

Students' Lived Experiences on the Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools in Learning Social Studies

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Abstract

This study explored the lived experiences of Grade 12 Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) students in using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools for learning Social Studies in Malapatan III District, Schools Division of Sarangani, Philippines. Anchored in Moustakas' Transcendental Phenomenology, Davis' Technology Acceptance Model, and Zimmerman's Self-Regulated Learning Theory, the study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design. Nine Grade 12 HUMSS students from three public secondary schools participated in in-depth interviews, while three Social Studies teachers participated in a focus group discussion for data triangulation. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, and data were gathered using a validated semi-structured interview guide and analyzed thematically. The findings identified twelve emerging themes encompassing students' lived experiences, the contexts shaping AI-supported learning, and their perspectives on future AI integration. Participants perceived AI as a valuable learning resource that improved conceptual understanding, academic productivity, confidence, classroom engagement, and emotional well-being. However, excessive dependence, reduced independent thinking, information accuracy, and academic integrity emerged as significant concerns. Students emphasized the importance of responsible AI use, critical evaluation, and continued teacher guidance. The study recommends strengthening AI literacy, ethical practices, and teacher capacity building through the proposed Responsible Artificial Intelligence Integration and Learning Empowerment Program (RAILEP). The findings primarily support Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by promoting responsible, inclusive, and learner-centered technology integration. The study contributes to educational and institutional sustainability by informing school-based guidelines and instructional practices that balance technological innovation with academic integrity, learner autonomy, and meaningful human interaction.

Keywords: Academic Integrity; Artificial Intelligence; Learner Autonomy; Phenomenology; Self-Regulated Learning; Social Studies; Technology Acceptance

1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed educational practices by providing opportunities for personalized learning, academic assistance, and improved student engagement. However, its increasing use raises concerns regarding academic integrity, critical thinking, learning autonomy, and technological dependence (Butt, 2025). In the Philippines, AI integration has become increasingly relevant among Senior High School students, particularly in rural educational settings where technological access and institutional guidance may be limited. This study explores the lived experiences of Grade 12 Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) students in Malapatan 3 District, Sarangani, regarding their use of AI tools in learning Social Studies.

Artificial Intelligence refers to computer-based systems capable of performing tasks associated with human intelligence, including learning, reasoning, and problem-solving (Kaplan et al., 2019). In education, AI functions as a learning assistant, tutor, and assessment tool (Xu & Fan, 2021), introducing innovative instructional approaches alongside pedagogical and ethical challenges (Muñoz, 2025). Its integration in Philippine education offers opportunities to improve instructional efficiency and academic performance (Estrellado et al., 2023). AI-supported platforms provide personalized instruction (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019) and targeted feedback addressing individual learning difficulties (Mounkoro, 2025). Studies indicate that students perceive AI positively for improving conceptual understanding (Tolentino, 2025), engagement in Social Science and language learning (Surgiarso, 2024), and academic assistance (Fabrique, 2024). AI may also promote educational accessibility and well-being (Sousa, 2024). Nevertheless, effective integration requires balanced pedagogical practices (Fazil, 2024), ethical accountability (Rani, 2025), and meaningful human involvement (Selwyn, 2019).

AI tools support students in organizing academic activities, understanding lessons, and developing independent learning practices (Jin et al. (2023)). Students' satisfaction with AI-supported learning is influenced by perceived usefulness and emotional well-being (Almufarreh (2024)), while adaptive instruction and immediate feedback may enhance learning outcomes (Gyonyoru et al.(2024)). Research associates AI use with improved academic performance and behavioral engagement (Villaver and Cabigas (2025)), cognitive and emotional participation (Chen (2025)), and ethical academic writing (Domingo et al. (2025)). Students' continued adoption of AI is influenced by usefulness, ease of use, and enjoyment (Lavidas (2024)). AI may also strengthen motivation and lifelong learning (Angel et al. (2025)), academic efficiency (Alexander Vieriu et al. (2025)), and access to educational information in the Philippines (Giray, (2024)). However, maintaining originality and preventing excessive dependence remain important considerations (Holecheck (2024)). Teachers also influence students' AI-supported learning experiences. AI applications provide instructional assistance (Almalki, 2025), reduce administrative workloads (Grassini, 2023; Duan and Zhao, 2024), and create opportunities for individualized teaching (Duan & Zhao, 2024). These technologies may support inclusive learning environments (Bhavani (2025)), provided that they complement rather than replace effective instructional practices (Eager and Brunton, 2023).

Although students generally demonstrate favorable attitudes toward AI-supported learning (Tolentino (2025) and Fabrique et al. (2024)), its increasing use raises concerns regarding academic honesty, originality, and independent thinking. AI applications may address individual learning difficulties (Zawacki-Ritcher et al., 2019), improve academic performance and satisfaction (Nasser et al. (2024)), and encourage technology adoption. AI-supported technologies have also been associated with psychological well-being and stress reduction (Rezaie (2024); Thakkar et al (2024)). Nevertheless, effective AI integration requires knowledge retention (Li(2025)), ethical accountability (Rani, 2025)), and responsible human-AI collaboration (Peta (2023)). Although AI supports information processing and decision-making (Nguyen (2022) and Ronanki (2023)), students must critically evaluate generated information to strengthen independent reasoning (Lawasi (2024)). AI may also promote self-directed learning through goal-setting, monitoring, and personalized feedback (Tapalova (2022)). Its capacity to provide individualized instruction (Taskin (2025)) and flexible learning opportunities (Holes, (2021)) requires appropriate self-regulation and ethical guidance (Younas (2025); Fazil (2024)). AI can support self-regulated learning (Chang (2024)) and independent academic engagement (Kong, 2024), provided that students critically assess information (Alm, 2024). Sustainable implementation consequently depends on student readiness, teacher competence, and institutional support (Yan et al. (2025); Sutrisno (2024)).

International educational discussions emphasize AI literacy, responsible integration, and academic integrity (Butt, 2025). In the Philippines, the source manuscript identifies DepEd Order No. 003, s. 2026 as a framework promoting responsible AI use in basic education. Within Region XII, studies have identified increasing student dependence on AI, accompanied by concerns regarding plagiarism, critical thinking, and teacher-student interaction (Mollo, 2025; Obenza, 2023; Laidan, 2023). Similar observations were documented at Daan Integrated School, where students increasingly used AI for academic requirements (SMEPA, 2024). However, limited research has explored Senior High School students' lived experiences concerning academic integrity, learning autonomy, and responsible AI use (Luo, 2024; Octaberlina et al., 2024), particularly in rural educational settings with limited technological resources and institutional guidance (Casal-Otero et al., 2023).

This study is anchored in the Transcendental Phenomenology of Moustakas (1994), supplemented by the Technology Acceptance Model of Davis (1989) and Self-Regulated Learning Theory of Zimmerman (2002). Transcendental phenomenology examines the meanings and essence of lived experiences through epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis (Oluka,2025). Epoché emphasizes suspending preconceived assumptions (De Bruin, 2020), while phenomenological analysis identifies meaningful experiences and their contexts (Moustakas, 1994). The Technology Acceptance Model explains technology adoption through perceived usefulness and ease of use (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh & Davis, 2000), which have been examined in educational AI research (Alasgarova, 2025; Gong, 2025; Kong, 2025; Lei, 2024). Self-Regulated Learning Theory emphasizes goal-setting, monitoring, reflection, and autonomy, which AI-supported feedback may facilitate

(Faza, 2025; Jin, 2023; Ng et al., 2024). Despite extensive literature on AI's educational benefits and challenges, limited attention has been given to the lived experiences of Grade 12 HUMSS students in rural Social Studies learning environments. To address this gap, the study explores how students in Malapatan 3 District, Sarangani, narrate their AI-supported learning experiences, describe the contexts influencing their technology use, and envision their future engagement with AI tools.

This study primarily aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education) by examining AI-supported learning, digital literacy, and student autonomy. It also supports the relevance of SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) through educational technology integration and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by considering technological access in rural schools. Furthermore, SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) relates to academic integrity, ethical accountability, and responsible AI practices, while SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) emphasizes potential collaboration among students, educators, administrators, and educational stakeholders in promoting responsible technology integration. The study contributes to educational, technological, and institutional sustainability by examining how AI-supported learning may strengthen academic engagement, independent thinking, and responsible technology use. Its findings may inform instructional strategies, digital literacy initiatives, and institutional guidelines that promote ethical AI integration. By exploring students' lived experiences in rural Social Studies education, the research seeks to provide insights for developing inclusive, responsible, and sustainable learning practices.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design employing transcendental phenomenology to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and meanings associated with AI-supported learning. Qualitative inquiry examines human experiences within natural settings (Creswell, 2013), while reflexivity strengthens research interpretation (Braun and Clarke, 2019). Grounded in the phenomenological tradition of Edmund Husserl (1931) and Moustakas (1994), this approach emphasizes understanding lived experiences while suspending researcher assumptions to identify their essential meanings (Moustakas, 1994; Brinkmann, 2018).

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Malapatan III District, Schools Division of Sarangani, Philippines, involving Daan Suyan Integrated School, Amado Quirit Sr. National High School, and Lun Padidu National High School. These public secondary schools offer the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) Strand and serve predominantly rural communities with diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, including the Blaan Indigenous Cultural Community. Figure 1 illustrates the geographical location and administrative boundaries of Malapatan, providing context for examining AI-supported learning amid technological and connectivity limitations.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The study involved nine Grade 12 HUMSS students, with three participants from each school selected for in-depth interviews (IDIs). Three Social Studies teachers, one from each school, participated in a focus group discussion (FGD) to support data triangulation. Students had firsthand experience using AI for academic activities, while teachers possessed at least five years of Senior High School teaching experience. The sample size was consistent with phenomenological research recommendations (Creswell, 1998).

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was employed to select information-rich participants with direct experience of AI-supported learning (Creswell, 2017; Patton, 2002). Selection considered students' AI-related academic experiences, teachers' instructional familiarity, and willingness to participate. The sample size followed phenomenological research recommendations (Creswell, 2018), emphasizing experiential depth (Morse, 2015) and information richness rather than numerical representation (Vasileiou et al. (2018)).

2.5 Research Instrument

The researcher served as the primary research instrument, supported by a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide validated by experts in Social Studies and educational research. The guide explored students' experiences, perceptions, and reflections concerning AI use. In-depth interviews enabled detailed examination of participants' beliefs and experiences (Boyce et al. (2018)). An interview protocol ensured consistency, while consented audio recordings were transcribed verbatim for analysis.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection followed the approval sequence illustrated in Figure 2, beginning with authorization from the Dean of the Graduate School of Sultan Kudarat State University, followed by permission from the Schools Division Superintendent, District Supervisor, and school principals. Participants were oriented regarding the study's objectives and procedures (Merriam and Tisdell (2016)). Informed consent and guardian permission,

where applicable, were secured (Creswell (2014)). Student interviews and teacher focus group discussions were conducted, followed by member checking to verify participants' accounts. Recordings were transcribed and organized confidentially (Babbie (2016)).

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The study employed thematic analysis to identify and interpret patterns in participants' narratives (Braun & Clarke, 2021), consistent with its phenomenological orientation (Moustakas (1994)). Analysis involved familiarization, initial coding, theme generation, review, definition, and report preparation. Emerging themes were examined against participants' accounts to strengthen credibility (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Trustworthiness was addressed through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Nowell et al. (2017)), supported by accurate documentation and participant verification (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Korstjens & Moser, 2018), reflexivity, contextual descriptions (Modol (2008)), consistent procedures (Crossman, 2019), and documented interpretations (Elo et al., 2014).

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study observed informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, fairness, and participant welfare. Participants were informed of the research procedures, risks, and benefits, while guardian consent was obtained where applicable. In accordance with Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012, identities were protected through coded identifiers, and recordings and transcripts were restricted to authorized research use. Participants were given opportunities to review their responses, and tokens of appreciation were provided. The researcher, a Teacher III with 12 years of teaching experience at Daan Suyan Integrated School, acknowledged the importance of reflexivity in minimizing personal assumptions during data interpretation.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Students' Lived Experiences in AI-Supported Social Studies Learning

3.1.1 AI as a Learning Support System

Participants described AI as an accessible learning resource that clarified difficult concepts, provided immediate explanations, supported academic tasks, and expanded access to information. Students reported completing assignments more efficiently and understanding lessons through simplified explanations and examples. Teachers likewise recognized AI's usefulness in providing information, instructional assistance, and interactive learning activities. Some students also emphasized verifying AI-generated responses before using them academically. These findings reflect the role of AI as an instructional assistant that supports knowledge development and learning engagement, consistent with Xu and Fan (2021) and Jin et al. (2023). Personalized explanations and immediate feedback also correspond with the findings of, Gyonyoru et al. (2024), and Taşkın (2025). The experiences further reflect Zimmerman's (2002) Self-Regulated Learning Theory, Ng et al. (2025), and Naseer et al. (2024), while Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model explains students' perceived usefulness of AI. Within Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological perspective, AI emerged as a meaningful source of academic assistance.

3.1.2 AI as a Source of Academic Empowerment

Participants reported increased confidence, independence, motivation, and productivity when using AI tools. Students described greater confidence in answering questions, participating in classroom discussions, exploring unfamiliar topics, and completing assignments. AI also helped them manage academic responsibilities, reduce task-related difficulties, and allocate time for other activities. These experiences suggest that AI-supported learning can strengthen students' perceived academic competence and encourage independent engagement. The findings align with Younas et al. (2025), who emphasized AI's potential to support learner autonomy and self-regulation. Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model and further contextualize students' willingness to use technologies perceived as beneficial. Through Moustakas' (1994) phenomenology, academic empowerment was understood through participants' firsthand experiences of confidence, independence, and active learning.

3.1.3 AI as a Source of Emotional Relief and Well-Being

Students described feelings of happiness, relief, confidence, and reduced academic stress when using AI. Immediate assistance made difficult Social Studies lessons and assignments more manageable, allowing participants to complete tasks efficiently and balance schoolwork with household responsibilities. Teachers similarly associated AI with reduced workloads, improved time management, and more interactive instruction. These findings indicate that emotional relief was associated with accessible academic assistance and reduced task-related pressure rather than AI alone. Grassini (2023) and Duan and Zhao (2024) discussed AI's potential to reduce administrative demands, while Chang et al. (2024) emphasized its support for learning and self-regulation. The findings also relate to Zimmerman's (2002) theory, Kersna et al. (2025), and Sousa et al. (2024), which provide perspectives on self-regulation and well-being. Consistent with Moustakas' (1994), these meanings emerged from participants' descriptions of their learning experiences.

3.1.4 AI Dependency and Ethical Concerns

Despite recognizing AI's benefits, participants reported excessive reliance on generated answers, reduced independent thinking, uncertainty about information accuracy, and concerns regarding academic integrity. Some admitted submitting AI-generated responses without verification, particularly under time pressure. Others expressed guilt about dependence and emphasized fact-checking, proper citation, and responsible use. Teachers similarly expressed concerns about students' critical thinking and academic development. These findings demonstrate the tension between technological convenience and learner accountability. Rani (2025) emphasized the ethical challenges associated with AI integration, while Holechek et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of responsible use and academic integrity. From Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological perspective, dependency and ethical concerns reflected students' personal experiences of balancing immediate academic assistance with independent judgment and responsibility.

3.2 Contexts Shaping Students' AI-Supported Learning Experiences

3.2.1 Emotional and Personal Development

Participants described AI-supported learning as contributing to happiness, confidence, motivation, and reduced academic pressure. Immediate explanations, organized information, and accessible assistance encouraged students to participate in classroom activities and pursue learning goals. However, some expressed concerns about excessive reliance on AI-generated answers. These experiences reflect the emotional and motivational dimensions of technology-supported learning. Thakkar et al. (2024), Tang et al. (2025), and Almufarreh (2024) discussed AI's relationship with emotional support and psychological well-being. Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model and Alasgarova (2025) further contextualize how perceived usefulness influences students' engagement. Through Moustakas' (1994) phenomenology, these emotional responses were understood as meanings emerging from participants' experiences.

3.2.2 Practical Learning Needs

Students reported using AI to address difficult lessons, urgent assignments, and limited learning resources. AI provided immediate explanations, improved understanding, and offered convenient approaches to completing academic requirements. Teachers similarly recognized its usefulness in lesson preparation, instructional support, and responding to students' learning needs. These findings suggest that AI's educational value was closely associated with the practical demands of learning. Ng et al. (2024) and Zimmerman's (2002) Self-Regulated Learning Theory emphasize the importance of feedback and independent learning. Burgos (2023) and Li (2025) further support the potential of AI to enhance knowledge development, productivity, and instructional practices. Consistent with Moustakas' (1994), participants' practical experiences provided the basis for understanding AI as a learning companion.

3.2.3 Academic Participation and Engagement

Participants described increased classroom participation, academic productivity, organization, and collaboration through AI-supported learning. Students used AI to clarify ideas, prepare academic outputs, and contribute to discussions, while teachers observed greater interaction and engagement. Nevertheless, some students acknowledged dependence on AI when completing challenging activities. These findings reflect AI's potential to support active and learner-centered educational experiences. Cabigas (2025) discussed AI-supported academic engagement, while Bhavani (2025) emphasized inclusive and creative learning environments. Chen (2025) further identified AI's potential contributions to behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement. Within Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological perspective, these findings demonstrate how participants experienced AI as a resource for academic involvement.

3.2.4 Responsible and Ethical AI Use

Participants recognized the importance of using AI as an academic guide rather than a substitute for independent thinking. Their accounts emphasized information verification, proper citation, academic honesty, and personal accountability. Although some acknowledged excessive reliance on AI-generated answers, they also expressed awareness of the need to evaluate information and maintain originality. These findings highlight the importance of ethical judgment in AI-supported learning. Abdulmumin (2025) emphasized appropriate supervision and institutional support, while Peta (2023) discussed responsible human-AI engagement. Domingo et al. (2025) further supported the role of academic integrity in AI-assisted writing. Consistent with Moustakas' (1994), responsible AI use emerged as a meaningful aspect of participants' experiences rather than merely an institutional requirement.

3.3 Students' Perspectives on Future AI Integration

3.3.1 Continued AI Integration in Learning and Everyday Life

Participants anticipated continuing to use AI in their studies, future careers, and daily activities. They perceived AI as an increasingly accessible and useful technology that could support academic tasks, information gathering, and lifelong learning. However, they also recognized the continuing importance of teacher guidance and human interaction. These findings reflect students' acceptance of AI as part of their evolving learning experiences.

Zimmerman's (2002) theory supports the importance of independent learning, while Holmes et al. (2021) and Lavidas et al. (2024) associate continued technology use with usefulness, accessibility, and enjoyment. Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model further explains participants' intention to continue using AI. Through Moustakas' (1994), these future expectations were understood through students' firsthand experiences.

3.3.2 Practical and Productive AI Utilization

Students envisioned using AI to improve productivity, accomplish academic and personal tasks, solve problems, and respond to future technological demands. Participants expected AI to become increasingly integrated into everyday activities because of its convenience, accessibility, and usefulness. These findings correspond with Ronanki and Nguyen (2023), who discussed AI's applications in automation, information processing, and decision-making. Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model and Falebita et al. (2024) further explain the role of perceived usefulness and ease of use in technology adoption. Lawasi (2024) emphasized the importance of critical evaluation and human judgment. Within Moustakas' (1994) phenomenology, practical AI utilization reflected participants' expectations of continued technological assistance.

3.3.3 Responsible and Ethical AI Engagement

Participants anticipated continued AI use in their academic and professional lives while acknowledging the importance of responsible practices. Their narratives emphasized maintaining critical thinking, independent judgment, academic integrity, and appropriate boundaries between technological assistance and personal effort. Teachers similarly recognized AI's usefulness while stressing that it should not replace meaningful human interaction. These findings emphasize the need to balance technological integration with ethical accountability. Eager and Brunton (2023) highlighted AI's potential to complement effective instructional practices, while Selwyn (2019) emphasized reflective and purposeful educational technology integration. Through Moustakas' (1994), responsible AI engagement emerged as part of participants' understanding of their future learning responsibilities.

3.3.4 Adaptive and Innovative Growth Through AI

Participants viewed AI as a technology that could support adaptability, creativity, lifelong learning, and future career preparation. Students expressed willingness to explore emerging technologies, improve their learning strategies, and apply AI in academic and professional activities. They also acknowledged the need to develop responsible practices alongside technological competence. These findings correspond with Ali et al. (2024), who associated AI adoption with creativity and innovation, and Ikram et al. (2026), who discussed personalized and adaptive learning. Anghel (2024) further emphasized balancing technological advancement with pedagogical and ethical responsibility. Consistent with Moustakas' (1994), participants' expectations reflected their experiences of AI as a resource for continued learning and adaptation.

3.4 Proposed Responsible AI Integration and Learning Empowerment Program

The findings informed the proposed Responsible Artificial Intelligence Integration and Learning Empowerment Program (RAILEP) for schools in Malapatan III District. The program addresses the identified benefits and challenges of AI-supported Social Studies learning through school-based AI policies, teacher capacity building, AI literacy, information verification, academic integrity, and learner autonomy. It incorporates a "Think First, AI Second" approach to encourage students to exercise independent judgment before seeking AI assistance. The proposed program emphasizes balanced AI integration through collaboration among school administrators, teachers, ICT coordinators, students, and other stakeholders. Its implementation includes professional development, responsible AI-supported instruction, and regular monitoring and evaluation. RAILEP is intended to strengthen ethical technology use while preserving critical thinking, meaningful teacher-student interaction, and independent learning.

3.5 Synthesis of Students' Lived Experiences

The findings revealed that students experienced AI as both a valuable learning support system and a source of ethical challenges. AI facilitated conceptual understanding, academic productivity, confidence, emotional relief, and classroom engagement. However, participants also recognized concerns involving excessive dependence, information accuracy, academic integrity, and reduced independent thinking. Their experiences were shaped by academic demands, technological accessibility, teacher guidance, and individual learning practices. The central essence of students' lived experiences was the continuous balance between technological assistance and personal responsibility. AI was perceived as beneficial when it supported understanding, independent learning, and academic participation, but potentially problematic when used without critical evaluation or ethical judgment. These findings underscore the importance of responsible AI integration that complements human reasoning, academic integrity, and meaningful Social Studies learning.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools played a meaningful role in the lived experiences of Senior High School students learning Social Studies in Malapatan III District. The findings revealed twelve emerging themes highlighting AI as a source of learning support, academic empowerment, emotional relief, and increased classroom engagement. AI helped students understand difficult concepts, complete academic tasks, and develop confidence and independent learning practices. However, participants also identified challenges involving excessive dependence, reduced critical thinking, information accuracy, and academic integrity. Their experiences demonstrated that AI influenced both academic and personal development, while their future perspectives emphasized continued integration, adaptability, and ethical utilization. Overall, AI was perceived as a valuable educational partner when balanced with human judgment, learner autonomy, and responsible academic practices.

The study recommends that schools in Malapatan III District consider integrating AI tools across Senior High School subjects to strengthen critical thinking, problem-solving, digital literacy, and interdisciplinary learning. Schools should also promote AI literacy through professional development and ethical training for teachers and students, supported by continuous discussions among administrators, educators, and stakeholders regarding responsible AI use. Further research on AI integration across different subject areas is recommended to inform educational practices. Additionally, the proposed school-based program on ethical AI utilization may support instructional engagement, academic integrity, and responsible technology integration.

The study was limited to the lived experiences and perspectives of Grade 12 Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) students from three public secondary schools in Malapatan III District, Schools Division of Sarangani, with supplementary insights from participating Social Studies teachers. Its qualitative phenomenological design relied on participants' accounts gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Consequently, the findings provide context-specific insights into AI-supported Social Studies learning rather than statistically generalizable conclusions about students in other grade levels, academic strands, subject areas, or educational settings.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The author acknowledges the participation of Senior High School students and Social Studies teachers from participating public secondary schools in Malapatan III District, Schools Division of Sarangani, and the cooperation of the school authorities. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before data collection through non-invasive in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Confidentiality was maintained through coded identifiers, secure handling of research data, and reporting of findings without disclosing personally identifiable information. Statements confirming the absence of conflicts of interest and external funding status require verification by the authors before publication.

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