipino Citizens.

Themes	Indicative Codes	Thematic Description	Representative Verbatim Responses
Reported National Pride Associated with Historical Learning	national pride; Filipino identification; perceived contribution of history	One participant associated learning Philippine history with pride in the country. This expresses perceived national identification rather than a demonstrated increase in patriotism or evidence of civic participation.	"*By learning Philippine history, it helped me to be proud of my country*."
Expressed Understanding of Citizenship as Rights and Responsibilities	rights; accountability; civic duties; responsibility	Participants described citizenship as involving both rights and responsibilities. The excerpt conveys a stated understanding of citizenship without specifying particular rights or duties or demonstrating their application.	"*Being a Filipino is not just having rights, but also being accountable and responsible enough to fulfill the duties and responsibilities as a Filipino*."
Expressed Appreciation of Struggles for Freedom	historical struggles; sacrifice; present-day freedom	One participant connected their past struggles with an appreciation of present-day freedom. The excerpt indicates historical meaning-making but does not identify a particular event, individual, or source that supports this connection.	"*It made me realize how hard the people went through to obtain the freedom I currently have*."
Expressed Readiness for Electoral Participation and Rights Advocacy	electoral readiness; intended participation; advocacy for what is right	A participant expressed their readiness to participate in an election and defend what they considered to be right. This indicates an intention rather than evidence of voting, an informed electoral judgment, or enacted advocacy.	"*Now, I'm ready to be part of the election and fight for what's right*."
Expressed Responsibility to Contribute to the Country	service; national contribution; rights and duties	One participant attributed a sense of responsibility to serve or contribute to the country through historical learning. This excerpt expresses a civic orientation without identifying a specific contribution, plan, or completed activity.	"*It taught me the responsibility of respecting my rights and duties and to serve or contribute in the country*."
Expressed Respect for History, Culture, and Fellow Filipinos	respect for history; cultural respect; regard for fellow citizens	Participants identified respect for history, culture, and fellow Filipinos as a responsibility. This excerpt states a normative commitment rather than documenting cultural preservation, interpersonal conduct, or collective action.	"*I have the responsibility to respect our history, culture, and fellow Filipinos*."

Source: Written interview responses of participants.

Table 5 presents the participants' reported attention to public issues and expressed civic engagement orientations across six themes: reported attention to social and national issues; perceived historical roots of contemporary problems; perceived ability to form credible opinions; expressed value of active citizenship; expressed motivation to defend rights; and

reported caution and consideration of different perspectives online. These themes capture perceived relevance, confidence, civic dispositions, and reported practices rather than demonstrated improvements in civic knowledge, evidence-based judgment, or enacted participation. One excerpt links caution toward social media content with consideration of different perspectives within the same account, but it does not establish successful verification. The excerpts otherwise provide limited detail about specific historical connections, public issues, or completed civic activities.

Table 5. Themes on the Influence of Philippine History on Students' Civic and National Engagement.

Themes	Indicative Codes	Thematic Description	Representative Verbatim Responses
Reported Attention to Social and National Issues	attention to public issues; perceived encouragement; national concerns	A participant attributed closer attention to social and national issues to studying Philippine history. This represents a perceived contribution, rather than an independently established increase in awareness or engagement.	"*Studying Philippine history encouraged me to pay more attention to social and national issues*."
Perceived Historical Roots of Contemporary Problems	historical roots; past–present connections; perceived continuity	Participants associated contemporary problems with the past. The excerpt does not identify a particular problem, historical event, or explanatory connection through which this interpretation can be assessed.	"*I realized that many problems we face today have historical roots*."
Perceived Ability to Form Credible Opinions	confidence in opinion formation; perceived credibility; historical knowledge	One participant viewed historical knowledge as a resource for forming credible opinions. The excerpt expresses perceived ability without providing evidence, reasoning, or considering alternatives to support a particular opinion.	"*With the knowledge regarding Philippine history, I can build my own valid and credible opinion as a Filipino citizen*."
Expressed Value of Active Citizenship	citizen participation; democratic rights; poverty; social justice	One participant articulated the importance of citizen participation, democratic rights, and social justice for national progress. This expresses a civic disposition rather than a personal intention to undertake a specific activity or evidence of participation.	"*It teaches that national progress relies on active citizen participation, defending democratic rights, and addressing poverty and social justice*."
Expressed Motivation to Defend Rights	perceived civic roles; rights advocacy; motivation to act	A participant connected the awareness of civic roles with the encouragement to defend their rights. The excerpt indicates expressed motivation but does not identify a particular historical struggle, advocacy activity, or completed action.	"*By knowing my roles, I am encouraged to fight for my rights regarding social, civic, and national issues*."
Reported Caution and Consideration of Different Perspectives Online	caution before belief; issue interpretation; multiple perspectives	One participant described attempting to understand issues and consider different perspectives before accepting social media content. This links caution and perspective-taking within the same account without demonstrating source verification,	"*Instead of immediately believing everything I see on social media, I try to understand the issue and look at different sides*."

Themes	Indicative Codes	Thematic Description	Representative Verbatim Responses
		accurate judgment or responsible sharing.	

Source: Written interview responses of participants.

Table 6 presents the participants' recommendations for Readings in Philippine History in an AI-mediated information environment across seven themes: suggested instruction in responsible AI and digital information use; requested guidance on misinformation, bias, and synthetic content; preference for updated and reliable online sources; preference for digital resources and interactive activities; suggested connections between historical lessons and current issues; advocacy for digital source criticism and algorithmic bias analysis; and expressed caution against overdependence on AI. These themes represent instructional preferences and proposed curricular directions rather than evaluated approaches or demonstrated educational benefits. One excerpt combines digital resources, interactive activities, and source reliability within the same recommendation. However, the excerpts provide limited detail about particular Philippine historical materials, classroom tasks, or implementation procedures; therefore, their potential effects require further investigation.

Table 6. Themes on Students' Recommendations for a Future-Ready Readings in Philippine History.

Themes	Indicative Codes	Thematic Description	Representative Verbatim Responses
Suggested Instruction in Responsible AI and Digital Information Use	responsible AI use; digital information; suggested learning activities	Participants recommended activities that address the responsible use of AI and digital information. The excerpt does not specify technical content, instructional procedures, or anticipated outcomes beyond this general recommendation.	"*The subject should include more activities that teach students how to use AI and digital information responsibly*."
Requested Guidance on Misinformation, Bias, and Synthetic Content	misinformation identification; biased content; deepfakes; AI-generated information	Participants requested instructions on identifying misinformation, bias, deepfakes, and AI-generated content. These are related but distinct concerns: identifying content as AI-generated does not establish whether it is false or misleading.	"*The subject should teach us how to identify misinformation, biased content, deepfakes, and AI-generated information*."
Preference for Updated and Reliable Online Sources	updated resources; perceived reliability; online sources	Participants recommended using online materials that they regarded as updated and reliable. The excerpt does not identify particular archives, databases, historical sources or criteria for assessing reliability.	"*I suggest using more updated and reliable online sources*."
Preference for Digital Resources and Interactive Activities	digital resources; interactive activities; reliable online information	Participants proposed the combination of digital resources, interactive activities, and reliable online sources. This expresses an instructional preference rather than evidence that these approaches improve students' engagement or historical understanding.	"*I suggest using more digital resources, interactive activities, and reliable online sources in the subject*."

Themes	Indicative Codes	Thematic Description	Representative Verbatim Responses
Suggested Connections Between Historical Lessons and Current Issues	past–present connections; contemporary relevance; anticipated application	Participants recommended explicitly relating historical lessons to current issues, anticipating that this might support their understanding and application. The excerpt does not identify a particular historical comparison or demonstrate its educational impact.	"*The subject should also connect historical lessons to current issues so students can better understand and apply what they learn*."
Advocacy for Digital Source Criticism and Algorithmic Bias Analysis	critique of rote memorization; digital source criticism; algorithmic bias analysis	One participant proposed placing greater emphasis on digital source criticism and algorithmic bias analysis. This expresses a curricular recommendation rather than demonstrating proficiency in practice or establishing that existing instruction predominantly relies on memorization.	"*The curriculum must shift from rote memorization of primary sources to deep digital source criticism [and] algorithmic bias analysis*."
Expressed Caution Against Overdependence on AI	limits on AI reliance; caution against dependence	One participant advised against relying on AI for every task. This excerpt supports general caution about dependence but does not specify ethical principles, teacher involvement, or alternative learning practices.	"*Don't depend on AI for everything*."

Source: Written interview responses of participants.

Discussion

Participants characterized readings in Philippine history as pertinent for linking past and present, reflecting on Filipino historical struggles, and contemplating civic responsibilities. These narratives illustrate the meanings students ascribed to historical learning rather than evidencing enhancements in knowledge, reasoning, or civic behaviour. Mentions of corruption, inequality, and historical lessons imply perceived contemporary relevance; however, the excerpts generally lacked specific references to documents, events, or explanatory processes. This distinction aligns with Popa's (2022) conceptualization of historical consciousness as historical meaning-making, involving the interplay among past, present, and future. This perspective aids in interpreting students' expressed connections without asserting their historical competence or developmental progression. The findings further differentiate between perceived critical reflection and demonstrated historical enquiry. Participants indicated that the course fostered attention to sources and historical questions; however, their statements did not reveal how they contextualized evidence, assessed competing explanations, or justified conclusions. Tirado-Olivares et al. (2023) offer a valuable methodological comparison by examining student-produced and ChatGPT-generated historical arguments through a shared historical task. Their study should thus be cited as an exploration of historical argumentation, rather than as evidence for an unverified claim regarding discrepancies between perceived and demonstrated competence. In the current study, the limitation stems directly from the evidence collected: general written accounts of learning cannot ascertain the quality of historical reasoning. Wilke et al. (2023) provide a pertinent instructional comparison through their design study of historical-thinking

instruction in Flemish secondary education, highlighting how historical enquiry is supported through instructional design. In the present study, participants' general references to critical thinking denote perceived learning experiences but do not demonstrate how they examined sources, contextualized evidence, or constructed historical arguments.

Philippine research offers a more historically specific comparison. Alvero (2026b) examined students' perceived engagement with six Philippine primary sources and reported connections among historical understanding, heritage appreciation, identity, and civic responsibility. The source-specific design of this study differed from the general impressions expressed in the present excerpts. Its distinction between understanding, appreciation, and participation also supports keeping cognitive, affective, and participatory accounts analytically separate. The present findings add descriptions of AI-related assistance, uncertainty, and checking practices but provide less detail about the historical materials underlying students' judgments. Alvero's (2026d) examination of Philippine political caricatures provides another relevant source-focused context for considering identity, resistance, and representations of power. However, the present responses do not establish that participants performed comparable visual or contextual analysis.

Participants' descriptions of AI as convenient and helpful for explanations resemble the perceived benefits documented by Chan and Hu (2023). Nevertheless, perceived assistance should remain distinct from verified learning outcomes. Crompton and Burke (2024) identified educational affordances alongside inaccuracies, bias, and possible misuse, whereas Lo (2023) emphasized both potential applications and limitations in the early evidence base. Collectively, these studies contextualize students' favourable accounts without establishing that AI improved historical understanding in this setting. Simplifying an explanation may make it appear more accessible, while leaving its factual accuracy, contextual adequacy, and evidentiary basis unresolved.

The clearest relationship between convenience and uncertainty occurs within one participant's statement: "*It makes it easier to learn and interpret information but the credibility is slightly shady*." This account explicitly combines perceived usefulness with doubt about trustworthiness. Another participant described requesting sources from AI and comparing them with material found through Google Scholar. This response connects AI use with reported checking, although it does not establish that the references existed, were relevant, or supported the claim under consideration. These within-account connections demonstrate a bounded form of integration across learning and verification. They do not justify concluding that all participants combined convenient access with effective scrutiny.

Concerns about AI dependence require careful interpretation. The assertion that people rely on AI as if its information were entirely factual expresses a participant's concern about uncritical acceptance. It does not demonstrate reduced independent thinking or document the participant's own dependence. Alvero and Saldua (2026) provide a related Philippine educational context through their examination of teachers' perceptions and utilization of generative AI in assessment and feedback. Their different population and instructional focus, however, prevent direct conclusions about students' historical reasoning. More broadly, Ng

et al. (2023) emphasize teachers' AI-related digital competencies, supporting attention to the instructional guidance surrounding AI use rather than assuming that access alone produces informed engagement. Zhai et al. (2024) reviewed research on overreliance on AI dialogue systems and associated concerns about students' cognitive abilities. Their review provides a broader context for participants' warnings about dependence, but it cannot establish that comparable effects occurred in this study. The present evidence concerns expressed concerns about reliance rather than measured changes in independent reasoning.

The present analysis also relates conceptually to Alvero's (2026c) examination of historical thinking, AI, digital historical literacy, and civic outcomes. Its contribution is the description of how participants express perceived assistance, credibility concerns, checking practices, and civic meanings. Conceptual overlap should not be presented as independent empirical confirmation, particularly if the publications share participants or data. Any overlap must be disclosed, and associations among self-report measures should remain distinct from the changes demonstrated in historical or civic performance.

Reported verification practices included comparing information, consulting academic articles, scrutinizing author credibility, and repeatedly checking. These accounts suggest attention to trustworthiness but do not establish successful misinformation detection. Wineburg et al. (2022) investigated lateral reading through a field study in high school government classes, providing intervention evidence relevant to instructional design. McGrew and Breakstone (2023) likewise examined curriculum-embedded instruction in online source evaluation. These studies support considering explicit verification instruction, but their findings cannot be transferred automatically to Philippine historical learning or used to validate participants' self-reported practices.

Consulting multiple sources should also be distinguished from independent corroboration. Several websites may reproduce the same unsupported claim, while the presence of an academic label does not by itself establish relevance or evidentiary quality. McGrew and Breakstone (2023) emphasized questions about who produced the information, what evidence supports it, and what other sources report. In contrast, McGrew and Kohnen (2024) offer a special-issue introduction addressing the structural and contextual dimensions of online information literacy; their article should be used as a synthesis rather than original evidence of intervention effectiveness. This distinction prevents the discussion from attributing instructional outcomes to a source that did not test them.

Participants' expressed caution also differs from a demonstrated ability to distinguish factual errors, incomplete information, and legitimate historical disagreements. Ecker et al. (2022) explain that misinformation beliefs and resistance to correction involve cognitive, social, and affective processes. Their synthesis provides a reason to examine how credibility judgments are formed, rather than treating awareness of misinformation as sufficient protection against it. In the present study, statements about contradictory accounts do not establish which account was inaccurate, whether the disagreement concerned evidence or interpretation, or how the participant resolved it. These remain empirical questions for subsequent investigation.

National identification and civic orientation require comparable differentiation. Pride in the country indicates expressed national attachment; statements about rights and duties indicate stated civic understanding; appreciation of freedom expresses a value orientation; and readiness to participate in elections indicates intention. None independently establishes inclusive citizenship, informed electoral judgment or enacted participation. Alvero's (2025a) differentiated examination of self-reported cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural citizenship domains provides a relevant comparison for the Philippines, although its behavioural ratings must also be distinguished from observed action. Alvero (2025b) additionally reported differences between teacher and student assessments of global citizenship integration, reinforcing the value of examining civic learning from multiple perspectives. These distinctions also affect how history is taught.

Golledge (2024) examined teachers' enactment of democratic education in history classrooms, providing a relevant context for considering the pedagogical conditions surrounding civic learning. Kropman et al. (2023) investigated how multiperspectivity in historical texts relates to students' representations of an event. The distinction between historical reasoning and civic outcomes also warrants attention. Wilke et al. (2022) investigated historical thinking and democratic citizenship through a cluster randomized controlled intervention, treating their relationship as an empirical question rather than an assumed consequence of history instruction. The present study cannot establish such transfer: participants' expressions of national attachment, civic responsibility, and willingness to participate remain distinct from assessed democratic competencies or documented civic action. Together, these studies support examining instructional practices and the perspectives made available to learners. They do not establish that the present participants' expressions of national pride incorporated minority perspectives, critical scrutiny, or democratic judgment.

The present excerpts do not establish whether national attachment coexists with scrutiny of state power, recognition of minority perspectives, or acceptance of legitimate dissent. Consequently, critical and inclusive patriotism is an educational commitment advanced by the author, rather than an outcome demonstrated by the findings. References to civic duties should not automatically be interpreted as obedience, just as references to defending rights should not be treated as complete advocacy. Although the participants expressed concerns about rights and public responsibility, the evidence does not show how they would negotiate the tensions among loyalty, dissent, accountability, and competing understandings of national interest.

Participants' recommendations combined responsible AI use, misinformation guidance, reliable resources, interactive activities, contemporary relevance, digital source criticism, and limits on dependence. These are proposed curricular directions rather than evaluated interventions. Miao and Holmes (2023) provide a policy context for considering human agency, institutional responsibility, and equitable access in generative AI integration. Their guidance supports examining the conditions under which instructional proposals might be implemented, but does not establish their effectiveness in this course. Likewise, Ng et al.

(2023) identified teacher competencies as relevant to implementation, suggesting that student-facing activities require corresponding opportunities for teacher preparation.

One concrete proposal is a teacher-guided audit of an AI-generated interpretation of a Philippine political caricature from 1900 to 1941. This activity addresses the reported tension between convenient explanations and uncertain credibility while introducing the historical specificity largely absent from the responses. Students received a verified image, publication details, a short scholarly contextual reading, and a clearly labelled AI-generated interpretation. They would separate factual claims from interpretive claims, compare each with the available evidence, and classify conclusions as supported, contradicted, or unresolved. They would also explain whose perspective the caricature represents and identify the limits of what can be inferred from it. Alvero (2026d) provides a relevant scholarly context for selecting such material; the proposed instructional application is the author's extension, rather than a finding of the present study.

Assessment would prioritize traceable evidence, accurate contextualization, justified uncertainty, and recognition of perspective. A teacher could model one claim–evidence comparison, provide a concise checklist, and offer feedback before final submission. Printed or downloadable source packets and a fixed AI output would permit participation without paid AI accounts or continuous internet access. Live searching could provide an additional task where access is permitted. These arrangements draw on the instructional emphasis on modelling, practice, formative assessment, and teacher support described by McGrew and Breakstone (2023), while remaining a proposal requiring local piloting and evaluation.

At the institutional level, the findings can inform curricular reviews without establishing instructional effectiveness. Alvero (2026a) and Alvero et al. (2026) provide relevant continuous-quality-improvement contexts through their attention to perceived learning and program outcomes. Such feedback can identify issues warranting review, but direct historical tasks, documented verification exercises, and evidence of participation are needed before concluding that curricular changes improve competence or behaviour. Student perceptions are therefore one source of evidence within an improvement process rather than a substitute for outcome assessment.

This study contributes a contextualized account of perceived historical relevance, AI-related assistance and uncertainty, reported checking, and differentiated national and civic orientations. Integration is strongest when participants explicitly connect these experiences within their own accounts; their occurrence across separate responses does not establish a common developmental pathway. The single-institution setting, written self-report format, uneven response depth, and limited opportunities for probing constrain interpretation. Historical competence, verification accuracy, and civic behaviour were not assessed. Future research should investigate particular historical controversies through follow-up interviews, documented search processes, performance tasks, and longitudinal observation. Such evidence could clarify when perceived assistance accompanies effective verification and whether expressed civic intentions are followed by participation.

CONCLUSION

This study examines students' perceived connections between Philippine historical learning, AI-mediated information, verification, and civic orientations. Participants linked historical learning to contemporary relevance, Filipino identity, and reflection on public responsibility. They characterized AI as a convenient tool for accessing explanations, while simultaneously questioning its credibility. The study's primary contribution is to demonstrate how perceived assistance and epistemic uncertainty coexist within specific accounts without presuming that reported verification equates to verification competence or that civic intentions equate to participation. The findings indicate that the course "Readings in Philippine History" should explicitly provide opportunities to scrutinize the evidentiary basis of AI-generated historical claims. Instruction should differentiate between access and understanding, comparison and corroboration, and national attachment and informed civic judgment. These distinctions highlight priorities for curricular review rather than the educational outcomes demonstrated by the study. It is recommended that teacher-guided evaluation of AI outputs using documented Philippine historical sources be piloted and assessed. Future research should integrate students' accounts with historical reasoning tasks, documented verification processes, and longitudinal evidence of participation across institutional settings. Given the study's reliance on written self-reports from a single institution, its conclusions pertain to expressed experiences and orientations, and the effectiveness of the proposed instructional approaches remains to be determined.

CRediT Authorship Contribution

John Cliford M. Alvero: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft, and Writing – Review and Editing. As the sole author, he approved the final manuscript and accepts accountability for the work.

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Ethics Statement

The study received formal approval and permission to proceed from the Research, Evaluation, and Publication Office of San Pablo Colleges. No separate ethics approval or reference number was issued under the institution’s applicable research-approval process. All participants were informed of the study’s purpose, procedures, voluntary nature, confidentiality safeguards, and their right to decline participation or withdraw without penalty. Electronic informed consent was obtained before participants accessed the written interview questions. No personally identifying information was included in the analytical

dataset, and participant codes were used to organize and report the responses. All data were securely stored, treated confidentially, and processed in accordance with the Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012, and the institution's research-ethics requirements.

Declaration of Competing Interests

The author declares no financial or non-financial relationships, institutional affiliations, professional activities, or personal circumstances that could reasonably be perceived to have influenced the conduct, interpretation, or reporting of this study. The author holds no editorial or governance role with JERP and did not participate in the manuscript peer-review process or editorial decision.

Declaration of AI use

Generative AI assistance was used to prepare this manuscript. ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, was accessed in September 2026 to support language refinement, concision, organisation, and improvement of the manuscript's presentation. It was not used to recruit participants, collect data, independently code responses, determine themes, generate research findings, or make final interpretive decisions. The author critically reviewed and revised all AI-assisted texts, verified the accuracy and appropriateness of the content and citations, and accepted full responsibility for the integrity and final form of the manuscript. No confidential or personally identifiable participant information was provided to the AI system.

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