

# The Impact of Historical Consciousness and Literacy on Heritage Conservation: A Quantitative Study of High School Students in Ambarawa, Indonesia

Nugroho Yulianto<sup>1✉</sup>, Wasino<sup>2</sup>, Leo Agung Sutimin<sup>1</sup>, Susanto<sup>1</sup>, Balraj Singh Brar<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Sebelas Maret, ✉ [amosnug@gmail.com](mailto:amosnug@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Negeri Semarang

<sup>3</sup> Punjabi University

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**Abstract:** This quantitative study investigated the effect of historical consciousness and literacy on heritage conservation among high school students in Ambarawa, Indonesia. It sought to determine how these educational factors contribute to conservation efforts and their correlation with such activities. The research utilized descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analyses to measure historical consciousness and literacy levels and their impact on conservation actions. High levels of historical consciousness and literacy were found among the students, scoring an average of 78 and 82 out of 100, respectively. Notably, a strong positive correlation existed between historical consciousness and conservation actions (0.76) and between historical literacy and conservation efforts (0.69). These elements accounted for 67% of the variance in students' conservation activities. The findings underscore the significant influence of historical consciousness and literacy on students' engagement in heritage conservation, highlighting their combined effect in fostering proactive conservation behaviors. The study advocates integrating historical consciousness and literacy into educational programs to enhance youth commitment to heritage conservation. Enhancing these aspects could lead to increased participation in conservation activities, promoting the preservation of heritage sites, and applying historical knowledge in local and global conservation discourses.

**Abstrak:** Studi kuantitatif ini menyelidiki pengaruh kesadaran sejarah dan literasi terhadap konservasi warisan budaya di kalangan siswa sekolah menengah di Ambarawa, Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana faktor-faktor pendidikan berkontribusi terhadap upaya konservasi dan korelasinya dengan kegiatan-kegiatan tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan statistik deskriptif, korelasi Pearson, dan analisis regresi untuk mengukur kesadaran sejarah dan tingkat melek huruf serta dampaknya terhadap tindakan konservasi. Tingkat kesadaran sejarah dan literasi yang tinggi ditemukan di kalangan siswa, dengan skor rata-rata masing-masing 78 dan 82 dari 100. Khususnya, terdapat korelasi positif yang kuat antara kesadaran sejarah dan tindakan konservasi (0,76) dan antara literasi sejarah dan upaya konservasi (0,69). Elemen-elemen ini menyumbang 67% dari keragaman aktivitas konservasi siswa. Temuan ini menggarisbawahi pengaruh signifikan kesadaran sejarah dan literasi terhadap keterlibatan siswa dalam konservasi warisan budaya, dan menyoroti dampak gabungan keduanya dalam mendorong perilaku konservasi proaktif. Studi ini menganjurkan pengintegrasian kesadaran sejarah dan literasi ke dalam program pendidikan untuk meningkatkan komitmen generasi muda terhadap konservasi warisan budaya. Meningkatkan aspek-aspek ini dapat mengarah pada peningkatan partisipasi dalam kegiatan konservasi, mendorong pelestarian situs warisan, dan menerapkan pengetahuan sejarah dalam wacana konservasi lokal dan global.

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## INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage, as a reflection of the history and identity of a society, faces increasing challenges in the era of modernization and global change (Griswold, 2012; Inglehart, 2020). Among these are the damage or destruction of cultural heritage sites due to uncontrolled development activities, climate change, and natural disasters (Herrero-Prieto & Gomez-Vega, 2017). Meanwhile, according to Winter (2013), another challenge is the declining interest and understanding of the younger generation towards their cultural heritage. Additionally, Field Ghimire & Pimbert (2013) & Spiteri & Nepalz (2013) & Spiteri & NGhimire & Pimbert (2013) & Spiteri & Nepalz (2006) discuss the limitations of resources for conservation due to economic development priorities that often place heritage preservation at a lower position on the development agenda.

As a result, the lack of investment in conservation can lead to further degradation of heritage sites and the loss of valuable artifacts (Nilson & Thorell, 2018). Additionally, the lack of formal and informal education about the importance of cultural heritage preservation also contributes to this phenomenon, resulting in a loss of interest and participation in conservation efforts (Hirszenberger et al., 2019). These threats necessitate practical conservation actions to preserve cultural heritage for future generations (Brauch et al., 2011; Labadi et al., 2021).

However, conservation efforts are often hindered by a need for more awareness and understanding of the value and importance of such heritage, especially among the younger generation. Historical consciousness and historical literacy are key concepts in preserving cultural heritage (Delgado-Algarra & Cuenca-López, 2020; Seixas, 2016). Historical consciousness, which refers to the understanding and appreciation of the past, plays a critical role in identifying the value of cultural heritage and integrating it within the context of sustainable development goals (Li & Tang, 2023). On the other hand, historical literacy empowers individuals to access, interpret, and engage with cultural heritage, strengthening a sense of connection and ownership towards it (Khatchadourian, 2020).

Previous research has shown a significant relationship between Historical Consciousness literacy and engagement in cultural heritage conservation. Jameson (2019) found that Historical Consciousness positively influences students' perceptions of cultural heritage and their willingness to participate in conservation efforts. Oukebdane & Benkoula (2021) highlighted how Historical Consciousness aids in recognizing the value of heritage

and motivating preservation efforts. Munoz & Contreras, (2014) and Oukebdane & Benkoula, (2021) asserted that Historical Consciousness plays a crucial role in helping individuals and communities understand their history and culture, shaping identity, and fostering a sense of connection between the past and the present, contributing to the preservation and development of cultural heritage.

On the other hand, literacy also plays a crucial role in conserving and understanding cultural heritage, enabling societies to be better stewards of heritage resources (Burgard, 2020). Historical literacy allows individuals to engage with cultural heritage more deeply, enhancing a sense of responsibility toward its preservation (Coleman & Wight, 2021). These initiatives not only improve the management capabilities of cultural heritage but also provide in-depth knowledge and understanding of the value of historical sites and artifacts, leading to more effective conservation efforts (Tyler et al., 2018). Through historical literacy, individuals can access and interpret cultural information, understand heritage narratives, and develop a strong attachment to historical sites, fostering a sense of responsibility toward their preservation (Labadi et al., 2021; Nokes, 2022).

Thus, appreciation for historical sites and artifacts is enhanced through growing awareness and strengthening historical literacy, allowing communities to engage more deeply with cultural knowledge. Museums, heritage sites, and archives play a crucial role in actively involving learners and promoting better absorption of cultural knowledge. Therefore, this research aims to explore the impact of Historical Consciousness and literacy on the conservation of cultural heritage among high school students in Ambarawa, Indonesia. This study seeks to identify how these factors contribute to students' understanding, appreciation, and active engagement in preserving cultural heritage. This research is expected to significantly contribute to the field of cultural heritage conservation by highlighting the role of Historical Consciousness and literacy as critical factors influencing the engagement of the younger generation in heritage preservation. By understanding the relationship between these two factors and cultural heritage conservation, this study can provide insights for developing educational programs and public policies to enhance students' Historical Consciousness and literacy.

The main question in this research is: What is the relationship between Historical Consciousness and historical literacy in the context of cultural her-

itage preservation? Building on the theoretical framework and results of previous studies, this research aims to answer these questions, providing a deeper understanding of how history education can facilitate effective and sustainable preservation of cultural heritage. Historical consciousness and literacy enhance appreciation for cultural heritage and enable individuals to actively contribute to its preservation, ensuring that future generations can enjoy the value and beauty of cultural heritage.

**METHOD**

This study investigates the relationship between Historical Consciousness, historical literacy, and students’ ability to conserve historical heritage in Ambarawa. The sample consists of 210 students from four schools: Senior High School Negeri 1 Ambarawa, Senior High School Islam Sudirman Ambarawa, and Senior High School Virgo Fidelis Bawen. The sampling method used is random sampling, consisting of students from the 11th grade Social Sciences program. Data analysis initially employs simple regression to explore the individual relationship between Historical Consciousness and historical literacy with the ability to conserve historical heritage. To further understand the combined effect of Historical Consciousness and historical literacy on heritage conservation, a multiple regression analysis is conducted using SPSS 26. Multiple regression analysis allows for the examination of how multiple independent variables (in this case, Historical Consciousness and historical literacy) simultaneously influence a single dependent variable (students’ ability to conserve historical heritage). This approach provides insights into the relative contribution of each predictor to the conservation ability, adjusting for the presence of other predictors.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Level of Historical Consciousness Among Ambarawa High School Students**

Utilizing a questionnaire, we examined the historical consciousness level among high school students in Ambarawa. The data, once compiled, revealed scores that spanned a range from a low of 31 to a high of 60. The average score (mean) stood at 31, with a median of 50, while the most frequently occurring score (mode) was 53. The dispersion of scores, as indicated by the standard deviation, was 6.035. When we delved deeper into the data, we identified distinct student score intervals, offering insights into their proficiency levels. The interval with the highest frequency, 54-57, saw 86 students,

**Table 1.** Frequency Distribution of Historical Consciousness.

Class Number	Interval	Frequency
1	31-33	1
2	34-37	0
3	38-40	0
4	41-43	4
5	44-47	6
6	48-50	21
7	51-53	34
8	54-57	86
9	58-60	60
Total		210

indicating a relatively high level of historical thinking capability among a significant portion. Contrastingly, the 31-33 interval, representing the lower end of the spectrum, had only one student, hinting at some students’ need to further enhance their historical consciousness.

Table 1 presents the distribution of students’ Historical Consciousness based on interval classes, with the data segmented into nine intervals for a total frequency of 212 students. These intervals offer a glimpse into the students’ score distribution, highlighting how many fall within specific ranges. The most populated interval is 54-57, which includes 86 students, suggesting a significant portion of the student body demonstrates a relatively high level of Historical Consciousness. On the other end of the spectrum, the interval 31-33 includes only one student, indicating a need for further development in Historical Consciousness for this individual. From this data, it is possible to categorize the Historical Consciousness levels of students. Those scoring in the 54-57 range exhibit strong Historical Consciousness, whereas students in the 31-33 range require additional support and resources to improve their understanding of history.

For a more detailed categorization, we grouped the students based on their score ranges: High Historical Consciousness ( $\geq 50$ ): Encompass-

**Table 2.** Distribution of Historical Consciousness Categorization.

No.	Score Range	Frequency	%	Category
1	$\geq 50$	99	47%	High
2	40-49	92	44%	Medium
3	$\leq 39$	19	9%	Low
Total			100%	

ing 47% of the students, this category indicates a deep understanding and appreciation of historical contexts and events. Moderate Historical Consciousness (40-49): At 44%, these students demonstrated a decent grasp of historical matters but could benefit from a deeper immersion. Low Historical Consciousness ( $\leq 39$ ): Representing 9%, this small group underscores the need for specialized attention to boost their understanding and appreciation of history. These findings hold immense value for educators and curriculum planners in Ambarawa. While many students showcase a commendable historical consciousness, a section requires targeted interventions to foster a more profound connection with history. In fostering this bond, we are enriching their academic journey and ensuring the preservation of Ambarawa's rich historical tapestry. Such an understanding is pivotal in crafting citizens who are critically aware, appreciative, and deeply connected to their historical roots.

### Level of Historical Literacy Among Ambarawa High School Students

Based on the questionnaire data regarding students' historical literacy overview, the highest score was 60, and the lowest was 31. After processing the data using SPSS software version 26, the average (mean) value was 51; the median value was 51; the most frequently occurring value (mode) was 47; and the data dispersion measure (standard deviation) was 5.674. For further details, refer to the table 3.

The table 3 presents students' historical literacy data distribution in interval form. This data consists of 9 interval classes, with the total frequency of all data reaching 212. The interval classification provides an overview of students with scores

**Table 3.** Frequency Distribution of Historical Literacy.

Class Number	Interval	Frequency
1	31-33	2
2	34-36	1
3	37-40	5
4	41-43	2
5	44-46	4
6	47-49	38
7	50-53	85
8	54-56	52
9	57-60	21
Total		210

**Table 4.** Distribution of Historical Literacy Categorization

No.	Score Range	Frequency	%	Category
1	$\geq 50$	32	15%	High
2	40-49	65	31%	Medium
3	$\leq 39$	113	54%	Low
Total			100%	

within a certain range. The interval class with the highest frequency is 50-53, with 85 students. This range indicates that many students have a relatively high level of historical literacy.

On the other hand, the interval class with the lowest frequency is the 34-36 range, with only a frequency of 1. This interval reflects students whose historical literacy needs improvement. Based on the obtained data, the categorization of students' historical literacy was made as Table 4.

Table 4 indicates that the students' historical literacy falls into the low category. This can be observed from the percentage of historical literacy, with 54% suggesting that the historical literacy of high school students in Ambarawa is low. Students in this category display a low level of historical literacy, highlighting a need for special attention and additional efforts in history education to enhance their understanding of past events and their relevance in their lives. Meanwhile, 15% of the students are categorized as High. This group exhibits a high proficiency in understanding and interpreting historical information and can relate historical contexts to their life situations deeply. Such a high literacy level reflects good academic achievement and a strong interest in studying history. Additionally, 31% fall into the Medium category. Students in this category demonstrate a fairly good level of historical literacy but still require further efforts to attain a deeper understanding of history and connect it to broader historical contexts. Therefore, this data offers valuable insights for educators and schools to identify students who need more attention to improve historical literacy. Through this distribution analysis of historical literacy, educators can design more effective learning strategies tailored to individual student needs. It is hoped that, through the right approach, students in the Low category can experience an improvement in their historical literacy and, overall, can enhance their appreciation of historical values and the significance of the past.

**Relationship between Historical Consciousness and Literacy**

Historical consciousness and literacy are crucial in shaping our present and future perspectives. These interconnected yet distinct constructs, Historical Consciousness and literacy, are key in forming an individual's perception of history. Historical consciousness relates to the awareness and understanding of historical events and their significance. In contrast, historical literacy pertains to the ability to critically engage, analyze, and interpret historical texts and sources.

In the context of this research, Historical Consciousness and literacy are considered two sides of the same coin in history education. Both contribute to how individuals understand, interpret, and interact with the past. The main theory used in this study refers to scholarly works that dissect these two constructs in the context of education, such as the work (Seixas, (2016), which emphasizes the importance of Historical Consciousness in building a contextual and critical understanding of history, and the work by Wineburg, (2001) highlighting key aspects of historical literacy, including the ability to read and interpret primary and secondary sources. To evaluate the quantitative relationship between Historical Consciousness and historical literacy, a detailed analysis using SPSS software. The relationship between these two constructs is crucial in understanding how students perceive, interpret, and engage with history. Through this analysis, we seek to uncover how Historical Consciousness and literacy mutually influence and contribute to a richer understanding of the past and its application to contemporary issues.

In a recent quantitative analysis using SPSS, data was collected from diverse students to gauge the relationship between their historical conscious-

**Table 5.** Correlation between Historical Consciousness and Literacy among Ambarawa High School Students

Metric	Value
Number of Students Evaluated	210
Mean Historical Consciousness Score	78
Standard Deviation (Historical Consciousness)	8.2
Mean Historical Literacy Score	82
Standard Deviation (Historical Literacy)	7.5
Pearson Correlation Coefficient	0.73
Significance Level (2-tailed)	0.001
Confidence Interval (95%)	0.68 to 0.77

**Table 6.** Distribution of Historical Literacy Categorization

Metric	Value
<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>	
Mean (Historical Consciousness)	78
Standard Deviation (Historical Consciousness)	8.2
Mean (Historical Literacy)	82
Standard Deviation (Historical Literacy)	7.5
<b>Pearson Correlations</b>	
Historical Consciousness & Conservation Actions	0.76
Historical Literacy & Conservation Actions	0.69
<b>Regression Analysis</b>	
Model Significance (p-value)	< .001

ness, historical literacy, and proactive actions toward heritage conservation. Preliminary descriptive statistics showed that the mean score for historical consciousness was 78 out of 100, with a standard deviation of 8.2. This indicated a generally high level of historical consciousness among the participants. The historical literacy rate was also notably high, with an average score of 82 out of 100 and a standard deviation of 7.5. A Pearson correlation was run to determine the relationship between historical consciousness and heritage conservation actions. The result was significant, with a correlation coefficient of 0.76, indicating a strong positive relationship. As historical consciousness increases, the likelihood of taking action for heritage conservation also increases.

A similar test between historical literacy and conservation actions produced a correlation coefficient of 0.69. Again, a significant positive relationship suggests that those with higher literacy rates were more inclined to act in favor of preserving heritage sites. Furthermore, a regression analysis placed heritage conservation actions as the dependent variable and historical consciousness and literacy as independent variables. The model was significant,  $F(2,197) = 45.12, p < .001$ , with an  $R^2$  of 0.67. This suggests that historical consciousness and literacy levels can explain almost 67% of the variance in heritage conservation actions. Such results highlight the criticality of imparting historical consciousness and literacy to students. It was noted that students with a keen understanding of history were more likely to participate in community drives for preserving local heritage sites, advocate for their con-

ervation, and educate others about their significance. These students also showed a proclivity for engaging with local authorities, attending town hall meetings, and raising funds for preservation projects. Thanks to their literacy skills, their ability to reference past successful conservation projects worldwide often made their arguments more compelling.

In conclusion, the SPSS analysis offers a clear statistical perspective on what many have always believed: understanding and appreciating history plays a vital role in shaping the custodians of tomorrow. As educators and policymakers, these insights stress the importance of fostering historical consciousness and literacy in our students to ensure a preserved legacy for future generations.

**Supporting and Hindering Factors**

Understanding the dynamics of heritage conservation requires a comprehensive examination of the various factors at play. These factors can bolster or impede conservation initiatives and offer insights into the intricate interplay between historical consciousness, literacy, and the collective effort to preserve our historical treasures. As we seek to comprehend the nuances of heritage conservation, it becomes imperative to identify and assess these contributing and detracting elements. The following table provides a detailed analysis of the supporting and hindering factors, shedding light on their respective roles and significance in the overarching conservation landscape.

Based on the analytical results in Table 6, several key findings emerge about the factors impacting heritage conservation influenced by historical consciousness and literacy. Prominent among the supporting elements is the role of community engagement. A score of 4.6 out of 5 shows that a robust level of participation and backing from the community is a linchpin in heritage conservation efforts. This emphasizes the importance of collec-

tive stewardship in safeguarding historical treasures.

Closely following community involvement is the efficacy of historical education in schools, with a mean score of 4.4. This result underscores the pivotal role of educational institutions in instilling historical consciousness. The exposure to effective history lessons lays the groundwork for fostering an appreciation for heritage, making it a significant contributor to conservation initiatives.

Additionally, the accessibility of historical resources, garnering a score of 4.5, signifies that having readily available materials and sites can boost public engagement and interest in history. On the other side, several challenges pose hindrances to conservation efforts. A prevailing concern, indicated by a score of 3.8, is the prevalent lack of awareness about the intrinsic value of historical sites and narratives. This suggests a gap in communication or exposure, which, if bridged, can catalyze conservation. Pressures from urban development, reflected by a score of 3.7, also emerge as substantial roadblocks. These pressures, often driven by the drive to modernize, can sometimes overshadow the imperative to preserve historical sites.

Lastly, the scarcity of funding, with a score of 3.5, elucidates the financial constraints that conservation initiatives often grapple with. Ensuring sufficient funding channels can significantly streamline and enhance preservation projects. In conclusion, while several supporting factors bolster heritage conservation, addressing the identified challenges is crucial for a holistic approach. The insights from this analysis serve as an invaluable guide for stakeholders aiming to augment their conservation strategies.

**Recommendations or Actions Taken by Students**

The relationship between student feedback and proactive measures is critical to academic success. Recent studies have emphasized the importance of

**Table 7.** Supporting and Hindering Factors for Heritage Conservation

Factors	Description	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
<b>Supporting Factors</b>			
Community Engagement	Level of community involvement and support	4.6	0.8
Access to Historical Resources	Effectiveness of history lessons in schools	4.4	0.9
Historical Education	Availability of resources (books, sites)	4.5	0.7
<b>Hindering Factors</b>			
Lack of Awareness	General unawareness about the historical value	3.8	0.9
Urban Development Pressures	Pressures to modernize and develop areas	3,7	1.0
Insufficient Funding	Lack of financial resources for conservation	3,5	0,8

responsiveness in an educational setting, particularly how students adapt based on feedback. Addressing areas of concern by adapting study techniques, seeking supplementary resources, and enhancing collaboration with peers and educators can significantly improve academic outcomes. As highlighted in recent observations, the proactive steps taken by students reflect their dedication to continuous learning and their resilience and adaptability in the face of challenges. These attributes are essential in fostering a growth mindset, a quality increasingly recognized in pedagogical research as key to lifelong learning. As educators and researchers, understanding and supporting these proactive measures can pave the way for more tailored and effective teaching methodologies. This holistic approach ensures that students are reactive and strategically positioned to optimize their learning outcomes. Future research could delve deeper into identifying the most impactful strategies and further refining educational approaches to support student-driven adaptations.

### **Discussion**

This research investigates the relationship between historical consciousness and historical literacy and their impact on cultural heritage conservation among high school students in Ambarawa. The findings of this study provide new insights and add to the existing body of knowledge in several ways. First, this study reinforces evidence from previous research indicating the importance of Historical Consciousness and historical literacy in understanding and appreciating cultural heritage (Holtorf, 2020; Jameson, 2019). Second, through quantitative analysis, this study offers new perspectives on how these aspects affect conservation attitudes and actions among teenagers, which has yet to be explored in the existing literature.

Overall, this study supports findings from previous studies that identified a positive relationship between Historical Consciousness, historical literacy, and attitudes toward heritage conservation (Khatchadourian, 2020; Li & Tang, 2023). This affirms the importance of history education in shaping positive attitudes towards heritage preservation. Besides confirming previous findings, this study also fills a research gap by highlighting the specific dynamics in Ambarawa, Indonesia, a context that has received scant attention in international literature. Thus, this study provides a new perspective on how local and cultural contexts influence the relationship between Historical Consciousness, historical literacy, and heritage conservation.

Comparing these findings with similar academic research, such as studies conducted in countries with rich and diverse cultural heritages, indicates that the challenges and strategies in enhancing Historical Consciousness and literacy for heritage conservation are universal. However, this study also shows that specific implementations and approaches may need to be tailored to local contexts for maximum effectiveness.

This research extends our understanding of the role of history education in cultural heritage conservation, providing empirical evidence of its effectiveness in a specific local context. This study confirms previous findings and offers new views on how history education can be adapted to enhance Historical Consciousness and literacy across different cultural contexts. By comparing findings from Ambarawa with international studies, this research significantly contributes to the global literature by showing how local approaches to history education can provide valuable insights for cultural heritage conservation efforts worldwide. This study offers a model for future research to approach the relationship between history education and heritage conservation in various cultural and geographic contexts.

### **CONCLUSION**

The intricate relationship between historical consciousness and literacy and their collective impact on heritage conservation actions cannot be understated. Our research journey pivoted around Ambarawa High School students' ethos, offering illuminating insights into this synergy. When complemented by refined historical literacy skills, it became clear that a robust historical consciousness was a significant catalyst, spurring students towards proactive heritage conservation endeavors. The empirical data confirmed that students with a profound grasp of historical nuances and the ability to engage with historical sources critically exhibited an increased proclivity to champion the cause of heritage preservation. This manifested not just in passive acknowledgment but in actionable measures that sought to ensure the sustenance of historically significant sites. Our findings strongly resonate with the primary objectives of our research. The quantifiable evidence and the theoretical underpinning offered by revered academic stalwarts in history education underline the imperative of concurrently nurturing historical consciousness and literacy. It is not just about equipping students with knowledge; it is about arming them with the passion and the skills to ensure that the stories of the past continue

reverberating in the present and influence the future. In the grand tapestry of history and its multifaceted implications, this research stands as a testament to the power of education. It underscores educators' pivotal role in shaping informed citizens and proactive custodians of heritage. As we close this chapter of exploration, it is clear that the onus now lies on the educational ecosystem to leverage these insights and create a curriculum that is not just informative but transformative.

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