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IMPLEMENTATION OF PLACE-BASED LEARNING MODEL IN FOSTERING MULTICULTURAL HISTORICAL AWARENESS IN THE YOUNGER GENERATION

Kian Amboro[1*], Barnas Rasmana[2], Agus Mahfudin Setiawan[3], Adi Setiawan[4]

[1*,2]Department of History Education, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Universitas Muhammadiyah Metro, Indonesia
[3]Department of History of Islamic Civilization, Faculty of Adab, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan, Indonesia
[4]History Teacher at SMA Negeri Sekampung, Indonesia
kianamboro@ummetro.ac.id[1], barnasrasmana@ummetro.ac.id[2], agus.mahfud@radenintan.ac.id[3], adiabuuwais@gmail.com[4]*
**Corresponding Author*

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ABSTRACT

Learning history through direct engagement with places can make local history more contextual and meaningful, particularly in multicultural urban settings. This study aims to examine the implementation of a place-based learning model through the Historical Riding Tour Telokbetong in relation to participants' multicultural historical awareness. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed using post-activity feedback questionnaire responses from 26 participants collected after the event on July 11, 2026. The data were analyzed thematically by examining participants' reported historical understanding, historical interpretation and meaning-making, recognition of the multicultural historical landscape, and heritage appreciation and preservation awareness. Participants described old buildings and urban spaces not merely as physical remnants but as historical resources containing identity, memory, and community narratives. Participants' responses also reflected recognition of Telukbetung as a multicultural historical landscape shaped by the diversity and interaction of European, Chinese, Malay/Islamic, Christian, and Catholic communities. Participants' responses reflected reported multicultural historical awareness and an appreciation of heritage preservation. The findings indicate that the Historical Riding Tour has potential as a place-based learning model connecting local history, direct experience, multicultural awareness, and heritage preservation.

Keywords: *Place-based learning, local history, multicultural historical awareness, Historical Riding Tour, cultural heritage.*

ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran sejarah melalui keterlibatan langsung dengan tempat dapat menjadikan sejarah lokal lebih kontekstual dan bermakna, khususnya dalam ruang perkotaan yang multikultural. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi model pembelajaran berbasis tempat melalui Historical Riding Tour Telokbetong dalam kaitannya dengan kesadaran sejarah multikultural peserta. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan data berupa tanggapan kuesioner umpan balik pascakegiatan dari 26 peserta yang dikumpulkan setelah kegiatan pada 11 Juli 2026. Data dianalisis secara tematik dengan menelaah pemahaman sejarah yang dilaporkan peserta, proses interpretasi dan pemaknaan historis, pengenalan terhadap lanskap sejarah multikultural, serta apresiasi dan kesadaran pelestarian warisan budaya. Peserta mendeskripsikan bangunan lama dan ruang perkotaan bukan sekadar peninggalan fisik, melainkan sebagai sumber sejarah yang memuat identitas, memori, dan cerita

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masyarakat. Tanggapan peserta juga mencerminkan pengenalan Telukbetung sebagai lanskap sejarah multikultural yang dibentuk oleh keberagaman dan interaksi komunitas Eropa, Tionghoa, Melayu/Islam, Kristen, dan Katolik. Tanggapan tersebut mencerminkan kesadaran sejarah multikultural dan apresiasi terhadap pelestarian warisan budaya. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Historical Riding Tour berpotensi menjadi model pembelajaran berbasis tempat yang menghubungkan sejarah lokal, pengalaman langsung, kesadaran multikultural, dan pelestarian warisan budaya.

Kata kunci: *Pembelajaran berbasis tempat, sejarah lokal, kesadaran sejarah multikultural, Historical Riding Tour, warisan budaya.*

INTRODUCTION

History education is not merely concerned with transmitting factual knowledge about past events, but also with enabling learners to interpret evidence, contextualize historical phenomena, construct arguments, and make meaningful connections between the past and the present. Historical reasoning requires learners to ask historical questions, use sources, contextualize events, and construct justified interpretations rather than recall information (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008). Similarly, historical consciousness involves the process through which individuals give meaning to relationships between past, present, and future (Popa, 2022). However, history learning can become abstract when historical knowledge is presented primarily through texts, chronological narratives, or classroom materials that are disconnected from the physical and social contexts in which the past occurred. Non-formal encounters with historical environments can provide opportunities for learners to reason about the past more concretely, particularly when observation and inquiry are integrated into the learning process (Efstathiou et al., 2018). Thus, an important challenge for contemporary history education is how to transform historical learning from the passive acquisition of information into an active process of encountering, interpreting, and making meaning from the past.

One approach that offers such an opportunity is place-based learning, which positions physical and social environments as integral components of the learning process. Rather than treating place merely as a backdrop, place-based education connects learning with the histories, communities, identities, and material environments that constitute particular places (Yemini et al., 2023). In historical education, this perspective is particularly relevant because heritage sites can function as tangible sources through which learners encounter traces of the past. Recent research demonstrates that direct engagement with local heritage can stimulate historical awareness by connecting learners with the material and social dimensions of their own historical environment (Cendani & Romadi, 2025). Similarly, the use of museums and local heritage sites as historical learning resources can facilitate contextual and authentic understanding by allowing learners to relate historical narratives to concrete places and objects (Azizah, 2025). Research on contextual history learning likewise emphasizes the importance of connecting historical knowledge with locally situated experiences and local historical resources (Kurniawanti, 2026; Utami, 2019). Strand (2025), furthermore, demonstrates the educational potential of encounters with the local past in fostering historical empathy

(Strand, 2025). These studies collectively establish the pedagogical value of place, but they also suggest that simply bringing learners to a historical site is insufficient; the educational value of place depends on how encounters with that place are interpreted and transformed into historical understanding.

The transition from historical encounter to historical understanding is closely related to historical empathy. Historical empathy requires learners to understand people and actions in the past within their historical contexts while recognizing the distance between their own contemporary perspectives and those of historical actors (Baron, 2012). Research on historical empathy indicates that contextualization, historical imagination, personal connection, and reflection are important components of this process (Bartelds et al., 2020; Strand, 2025). Historical empathy therefore cannot be assumed to emerge automatically from exposure to historical places. Instead, interpretation and reflective engagement are necessary to transform physical encounters into meaningful understandings of the past. Recent research by Zhang et al. (2026) demonstrates that historical empathy can influence visitors' cultural attitudes through processes of reflection and affective connection, while Huang et al. (2026) show that the way cultural heritage is interpreted can shape tourists' historical empathy, particularly through imagination. These findings provide an important theoretical bridge for understanding historical tours not simply as recreational activities but as interpretive learning experiences in which physical encounters, narratives, imagination, and reflection interact.

This perspective is also supported by research on heritage interpretation and visitor experience. Interpretation can influence how visitors perceive the historical value of heritage places, suggesting that information and narrative mediation play an important role in transforming physical sites into meaningful heritage experiences (Weng et al., 2020). Experiential authenticity similarly contributes to the meaningfulness of heritage encounters by allowing visitors to engage with heritage beyond the consumption of factual information (Jin et al., 2020). Authenticity, involvement, nostalgia, and place attachment can further shape how visitors experience historic environments and develop relationships with them (Gao et al., 2020; Ram et al., 2016). Recent research also emphasizes the importance of authenticity and experience in contemporary heritage engagement (Zhu et al., 2025). Nevertheless, much of this literature has developed within heritage tourism and visitor-experience studies rather than history education. This creates an important conceptual opportunity: the interpretive mechanisms that make heritage experiences meaningful can also be examined as pedagogical mechanisms through which participants construct historical understanding.

The issue becomes particularly significant in multicultural historical environments such as Telukbetung, an urban area in Bandar Lampung where historical traces are associated with different communities, institutions, religions, and cultural traditions. Understanding such a historical landscape requires more than recognizing individual buildings; it requires learners to interpret how different communities contributed to the city's formation and transformation. Recent evidence from history learning in Kota Metro also supports this connection, showing that culturally responsive local history instruction

strengthened students' tolerance, solidarity, respect for cultural differences, and inclusiveness (Amboro et al., 2026). Cross-cultural awareness has been shown to influence how visitors perceive authenticity and cultural experiences in heritage settings (H. Zhang et al., 2018). For younger generations, engagement with cultural heritage can likewise be connected with motivations to experience and understand cultural traditions in more direct and meaningful ways (Jiang et al., 2025). From the perspective of historical consciousness, such encounters are important because they enable individuals to relate multiple historical experiences to contemporary identities and social relationships (Popa, 2022). Historical empathy is also relevant because understanding historical communities requires learners to move beyond simplified contemporary categories and consider the circumstances, perspectives, and interactions that shaped the past (Baron, 2012). Consequently, a historical landscape such as Telukbetung offers an important context for examining how place-based learning may foster awareness of cultural plurality as part of historical understanding.

The educational significance of such encounters extends beyond historical knowledge toward heritage awareness and preservation. Experiences that generate attachment to historical places can contribute to visitors' willingness to value and support heritage conservation (Ram et al., 2016). A conceptual framework proposed by Buonincontri et al. (2017) further connects visitor experience and place attachment with sustainable behavior at cultural heritage sites. More recent research similarly identifies the relationship between fascination, place attachment, and stewardship in cultural tourism destinations (Rezapouraghdam et al., 2025). These perspectives are relevant to history education because historical awareness can become more socially meaningful when learners recognize that heritage is not merely evidence of the past but also a cultural resource that requires care in the present. Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish awareness from demonstrated long-term conservation behavior. Educational encounters may cultivate appreciation, concern, and preservation motivation, but these outcomes should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of sustained behavioral change.

Despite the growing literature on place-based education, historical empathy, heritage interpretation, and visitor experience, an important research gap remains. Recent studies have demonstrated the educational potential of local heritage encounters (Azizah, 2025; Cendani & Romadi, 2025; Strand, 2025), the role of place in diverse urban learning environments (Yemini et al., 2023), and the importance of heritage interpretation and contextual engagement in shaping historical empathy and cultural attitudes (Huang et al., 2026; L. Zhang et al., 2026). However, these studies have largely examined these dimensions separately, leaving limited empirical explanation of how direct movement across interconnected historical sites can bring together historical interpretation, multicultural historical awareness, and heritage preservation awareness within a single learning process. The novelty of the present study lies in identifying and empirically tracing this integrated learning pathway through the Historical Riding Tour Telokbetong. Unlike learning activities centered on a single heritage site or conventional field-trip encounter, the Historical Riding Tour connects continuous movement across an urban

historical landscape with observation of material traces, contextual historical narratives, discussion, and reflection. Through this configuration, the study examines how participants' reported historical meaning-making is associated with their recognition of cultural plurality and appreciation of heritage preservation. Accordingly, this study aims to examine how the Historical Riding Tour Telokbetong operates as a place-based learning model by tracing participants' historical meaning-making, recognition of cultural plurality, and awareness of heritage preservation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a place-based learning perspective to examine how participation in the Historical Riding Tour Telokbetong generated historical learning and multicultural historical awareness. The activity, officially named the Historical Riding Tour Telokbetong, was conducted in the historical urban area of Telukbetung, Bandar Lampung. Place-based education emphasizes integrating learning with the physical, social, and cultural characteristics of particular places (Yemini et al., 2023). In this study, Telukbetung was positioned as a historical learning environment in which buildings, urban spaces, religious sites, and traces of past communities became learning resources. This orientation aligns with studies showing that direct engagement with local heritage can support historical awareness and contextual learning (Azizah, 2025; Cendani & Romadi, 2025; Strand, 2025).

Data were collected during and immediately after the Historical Riding Tour Telokbetong, conducted on 11 July 2026. The activity combined motorized movement between historical locations with walking, direct observation, historical storytelling, and discussion at selected sites. The research used participants' experiences and written post-activity feedback as the principal empirical material. The post-activity questionnaire was completed by 26 participants, whose responses constituted the principal empirical material for the analysis. The respondents ranged in age from 16 to 51 years old, with a mean age of 25 years and a median age of 22 years. In terms of educational background, the respondents comprised SMA (n = 5), D-3 (n = 1), D-4/S-1 (n = 17), and S-2 (n = 3). The questionnaire was administered after the activity, and the 26 submitted responses constituted the dataset analyzed in this study. Participants were included in the dataset when they had participated in the Historical Riding Tour Telokbetong and submitted a completed post-activity questionnaire. Because the activity was community-based and open to participants from different educational and community backgrounds, participant selection was based on participation in the activity and voluntary submission of the feedback questionnaire rather than on a predetermined demographic sampling frame.

The questionnaire consisted of questions concerning participants' initial knowledge of Telukbetung, their evaluation of the riding-and-walking tour model, the historical site that made the strongest impression, changes in their interpretation of old buildings and urban spaces, lessons derived from the multicultural historical narrative, perceptions of community activities for heritage preservation, and suggestions for future tour development. The questionnaire therefore captured both experiential and reflective

dimensions of the learning process. Such use of participant reflection and direct engagement with heritage environments is relevant to place-based and experiential history learning (Azizah, 2025; Cendani & Romadi, 2025; Strand, 2025), while inquiry-oriented encounters with historical environments have also been shown to provide opportunities for learners to develop historical understanding beyond formal classroom settings (Efstathiou et al., 2018). The responses were treated as self-reported evidence of participants' perceptions and learning experiences rather than as objective measurements of learning gains.

The data were analyzed thematically through four sequential stages. First, all questionnaire responses were read repeatedly to identify meaningful statements and develop initial codes related to participants' prior historical knowledge, experiences of encountering historical places, interpretation of historical narratives, multicultural awareness, and heritage preservation. Second, related initial codes were compared and grouped into broader analytical categories representing historical interpretation and meaning-making. Third, recurring categories concerning multicultural historical awareness were identified, including recognition of the coexistence and contributions of European, Chinese, Malay/Islamic, Christian, and Catholic communities, as well as perceptions of tolerance, social interaction, and shared urban identity. Fourth, these themes were examined in relation to participants' perceptions of heritage appreciation and preservation awareness. The coding process moved iteratively between individual responses, initial codes, categories, and the four final analytical themes. To maintain interpretive consistency, the coded responses were reread and checked against the original questionnaire responses before the themes were finalized. The initial coding was conducted by the first author and subsequently reviewed by the other authors. The researchers then compared the emerging themes with relevant previous studies to identify areas of convergence, extension, and difference.

The interpretation of the themes was informed by the understanding of historical consciousness as a process of constructing meaning from relationships between past and present (Popa, 2022), historical reasoning as involving contextualization and interpretation of historical evidence (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008), and historical learning as an interpretive process in which learners construct meaning from encounters with the past (Bartelds et al., 2020). Accordingly, the analysis followed the conceptual sequence: historical knowledge, historical encounter and interpretation, meaning-making, multicultural historical awareness, heritage awareness. The researchers then compared the emerging themes with relevant previous studies to identify areas of convergence, extension, and difference. Because the study relied on post-activity self-reports from a single historical tour, the findings were interpreted as evidence of participants' reported experiences and awareness, not as proof of causal or long-term behavioral change.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From Limited Historical Knowledge to Place-Based Historical Learning

The Historical Riding Tour Telokbetong provided an opportunity to examine how

participants encountered local history through direct engagement with the historical urban landscape. The participant feedback indicates that the activity brought together individuals with different levels of prior historical knowledge. Before participating in the tour, some respondents reported that they knew little or nothing about the historical position of Telukbetung, while others had some familiarity with the area but lacked detailed knowledge concerning its historical development. This variation is important because it demonstrates that the historical significance of Telukbetung is not necessarily self-evident to people who routinely encounter its buildings and urban spaces. The questionnaire explicitly asked participants about their prior knowledge of Telukbetung as the former capital of the Lampung Residency and subsequently asked them to evaluate the attractiveness and comfort of the combined riding-and-walking tour model.

The responses suggest that participants' initial knowledge was often fragmentary. Some participants knew the names or general functions of particular buildings but did not previously understand their relationship to the broader historical development of Telukbetung. This condition illustrates an important distinction between knowing historical information and understanding history through place. Historical knowledge becomes more meaningful when individual facts can be connected to spatial contexts, historical actors, institutions, events, and changes occurring over time. Such a process corresponds with the conception of historical consciousness as meaning-making between past and present (Popa, 2022) and with historical reasoning that requires learners to contextualize and interpret historical information rather than merely recall it (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008).

The 26 responses reveal three broad levels of reported prior knowledge. Ten participants (38.5%) reported little or no prior knowledge of Telukbetung's historical position as the former capital of the Lampung Residency, eight (30.8%) reported moderate knowledge, and eight (30.8%) reported that they already knew or were very familiar with this historical position. The post-activity responses also contained several recurring patterns of reported learning and reinterpretation. Participants described old buildings and urban spaces as historical resources, reported acquiring or expanding historical knowledge, and in some cases described revising previous assumptions about the historical formation of Telukbetung. For example, P10 reported that the explanation at Taman Dipangga gave him new knowledge about the area's connection with the Lampung Residency and encouraged further historical inquiry. P14 reported that the activity led him to reconsider his previous assumption that Telukbetung had been built largely by the Chinese community, while P23 described old buildings and areas as more than physical remnants because they contained historical narratives, city identity, and community stories. These responses indicate that participants described the historical landscape in more interconnected terms after the activity, although the study does not establish this as a statistically measured learning gain.

This finding supports the central premise of place-based learning. Yemini et al. (2023) argue that place-based education connects learning with the physical, social, and cultural environments in which learning takes place. In the context of history education,

this means that historical knowledge can be constructed not only from textbooks or classroom explanations but also from encounters with material traces of the past. Cendani & Romadi (2025) similarly demonstrate the importance of direct engagement with heritage places for developing historical awareness, while Azizah (2025) shows that historical heritage sites can function as contextual and authentic learning resources. Strand (2025) further demonstrates that encounters with the local past can provide conditions for historical empathy and deeper engagement with historical experiences.

The Historical Riding Tour importantly extends these insights. Rather than bringing participants to a single formal educational institution such as a museum, the activity placed learning within an ordinary urban environment that continues to function as part of everyday life. Participants moved through the historical landscape, observed buildings and sites, listened to narratives, and discussed their meanings in situ. This arrangement transformed the city itself into a distributed learning environment. The approach also resonates with Efstathiou et al. (2018), who demonstrate the potential of non-formal historical environments to support historical reasoning through direct and inquiry-oriented encounters. In this sense, the motorcycle component was not itself the educational innovation; its significance lay in facilitating movement across a connected historical landscape and enabling participants to encounter historical traces within their actual spatial contexts. Because the study did not employ a pre-test/post-test design, the post-activity responses are interpreted as participants' reported awareness and learning experiences rather than as measured learning gains attributable to the tour. All 26 respondents reported that the narratives had changed their view of old buildings and urban spaces, although the reasons they provided varied. Some reported gaining new historical information, while others described reinterpreting familiar buildings as historical resources, questioning previous assumptions, or connecting urban spaces with community identity and memory. P23, for example, reported that buildings previously perceived as ordinary or neglected were subsequently understood as historical sources containing identity, memory, and community stories. These responses therefore indicate how participants described their own reinterpretations following the activity, rather than demonstrating an objectively measured change in historical knowledge.

This finding is significant because it identifies the first mechanism of the Historical Riding Tour as a recontextualization of historical knowledge through place. The learning process does not begin with the assumption that participants are completely uninformed. Instead, it begins with partial, fragmented, or superficial knowledge and then connects that knowledge with material evidence and historical narratives encountered in the urban environment. In this process, place operates simultaneously as a source, context, and medium of historical learning. The route and the four historical learning sites examined in the activity are illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Historical Riding Tour Route and Learning Sites in Telukbetung
Source: Google Maps (2026); route and learning-site annotations by the authors.

The spatial dimension is therefore essential to interpreting the findings. The tour enabled participants to perceive that historical buildings and spaces were not isolated objects but components of a connected historical urban landscape. This finding is consistent with research emphasizing the educational value of place-based and heritage encounters. Yemini et al. (2023) show that place-based education connects learning with the physical, social, and cultural environments of diverse urban communities, while Cendani & Romadi (2025) demonstrate how direct encounters with heritage places can support historical awareness. Azizah (2025) further positions historical heritage sites as contextual and authentic learning resources, and Strand (2025) shows how encounters with the local past can create conditions for deeper engagement with historical experiences. The present findings extend these studies by showing how a community-organized riding-and-walking activity can connect several historical locations within an ordinary urban environment rather than concentrating learning within a single heritage institution or site. Participants' movement across the landscape enabled historical narratives to be encountered in relation to the physical places to which they referred. Thus, the educational significance of the activity lies not in the transportation format itself, but in the way mobility connected place, interpretation, observation, and historical meaning-making within a non-formal learning environment.

Reading Telokbetong Through Historical Sites: Experience, Interpretation, and Meaning-Making

The second major finding concerns the way participants interpreted particular historical sites after encountering them directly. The questionnaire asked participants to

identify which of four selected sites: Taman Dipangga, SMP Xaverius, Masjid Al Anwar, and Vihara Thay Hin Bio provided the most profound historical impression and to explain why. The responses indicate that the sites functioned not simply as destinations along a tour route but as historical learning windows through which participants constructed different meanings about the city.

Taman Dipangga, for example, was repeatedly associated with several layers of historical information, including the Krakatau eruption, the Lampung Residency, and the former Saripetojo ice factory. P10 described Taman Dipangga as particularly meaningful because the site was connected in the explanation with the Lampung Residency and other historical narratives. Another participant, P11, also associated the site with the Residency and the political history of Lampung. These responses suggest that the significance participants attributed to Taman Dipangga was closely related to the historical narratives presented at the site rather than to its physical appearance alone.

SMP Xaverius produced a somewhat different type of historical meaning. Participants associated the site with educational and institutional histories that formed part of the development of the city. Although the responses concerning this site were generally shorter than those concerning some other locations, its significance lies in demonstrating that urban historical learning can encompass more than government buildings or monuments. Educational institutions can also serve as material traces of the development of particular communities and social structures. In a place-based learning framework, the meaning of a historical building emerges from the relationship between its physical presence, its historical function, and the stories that can be reconstructed around it.

Masjid Al Anwar generated particularly strong responses concerning religious history and historical continuity. P16 selected Masjid Al Anwar because its surviving physical features were perceived as authentic traces of the past and as evidence of the historical presence of Islam during the colonial period. P20 likewise described the site as meaningful in relation to the history of Bandar Lampung and Telukbetung. These responses suggest that the surviving material features of the mosque provided participants with observable references through which historical narratives could be interpreted.

Vihara Thay Hin Bio produced another significant form of interpretation, particularly concerning the Chinese community and multicultural urban history. Participants connected the vihara with the historical presence of the Chinese community and, importantly, with its spatial relationship to Masjid Al Anwar. P07 explicitly identified the proximity between Vihara Thay Hin Bio and Masjid Jami' Al-Anwar as meaningful evidence of historical diversity and coexistence. Other participants similarly associated the vihara with the historical presence of the Chinese community and with the broader multicultural character of Telukbetung. These responses indicate that participants interpreted the meaning of the site partly through its spatial relationship with other cultural and religious traces. The main historical meanings identified across the four tour sites are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Historical Learning Meanings Emerging from the Four Tour Sites

Historical site	Main historical focus	Participant perception	Learning meaning
Taman Dipangga	Residency, Krakatau, urban development	Rich concentration of historical narratives	Understanding Telukbetung as a political and urban center
SMP Xaverius	Educational institution and community history	Historical institutional presence	Understanding the role of institutions and communities in urban development
Masjid Al Anwar	Islamic and religious history	Material continuity of the past	Understanding religious history within the colonial urban landscape
Vihara Thay Hin Bio	Chinese community and cultural diversity	Connection with multicultural urban space	Understanding coexistence and cultural plurality

The findings indicate that interpretation was the mechanism connecting physical encounter with historical meaning. This is consistent with Weng et al. (2020), who demonstrate that tour interpretation affects visitors' perceptions of heritage value. The Historical Riding Tour likewise shows that historical sites become educationally meaningful when participants receive narratives that explain why a place matters, what happened there, and how it relates to broader historical processes. The findings also resonate with Jin et al. (2020), who emphasize experiential authenticity in heritage museums. Participants' responses concerning Masjid Al Anwar and other sites suggest that the direct observation of surviving material traces generated a stronger sense of historical immediacy than information encountered solely through secondary sources. Gao et al. (2020) similarly demonstrate the importance of authenticity, involvement, and nostalgia in shaping experiences of urban heritage environments, while Ram et al. (2016) establish the relevance of authenticity to place attachment.

The Historical Riding Tour, however, adds an educational dimension to these visitor-experience perspectives. The purpose of the encounter was not primarily to consume an authentic tourism experience but to interpret historical evidence in situ. This distinction is important. A heritage tourist may appreciate an old building because it is aesthetically or emotionally appealing, whereas a history learner is encouraged to ask what the building represents, who used it, how it changed, and what historical relationships can be inferred from its survival. The role of interpretation becomes even more significant when viewed through the literature on historical empathy. Baron (2012) emphasizes that historical empathy involves contextual understanding rather than merely emotional identification with the past. Similarly, historical reasoning requires contextualization and evidence-based interpretation (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008). The narratives presented during the tour therefore provided a bridge between seeing the historical trace and understanding its historical context.

This interpretation is further supported by Huang et al. (2026), whose findings demonstrate that heritage interpretation can influence historical empathy and that imagination can mediate this relationship. L. Zhang et al. (2026) likewise demonstrate that historical empathy can influence visitors' cultural attitudes through reflection and affective connection. Although the present study did not directly measure historical empathy using a validated scale, participants' reflections indicate a related process: they encountered material traces, listened to historical explanations, reconsidered what they previously knew, and developed broader interpretations of the communities and histories associated with the sites. Grinfelde & Veliverronena (2021) similarly demonstrate the educational potential of field-based encounters in enabling students to confront historical places through experiential learning. Zhu et al. (2025) also reinforce the significance of heritage experience and interpretation in producing meaningful engagement with cultural heritage. Taken together, these studies help explain why the Historical Riding Tour generated more than simple site recognition. The educational value emerged from the interaction between place, narrative, observation, and reflection. These direct encounters with historical places are illustrated in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Participants' Direct Encounters with Historical Places
Source: Metro Heritage and Metro Walking Tour documentation (2026), used with permission.

Thus, the four historical sites can be conceptualized as four different entry points into the history of Telukbetung. Taman Dipangga opened a discussion of government and disaster memory, and urban development; SMP Xaverius revealed institutional and community histories; Masjid Al Anwar provided an entry into religious and social history; and Vihara Thay Hin Bio revealed the historical presence of the Chinese community and

its relationship with other communities. The meaning of the tour consequently emerged through the connections among sites, rather than from any single site considered in isolation.

From Historical Sites to Multicultural Historical Awareness

A central finding in relation to the focus of this study was participants' reported recognition of Telukbetung as a multicultural historical landscape. Among the 26 responses, 20 participants explicitly referred to diversity, coexistence, tolerance, harmony, or cooperation when describing the historical or social lessons they derived from the tour. The remaining responses either emphasized specific community histories or did not provide a substantive response to this aspect. The feedback therefore indicates that participants did not merely report learning about individual ethnic or religious communities; many described Telukbetung's historical development in terms of interaction and coexistence among multiple communities.

This finding is particularly visible in participants' responses concerning the multicultural narrative presented during the tour. One participant explained that the historical landscape of Telukbetung had long been socially diverse, involving Muslim, Christian, Catholic, and Chinese communities that could live together without abandoning their respective identities. Another participant emphasized that different ethnic and social groups had worked together and that such cooperation contributed to the development of Telukbetung. These responses indicate a movement beyond the recognition of cultural difference toward an understanding of historical coexistence.

The distinction is important. Multicultural historical awareness should not be reduced to knowing that different groups existed in the past. It involves recognizing that the historical landscape was produced through interactions among different communities and that contemporary urban identity is partly rooted in these historical relationships. This can be observed in a participant's statement that cultural differences were not barriers to coexistence and that diversity was an important part of the formation of Telukbetung's history and identity.

The significance of this finding is related to, but also extends, the cross-cultural awareness perspective proposed by H. Zhang et al. (2018). Their study highlights the role of cross-cultural awareness in shaping visitors' interpretations of cultural heritage experiences, whereas the present study shows how multicultural awareness can emerge through participants' interpretation of the historical relationships among different communities within a shared urban landscape. In Telukbetung, participants did not encounter cultural diversity as a collection of separate cultural attributes. Instead, their responses associated European, Chinese, Malay/Islamic, Christian, and Catholic communities with the historical formation and identity of the same city. This provides a different emphasis from studies that primarily examine cultural awareness as an aspect of visitors' heritage experience: the present findings locate multicultural awareness within historical meaning-making and the spatial relationships among heritage sites. The finding also complements recent research on historical empathy and heritage interpretation,

which emphasizes the role of contextualized encounters in developing more nuanced understandings of the past (Huang et al., 2026; Strand, 2025; L. Zhang et al., 2026). The contribution of the present study therefore lies in connecting cross-cultural awareness with place-based historical interpretation, showing how participants' reading of multiple cultural and religious traces within one urban landscape was associated in their responses with meanings of coexistence, cooperation, tolerance, and shared historical identity.

This sequence is consistent with Popa's (2022) conception of historical consciousness as meaning-making, because participants connected past social relations with contemporary understandings of identity and coexistence. It also relates to Baron (2012) and Strand (2025), who emphasize the importance of contextual engagement with the past for developing more nuanced understandings of historical actors and communities. The data also suggest that multicultural historical awareness was closely related to historical empathy, although, again, the present study does not claim to have quantitatively measured empathy. When participants interpreted the historical coexistence of European, Chinese, Malay/Islamic, Christian, and Catholic communities, they moved away from a simplified understanding of the city as being shaped by a single dominant group. One participant, for example, acknowledged that they had previously assumed that Telukbetung had largely been built by the Chinese community but revised this understanding after participating in the tour. This is a particularly important finding because it demonstrates historical reinterpretation, rather than simply the addition of another historical fact.

The process is also compatible with L. Zhang et al. (2026), who demonstrate that historical empathy can influence cultural attitudes, and Huang et al. (2026), who emphasize the role of heritage interpretation in developing historical empathy. The present findings suggest a complementary pathway in which interpretation of multicultural historical spaces can encourage participants to recognize cultural plurality and reconsider simplified assumptions about the past.

Jiang et al. (2025) further provide a relevant perspective concerning younger generations' engagement with intangible cultural heritage. Although the participants in this study were not exclusively members of Generation Z, the activity attracted young participants alongside students, heritage activists, government representatives, educators, and members of the wider community. Therefore, the findings should not be generalized as evidence that the entire younger generation has changed its historical awareness. Rather, they indicate that place-based heritage experiences offer a potentially relevant learning environment for younger participants and wider community audiences.

The responses concerning moral and social lessons reinforce this interpretation. Twenty participants explicitly referred to tolerance, mutual respect, coexistence, cooperation, harmony, or appreciation of diversity in their responses. P07, for example, connected the spatial proximity of Vihara Thay Hin Bio and Masjid Jami' Al-Anwar with the coexistence of different religious and cultural communities. P23 similarly described the historical development of Telukbetung in terms of cooperation and coexistence among European, Chinese, Malay/Islamic, Christian, and Catholic communities. These

responses indicate that participants associated the historical landscape with contemporary meanings of diversity and coexistence.

This is where the study's contribution moves beyond conventional local-history learning. The participants did not merely learn about Telukbetung; they learned to read Telukbetung as a multicultural historical landscape. Ordinary urban spaces were reinterpreted as meaningful heritage spaces. A building or site previously perceived as old, familiar, or insignificant became associated with community histories, identity, memory, and social relationships. This transformation may be conceptualized as: ordinary urban space, interpreted historical space, multicultural historical space, and meaningful heritage space. The process provides the strongest empirical basis for the concept of multicultural historical awareness used in this study. It suggests that awareness emerges when participants can connect historical traces to the plurality of communities that produced the city and can relate those historical relationships to contemporary values of coexistence and mutual respect.

Historical Riding Tour as a Place-Based Learning Model for Heritage Awareness

The findings from the previous three subsections can be synthesized into a broader interpretation of the Historical Riding Tour as a place-based learning model for heritage awareness. The central contribution of the activity was not the riding format itself, but the creation of a learning process that connected direct encounter, interpretation, reflection, multicultural historical understanding, and awareness of heritage value. The first stage of the process was the direct encounter with historical places. Participants entered an urban environment that they might previously have encountered primarily as ordinary city space. Through the tour, however, they were invited to observe the historical traces embedded in that environment. This reflects the basic principle of place-based education articulated by Yemini et al. (2023), in which learning is connected to the physical and social characteristics of particular places. It also corresponds with the heritage-encounter perspective of Cendani & Romadi (2025) and the use of authentic local heritage as a historical learning resource described by Azizah (2025).

The second stage was historical interpretation. The sites did not automatically communicate their historical meanings. Participants required narratives that explained the historical functions, communities, events, and transformations associated with them. Weng et al. (2020) demonstrate the importance of interpretation in shaping perceived heritage value, while Jin et al. (2020) and Gao et al. (2020) highlight the importance of experiential engagement and authenticity in heritage experiences. The present study extends these findings by demonstrating that interpretation can function as a pedagogical bridge between heritage experience and historical learning.

The third stage involved observation, discussion, and reflection. Participants did not simply listen to information; their responses indicate that they compared what they previously knew with what they encountered during the activity. This process allowed them to reinterpret familiar spaces and question assumptions about the historical development of Telukbetung. Such meaning-making corresponds with Popa (2022) and

with the historical reasoning framework of van Drie & van Boxtel (2008).

The fourth stage was the emergence of multicultural historical awareness. Participants recognized that Telukbetung's historical landscape reflected the presence and interaction of multiple communities. The significance of this finding lies in the movement from factual recognition toward relational understanding: different communities were perceived not merely as separate historical groups but as participants in the formation of a shared urban environment. This finding is consistent with the cross-cultural awareness perspective of H. Zhang et al. (2018), while the historical empathy literature helps explain why contextual interpretation can encourage more nuanced cultural understanding (Baron, 2012; Huang et al., 2026; Strand, 2025; L. Zhang et al., 2026).

The fifth stage was heritage appreciation and preservation awareness. Participants' reported heritage appreciation and preservation awareness constituted another recurring pattern in the questionnaire responses. Twenty-two of the 26 respondents explicitly associated community-based historical activities with public awareness, education, appreciation, care, protection, documentation, or advocacy for heritage preservation. P11, for example, connected historical understanding with greater care for heritage, while P20 referred to awareness, documentation, education, and collaboration with government institutions as possible preservation strategies. P23 similarly stated that understanding the historical value of a place could generate greater concern and willingness to preserve cultural heritage. These responses indicate participants' reported preservation awareness and motivation rather than demonstrated long-term preservation behavior.

These findings are compatible with Ram et al. (2016), who connect authenticity with place attachment, and with Buonincontri et al. (2017), who conceptualize relationships among visitor experience, place attachment, and sustainable behavior at cultural heritage sites. Rezapouraghdam et al. (2025) further demonstrate the relationship between fascination, place attachment, and environmental stewardship. Jiang et al. (2025) add the importance of meaningful cultural heritage engagement for younger generations. Together, these studies provide theoretical support for understanding heritage awareness as a possible consequence of meaningful engagement with place.

Nevertheless, the findings require an important qualification. This study does not demonstrate that the Historical Riding Tour caused measurable learning gains or long-term heritage-preservation behavior. The evidence consists primarily of participants' post-activity self-reported responses. There was no control group, no standardized pre-test/post-test measurement of historical knowledge or multicultural awareness, and no longitudinal observation of participants' subsequent preservation behavior. Consequently, the findings support claims about participants' reported historical insight, multicultural awareness, heritage appreciation, and preservation motivation, but not about objectively measured learning gains, causal effects, or sustained behavioral change.

This limitation does not diminish the educational significance of the findings. Instead, it identifies an important direction for future research. Subsequent studies could employ pre-test/post-test designs, validated measures of historical empathy and historical consciousness, observation of participant behavior over time, interviews conducted

several weeks or months after the activity, or comparative studies involving different heritage routes and participant groups. Such approaches could determine whether the awareness generated during a place-based heritage encounter is sustained and whether it eventually translates into concrete forms of heritage stewardship. The findings can therefore be synthesized into the place-based learning process presented in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Place-Based Learning Process in the Historical Riding Tour Telokbetong
Source: Authors' analysis and synthesis of the research findings.

Figure 3 synthesizes the learning process identified across the participant responses. The first stage, direct encounter, reflects participants' descriptions of visiting and observing historical buildings, religious sites, and urban spaces in their actual locations. The second stage, historical interpretation, corresponds to responses in which participants reported acquiring or expanding knowledge about the historical functions and meanings of particular sites, including their connections with the Lampung Residency, religious communities, and the historical development of Telukbetung. The third stage, observation, discussion, and reflection, is reflected in participants' accounts of listening to explanations, examining physical traces, discussing historical meanings, and connecting the observed sites with broader historical narratives. The fourth stage, multicultural historical awareness, is represented by responses that associate Telukbetung's historical development with the presence, interaction, coexistence, and contribution of different ethnic and religious communities. The fifth stage, heritage appreciation and preservation awareness, is reflected in participants' statements linking historical understanding with greater appreciation, care, documentation, education, and preservation of heritage.

These empirical themes explain why the model should not be understood simply as a sequence of activities. Rather, Figure 3 represents an analytical synthesis of how participants described their learning experiences across the activity: physical encounter provided access to historical places; interpretation connected places with historical narratives; observation, discussion, and reflection supported meaning-making; these meanings were associated with recognition of Telukbetung as a multicultural historical landscape; and such recognition was further associated in participants' responses with heritage appreciation and preservation awareness. The model therefore extends existing studies that have separately examined place-based education (Yemini et al., 2023), historical encounters (Cendani & Romadi, 2025), local heritage as a learning resource (Azizah, 2025), historical empathy (Strand, 2025; L. Zhang et al., 2026), heritage interpretation (Huang et al., 2026; Weng et al., 2020), and place attachment and stewardship (Buonincontri et al., 2017; Ram et al., 2016; Rezapouraghdam et al., 2025). The distinctive contribution of the present study lies in bringing these dimensions together within a community-based urban heritage learning activity and empirically linking them as stages of a place-based learning process.

The findings also have potential relevance beyond Telukbetung, particularly for other multicultural historical cities in which heritage sites, religious buildings, commercial districts, residential areas, and other historical traces remain embedded within everyday urban life. The model presented in Figure 3 is transferable not because the riding format can be reproduced identically, but because its underlying learning principles can be adapted to different historical and cultural contexts. Other communities could identify a connected set of local historical places, develop historically grounded narratives with local knowledge holders, and design activities that combine direct encounter, observation, interpretation, discussion, and reflection. In a multicultural city, these activities could similarly be used to examine how different communities contributed to the formation and identity of an urban environment.

The findings have practical relevance for the design of place-based history and community-based heritage education. Rather than treating historical sites as destinations for one-time visits, educators and heritage practitioners can use the learning principles identified in this study (direct encounter, contextual interpretation, observation, discussion, and reflection) to connect local historical places with multicultural historical understanding and heritage appreciation. This orientation is consistent with recent research emphasizing the role of place in connecting learning with diverse urban environments (Yemini et al., 2023), the educational value of direct heritage encounters (Cendani & Romadi, 2025), the use of local heritage as a contextual learning resource (Azizah, 2025), and engagement with the local past through experiential learning (Strand, 2025). Recent studies on heritage interpretation and historical empathy further underline the importance of contextual engagement in shaping how people understand historical places and cultural relationships (Huang et al., 2026; L. Zhang et al., 2026). Accordingly, the contribution of the present findings lies not in prescribing the Historical Riding Tour as a standardized programme, but in identifying adaptable learning principles that can

inform heritage walks, cycling or riding tours, museum outreach, neighbourhood history programmes, and school-community heritage projects in other multicultural historical contexts. Their application should remain sensitive to local historical narratives, community relationships, heritage conditions, site accessibility, and participant characteristics.

CONCLUSION

This study indicates that the Historical Riding Tour Telokbetong has potential as a place-based learning model that connects the urban historical landscape with participants' historical interpretation, multicultural awareness, and heritage appreciation. Participants reported varied and sometimes fragmented prior knowledge of Telukbetung's historical significance. Following the activity, their responses described old buildings and urban spaces as historical resources containing identity, memory, and community narratives. Participants also reported recognizing Telukbetung as a multicultural historical landscape shaped by the interactions and contributions of European, Chinese, Malay/Islamic, Christian, and Catholic communities. These responses suggest that multicultural historical awareness was articulated through participants' interpretation of diversity, coexistence, interaction, and cooperation in the historical formation of the city. The findings further indicate that participants connected historical narratives encountered during the tour with appreciation and awareness of heritage preservation. In this sense, the Historical Riding Tour can position urban heritage sites not only as objects of visitation but also as experiential resources for community-based history learning. However, the findings are based on post-activity self-reports and therefore do not establish measurable learning gains or long-term changes in heritage-preservation behavior. Future studies should employ pre- and post-learning assessments, longitudinal designs, and comparative research to examine the sustainability and broader educational implications of place-based heritage learning. Overall, the study suggests that community-based historical activities can provide a relevant learning environment for connecting local history, multicultural historical awareness, and heritage preservation.

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