

# Students' Historical Awareness and Their Political Decision-Making Process

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the level of historical awareness and its relationship with the political decision-making process of students at the University of the Visayas–Main Campus for the academic year 2025–2026. Utilizing a descriptive correlational research design, the study employed quantitative methods such as mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to determine the extent and association between variables. Results show that students exhibit a high level of historical awareness across historical figures, contributions, and events, with overall means consistently falling within the Highly Aware category. Students demonstrated strong recognition of key national heroes, major historical milestones, and significant events that shaped Philippine society and governance. However, the decision-making process of students in terms of political choices registered only a moderate level (overall mean 3.81), indicating that while students consider multiple factors, they tend to rely more on reputation, family background, and social influence rather than critical evaluation of qualifications, policies, and leadership competencies. Correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant but very weak negative relationship between historical awareness and political decision-making ( $r = 0.219$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), indicating that increased historical knowledge does not necessarily translate into more informed political choices. These results suggest that while students possess strong historical knowledge, they may lack the ability to apply such knowledge in real-world political contexts. Instructional interventions should therefore focus on integrating interactive history teaching materials that emphasize critical thinking, civic education, and practical application. Future research is encouraged to explore additional factors influencing political decision-making to further strengthen educational strategies that promote informed and responsible democratic participation.

**Keywords:** Historical awareness, political decision-making process, social sciences, descriptive-correlational

## INTRODUCTION

Historical awareness refers to an individual's understanding of past events and their significance in shaping present and future societies. It is important because it develops critical thinking, civic competence, and the ability to analyze social and political issues using historical evidence and lessons from the past. Political decision-making is the process through which individuals evaluate political information, form opinions, and make choices regarding political issues, policies, or leaders. Previous studies suggest a strong relationship between the two, showing that individuals with greater historical awareness are more capable of critically evaluating political issues, making informed judgments, and participating responsibly in democratic processes. Historical knowledge provides context for understanding contemporary political events and helps citizens make more rational and informed political decisions (Do et al., 2024; Santos, 2021; Mitra, 2022).

Historical awareness has an important role in shaping how individuals understand society, interpret current events, and make informed political decisions. For students, particularly those in secondary and tertiary education, the ability to connect past events with present realities is not only an academic exercise but also a foundation for responsible citizenship. Education and exposure to historical and political contexts significantly affect their willingness to participate in civic discussions and decision-making processes especially when mediated by social and digital platforms (Willeck & Mendelberg, 2022). This means that fostering historical

consciousness in schools not only strengthens academic learning but also empowers students to become active and informed citizens capable of engaging responsibly in democratic processes.

In the context of democratic societies, political decision-making is deeply influenced by how individuals perceive history. Students who understand the struggles, achievements, and failures of past generations are more likely to engage meaningfully in civic life, exercise their right to vote responsibly, and participate in discussions on social and political matters (Thelma et al., 2024). Next, limited historical awareness may lead to apathy, susceptibility to misinformation, or superficial engagement with political processes.

This phenomenon is not unique to the Philippines. Internationally, scholars highlight that historical narratives and collective memory significantly shape political culture and foreign policy decisions. For example, historical lessons embedded in national identity influence how policymakers and citizens perceive threats, justify political actions, and respond to global challenges (Lebow & Zhang, 2024). Similarly, youth civic engagement studies reveal that young people's participation in democratic processes worldwide is strongly tied to their historical and civic knowledge. When students understand the struggles and achievements of past generations, they are more likely to engage meaningfully in civic life and political decision-making (Do et al. 2024).

Several challenges complicate the relationship between historical awareness and political decision-making. The rise of misinformation and disinformation online distorts historical narratives and manipulates political choices, as false or selective accounts of the past are often weaponized to influence public opinion and voting behavior (Broda & Strömbäck, 2024). Declining civic participation further weakens democratic engagement, as many young people express disillusionment with politics or feel disconnected from historical struggles that once mobilized earlier generations (Pun et al., 2026). Fragmented or contested interpretations of history also pose a challenge. In the Philippines, differing views on martial law and other pivotal events create confusion and hinder the development of a unified historical consciousness (Te, 2022). Moreover, personality-driven politics and overreliance on popular culture often overshadow substantive historical lessons (van Elteren, 2013).

This study is conducted to address that gap by examining the level of historical awareness among students and its effect on their political decision-making process. Understanding this relationship is crucial because students represent the next generation of voters and leaders, and their ability to make informed political choices will directly impact the quality of democratic governance in the Philippines. Although previous studies have established that historical knowledge contributes to civic engagement and informed political judgment, most have focused on adults, voters, or civic education in general rather than on students' political decision-making processes. Furthermore, limited research has directly examined how varying levels of historical awareness influence students' evaluation of political issues, candidates, and policy choices. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by investigating the relationship between students' historical awareness and their political decision-making process, providing evidence on the role of historical understanding in shaping informed political choices among young citizens.

Historical awareness refers to the ability of individuals to understand, interpret, and connect past events, figures, and contributions to present realities. It involves not only factual knowledge of history but also the capacity to critically analyze its relevance to contemporary society and future decision-making. Scholars emphasize that historical awareness is a multidimensional construct, encompassing knowledge of historical facts, recognition of historical significance, and the ability to apply lessons from the past to civic and political life (Aisiah et al., 2016). It is considered a foundation for responsible citizenship, as it equips learners with the perspective needed to evaluate governance, social issues, and political choices. Indeed, historical awareness is central to identity formation, linking personal and collective memory to national unity (Vubo, 2003).

Students' knowledge and perception of historical figures play a vital role in shaping their understanding of leadership, governance, and national identity. Literature suggests that historical figures serve as symbols of values and ideals that influence civic attitudes (Santos, 2021). For example, studies highlight how students' recognition of national heroes such as José Rizal or Andres Bonifacio reflects their grasp of patriotism and social responsibility. Santos (2021) found that students' historical awareness correlates with their appreciation of cultural heritage, particularly when local heroes are integrated into the curriculum. Similarly, an article suggests that students who study figures like Martin Luther King Jr. or Winston Churchill develop stronger civic

engagement and political awareness (Mattone, 2025). Kindenberg (2026) agreed to them by revealing in his study that students often remember historical figures more vividly than abstract events, but their interpretations may vary depending on how these figures are portrayed in textbooks, media, and classroom discussions. This indicates that historical awareness in terms of figures is not only about memorization but also about critical evaluation of their contributions and relevance.

Awareness of historical events provides students with context for understanding societal changes and political structures. Literature emphasizes that knowledge of events such as revolutions, wars, or democratic transitions helps learners recognize patterns in governance and the consequences of political decisions (Hipolito, 2025; Gadaza et al., 2025). A study shows that when students are able to critically analyze these events, they are more likely to engage in civic discussions and resist misinformation (Gadaza et al., 2025). In the Philippine setting, events like the People Power Revolution or the Martial Law period are central to shaping students' political consciousness. Hipolito (2025) found that college students had limited awareness of overlooked events during the American occupation, such as the Balangiga and Bud Dajo massacres highlighting gaps in historical education. Gadaza et al. (2025) also highlighted that tertiary students' historical consciousness is shaped by how history is taught with fragmented narratives often hindering unified understanding. International research echoes this, noting that awareness of events such as the Holocaust or the Civil Rights Movement strengthens students' moral and political judgment (Novis-Deutsch & Granot-Bein, 2025).

Beyond figures and events, historical awareness also involves understanding the contributions of individuals and groups to society, culture, and governance. Literature suggests that recognizing contributions such as reforms, scientific advancements, or social movements helps students appreciate the collective effort that shapes national identity and progress. Studies reveal that students who understand these contributions are more likely to value civic responsibility and democratic participation (Santos, 2021; Gadaza et al., 2025). In the Philippines, contributions of reformists, educators, and civic leaders highlight the importance of active participation in nation-building. Santos (2021) emphasized that students who understand local historical contributions, such as reforms and cultural heritage preservation, show greater appreciation for civic responsibility. This shows that understanding historical contributions of local heroes shape civic responsibility and consciousness of the students. This is helpful in integrating local history into educational subjects to promote civic commitments among the youth.

Similarly, Gadaza et al. (2025) noted that integrating contributions of reformists and civic leaders into instruction fosters cultural identity and historical consciousness. This means that integrating local history emphasizing their contributions in the country and their role as leaders create a culture of accepting the local identity among youth which is also vital in their historical consciousness. This research shows that awareness of contributions, such as those made by suffragists or civil rights activists, fosters appreciation for social justice and equality. This also emphasizes that teaching contributions alongside figures and events provides a more holistic view of history enabling students to connect past struggles with present challenges and future possibilities.

The implication of this study is that strengthening students' historical awareness can directly enhance the quality of their political decision-making, thereby contributing to a more informed and participatory democratic society. By examining how knowledge of historical figures, events, and contributions influences civic attitudes, the research highlights the need for educational reforms that go beyond rote memorization and instead foster critical engagement with history. This has practical implications for curriculum development, teacher training, and civic education programs, as it underscores the importance of equipping students with the ability to connect past lessons to present realities. In conclusion, the study emphasizes that historical awareness is not merely an academic pursuit but a vital foundation for responsible citizenship; without it, students risk becoming disengaged or vulnerable to misinformation, while with it, they gain the capacity to make thoughtful political choices that strengthen democratic governance.

Political decision-making is best understood as a dynamic and multidimensional process in which individuals or groups evaluate information, weigh alternatives, and select actions within political contexts. It is not purely rational, as traditional models once suggested, but instead integrates cognitive processes, values, emotions, and institutional constraints. Béchard et al. (2024) emphasize that political decision-making is an interdisciplinary field bridging psychology and political science, highlighting how cognitive biases, heuristics, and social

influences shape political judgments. This means that citizens often rely on shortcuts such as party affiliation, candidate personality, or cultural identity rather than detailed policy analysis when making choices.

At the same time, institutional structures like electoral systems, media framing, and governance frameworks exert significant influence, shaping the environment in which decisions are made. Thus, political decision-making emerges as a complex interplay between rational evaluation and subjective influences, underscoring the importance of education, historical awareness, and critical thinking in ensuring that individuals make informed and responsible political choices. Political institutions and governance structures play a central role in shaping decision-making. Sandhu (2023) highlights that frameworks such as institutionalism, pluralism, and elitism explain how power is distributed and exercised, influencing policy outcomes and citizens' choices. In democratic settings, decision-making is often mediated by electoral systems, party structures, and media, which can either empower or constrain rational political engagement.

Moreover, research in political psychology emphasizes that political decision-making is rarely a purely rational process; instead, it is deeply influenced by cognitive shortcuts, emotional appeals, and identity-based reasoning. Citizens often rely on heuristics such as party affiliation, candidate personality, or symbolic cues rather than engaging in detailed policy analysis, which simplifies complex choices but also increases susceptibility to bias (Kartini et al., 2025). This tendency is particularly relevant for students, who are still developing critical thinking skills and may be more vulnerable to external influences such as peer pressure, media narratives, and online discourse. The growing prevalence of misinformation and disinformation further complicates this process, as distorted or manipulated historical and political narratives can shape perceptions and lead to decisions that are misaligned with democratic values. These dynamics highlight the importance of strengthening media literacy, historical awareness, and civic education among young people ensuring that their political decision-making is informed not only by emotional and identity-based factors but also by critical evaluation and factual understanding.

Zaidi (2021) notes that much of the literature on decision-making focuses on public policy and foreign policy, where leaders must balance rational analysis with political pressures. While this research often examines elite decision-making, parallels exist at the citizen level: both involve weighing competing interests, values, and information sources. For students, this translates into evaluating historical lessons, civic values, and contemporary issues when forming political opinions or voting preferences. Empirical studies highlight that youth political decision-making is shaped by education, historical awareness, and exposure to civic discourse.

In the Philippines, research shows that students often rely on cultural values and social media influences when making political choices, but those with stronger historical consciousness demonstrate more critical and informed decision-making (Cadayday et al., 2024). In the research conducted by Cadayday et al. (2024), they highlighted the dual nature of youth political engagement: on one hand, cultural traditions and digital platforms provide accessible frameworks for shaping opinions, yet on the other, they can also lead to superficial or personality-driven choices when not grounded in historical understanding. Students who are more historically aware tend to evaluate candidates and issues beyond surface-level appeal, drawing connections between past governance patterns and present political realities. This suggests that historical consciousness acts as a safeguard against misinformation and populist rhetoric, enabling young voters to make decisions that are not only personally meaningful but also socially responsible.

Internationally, similar findings reveal that civic education and historical knowledge correlate with higher levels of democratic participation among young voters (Siegel-Stechler, 2019). Siegel-Stechler (2019) emphasized that the universal importance of integrating history and civic learning into education systems, as students who are exposed to comprehensive historical narratives tend to develop stronger political awareness and a deeper sense of civic responsibility. In many democratic societies, civic education programs that emphasize historical struggles such as the fight for civil rights, suffrage movements, or anti-colonial resistance equip young people with the tools to critically evaluate political rhetoric and resist misinformation. As a result, these students are more likely to engage in voting, activism, and community participation, demonstrating that historical knowledge is not only an academic skill but also a practical foundation for democratic engagement. This global perspective reinforces the Philippine context, showing that the cultivation of historical awareness among students is essential for nurturing informed and responsible citizens who can contribute meaningfully to both national and international democratic processes.

## Theoretical Background

This study is anchored on two theories namely: Political Socialization Theory and Cognitive Development Theory, which collectively provide a comprehensive lens for examining the relationship between students' historical awareness and their political decision-making process.

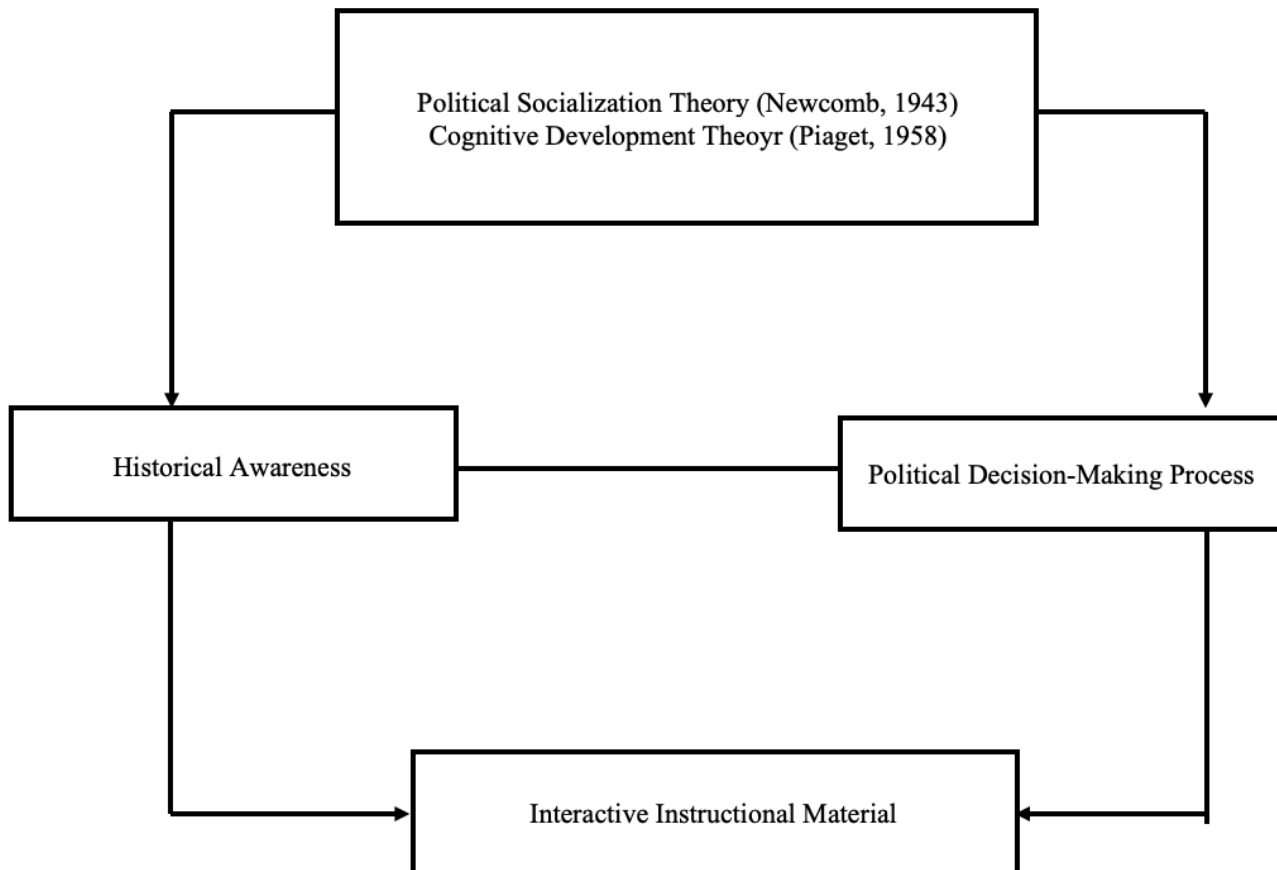


Fig. 1. Schematic Diagram of the Theoretical work

**Political Socialization Theory.** Political Socialization Theory was first articulated through studies such as Theodore Newcomb's Bennington Study in 1943, which examined how individuals acquire political values, beliefs, and behaviors through agents like family, peers, education, and media. It explains that political orientations are not innate but learned through social interactions and institutions. This theory is significant to the study because students' historical awareness whether of figures, events, or contributions is largely shaped by the socialization they receive in classrooms, communities, and online spaces. It helps explain why students with stronger historical grounding make more critical political choices, while those influenced mainly by social media or peer groups may lean toward personality-driven politics. It connects historical awareness with the decision-making process by showing how socialization agents transmit knowledge and values. Its contribution to knowledge lies in situating historical awareness within broader political culture emphasizing the role of education in countering misinformation. This implies that strengthening history education and civic discourse can improve students' political maturity leading to more informed democratic participation.

Political Socialization Theory provides a foundational lens for understanding how students acquire political values, beliefs, and decision-making patterns through interactions with key social agents such as family, peers, educational institutions, and media. Rooted in early studies like Theodore Newcomb's Bennington Study (1943), the theory explains that political orientations are not innate but are learned and continuously shaped by social experiences. In the context of this study, students' historical awareness encompassing knowledge of historical figures, events, and contributions is largely formed through formal education and exposure to social and digital

information environments. This framework helps explain variations in students' political decision-making processes particularly why those with stronger historical grounding tend to exhibit more critical and informed political choices, while those primarily influenced by peer groups or social media may be susceptible to personality-driven or superficial political judgments. Political Socialization Theory highlights the crucial role of education in transmitting accurate historical knowledge, countering misinformation, and fostering political maturity by situating historical awareness within broader political culture. As a result, this strengthens history education and civic discourse becomes essential in promoting informed, reflective, and responsible democratic participation among students.

**Cognitive Development Theory.** Cognitive Development Theory, proposed by Jean Piaget in the mid-20th century and later expanded by Lawrence Kohlberg in 1958 through his stages of moral development, explains how individuals progress in their ability to think critically, reason logically, and make ethical judgments. It is significant to the study because historical awareness requires higher-order thinking skills students must not only recall facts but also interpret their meaning and relevance to current political contexts. It shows that students with advanced cognitive skills are better able to critically evaluate historical figures, events, and contributions and apply these lessons in their political decision-making. It contributes to the body of knowledge by linking historical awareness to intellectual and moral growth emphasizing the need for interactive and analytical teaching methods rather than rote memorization. This implies that fostering cognitive development through history education enhances rational and ethical political choices strengthening democratic governance.

Cognitive Development Theory, as advanced by Jean Piaget and later expanded by Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development, offers a critical explanatory framework for understanding how students' intellectual and moral capacities influence their political decision-making. The theory posits that individuals progressively develop higher-order thinking skills, including logical reasoning, critical analysis, and ethical judgment, which are essential for transforming historical knowledge into meaningful political insight. In the context of this study, historical awareness requires more than factual recall, it demands the cognitive ability to interpret historical figures, events, and contributions and assess their relevance to contemporary political contexts. Students with more advanced cognitive development are therefore better equipped to evaluate competing political narratives, recognize ethical implications, and apply historical lessons in making informed political choices. Cognitive Development Theory highlights the importance of interactive, analytical, and reflective history instruction over rote memorization by linking historical awareness to both cognitive and moral growth. This synthesis highlights that fostering cognitive development through effective history education enhances rational, ethical, and responsible political decision-making contributing to stronger democratic engagement.

## Statement of the Problem

The study aims to determine the students level of historical awareness of the and its relationship with their political decision-making process at the University of the Visayas – Main Campus during the academic year 2025 – 2026.

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of historical awareness of the students in terms of:
  - 1.1 historical figures;
  - 1.2 historical contributions; and
  - 1.3 historical events?
2. What is the level of the decision-making process of the students in terms of their political choices?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of historical awareness of the students and their political decision-making process?
4. Based on the findings of the study, what interactive history teaching materials maybe developed?

## Statement of the Null Hypothesis

At 0.05 level, the hypothesis was tested:

Ho1: There was no significant relationship between the level of historical awareness of the students and their political decision-making process.

## METHODOLOGY

### Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design in its attempt to describe and determine the relationship between historical awareness and the political decision-making process of university students at the University of the Visayas – Main Campus for the academic year 2025–2026. In a descriptive-correlational study, the variables are first described individually, and then the strength and direction of the associations between and among them are statistically assessed. Specifically, the study examined the level of historical awareness of students in terms of historical figures, historical events, and historical contributions, and how these dimensions relate to their political decision-making process, which includes evaluating information, weighing alternatives, and making political choices.

This study employed a descriptive-correlational approach within a quantitative research design. The use of a quantitative design is appropriate because it allows for the systematic measurement and statistical analysis of the variables involved, including the extent of students' historical awareness and the nature of their political decision-making. It also enabled the generation of numerical data that can be used to determine the significance and strength of the relationship between these variables. Furthermore, the study aimed to produce an output in the form of interactive history teaching material, based on the findings, to enhance students' historical awareness and support informed political engagement.

### Participants

The participants of this study were the university students from different programs namely Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Bachelor of Arts in Communication, Bachelor of Sciences in Biology, and Bachelor of Science in Psychology in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS).

**Sample size and sampling.** Out of 195, a sample of 130 was considered as the participants of the study using Raosoft sample size calculator with a varying allocation of students per college department (See table 1). To effectively gather the students, stratified sampling technique was used provided that they will be qualified as participants based on the criteria set for the study

**Table 1 Distribution of the Participants**

| College Departments                       | Population | Sample Size | Percentage  |
|-------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Bachelor of Arts in Political Science     | 33         | 22          | 16.92%      |
| Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies | 10         | 7           | 5.39%       |
| Bachelor of Science in Biology            | 12         | 8           | 6.15%       |
| Bachelor of Science in Psychology         | 140        | 93          | 71.54%      |
| Total                                     | <b>195</b> | <b>130</b>  | <b>100%</b> |

**Inclusion Criteria.** The participants were selected based on the following criteria: 1) they belong to either of the four programs in the College of Arts & Sciences, regardless of age and gender; 2) they are currently enrolled in the second semester for the academic year 2025 – 2026; 3) they were willing to participate in the study; and 4) they have signed the informed consent.

**Exclusion Criteria.** There were other college departments that were not included in this study. These are the College of Education (COED), College of Maritime Education (COME), College of Criminal Justice (COCJ), College of Engineering Technology and Architecture (CETA), College of Allied Health and Sciences (CAHS), College of Business Administration (CBA), and Gullas Law School

## Data Gathering Tools

The main instruments for this study was a researcher-made questionnaire assessing the level of historical awareness of the students in three domains namely: historical figures, historical contributions, and historical events. It also examined the extent of their political decision-making process. The final survey questionnaire will undergo content and face validation and as well as reliability testing. The research instrument was put through face and content validation process by a jury of three specialists who hold masters/and doctoral degrees using Good and Scates validation instrument. The researcher-made questionnaire was valid since the result obtained was 4.78 and interpreted as excellent. It was also subjected to reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha Formula. Both the computer value and internal consistency interpretation were presented to ensure that instruments are reliable for the conduct of the study. The results obtained were 0.91, 0.90, 0.92, and 0.90 interpreted as excellent.

Each student was evaluated based on the following scale:

**Table 2. Instrument parameter scale**

| Scale | Response          | Ranges of Mean | Interpretation   |
|-------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 5     | Strongly Agree    | 4.21 – 5.00    | Highly Aware     |
| 4     | Agree             | 3.41 – 4.20    | Aware            |
| 3     | Somewhat Agree    | 2.61 – 3.40    | Moderately Aware |
| 2     | Disagree          | 1.81 – 2.60    | Slightly Aware   |
| 1     | Strongly Disagree | 1.00 – 1.80    | Not Aware        |

## Data Gathering Procedure

**Pre-data gathering.** In preparation for data collection, the researchers followed a series of systematic procedures. Initially, they will address the comments and suggestions provided by the panelists during the design hearing. Following this feedback, the researchers sought ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee (REC). After all necessary approvals will be obtained, the REC will review the ethical considerations of the study before granting a Notice to Proceed (NTP). With the NTP in hand, the researchers will submit a formal letter to the Dean of College of Arts and Sciences, will endorsed by her adviser and by the Dean of the Graduate School of Education of the University of the Visayas and waited for approval.

**Actual Data Gathering.** On the day of data collection, the researchers explained the purpose and mechanics of the survey to ensure that respondents understood the process. Subsequently, they administered the survey questionnaire to each participant through google form via messenger or email. Data on level of historical awareness and its relationship on their political decision making process will be collected through a standardized questionnaire

**Post Data Gathering.** After data collection, the gathered information was compiled, tallied, tabulated, and statistically analyzed. The data was encoded on a secured computer system protected by a password, ensuring that only authorized personnel had access. The data was disposed of following the publication of the study in an accredited journal or after one year.

## Data Analysis

With the data that was analyzed through statistical tools, specifically the IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). For the level of the historical awareness of the students, descriptive statistics was used, specifically the mean and standard deviation. To find out the extent of their political decision-making process, descriptive statistics was used, specifically the mean and standard deviation. Lastly, in order to find out the correlation between the level of students' historical awareness and its effect on their political decision-making process, pearson's r was used provided that the data distribution is normal. After the processing, interpretation, and analysis of data, the recommendations and instructional learning material was created.

## Ethical Consideration

The study was conducted according to the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki. It has been approved following the protocol of the Research and Ethics Committee of the University of the Visayas with Reference No. 2026-0245 dated May 15, 2026. The research involved university students participating voluntarily in an online survey. Before completion of the questionnaires, an accompanying cover letter explained the confidentiality and purpose of the study, the potential objectives, and the voluntary participation. No financial incentives were provided for participating in the study. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter contains the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the relationship between the level of historical awareness and the political decision-making process of university students at the University of the Visayas – Main Campus.

### Level of Historical Awareness of the Students

The table below shows as to what level of historical awareness of the students using weighted mean and standard deviation with verbal interpretation

**Table 3. Level of historical awareness of the students in terms of historical figures**

| Indicator                                                                                                   | Mean | SD   | Verbal Description |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|--------------------|
| 1. I recognize José Rizal's writings as influential in shaping Filipino nationalism and political identity. | 4.42 | 0.91 | Highly Aware       |
| 2. I value Andres Bonifacio's leadership in the Katipunan as a symbol of resistance against oppression.     | 3.76 | 1.65 | Aware              |
| 3. I understand Emilio Aguinaldo's role in declaring Philippine independence and its impact on governance.  | 4.47 | 0.73 | Highly Aware       |
| 4. I appreciate Apolinario Mabini's contributions as a political thinker in guiding democratic principles.  | 4.42 | 0.76 | Highly Aware       |
| 5. I acknowledge Gabriela Silang's leadership as an inspiration for cultural identity and freedom.          | 4.66 | 0.71 | Highly M Aware     |
| Total                                                                                                       | 4.34 | 0.95 | Highly Aware       |

*Note. 4.21-5.00-Highly Aware; 3.41-4.20-Aware; 2.61-3.40-Moderately Aware; 1.81-2.60-Slightly Aware; 1.00-1.80-Not Aware at All*

The results of this study reveal a consistently high level of historical awareness among students in terms of major Filipino historical figures. The overall mean of 4.34 falls within the Highly Aware range, indicating that students possess strong recognition and understanding of the contributions of these figures to Philippine history and national identity. Notably, the highest indicator, with a mean of 4.66, shows that students are particularly aware of Gabriela Silang's leadership, highlighting her importance as an inspiration for cultural identity and freedom. Other indicators, such as the contributions of Emilio Aguinaldo, José Rizal, and Apolinario Mabini, also received high mean scores such as 4.42 and 4.47 reflecting consistent awareness of their roles in shaping nationalism and governance. In contrast, the lowest mean of 3.76 indicates that students are comparatively less aware of Andres Bonifacio's leadership in the Katipunan, although it still falls within the Aware category. This suggests that while students generally recognize his contributions, their level of understanding is less pronounced compared to other historical figures.

The findings of this study are supported by several related literature emphasizing the role of historical awareness in shaping national identity and critical thinking among learners. Van Drield et al. (2024) argues that historical understanding involves recognizing the significance of key figures and their contributions which explains the high level of awareness shown by students toward Rizal, Aguinaldo, and Mabini. Similarly, Bleeze (2024) emphasizes that an appreciation of historical personalities strengthens national consciousness, helping learners

connect past events with present realities. Furthermore, Stelios and Marina (2026) highlight that engagement with historical narratives fosters emotional connection and civic understanding which may account for the particularly high awareness of Gabriela Silang as a symbol of resistance and identity among students. These perspectives support the study's conclusion that students demonstrate a strong grasp of major historical figures and their importance in nation-building.

However, the results also reflect findings from other studies that point to uneven historical understanding among students. Barnard (1997) explains that history education in the Philippines often emphasizes selected national heroes which can lead to deeper knowledge of some figures while others receive less attention. This is evident in the relatively lower awareness of Andres Bonifacio compared to other figures. Additionally, Stelios and Marina (2026) notes that inconsistencies in curriculum delivery and teaching strategies can contribute to variations in students' comprehension of historical roles. These studies suggest that while overall awareness is high, there is a need for a more balanced and inclusive approach in teaching history. Strengthening the representation of all key figures and improving instructional strategies can help ensure a more comprehensive understanding of Philippine history among students.

The findings of this study imply that while students demonstrate a strong level of historical awareness, there is a need to further enhance instructional approaches to achieve a more balanced and inclusive understanding of all significant historical figures. Educators should place equal emphasis on both well-known and less-highlighted personalities to deepen students' appreciation of the diverse contributions that shaped Philippine history. Integrating more engaging and critical learning strategies, such as discussion, reflection, and contextual analysis, may help address existing gaps in awareness. In conclusion, although the overall level of historical awareness among students is highly commendable, continuous efforts in improving curriculum design and teaching practices are essential to foster a more comprehensive, critical, and meaningful engagement with history that can strengthen national identity and civic responsibility.

**Table 4. Level of historical awareness of the students in terms of historical contributions**

| Indicator                                                                                                | Mean | SD   | Verbal Description |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|--------------------|
| 6. I recognize the Malolos Constitution as a foundation for democratic governance in the Philippines.    | 4.48 | 0.99 | Highly Aware       |
| 7. I value the EDSA People Power Revolution for restoring democracy and influencing civic participation. | 4.44 | 0.75 | Highly Aware       |
| 8. I understand the Philippine Revolution of 1896 as a turning point in achieving national identity.     | 4.56 | 0.60 | Highly Aware       |
| 9. I appreciate the contributions of Filipino leaders in advancing education and social reforms.         | 4.09 | 1.00 | Aware              |
| 10. I acknowledge the Commonwealth era as crucial in preparing Filipinos for self-governance.            | 4.04 | 1.14 | Aware              |
| Total                                                                                                    | 4.32 | 0.90 | Highly Aware       |

*Note. 4.21-5.00-Highly Aware; 3.41-4.20-Aware; 2.61-3.40-Moderately Aware; 1.81-2.60-Slightly Aware; 1.00-1.80-Not Aware at All*

The results of this study reveal a generally high level of historical awareness among students in terms of significant historical contributions in the Philippines. The overall mean of 4.32 falls within the Highly Aware range indicating that students possess a strong understanding of major historical events and their importance in shaping the nation's development. Notably, the highest indicator, with a mean of 4.56, shows that students are highly aware of the Philippine Revolution of 1896 as a turning point in achieving national identity, highlighting its significance in fostering a sense of nationalism. Other indicators, such as recognition of the Malolos Constitution with a mean of 4.48 and the EDSA People Power Revolution with a mean of 4.44 also fall within the Highly Aware category reflecting students' strong awareness of events that contributed to democratic governance and civic participation. In contrast, the lowest mean scores were recorded for the appreciation of Filipino leaders' contributions to education and social reforms (Mean = 4.09) and acknowledgment of the Commonwealth era (Mean = 4.04) both interpreted as Aware. Although these still indicate a positive level of

awareness, they are comparatively lower than the other indicators, suggesting that students may have less in-depth understanding or exposure to these aspects of Philippine history. The pattern observed in the mean scores highlights that students are more aware of revolutionary and political milestones than developmental or institutional contributions.

The findings of this study are supported by several related literature and studies that emphasize the importance of understanding historical contributions in developing national identity and civic awareness. According to Stelios and Marina (2026), historical understanding is strengthened when learners recognize the significance of major events, such as revolutions and constitutional developments which explains the high awareness of the Philippine Revolution of 1896, the Malolos Constitution, and the EDSA People Power Revolution. Similarly, Achour and Alghamdi (2022) highlights that identifying key historical turning points enables students to connect past events with present democratic values reinforcing the strong awareness observed in politically significant contributions. Furthermore, Martell and Stevens (2020) argue that students engage more deeply with history when events are associated with major societal changes such as the restoration of democracy which may explain the consistent high scores in revolutionary and governance-related indicators.

However, the relatively lower awareness of contributions related to education, social reforms, and the Commonwealth era reflects concerns raised in other studies. Gadaza et al. (2025) notes that Philippine history education often prioritizes dramatic political events over developmental contributions, leading to gaps in understanding institutional progress and reforms. In addition, Stelios and Marina (2026) emphasizes that uneven curricular emphasis and teaching strategies can result in limited awareness of less highlighted historical periods. These findings suggest that while students demonstrate strong awareness of major political milestones, there is a need to enhance instruction on broader historical contributions. Strengthening the inclusion of social, educational, and institutional developments can help students achieve a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of Philippine history.

**Table 5. Level of historical awareness of the students in terms of historical events**

| Indicator                                                                                             | Mean | SD    | Verbal Description |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|--------------------|
| 11. I understand the impact of Spanish colonization on shaping Filipino society and governance.       | 4.65 | 0.74  | Highly Aware       |
| 12. I recognize the Philippine–American War as a struggle for independence and self-determination.    | 4.50 | 0.94  | Highly Aware       |
| 13. I value the lessons of Martial Law in protecting democracy and human rights today.                | 4.43 | 1.17  | Highly Aware       |
| 14. I appreciate the EDSA People Power Revolution as a defining moment in Filipino political culture. | 4.56 | 0.67  | Highly Aware       |
| 15. I believe World War II in the Philippines strengthened unity and resilience against oppression.   | 4.37 | 01.22 | Highly Aware       |
| Total                                                                                                 | 4.50 | 0.95  | Highly Aware       |

*Note. 4.21-5.00-Highly Aware; 3.41-4.20-Aware; 2.61-3.40-Moderately Aware; 1.81-2.60-Slightly Aware; 1.00-1.80-Not Aware at All*

The results of this study reveal a consistently high level of historical awareness among students in terms of significant historical events in the Philippines. The overall mean of 4.50 falls within the Highly Aware range, indicating that students possess a strong understanding of major events that shaped Filipino society, governance, and national identity. Notably, the highest indicator, with a mean of 4.65, shows that students are particularly aware of the impact of Spanish colonization on Filipino society and governance, highlighting its foundational role in shaping institutions and cultural identity. Other events such as the EDSA People Power Revolution with a mean of 4.56, the Philippine–American War with a mean =of 4.50, and the lessons of Martial Law (Mean = 4.43) also reflect high awareness demonstrating students’ recognition of struggles for independence, democracy, and human rights. Additionally, awareness of World War II with a mean score of 4.37 remains strong indicating appreciation of its role in fostering unity and resilience. The pattern in the mean scores suggests that students are highly aware of major historical events, particularly those related to colonization, conflict, and democratic

movements, reflecting a solid understanding of the historical experiences that shaped the nation.

The findings of this study are supported by several related literature and studies that highlight the importance of historical events in shaping students' understanding of national identity and civic values. According to Burgos-Videla et al. (2025), students develop deeper historical understanding when they engage with significant events that have shaped societal structures which explains the high awareness of Spanish colonization, the Philippine–American War, and World War II. Similarly, Stelion and Marina (2026) emphasizes that recognizing major turning points such as revolutions and political movements enables learners to connect past struggles with present democratic practices supporting the high awareness of the EDSA People Power Revolution and the lessons of Martial Law. Furthermore, Perrota et al. (2024) argue that historical empathy and engagement are strongest when students study events involving conflict, resistance, and social change, which are clearly reflected in the high scores for war, colonization, and political transition.

In addition, Philippine-based studies reinforce these findings. Rengganis et al. (2023) highlights that the teaching of major historical events, especially those related to colonization and democracy, plays a key role in strengthening patriotism and civic consciousness among students. Meanwhile, Gutek (2022) points out that educational emphasis on impactful national events contributes to higher awareness compared to less dramatic historical developments. These studies suggest that the consistently high level of awareness observed in the table is a result of the strong inclusion of these events in the curriculum and their relevance to contemporary societal issues. Overall, the literature supports the interpretation that students are highly aware of historical events particularly those that involve struggle, governance, and national transformation, as these experiences are central to understanding the Filipino identity and democratic values today.

### Decision-making Process of the Students in terms of their Political Choices

The table below shows the extent of the decision-making process of the students in terms of their political choices using weighted mean and standard deviation with verbal interpretation.

**Table 6. Extent of Political Decision-Making Process in terms of Political Choices**

| Indicator                                                                                             | Mean | SD   | Verbal Description |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|--------------------|
| 1. I consider the family background of a political candidate when making decisions.                   | 4.35 | 0.66 | Strongly Agree     |
| 2. I evaluate a candidate's educational attainment before supporting them.                            | 3.35 | 1.30 | Agree              |
| 3. I take into account the candidate's track record in public service.                                | 3.64 | 1.31 | Agree              |
| 4. I am influenced by the candidate's reputation and credibility in the community.                    | 4.45 | 0.77 | Strongly Agree     |
| 5. I weigh the candidate's leadership qualities and communication skills before deciding.             | 3.48 | 1.35 | Agree              |
| 6. I consider the candidate's political party affiliation when making my choice.                      | 3.66 | 1.23 | Agree              |
| 7. I am influenced by the candidate's platforms and proposed policies.                                | 3.55 | 1.01 | Agree              |
| 8. I take into account endorsements or recommendations from trusted individuals or groups.            | 3.87 | 1.20 | Agree              |
| 9. I evaluate the candidate's consistency between words and actions.                                  | 3.75 | 1.45 | Agree              |
| 10. I reflect on how the candidate's values align with my personal and family values before deciding. | 4.04 | 0.85 | Agree              |
| Total                                                                                                 | 3.81 | 1.11 | Agree              |

*Note. 4.21-5.00-Highly Decisive; 3.41-4.20-Decisive; 2.61-3.40-Moderately Decisive; 1.81-2.60-Slightly Decisive; 1.00-1.80-Not Decisive at All*

The results of this study reveal a generally moderate to high level of political decision-making among students in terms of their political choices. The overall mean of 3.81 indicates that students are aware and somewhat engaged in evaluating different factors when choosing political candidates. Notably, the highest indicators, with

means of 4.45 and 4.35, show that students are highly influenced by a candidate's reputation and credibility in the community and their family background, suggesting that personal image and social connections play a major role in their decision-making process. These findings indicate that students tend to rely on observable and socially recognized characteristics when forming political judgments. In contrast, lower mean scores such as 3.35 for evaluating a candidate's educational attainment and 3.48 for assessing leadership qualities and communication skills indicate that these more substantive criteria are considered less strongly, although still within the Aware level. Other important factors, such as platforms, track record, and policy proposals, also fall within moderate awareness, suggesting that while students do consider them, they are not the primary bases for decision-making. The pattern observed in the mean scores highlights that students' political choices are more influenced by personal and relational factors rather than policy-based evaluation.

The findings of this study are supported by several related literature and studies that explain how individuals make political decisions based on both personal perceptions and social influences. According to Budge et al. (2024), political choice is often shaped by long-standing social factors such as family background, party identification, and candidate image which aligns with the study's result showing that students are highly influenced by a candidate's family background and community reputation. Similarly, Indryani et al. (2025) argue that interpersonal influence and social networks play a crucial role in shaping voter behavior explaining why endorsements and recommendations are important considerations among students. In addition, Bernhard and Freeder (2020) posits that voters use limited information and tend to rely on simplified cues, such as credibility and familiarity which supports the finding that reputation carries more weight than technical aspects like education or policy platforms.

On the other hand, the relatively lower emphasis on evaluating candidates' educational background, platforms, and leadership qualities reflects concerns raised in more contemporary studies. Malik (2021) notes that modern voters, especially younger citizens, often demonstrate lower levels of critical engagement in policy-based evaluation, instead relying on image and personality-driven factors. In the Philippine context, Macalawi and Motalib (2025) highlights how patronage politics and personality-based campaigns influence voter preferences, often overshadowing issue-based decision-making. Furthermore, Teehankee and Kasuya (2020) emphasize that weak political party systems in the Philippines contribute to voters focusing more on individual candidates rather than their platforms or ideological positions. These studies suggest that while students are aware of multiple factors in political decision-making, their choices are still largely influenced by social, relational, and perceptual elements rather than critical evaluation of qualifications and policies.

### Relationship between the Level of Historical Awareness of the Students and their Political Decision-Making Process

The table below shows the significant relationship between the level of historical awareness of the students and their political decision-making process using pearson's r with verbal interpretation.

**Table 7. Relationship Between The Level of Historical Awareness of the Students and their Political Decision-Making Process**

| Variables                                                         | r -value | Strength of Correlation   | p - value | Decision  | Remarks     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Historical Awareness and Political Decision-Making Process        | 0.219    | Weak Positive Correlation | 0.002     | Reject Ho | Significant |
| <i>Note. Significant at <math>p &lt; 0.05</math> (two-tailed)</i> |          |                           |           |           |             |

The table indicates a positive relationship between the level of historical awareness of the students and their political decision-making process, with a correlation coefficient of 0.219 interpreted in the study as strongly positive and a p-value of 0.02, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This suggests that the observed relationship is statistically significant and not due to chance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Based on this interpretation, higher levels of historical awareness among students are associated with stronger or more engaged political decision-making processes. As a consequence, the findings imply that as students become more knowledgeable about historical events, figures, and contributions, they are more likely to apply this knowledge

in evaluating political choices. This relationship suggests that historical awareness plays a role in shaping political thinking, potentially helping students develop more informed perspectives when assessing candidates and issues. Therefore, strengthening historical awareness through education may contribute to improving the quality of students' political decision-making, as it provides them with the necessary context and critical understanding to engage more meaningfully in democratic processes.

The findings of this study are supported by several related literature emphasizing the role of historical awareness in shaping political behavior and civic engagement. For instance, Achour and Alghamdi (2022) argues that a strong understanding of history enables individuals to critically analyze present-day political issues suggesting that students who are historically aware are more likely to engage meaningfully in political decision-making. Similarly, Bleeze (2024) highlights that historical consciousness fosters informed citizenship allowing individuals to connect past experiences with current political realities. This supports the interpretation that students with higher historical awareness may demonstrate more thoughtful and engaged decision-making processes. In addition, LeCompte et al. (2020) emphasize that historical learning develops civic competence, enabling students to evaluate leadership and governance more critically. These perspectives align with the study's implication that historical awareness contributes positively to how students approach political choices.

Furthermore, other studies reinforce the connection between knowledge and political participation. Chen and Madni (2024) explains that increased political knowledge, including historical understanding, enhances civic engagement and democratic participation, which can explain the observed positive relationship. In the Philippine context, Dimalig and Lomarda (2025) notes that teaching national history strengthens political awareness and national identity encouraging students to become more active in democratic processes. However, despite the positive relationship, the weak strength of correlation suggests that historical awareness alone is insufficient. Anastacio and Morandarte (2023) argue that political behavior in the Philippines is also shaped by social networks, patronage systems, and personal influences, which may limit the impact of historical knowledge. Overall, these studies support the interpretation that while historical awareness plays a role in political decision-making, it operates alongside other social and cultural factors that significantly influence students' political choices.

The findings of this study imply that although there is a statistically significant relationship between students' historical awareness and their political decision-making process, the extremely weak and negative correlation suggests that historical knowledge alone is not sufficient to guide or improve informed political choices. This indicates a need for educators to go beyond teaching historical facts and instead integrate critical thinking, civic education, and values formation into the curriculum to strengthen students' ability to apply historical lessons in real-life political contexts. In conclusion, while historical awareness remains important in shaping students' understanding of society, it must be complemented with practical political literacy and analytical skills to effectively influence responsible and informed decision-making in democratic participation.

## CONCLUSION

The results indicated that students demonstrate a consistently high level of historical awareness across historical figures, contributions, and events indicating a strong understanding of the individuals and milestones that shaped Philippine history. However, despite this high level of awareness, the results from the political decision-making table show that choices of the students are only at a moderate level and are more influenced by personal, social, and perceptual factors such as reputation and family background rather than critical evaluation of policies, qualifications, and issues. Furthermore, it is indicated that increased knowledge of history does not necessarily translate into stronger or more informed political choices. Taken together, these findings imply that while students are knowledgeable about historical content, they may not effectively apply this knowledge in practical political contexts. Based on the findings, it is recommended that students are encouraged to go beyond memorizing historical facts and actively apply their knowledge in evaluating contemporary political issues and candidates. They should develop critical thinking by analyzing policies, leadership competencies, and governance track records rather than relying solely on reputation or social influence. Engaging in discussions, debates, and civic activities can also help strengthen their political awareness and responsibility as future voters. Instructors should integrate critical and analytical approaches in teaching history by linking past events with present-day political realities. They are encouraged to use interactive strategies such as case studies, simulations, and reflective

activities to help students understand how historical lessons can inform political decision-making and civic participation. Deans and Academic Administrators should support curriculum enhancement that emphasizes the integration of historical awareness, civic education, and political literacy. Providing training for instructors, promoting interdisciplinary programs, and encouraging research-based learning approaches can help strengthen students' ability to apply historical knowledge in real-life political contexts. Institutions should create opportunities for student engagement in democratic processes, such as forums, leadership programs, and voter education campaigns. These initiatives can help bridge the gap between knowledge and practice by encouraging students to actively participate in community and political activities. Policymakers should strengthen educational policies that promote civic education and media literacy, ensuring that students are equipped with the skills needed to critically evaluate political information. Programs that encourage transparent governance and youth participation can also help cultivate informed and responsible citizens. Future studies are encouraged to explore other variables that may influence political decision-making, such as social media exposure, family influence, and political education. Researchers may also conduct comparative or longitudinal studies to further examine how historical awareness can be effectively translated into informed civic behavior.

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