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Cultural Intelligence and Historical Thinking Skills among University Students

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ABSTRACT

In times of growing historical distortion and declining interest in the past, strong historical thinking skills have become essential. This study examined the level of cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills among university students. A total of 370 students from various academic colleges at the University of Mindanao were selected through stratified random sampling. A descriptive-correlational quantitative research design was used to determine the relationship between two variables, employing mean, standard deviation, and Spearman's rho for data analysis. Anchored in Social Cognitive Theory, the study explains how personal, behavioral, and environmental factors influence students' learning and development in both cultural and historical contexts. The findings revealed that students demonstrated high levels of both cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills. In terms of cultural intelligence, students exhibited a very high level of metacognitive skills and high levels of cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions, reflecting their ability to effectively interact in culturally diverse environments. Likewise, students showed high levels in historical thinking skills, particularly in time and chronology perception, as well as historical inquiry and historical empathy. Furthermore, a significant relationship was found between cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills, indicating that students who are more culturally aware tend to demonstrate deeper analytical, interpretative, and reflective abilities in understanding historical contexts. These results highlight the importance of strengthening both competencies in higher education to develop globally minded learners who are critical thinkers, culturally responsive, and capable of making informed judgments in diverse academic and real-world settings.

INTRODUCTION

In an era of historical misinterpretation and declining curiosity about the past, strong historical thinking skills have become increasingly important. Studies have shown challenges, such as in the study of Gentallan and Pandan (2024), wherein 426 education undergraduates scored an average of 3.7 out of 5 in Historical Thinking Skills. In Pandan *et al.* (2025), the study found that although 87% of students were good or excellent in inquiry skills, 61% were completely uninformed about major revolts in history, such as Tamblot and Dagohoy, and only 22% showed excellent knowledge.

International literature has revealed constant challenges in the development of students' Historical Thinking Skills. In Callaway's (2020) study on students' historical thinking across different year levels, it was found that students often rely on surface-level explanations and make only limited use of core disciplinary skills such as sourcing, corroboration, and contextualization when evaluating historical events like the Korean War. Also, Lee (2023) emphasized that even though the integration of Historical Thinking Skills under the KSSR curriculum seeks to reinforce the affective, psychomotor, and cognitive domains, gaps remain in the effective application of these skills because of inconsistencies in the implementation of students' instruction and students' limited expertise in historical thinking skills.

The study by Parada-Ulloa and Burgos-Videla (2025)

emphasized that traditional procedures in Social Science History education continue to reproduce dominant accounts, thereby restricting opportunities for deeper historical understanding and reflective thought among students. Abd Elsadek El Sharawy (2025) highlighted that Historical Thinking Skills are continually evolving and multifaceted, but chronological thinking remains a core skill for higher-order thought processes, such as examining and interpreting historical events. Studies have revealed that, while Historical Thinking Skills structures are progressively embedded in the curriculum, learners still face difficulties fully developing historical thinking skills, highlighting the need for powerful pedagogical aids and instructional strategies to foster more meaningful historical awareness and engagement with the past.

Historical thinking skills are important for developing learners' critical understanding of the past and their ability to evaluate information thoughtfully. The study by Candelaria (2023) emphasized that removing the Philippine History subject from the senior high school curriculum creates a six-year gap before students encounter the subject again, limiting learners' exposure to validation, sourcing, and historical framing. The study by Steven Pandan (2023) found that historical thinking skills enable learners to evaluate sources, differentiate perspectives, and make informed judgments, thereby promoting rational analysis and civic responsibility. According to Dizon (2020), effective history instruction

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relies on teaching approaches that support questioning and empathetic understanding, ensuring that learners analyze events and situations rather than simply memorizing information. This development is important for upholding the significance and vitality of history education in preparing learners for the difficulties and opportunities of the 21st-century world.

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) arises as a potential contributing factor in nurturing historical thinking skills. It is defined as the capability to function competently in diverse cultural settings (Ang *et al.*, 2007). Cultural intelligence encompasses metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions. According to Biay and Tenorio (2024), people with high cultural intelligence (CQ) show flexibility in adjusting to new cultures and perspective-taking, skills important for empathetic understanding. Aligned with Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, this explains the interaction between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors in learning. Therefore, students with strong cultural intelligence (CQ) are more likely to put historical actors into perspective and empathize more thoroughly with their viewpoints.

A study on cultural intelligence emphasized its significance in intercultural communication, teamwork, and education. The study of Alifuddin and Widodo (2022) revealed that learners with high cultural intelligence (CQ) show engagement in multicultural settings, adaptability, and reflection. In the Philippines, cultural intelligence has been connected to cross-cultural effectiveness and social integration (Salas & Hermosa, 2025). The metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions improve one's capability to explain and respond to cultural diversity. These skills mirror the cognitive and emotional processes required to develop historical thinking. Furthermore, the study of Wang and Zhang (2021) highlighted that cultural intelligence is increasingly significant in a globalized world, especially in supporting students' success in academics, effective communication, and execution in international learning environments.

The study of Da Silva Teixeira and Klein (2024) found that cultural intelligence evolves through active and hands-on learning, reinforcing students' comprehension of cultural norms and their capability to comprehend cultural diversity. Furthermore, Haikuo (2025) stated that cognitive cultural intelligence enhances multicultural proficiency and adaptation, emphasizing its role in effective functioning in diverse contexts. Urgan *et al.* (2025) have revealed that a cultural groundwork initiative will lead to advancement in cultural intelligence (CQ) and cultural proficiency.

The results also show that guided education is more effective in developing cognitive CQ. In contrast, experiential learning improves overall cultural intelligence, although findings on the motivational and behavioral dimensions remain contradictory. Meanwhile, Huang (2023) highlighted that incorporating cultural metacognition into the EFL curriculum strongly enhances learners' intercultural ability, particularly in affective,

metacognitive, and behavioral domains, by fostering careful thinking, self-understanding, and the ability to apply cultural understanding in diverse settings.

In the study by Meral and Karakus-Yilmaz (2022), historical thinking skills are assessed using three indicators: Time and Chronology Perception, Historical Inquiry, and Historical Empathy. Time and chronology perception help learners arrange historical events and comprehend their linkages. Historical inquiry involves evaluating sources, questioning them, and conducting evidence-based analysis. Historical empathy, on the other hand, enables learners to understand the point of view and inspirations of people in the past. Similarly, Lopez-Garcia (2023) noted that learners' ability to contextualize events, interpret primary and secondary sources, and produce narratives improves when experiential learning and technology are used. Both studies show that understanding time, asking questions, and showing empathy are important for strong historical thinking skills. Despite the growing discussion of historical thinking skills and cultural intelligence (CQ), few studies have examined their connection, particularly in the Philippine context. Given the country's multicultural climate and ongoing problems of historical misinterpretation and lack of interest in historical events, this gap needs immediate action. This study aims to determine the relationship between cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills among university students who have already completed the course Readings in Philippine History (GE8) at the University of Mindanao. It aims to evaluate the learners' level of cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills and to analyze whether cultural intelligence influences their growth and utilization of historical thinking skills.

The significance of this study aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 and 10. To be precise, it advocates SDG 4, which promotes comprehensive, just, and unbiased quality education for all, and SDG 10, which advocates reducing inequalities through multicultural consciousness and respect for each individual's uniqueness. This study is significant because it helps students look at the past with greater cultural awareness and understanding. By showcasing how cultural intelligence enhances historical thinking skills, it fosters a learning environment where learners can value the diverse perspectives and historical experiences that shape history. Globally, it contributes to the growing recognition of how intercultural competence enhances historical thinking. At the same time, this study socially addresses the need to combat misinformation and foster reflective and responsible citizenship among the youth.

The findings of this study will benefit the University of Mindanao Faculty by providing a basis for integrating cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills in history instruction. The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) guides the creation of student programs to promote cultural awareness and foster the application of historical thinking skills. ILUSSTRADO, the Official Academic Organization of BSED-Social Studies of the

University of Mindanao, by supporting its advocacy for intellectual and social development through historically grounded initiatives and activities, and the Department of Education and Commission on Higher Education, by offering insights for designing curricula that link cultural intelligence to deepen and support students' historical thinking skills.

Statement of the Problem

This study seeks to determine the level of cultural intelligence in terms of metacognitive CQ, cognitive CQ, motivational CQ, and behavioral CQ; Determine the level of historical thinking skills in terms of time and chronology perception, historical inquiry, and historical empathy; and determine the significant relationship between cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills. Lastly, this study hypothesizes that there is no significant relationship between cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Respondents

There were 9,319 students for the second semester of the academic year 2025-2026 from the College of Arts and Sciences Education (CASE), College of Computing Education (CCE), College of Criminal Justice Education (CCJE), and College of Teacher Education (CTE). Respondents come from various programs and colleges within the university and have already completed the Readings in Philippine History (GE8) course in the academic year 2025-2026. Demographic details such as age, gender, and academic background were also gathered. Upon calculating the sample size using the Raosoft calculator, the researchers got a sample size of 370. The sample size came from the four (4) colleges of the University: 111 from the College of Arts and Sciences Education, 114 from the College of Computing Education, 84 from the College of Criminal Justice Education, and 61 from the College of Teacher Education.

In obtaining the sample, the researchers used stratified random sampling, in which students were grouped by college, and an equal number of respondents were selected from each group to ensure unbiased representation. Students currently enrolled in or who have not yet taken the course were excluded to ensure a relevant academic background and knowledge of the variables. Additionally, students from the College of Business Administration (CBAE), College of Accounting Education (CAE), College of Architecture and Fine Arts Education (CAFAE), College of Engineering Education (CEE), College of Hospitality Education (CHE), College of Health and Sciences Education (CHSE), and the University of Mindanao Technical School were excluded due to their off-site locations. Likewise, the Professional Schools, College of Legal Education, and Basic Education were excluded due to substantial differences in students' academic backgrounds.

A structured survey questionnaire with a Likert scale was used to quantitatively assess the relationship between cultural intelligence (independent variable) and historical thinking skills (dependent variable). This approach helps determine how students' level of cultural intelligence influences their capacity for historical thinking skills, particularly after completing the Readings in Philippine History (GE8).

Research Instruments

The researchers adopted the first instrument, which is the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) developed by Ang *et al.* (2007), which consists of 20 items measuring four key dimensions of cultural intelligence: four items in metacognitive CQ, six items in cognitive CQ, five items for motivational CQ, and five items for behavioral CQ. To measure the historical thinking skills, the researchers adopted the 37-item Historical Thinking Skills Scale developed by Meral and Karakus-Yilmaz (2022). The scale consists of eleven (11) items in time and chronology perception, fifteen (15) items in historical inquiry, and eleven (11) items in historical empathy. Overall, the respondents answered fifty-seven (57) questions.

The questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaires were submitted to expert validators and obtained a mean score of 4.71. It was pilot-tested with a Cronbach's Alpha of .93 for the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) and .94 for the Historical Thinking Skills Scale, which are considered acceptable.

Furthermore, the range for interpreting the gathered data is as follows: a score of 4.20-5.00 is considered very high, indicating that cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills are consistently evident. The score of 3.40-4.19 is high, indicating that cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills are frequently manifested. Then, a score of 2.60-3.39 is considered moderate, suggesting that cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills are sometimes manifested. Following this is the low score of 1.80-2.59, indicating that cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills are rarely manifested. Lastly, a score of 1.00-1.79 is very low and suggests that cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills are never manifested.

Research Design and Procedure

The study employed the descriptive-correlational quantitative research design to determine the relationship between cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills. This design is appropriate because it allows the researchers to measure and describe the degree of association between naturally occurring variables without manipulating them. Similarly, Makwana *et al.* (2023) emphasized that this approach is ideal for educational research where the goal is to identify patterns and relationships rather than determining causality.

The following procedure was implemented to gather the data: First, researchers submitted the questionnaires to validators to ensure their reliability and validity. The questionnaires submitted to validators received a

mean score of 4.70, interpreted as Very Highly Valid. Second, the questionnaire underwent pilot testing and was submitted to the statistician for Cronbach's Alpha, yielding .93 for the Cultural Intelligence Scale and .94 for the Historical Thinking Skills Scale. Third, the researchers got a letter addressed to the Deans of the four selected colleges in the university. After each Dean approved, the researchers distributed questionnaires to randomly selected university students from different colleges. Then, they collected the completed questionnaires, organized the data, and submitted them to a statistician for analysis. Finally, after the data were analyzed and explained, the researchers wrote the study's discussion, conclusion, and recommendations.

This study used the mean and standard deviation to measure the levels of cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills. It also used Spearman's rho correlation coefficient to find out the relationship between the two variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Intelligence

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation of cultural intelligence among university students across four indicators: metacognitive CQ, cognitive CQ, motivational CQ, and behavioral CQ. The overall mean score is 3.96 (SD=0.566), which is interpreted as high. This says that cultural intelligence is frequently manifested by the students, meaning they frequently show the ability to understand, adjust, and interact well with people from different cultural backgrounds in academic and social settings. This suggests that the students can apply cultural knowledge and awareness when responding to culturally diverse situations and experiences. It also indicates that students demonstrate open-minded and flexible interactions by recognizing cultural differences and responding appropriately to them.

Between the indicators, Metacognitive CQ has the highest mean score at 4.21 (SD=0.627). The data were interpreted

Table 1: Level of Cultural Intelligence among University Students

Indicator	Mean	SD
Metacognitive CQ	4.21	0.672
Cognitive CQ	3.62	0.808
Motivational CQ	4.01	0.713
Behavioral CQ	4.11	0.734
Overall	3.96	0.566

as very high, indicating that metacognitive CQ is consistently manifested among university students. This indicates that the respondents in this study consistently demonstrate strong metacognitive awareness, enabling them to evaluate, observe, and adjust their thinking in culturally diverse situations. This very high level of metacognitive awareness suggests that students are able to reflect on their cultural assumptions and consider how these influence their understanding of unfamiliar perspectives. It also indicates that students can approach culturally diverse interactions with greater thoughtfulness and flexibility.

Meanwhile, cognitive CQ got the lowest mean score of 3.62 (SD=0.808), which is interpreted as high, indicating that cognitive CQ is frequently manifested among university students. This shows that the respondents have a good level of cultural knowledge. However, they still need to improve their understanding of cultural norms, frameworks, and practices to strengthen their overall cultural intelligence. This suggests that students have a basic understanding of cultural values and practices but can further develop their ability to recognize how these influence people's behaviors and perspectives. Further development in this area can strengthen their ability to understand and respond appropriately to cultural differences.

The results align with Da Silva Teixeira and Klein

(2024), who found that students demonstrated a high level of metacognitive cultural intelligence, particularly in planning, monitoring, and adjusting their cultural interpretations during intercultural learning encounters. The study emphasized that metacognitive CQ is strengthened through reflective and situated learning, in which individuals actively evaluate their thinking processes across diverse cultural contexts, thereby supporting the respondents' strong metacognitive awareness in managing culturally diverse interactions. This further suggests that metacognitive CQ is associated with students' awareness of their cultural assumptions and their ability to adjust their perspectives when encountering culturally diverse situations. Thus, the respondents' strong metacognitive awareness reflects their ability to evaluate and adapt their understanding when engaging with different cultural perspectives.

Aligned with this, Haikuo (2025) reported that cognitive cultural intelligence enhances knowledge of cultural norms and differences, supporting better adaptation in academic settings. Likewise, Urgan *et al.* (2025) highlighted that cultural intelligence is important because it can be developed through cross-cultural training, which strengthens individuals' understanding of cultural norms and improves intercultural awareness and adaptation. This dimension involves developing knowledge of cultural values, practices, communication patterns, and

social expectations across different cultural groups. Such knowledge provides a basis for interpreting unfamiliar behaviors and recognizing that individuals can perceive and respond to similar situations differently depending on their cultural backgrounds.

Historical Thinking Skills

Presented in Table 2 are the level of historical thinking skills among university students in terms of time and chronology perception, historical inquiry, and historical empathy. The data interpreted a high level of historical

thinking skills among university students, with a mean score of 3.90 (SD=0.532). This indicates that students frequently manifested historical thinking skills and often demonstrated the ability to understand time order, take part in historical inquiry, and consider the perspectives of people in the past. This suggests that students are generally able to apply these skills when engaging with historical information and events. Their ability to understand chronology, conduct historical inquiries, and consider past perspectives reflects a developing capacity to interpret history beyond simple recall.

Table 2: Level of Historical Thinking Skills among University Students

Indicator	Mean	SD
Time and Chronology Perception	3.80	0.636
Historical Inquiry	4.01	0.575
Historical Empathy	3.87	0.621
Overall	3.90	0.532

Among the historical thinking skills indicators, historical inquiry has the highest mean score of 4.01 (SD=0.575), which is interpreted as high, indicating that it is frequently manifested among university students. This means that historical inquiry is often shown as the respondents actively analyzing, questioning, and interpreting important historical events. This suggests that respondents can engage with historical information beyond simple recall by examining evidence, asking relevant questions, and considering different interpretations. It also indicates that they demonstrate analytical skills in constructing interpretations and understanding historical events based on available evidence.

The indicator of time and chronological perception has the lowest mean score of 3.80 (SD = 0.636). The data, which was shown as high, shows that time and chronology perception are frequently manifested. This means that the respondents are usually aware of time and chronology. However, the students' ability to arrange and explain historical events in contexts still needs further development. This suggests that while respondents have a general understanding of chronological order, they still need to strengthen their ability to establish connections among historical events and understand how one development relates to another.

The respondents show a high level of historical thinking skills, especially in time and chronology perception, historical inquiry, and historical empathy. These results align with the study by Meral and Karakus-Yilmaz (2022), who found that secondary learners can attain high levels of historical thinking when proficiency skills, such as thinking chronologically, historical comprehension, historical evaluation, and evidence-based reasoning, are explicitly taught and assessed. To support this claim, Steven Pandan (2023) emphasized that ongoing learning experiences can significantly improve students' historical thinking skills. In addition, Candelaria (2023) explained

that even with gaps in history education, regular exposure to historical content helps students develop comprehensive historical thinking skills.

Correlation between Cultural Intelligence and Historical Thinking Skills

Table 3 shows the relationship between cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills among university students. The results gave a correlation coefficient $r=0.644$ ($p<.001$), which means there is a significant moderate direct correlation between the two variables. This indicates that students with higher cultural intelligence tend to demonstrate stronger historical thinking skills, showing that the two variables are positively associated. This relationship reflects how students' cultural awareness and understanding of different perspectives are connected with their ability to analyze historical information, understand chronology, conduct historical inquiry, and consider perspectives from the past.

This suggests that students with higher cultural intelligence also tend to demonstrate stronger historical thinking skills, indicating that these skills are connected in supporting students' understanding of historical contexts and perspectives. Therefore, integrating cultural intelligence activities into teaching can provide opportunities for students to examine evidence, understand diverse perspectives, and engage in deeper historical reasoning. This relationship emphasizes the value of developing students' cultural awareness alongside their historical thinking abilities. Recognizing different cultural perspectives can help students approach historical events more thoughtfully and gain a deeper understanding of the experiences, beliefs, and contexts that shaped the past.

Also, there is a moderate positive correlation between cognitive CQ and historical empathy, with $r=0.502$ ($p<.001$). This means that students with higher cognitive

Table 3: Significance of Relationship Between Cultural Intelligence and Historical Thinking Skills

Cultural Intelligence	Historical Thinking Skills			
	Time And Chronology Perception	Historical Inquiry	Historical Empathy	Overall
Metacognitive CQ	.379* ($<.001$)	.458* ($<.001$)	.383* ($<.001$)	.470* ($<.001$)
Cognitive CQ	.420* ($<.001$)	.400* ($<.001$)	.502* ($<.001$)	.511* ($<.001$)
Motivational CQ	.327* ($<.001$)	.411* ($<.001$)	.481* ($<.001$)	.464* ($<.001$)
Behavioral CQ	.365* ($<.001$)	.433* ($<.001$)	.480* ($<.001$)	.488* ($<.001$)
Overall	.501* ($<.001$)	.554* ($<.001$)	.619* ($<.001$)	.644* ($<.001$)

* $p < .05$ is significant.

CQ tend to have a good comprehension and appreciation of different historical perspectives. These results are supported by Wang and Zhang (2021), who found that higher cultural intelligence improves students' adjustment and academic performance in diverse cultural settings, indicating that cultural understanding strengthens historical learning. This relationship suggests that students with greater cultural knowledge are better positioned to recognize and understand the beliefs, experiences, and viewpoints of people from different historical contexts. Their knowledge of cultural differences can also help them consider historical events from perspectives beyond their own, contributing to a deeper understanding of the past.

Based on Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, these results can be explained through reciprocal determinism, observational learning, and self-efficacy. Reciprocal determinism shows that personal factors (cognitive CQ), behavior (historical empathy), and the environment (multicultural learning experiences) work together to shape learning outcomes. Through observational learning, learners build openness and perspective-taking by engaging with teachers, classmates, and different historical narratives. Self-efficacy also helps students feel confident in understanding unfamiliar cultures and viewpoints. Thus, the study aligns with Bandura's theory, as historical empathy develops through the interaction among cultural knowledge, social experiences, and learned behaviors. This interaction provides a basis for understanding how cultural knowledge, social experiences, and learning environments are connected to students' ability to understand historical perspectives. Thus, the findings are consistent with Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes that learning develops through the interaction of personal factors, behaviors, and environmental influences.

The data also showed a weak positive relationship between motivational CQ and time and chronology perception, with $r=0.327$ ($p<.001$). This means that a learner's

motivation to connect with other cultures has only a small portion of their ability to understand historical timelines and arrange events. Even though the result is significant, the relationship remains low, so motivation is not a strong indicator of chronological thinking skills. This aligns with Alifuddin and Widodo (2022), who found that cultural intelligence supports adaptability and openness, but its effect can vary depending on the type of thinking skill involved. This suggests that chronological thinking involves more than motivation to engage with other cultures, as it requires specific historical reasoning skills. These include sequencing events, identifying connections among historical developments, and understanding the context in which events occurred.

The study also found a moderately strong positive relationship between cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills, indicating that students with higher cultural intelligence tend to exhibit stronger historical thinking skills. This supports the studies by Biay and Tenorio (2024) and Meral Karakus-Yilmaz (2022), who highlighted that considering others' points of view and being exposed to different standpoints improve questioning, empathy, and contextual comprehension. Ang *et al.* (2007) also emphasized that the cognitive and motivational factors of cultural intelligence improve adaptive thinking, which aligns with the critical thinking needed for evaluation in historical thinking. Moreover, Salas and Hermosa (2025) pointed out that culturally intelligent learners think more carefully about information, which further solidifies this relationship.

CONCLUSION

The study found that students have high levels of cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills. They can understand and adapt to different cultures while analyzing historical events, conducting research, understanding context, and considering diverse perspectives. The findings revealed a moderately strong positive relationship between cultural intelligence and historical thinking

skills, suggesting that cultural intelligence can support students' ability to interpret and critically analyze historical information. However, cultural intelligence alone does not guarantee strong historical thinking, which also requires skills in analyzing evidence, establishing context, and connecting events across time.

The findings are consistent with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes the interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors in learning. Based on the results, teachers are encouraged to integrate historical and cultural perspectives, reflective activities, and diverse examples into their lessons. The Office of Student Affairs of the University of Mindanao may organize programs that promote cultural and historical awareness, while the student organizations like ILUSSTRADO can collaborate with ELLiTeS and SAMFAIL on interdisciplinary language, culture, and history activities. DepEd and CHED may strengthen curriculum policies integrating cultural intelligence and historical thinking skills. Future researchers may use qualitative or experimental research to explore students' experiences and examine factors that influence these skills.

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