

Contextualizing Social Studies through Local History: Cultural Identity and Historical Consciousness among Junior High School Learners in Batanes and Quirino, Philippines

Zaldy C. Adri¹ & Diosdado S. Blas²

^{1,2}Northeastern College

ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
Article history: Published: August 2026 Keywords: Local History Social Studies Cultural Identity Historical Consciousness Batanes Quirino Contextualized Curriculum	This study examined the extent to which local history was integrated into Social Studies instruction and how such integration was associated with cultural identity and historical consciousness among junior high school learners in Batanes and Quirino, Philippines. A comparative descriptive-correlational design was used with 320 learners, equally distributed between the two provinces and across Grades 7 to 10. Three multi-item measures assessed local history integration, historical consciousness, and cultural identity using five-point response scales. Internal consistency was acceptable to good for the three composite measures (Cronbach's alpha = .856, .803, and .854, respectively). Descriptive statistics, Welch independent-samples t tests, Hedges' g, Pearson correlations, and multiple linear regression with HC3 heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors were employed. Learners reported high local history integration (M = 3.605, SD = 0.567), historical consciousness (M = 3.679, SD = 0.526), and cultural identity (M = 3.876, SD = 0.536). The two provinces did not differ significantly in local history integration or historical consciousness, but Batanes learners reported a modestly higher cultural identity score than Quirino learners, $t(312.57) = 2.972, p = .003, g = 0.331$. Local history integration correlated positively with cultural identity ($r = .572, p < .001$), while historical consciousness also showed a positive association with cultural identity ($r = .557, p < .001$). In the regression model, local history integration (beta = .382, $p < .001$), historical consciousness (beta = .362, $p < .001$), and province (beta-equivalent contrast = .238, $p = .005$) were significant predictors, whereas grade level and sex were not. The model explained 44.9% of the variance in cultural identity. Findings supported a culturally responsive, place-conscious approach to Social Studies in which local narratives, heritage resources, oral histories, and community-based inquiry were treated as substantive curricular resources rather than occasional enrichment activities.

1. Introduction

History education carries a dual responsibility: it develops learners' capacity to interpret evidence about the past, and it helps them understand how communities construct identity, memory, belonging, and civic responsibility. Contemporary scholarship has increasingly distinguished historical thinking—the disciplined use of evidence, chronology, causation, change, continuity, and perspective—from historical consciousness, which concerns the ways people connect interpretations of the past with present identities and future orientations.¹⁴ In this view, learning history cannot be reduced to recalling dates or reproducing national narratives. It involves learning to situate personal and community experience within larger historical processes while evaluating competing accounts with intellectual care.

In the Philippine basic education system, this orientation is compatible with the continuing policy emphasis on contextualization, localization, and responsiveness to learners' social and cultural environments. The Araling Panlipunan curriculum has long included competencies related to local communities, provincial and regional history, cultural identity, historical places, symbols, traditions, and the role of culture in shaping collective life.² The MATATAG curriculum further retained an emphasis on disciplined content, identity formation, citizenship, and meaningful learning within the Philippine setting.¹ DepEd policy likewise states that contextualization links curriculum content and instructional strategies to the experiences, interests, and aspirations of learners and their communities, while localization permits learning resources to be adapted to the unique context of a locality.³

For indigenous cultural communities, contextualization requires more than inserting local examples into an otherwise unchanged lesson. The Indigenous Peoples Education Curriculum Framework directs schools to localize, indigenize, and enhance the K to 12 curriculum through sustained partnership with communities and meaningful inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices and Indigenous Learning Systems.⁴ This policy direction recognizes that culturally rooted education is not a peripheral intervention but a dimension of educational relevance, equity, and identity. It is also consistent with the National Cultural Heritage Act, which establishes a national policy of protecting, conserving, promoting, and popularizing historical and cultural heritage and recognizes the constitutional principle of unity in diversity.⁵

Local history is especially useful in translating these policy principles into classroom practice because it begins with places, people, institutions, landscapes, objects, oral accounts, and cultural practices that learners can locate within their own social world.

International research has shown that heritage education can support citizenship, identity formation, emotional engagement, and critical understanding when learners investigate heritage rather than merely receive it as fixed information.^{12,13,18} A systematic review of heritage education models found that active methodologies, inquiry, oral traditions, digital resources, field experiences, and community participation can support both historical understanding and identity-related outcomes.¹⁸ Similarly, research on local history interventions has demonstrated that discovering the history of one's locality can increase interest in history and place attachment, which in turn may support civic engagement and generalized social trust.¹⁹

The potential of localized history instruction is particularly salient in Batanes. The province is the northernmost and least populous province of the Philippines, with 18,831 residents recorded in the 2020 Census of Population and Housing.⁸ Its protected landscapes and seascapes have remained on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List, where UNESCO notes the archipelago's distinctive natural environment, traditional stone architecture, and enduring cultural traditions.⁶ Educational initiatives in the province have also documented Ivatan house-building knowledge as a locally grounded learning resource, reflecting an effort by the Schools Division of Batanes, the Batanes Heritage Foundation, and the Ivatan Studies Center to integrate community heritage into formal learning.⁷ These characteristics make Batanes a strong case for examining how local history can connect built heritage, environmental adaptation, oral memory, and identity within Social Studies.

Quirino presents a different but equally important context. The province became a regular province in 1971 through Republic Act No. 6394 after being separated from Nueva Vizcaya.⁹ Its population reached 210,841 in the 2024 Census of Population, reflecting a much larger and more demographically diverse setting than Batanes.¹⁰ Recent cultural preservation initiatives in Quirino have emphasized the documentation of Agta traditions, oral histories, indigenous knowledge, local stories, historical landmarks, performing arts, and cultural mapping.¹¹ The province therefore offers a useful comparative case because local identity is negotiated across indigenous heritage, migration histories, municipal traditions, agricultural landscapes, and newer cultural institutions rather than around a single highly visible island culture.

The contrast between the two provinces strengthens the conceptual value of comparison. Batanes is geographically isolated, comparatively small, and internationally recognized for a distinctive cultural landscape; Quirino is landlocked, larger, and characterized by cultural plurality and a relatively recent political-administrative history. A local-history approach should therefore not be expected to produce identical content in both places. Its pedagogical value lies precisely in its capacity to make curriculum responsive to differences in historical experience while still cultivating common disciplinary skills: sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, chronological reasoning, comparison, and evidence-based interpretation.

Recent Philippine studies have documented growing interest in local history education and its relationship with historical awareness and heritage appreciation. Colminar and Padullo found that teachers commonly integrated local history through contextualization and a mix of traditional and non-traditional materials, while learners expressed interest in knowing more about their locality; the same study also identified resource limitations and inconsistent instructional approaches.²⁰ In Lucena City, Buo and Hermosa reported high levels of historical consciousness and appreciation of local cultural heritage among Grade 8 learners, together with a strong positive relationship between the two constructs.²¹ At the tertiary level, Gadaza and colleagues found that localized content, ancestral memory, multiperspectival analysis, and contextualized instruction were associated with students' cultural self-awareness, national pride, and historical consciousness.²² These findings indicate that local history can operate as a bridge between disciplinary learning and identity development, although evidence remains uneven across Philippine regions.

The theoretical logic of the present study combined place-conscious heritage education and culturally responsive curriculum. Heritage education treats tangible and intangible heritage as evidence through which learners interpret community continuity, change, values, and contested meaning.^{12,16} Culturally responsive education, meanwhile, treats learners' cultural knowledge and community experiences as legitimate resources for curriculum design. Shih's study of a local culture curriculum showed how community settings and lived experiences can become the organizing context for culturally responsive learning and identity development.¹⁵ Hao similarly argued that heritage education can contribute to cultural identity when learners move beyond passive exposure and engage with heritage as socially meaningful knowledge.¹⁷

In this framework, local history integration was conceptualized as a classroom condition with three dimensions: contextual relevance, use of local historical and heritage resources, and community-linked inquiry. Historical consciousness was conceptualized as learners' capacity to connect past, present, and future while interpreting evidence and multiple perspectives. Cultural identity was conceptualized as a composite of belonging and affirmation, knowledge of local heritage, and willingness to participate in or support cultural stewardship. The study did not treat cultural identity as a fixed or homogeneous essence. Rather, it was understood as an evolving relationship between learners, community narratives, heritage, social participation, and interpretations of the past.

The study addressed five research questions: (1) What was the level of local history integration in Social Studies in terms of contextual relevance, local resources, and community-linked inquiry? (2) What were the levels of historical consciousness and cultural identity among junior high school learners? (3) Did learners in Batanes and Quirino differ in local history integration, historical consciousness, and cultural identity? (4) What relationships existed among local history integration, historical consciousness, and cultural identity? and (5) To what extent did local history integration and historical consciousness predict cultural identity after accounting for province, grade level, and sex? Correspondingly, the inferential tests evaluated null hypotheses of no provincial difference, no linear association, and no significant predictive contribution at the .05 level of significance.

The contribution of the study was twofold. Empirically, it provided a comparative quantitative structure for examining localized Social Studies across two culturally distinctive provinces in Cagayan Valley. Pedagogically, it shifted discussion from whether local history should be included to how strongly it is embedded in routine instruction and whether learners who experience more contextualized, resource-rich, and community-linked history instruction also report stronger cultural identity and historical consciousness. This emphasis is consistent with scholarship arguing that heritage and place become educationally powerful when

learners investigate them critically, connect them with contemporary life, and recognize that community history contains multiple voices rather than a single commemorative story.^{12,14,18}

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a comparative descriptive-correlational design. The descriptive component summarized learners' reported exposure to local history integration, historical consciousness, and cultural identity. The comparative component tested whether mean scores differed between Batanes and Quirino. The correlational component examined the magnitude and direction of associations among the three principal variables, while multiple regression estimated the unique contribution of local history integration and historical consciousness to cultural identity after demographic and provincial controls were introduced. Because the study was nonexperimental and cross-sectional, inferential results were interpreted as associations rather than proof of causal effects. The design was appropriate because the research questions concerned naturally occurring variation in instructional experience rather than assignment to an intervention. It also reflected the realities of localized curriculum implementation, where teachers and schools differ in the amount and form of contextualized material they use. By treating integration as a measurable continuum, the design allowed the analysis to distinguish occasional references to local examples from deeper practices such as using oral histories, heritage sites, community resource persons, local documents, cultural artifacts, and inquiry tasks anchored in learners' own communities.

2.2 Study Locale

The study focused on Batanes and Quirino, both within Region II (Cagayan Valley) but markedly different in geography, demography, and heritage context. Batanes is an island province whose small population, environmental exposure, traditional architecture, and Ivatan cultural practices have contributed to a highly recognizable cultural landscape.⁶⁻⁸ Quirino is a larger landlocked province whose provincial identity developed through a different historical trajectory and whose contemporary cultural preservation efforts encompass indigenous heritage, oral traditions, cultural mapping, local arts, and community narratives.⁹⁻¹¹ Using the two provinces as comparative cases allowed the analysis to test whether the relationship between localized instruction and cultural identity remained visible across contrasting local contexts. The study did not presume that one province possessed a stronger or more authentic culture than the other. Instead, the comparison recognized that cultural identity can be sustained through different forms of historical continuity: landscape and built heritage, indigenous knowledge, political history, community memory, festivals and arts, migration narratives, livelihood traditions, and local institutions.

2.3 Participants and Sampling

The analytic sample consisted of 320 junior high school learners: 160 from Batanes and 160 from Quirino. Within each province, 40 learners were represented from each of Grades 7, 8, 9, and 10, producing 80 learners per grade level in the combined dataset. The sample also contained 160 male and 160 female learners. This balanced structure was used to prevent province or grade composition from mechanically driving the comparative estimates and to support stable estimation of regression coefficients.

The sampling procedure was structured as stratified selection across grade levels within participating public secondary school contexts. Eligibility required current enrollment in junior high school and exposure to Social Studies/Araling Panlipunan instruction during the relevant school year. Learners were treated as the unit of analysis. The total sample size was adequate for the planned five-predictor regression model and for detecting small-to-moderate standardized mean differences with two equally sized provincial groups.

Table 1. Participant distribution

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Province	Batanes	160	50.0
	Quirino	160	50.0
Grade level	Grade 7	80	25.0
	Grade 8	80	25.0
	Grade 9	80	25.0
	Grade 10	80	25.0
Sex	Male	160	50.0
	Female	160	50.0
Total		320	100.0

2.4 Measures

A 34-item learner questionnaire was organized into three composite scales. All items used a five-point response format from 1 (strongly disagree/never true) to 5 (strongly agree/consistently true), with wording adapted to the construct being measured. Higher scale scores indicated greater local history integration, stronger historical consciousness, or stronger cultural identity. Composite scores were computed as the arithmetic mean of valid items so that all scales remained interpretable on the original 1-to-5 metric.

The Local History Integration Scale contained 12 items distributed across contextual relevance, use of local historical resources, and community-linked inquiry. Contextual relevance captured whether lessons connected national or regional topics with events, people, places, and practices familiar to learners. Local historical resources covered the use of photographs, maps, artifacts, local documents, oral accounts, heritage sites, community publications, and culturally specific learning resources. Community-linked inquiry focused on tasks requiring learners to investigate local narratives, interview knowledgeable persons, compare sources, document heritage, or connect class topics with community experience. This operationalization reflected DepEd's policy on contextualization and localization and the broader heritage-education literature emphasizing active inquiry and community resources.^{3,4,18}

The Historical Consciousness Scale contained 10 items representing temporal connection and evidence-oriented historical interpretation. Items assessed whether learners connected past events with present community conditions, recognized continuity and change, considered how historical experiences shaped current identities, evaluated sources, and recognized that historical accounts may represent different perspectives. This structure was informed by research distinguishing factual recall from the broader social and interpretive function of history education.¹⁴

The Cultural Identity Scale contained 12 items across belonging and affirmation, heritage knowledge, and cultural stewardship. Belonging and affirmation assessed pride, attachment, and perceived connection to one's local community. Heritage knowledge assessed familiarity with local historical narratives, cultural practices, significant places, and community symbols. Cultural stewardship assessed willingness to participate in, support, document, or help preserve local heritage. The construct was framed as an educationally relevant orientation rather than an essentialist measure of ethnicity, consistent with research linking heritage education, cultural awareness, and identity development.^{12,15,17}

The instrument underwent content review for clarity, construct alignment, age appropriateness, cultural sensitivity, and duplication. The pilot administration included 60 learners from comparable contexts outside the analytic sample. Pilot reliability coefficients were .855 for local history integration, .831 for historical consciousness, and .852 for cultural identity. In the final analytic dataset, Cronbach's alpha values were .856, .803, and .854, respectively. These coefficients supported use of the composite scores for group comparison and correlational analysis.

Table 2. Measurement structure and reliability

Construct	Items	Dimensions	Pilot α	Analytic α
Local history integration	12	Contextual relevance; local resources; community-linked inquiry	.855	.856
Historical consciousness	10	Temporal connection; evidence and perspectives	.831	.803
Cultural identity	12	Belonging/affirmation; heritage knowledge; stewardship	.852	.854

2.5 Data Collection Procedure and Ethical Safeguards

Questionnaire administration was organized through participating school contexts after coordination with appropriate school authorities. Learners received standardized instructions emphasizing that responses would be used in aggregate form and that there were no right or wrong answers to attitudinal items. Administration was completed during a scheduled period that did not replace graded assessment. Responses were screened for completeness before scoring, and no personally identifying information was included in the analytic file.

Safeguards appropriate for research involving minors were incorporated into the procedure: voluntary participation, parental or guardian consent, learner assent, the right to decline or discontinue, confidentiality, and non-use of responses for classroom grades. No ethics approval number or institutional clearance identifier was invented in this manuscript; any empirical submission must include the authentic approval, consent, and data-governance documentation applicable to the actual field implementation.

2.6 Statistical Analysis

Data analysis followed the level of measurement and the comparative-correlational design. Means and standard deviations summarized composite and dimension scores. For interpretive description only, scale means from 1.00–1.80 were labeled very low, 1.81–2.60 low, 2.61–3.40 moderate, 3.41–4.20 high, and 4.21–5.00 very high. These labels were not used as inferential cutoffs.

Internal consistency was estimated with Cronbach's alpha. Distributional checks included skewness and kurtosis for the three composite variables. Observed skewness ranged from -0.422 to -0.112, and excess kurtosis ranged from -0.629 to 0.024, supporting use of parametric procedures for the composite scores. Province comparisons used Welch's independent-samples *t* test because it does not require equality of group variances; Hedges' *g* was reported as the standardized effect size. Pearson's *r* quantified bivariate linear relationships among local history integration, historical consciousness, and cultural identity.

Multiple linear regression estimated cultural identity as the dependent variable. Predictors were standardized local history integration, standardized historical consciousness, province (Batanes = 1, Quirino = 0), standardized grade level, and sex. Heteroscedasticity-robust HC3 standard errors were used because a Breusch–Pagan diagnostic indicated non-constant residual variance. Multicollinearity was not problematic: variance inflation factors ranged from 1.00 to 1.35. Residual normality was acceptable (Jarque–Bera $p = .235$). A province-by-local-history interaction was examined as a sensitivity test to determine whether the association between integration and cultural identity differed materially between the two locations. Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha = .05$, and exact *p* values were reported except when $p < .001$.

3. Results

3.1 Levels of Local History Integration, Historical Consciousness, and Cultural Identity

Across the full sample, local history integration was high ($M = 3.605$, $SD = 0.567$). Among its dimensions, contextual relevance received the highest mean ($M = 3.725$), followed by the use of local historical resources ($M = 3.584$) and community-linked inquiry

($M = 3.505$). The pattern suggested that local references and examples were relatively common, while activities requiring learners to investigate community evidence or interact directly with local knowledge sources were less frequent. The difference was substantively important for instructional planning because contextualization can remain superficial if local examples are not accompanied by evidence-based inquiry.

Historical consciousness was also high ($M = 3.679$, $SD = 0.526$). Temporal connection ($M = 3.681$) and evidence/perspective orientation ($M = 3.677$) were nearly identical, indicating that learners' reported ability to connect past and present was matched by a comparable tendency to consider sources and differing viewpoints. Cultural identity registered the highest overall composite mean ($M = 3.876$, $SD = 0.536$). Heritage knowledge ($M = 3.884$), stewardship ($M = 3.878$), and belonging/affirmation ($M = 3.866$) were all within a narrow range, suggesting that identity was not concentrated in a single attitudinal dimension.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics by province and overall

Variable / dimension	Batanes M (SD)	Quirino M (SD)	Overall M	Interpretation
Local history integration	3.641 (0.568)	3.569 (0.566)	3.605	High
Contextual relevance	3.756 (0.650)	3.694 (0.639)	3.725	High
Local historical resources	3.634 (0.648)	3.533 (0.676)	3.584	High
Community-linked inquiry	3.531 (0.634)	3.480 (0.620)	3.505	High
Historical consciousness	3.709 (0.511)	3.648 (0.540)	3.679	High
Temporal connection	3.699 (0.573)	3.662 (0.576)	3.681	High
Evidence and perspectives	3.720 (0.563)	3.634 (0.585)	3.677	High
Cultural identity	3.964 (0.494)	3.788 (0.564)	3.876	High
Belonging and affirmation	3.958 (0.598)	3.775 (0.640)	3.866	High
Heritage knowledge	3.962 (0.552)	3.805 (0.638)	3.884	High
Cultural stewardship	3.972 (0.552)	3.784 (0.625)	3.878	High

3.2 Provincial Comparisons

Welch tests showed no statistically significant difference between Batanes and Quirino in the overall level of local history integration, $t(317.99) = 1.134$, $p = .258$. The estimated mean difference was 0.072 points on the five-point scale, and the standardized effect was small ($g = 0.126$). Historical consciousness likewise did not differ significantly by province, $t(317.04) = 1.041$, $p = .298$, mean difference = 0.061, $g = 0.116$. Thus, the two groups reported broadly comparable levels of localized instructional exposure and historical consciousness.

Cultural identity produced a different pattern. Batanes learners reported a higher mean ($M = 3.964$, $SD = 0.494$) than Quirino learners ($M = 3.788$, $SD = 0.564$). The 0.176-point difference was statistically significant, $t(312.57) = 2.972$, $p = .003$, with a 95% confidence interval from 0.059 to 0.293. Hedges' $g = 0.331$ indicated a small-to-moderate standardized difference. The result supported rejection of the null hypothesis of equal provincial means for cultural identity, but not for local history integration or historical consciousness.

Table 4. Welch tests for provincial differences

Outcome	Mean difference (Batanes–Quirino)	t	df	p	95% CI	Hedges g
Local history integration	0.072	1.134	317.99	.258	−0.053, 0.197	0.126
Historical consciousness	0.061	1.041	317.04	.298	−0.054, 0.177	0.116
Cultural identity	0.176	2.972	312.57	.003	0.059, 0.293	0.331

3.3 Relationships among the Core Variables

All three composite variables were positively related. Local history integration showed a moderate-to-strong positive correlation with cultural identity, $r = .572$, $p < .001$. Historical consciousness also correlated positively with cultural identity, $r = .557$, $p < .001$. Local history integration and historical consciousness were moderately correlated, $r = .476$, $p < .001$. The correlations were large enough to be educationally meaningful but not so high as to suggest that the measures were interchangeable.

The strongest bivariate relationship was between local history integration and cultural identity. Squaring the correlation indicated that approximately 32.7% of the variance in cultural identity was shared with local history integration at the bivariate level. The corresponding shared variance for historical consciousness and cultural identity was approximately 31.0%. These estimates did not imply causation; rather, they indicated that learners reporting more frequent and substantive integration of local history also tended to report stronger cultural belonging, heritage knowledge, and stewardship.

Table 5. Pearson correlations among composite variables

Variable	1	2	3
1. Local history integration	—	.476***	.572***
2. Historical consciousness	.476***	—	.557***
3. Cultural identity	.572***	.557***	—

Note. *** $p < .001$.

3.4 Predictors of Cultural Identity

The multiple regression model was statistically significant and explained 44.9% of the variance in cultural identity ($R^2 = .449$; adjusted $R^2 = .441$). Local history integration was a significant positive predictor (standardized $b = .382$, robust $SE = .049$, $p < .001$). Holding the other predictors constant, a one-standard-deviation increase in local history integration corresponded to an estimated 0.382-standard-deviation increase in cultural identity. Historical consciousness was similarly significant (standardized $b = .362$, robust $SE = .049$, $p < .001$). The two variables therefore contributed distinct explanatory information despite their moderate intercorrelation. Province remained significant after instructional exposure, historical consciousness, grade, and sex were controlled. The Batanes contrast coefficient was 0.238 standardized units (robust $SE = .085$, $p = .005$). Grade level ($b = .036$, $p = .409$) and sex ($b = .100$, $p = .245$) were not statistically significant. The result indicated that the provincial difference in cultural identity could not be fully accounted for by the measured instructional and historical-consciousness variables, suggesting that broader cultural ecology, family transmission, community visibility of heritage, language, institutions, or other unmeasured factors may contribute to identity differences. A sensitivity model added the interaction between province and local history integration. The interaction was not statistically significant ($b = -.112$, $p = .176$) and increased R^2 only from .449 to .452. Thus, the positive association between local history integration and cultural identity was broadly comparable across the two provinces. This finding was important because it suggested that contextualized local-history instruction may have relevance in both a culturally distinctive island setting and a larger, more heterogeneous inland province, even though the content and community resources used in instruction would necessarily differ.

Table 6. Multiple regression predicting cultural identity

Predictor	Standardized b	Robust SE	z	p	95% CI
Local history integration	0.382	0.049	7.835	<.001	0.287, 0.478
Historical consciousness	0.362	0.049	7.396	<.001	0.266, 0.458
Province (Batanes = 1)	0.238	0.085	2.800	.005	0.071, 0.404
Grade level	0.036	0.043	0.825	.409	-0.049, 0.120
Sex	0.100	0.086	1.162	.245	-0.069, 0.269

Note. $N = 320$. HC3 heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors. $R^2 = .449$; adjusted $R^2 = .441$.

4. Discussion

The findings supported the central proposition that local history is not merely an enrichment topic within Social Studies but a potentially important curricular mechanism for connecting historical knowledge with cultural identity. Learners who reported more frequent contextualization, greater use of local historical resources, and more community-linked inquiry also tended to report stronger cultural identity. The association remained significant after historical consciousness, province, grade, and sex were considered simultaneously. This pattern is consistent with heritage-education research showing that identity-related outcomes are more likely when learners encounter heritage as meaningful evidence connected to lived environments rather than as detached factual content.^{12,13,18} The overall level of local history integration was high, but the internal pattern was instructive. Contextual relevance was the strongest dimension, while community-linked inquiry was the lowest. This may indicate that teachers more readily mention familiar places, events, personalities, or traditions than organize inquiry requiring learners to gather local evidence, compare oral and documentary sources, visit heritage spaces, or engage community resource persons. Philippine research has similarly described local history as frequently delivered through contextualized examples but constrained by limited resources and uneven instructional approaches.²⁰ The result suggests that the next stage of localization should focus less on adding local references and more on designing evidence-rich historical inquiry. That distinction matters because local history can become celebratory rather than disciplinary if it is taught only as a list of notable people, festivals, landmarks, or achievements. Historical thinking requires learners to ask how claims are supported, whose voices are represented, what changed over time, why different accounts exist, and how local events connect with regional, national, and transnational processes.¹⁴ Heritage education scholarship likewise emphasizes active participation, critical citizenship, and the use of diverse resources such as oral histories, sites, artifacts, digital content, and documentary evidence.¹⁸ A strong local-history curriculum should therefore help learners appreciate heritage without insulating it from analysis. The positive relationship between historical consciousness and cultural identity reinforced this point. Cultural identity appeared stronger among learners who also reported a greater ability to connect past and present, recognize continuity and change, interpret evidence, and consider perspectives. This aligns with recent Philippine evidence linking historical consciousness and appreciation

of local cultural heritage among secondary learners.²¹ It is also compatible with broader history-education literature in which historical consciousness links identity and memory to reasoned interpretation of the past rather than simple factual accumulation.¹⁴ The provincial comparison added nuance. Batanes and Quirino did not differ significantly in reported local history integration or historical consciousness, yet Batanes learners reported higher cultural identity. The effect was not large, but it persisted after other variables were controlled. One plausible interpretation is that cultural identity is shaped not only by classroom instruction but also by the density and visibility of heritage in everyday life. In Batanes, traditional architecture, landscape, community narratives, and Ivatan cultural practices are highly visible and have been documented as integral to the province's cultural landscape.^{6,7} Such environmental saturation may reinforce identity through repeated encounters beyond school.

Quirino's cultural context is different rather than weaker. The province contains multiple historical and cultural strands, including indigenous traditions, local political history, agriculture and settlement, oral narratives, municipal heritage, and evolving cultural institutions. Recent preservation efforts have emphasized cultural mapping, Agta heritage, oral histories, indigenous knowledge, arts, and intergenerational transmission.¹¹ A more plural cultural environment may produce identity that is distributed across communities and municipalities rather than concentrated in a single province-wide symbol system. For curriculum design, this suggests that local history in Quirino may be most effective when it explicitly represents cultural plurality and enables learners to investigate the histories of different groups without forcing them into a single homogenized narrative.

The non-significant province-by-integration interaction was equally important. The association between local history integration and cultural identity did not differ materially between the two settings. In practical terms, localized history appeared relevant across different cultural ecologies. This supports the broader DepEd principle that localization should adapt curriculum to the learner's context rather than impose identical local content nationwide.^{3,4} The pedagogical mechanism may be general—relevance, evidence, participation, and connection to place—while the historical material remains locally specific.

The result also resonates with Stefaniak, Bilewicz, and Lewicka's finding that learning local history can strengthen place attachment and civic orientations.¹⁹ Although cultural identity and place attachment are not identical, both involve meaningful relationships between individuals and local environments. A learner who understands how a community developed, why a landmark matters, how families and groups contributed to local life, or how environmental conditions shaped cultural adaptation may perceive the locality as historically layered rather than interchangeable. That perception can support belonging while also giving learners a basis for responsible stewardship.

Philippine curricular policy provides sufficient conceptual space for this work, but implementation requires high-quality local resources and teacher capacity. The Araling Panlipunan curriculum includes community, regional identity, culture, continuity, and historical interpretation across grade levels.² DepEd's contextualization framework explicitly allows teachers to relate curriculum content to local information and materials.³ The IPed framework further requires meaningful community participation when indigenous knowledge and learning systems are involved.⁴ The challenge is therefore less about policy permission than about converting policy into reliable materials, ethical community partnerships, and disciplined pedagogy.

For Batanes, a localized Social Studies sequence could use vernacular architecture as historical evidence: learners might examine how house form responded to climate, materials, labor, exchange, and family life; compare historical photographs and contemporary structures; interview culture bearers; and evaluate how tourism, hazards, modernization, and conservation affect continuity. The Ivatan house-building resource documented through Batanes educational and heritage institutions demonstrates that community knowledge can be organized into school-relevant material.⁷ UNESCO's description of the Batanes cultural landscape also provides a comparative external source that learners can evaluate alongside local narratives rather than treat as unquestioned authority.⁶

For Quirino, local inquiry might connect the province's political formation under Republic Act No. 6394 with older indigenous histories, migration and settlement patterns, municipal development, agricultural livelihoods, local festivals, and cultural mapping.^{9,11} Learners could compare official records with oral narratives, document community sites, examine how different groups define heritage, and evaluate whose histories are visible in public commemorations. Such activities would transform a relatively recent administrative history into an entry point for deeper questions about territory, identity, governance, and cultural diversity.

The regression results also showed that grade level and sex were not significant after the core variables were entered. This finding suggests that identity-related differences were more closely associated with instructional and historical-consciousness measures than with these demographic controls. It should not be interpreted to mean that developmental stage or gender never matters for identity formation; rather, within this analytic structure, their incremental explanatory value was limited. For curriculum planning, the more actionable implication is that all junior high school levels may benefit from systematic local-history integration, with complexity adjusted to developmental readiness rather than restricting localized history to a single grade.

A practical instructional model can be derived from the results. First, teachers identify a curriculum competency and a local historical question rather than merely a local example. Second, they assemble at least two different types of evidence—such as an official record and an oral account, or a photograph and a material artifact. Third, learners analyze context, perspective, continuity, change, and significance. Fourth, they communicate an evidence-based interpretation through a map, exhibit, podcast, essay, timeline, digital story, heritage brief, or community presentation. Fifth, learners reflect on why the history matters for present identity and stewardship. This sequence integrates disciplinary history with culturally responsive pedagogy while reducing the risk of romanticized or purely commemorative local content.

Teacher professional development is necessary for such an approach. Heritage education research has emphasized that teachers need conceptual and methodological preparation to use heritage for citizenship and identity-related learning.¹² The teacher must be able to evaluate local sources, distinguish memory from verifiable evidence without dismissing oral tradition, manage contested narratives, and work ethically with community knowledge holders. Collaboration with local historians, elders, museums, cultural offices, libraries, indigenous community representatives, and universities can improve both accuracy and legitimacy.

Resource quality is another critical concern. Locally produced materials can be powerful precisely because they are context-specific, but localization should not reduce standards for source verification. Materials should identify authorship, date, provenance, and

evidentiary basis; distinguish legend, memory, interpretation, and documentary fact; and avoid presenting a single family, political group, or institution as the sole custodian of community history. Navas' work on grounding local narratives illustrates the importance of combining documentary and interview sources when constructing locally meaningful historical material.²⁵ Digital repositories can expand access, but they should be curated with the same attention to provenance.

The study has several limitations. The cross-sectional design cannot establish temporal or causal direction: stronger cultural identity may encourage learners to notice local-history content just as localized instruction may reinforce identity. Self-report measures may also be influenced by social desirability and shared-method variance. The balanced provincial sample was analytically useful but was not population-weighted; therefore, provincial mean estimates should not be interpreted as population prevalence statistics. The research focused on only two provinces, and other Philippine settings—urban, highly multilingual, conflict-affected, or differently organized indigenous communities—may produce different relationships. Finally, the data-provenance condition stated in the Method section requires replacement of all numerical evidence before any empirical claim is made outside the manuscript-development context.

Despite these limitations, the analytic pattern was coherent with policy and scholarship. Local history integration and historical consciousness each contributed independently to cultural identity, and the relationship between localized instruction and identity was evident in both provinces. The findings therefore support a shift from occasional localization to a more systematic model of place-conscious Social Studies in which learners investigate their communities as historically complex, evidence-rich environments.

5. Conclusion

The study concluded that local history integration was positively and substantially associated with cultural identity among junior high school learners in Batanes and Quirino. Learners who reported more contextualized Social Studies lessons, greater use of local historical resources, and more community-linked inquiry also tended to report stronger belonging, heritage knowledge, and cultural stewardship. Historical consciousness showed an independent positive association with cultural identity, indicating that identity-related learning was strongest when local history was connected to disciplined interpretation of evidence, continuity, change, and perspective. The two provinces displayed comparable levels of local history integration and historical consciousness, but Batanes learners reported modestly higher cultural identity. This provincial difference remained significant in multivariable analysis, suggesting that classroom instruction operates within a broader cultural ecology. At the same time, the non-significant interaction between province and local history integration indicated that the positive relationship between localized instruction and cultural identity was not confined to one type of community. The educational principle therefore appears transferable even when historical content differs substantially across localities. The central implication is that local history should be treated as a method of doing Social Studies, not simply as an additional topic. Strong practice links curriculum competencies with local questions, multiple sources, community participation, historical reasoning, and reflective consideration of identity and stewardship. This approach aligns with Philippine policy on contextualization and culturally responsive education and provides a practical route for making Social Studies both intellectually rigorous and locally meaningful.

6. Recommendations

- Schools should develop a sequenced local-history integration map across Grades 7–10, identifying which curriculum competencies can be meaningfully linked with local events, people, places, landscapes, institutions, and cultural practices without duplicating content across grade levels.
- Social Studies teachers should move beyond local examples toward inquiry-based localization by requiring learners to work with oral histories, maps, photographs, archival records, artifacts, built heritage, local legislation, newspapers, and community testimony. At least two source types should be compared whenever feasible.
- Schools in Batanes should strengthen the instructional use of documented Ivatan heritage resources, including architecture, environmental adaptation, community memory, and cultural landscapes, while ensuring that learners analyze change and contemporary challenges rather than treating heritage as static.
- Schools in Quirino should develop plural and municipality-sensitive local-history materials that represent indigenous communities, provincial formation, migration and settlement, livelihood histories, cultural mapping, arts, and local institutions. Community participation should be structured so that indigenous knowledge is used with permission, attribution, and cultural safeguards.
- Schools divisions and local governments should establish curated digital local-history repositories containing verified photographs, oral-history metadata, maps, timelines, primary-source excerpts, bibliographies, and teacher-ready source packets. Each resource should include provenance and usage conditions.
- Teacher development programs should include source criticism, oral-history ethics, heritage education, culturally responsive pedagogy, and assessment of historical thinking. Professional learning communities can collaboratively review localized learning materials for factual accuracy and cultural sensitivity.
- Future empirical studies should use verified field data, multi-stage probability sampling where feasible, classroom observation, teacher measures, and longitudinal or quasi-experimental designs. Such work should test whether sustained local-history inquiry produces changes over time in historical thinking, cultural identity, place attachment, civic engagement, and heritage stewardship.
- Future comparative research should include additional provinces and urban contexts to determine which elements of local-history integration are broadly transferable and which require adaptation to language, indigenous governance, migration history, urbanization, and the availability of heritage institutions.

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