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A Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)-Oriented Assessment Management Model for History Learning to Strengthen Historical Literacy in State Senior High Schools in Ambon City, Maluku

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Abstract

History education plays a crucial role in shaping students' understanding of the past and developing critical, analytical, and creative thinking skills. The Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)-oriented assessment management model in history learning is considered effective in strengthening students' historical literacy, particularly in the context of Maluku, which has a long and rich history. This study aims to explore the application of the HOTS-based assessment management model in history learning at SMA Negeri Kota Ambon and its impact on students' historical literacy. This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design involving observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The results indicate that the implementation of the HOTS assessment model has enhanced students' abilities in analysis, synthesis, and application of historical knowledge, while also strengthening their understanding of the historical context of Maluku. In conclusion, the HOTS-based assessment management model significantly contributes to the enhancement of students' historical literacy and enriches their history learning experience, although challenges related to adaptation and student readiness still need to be addressed.

Keywords: Assessment Management; History Learning; Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS); Historical Literacy.

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INTRODUCTION

History learning plays a crucial role in shaping students' understanding of the past and providing insight into the social, cultural, and political dynamics that occurred during various historical periods. History learning plays a strategic role in shaping historical awareness, collective identity, and reflective skills in students (Ramadhani et al., 2026). Through history learning, students are encouraged to understand how past events shaped national identity and influenced contemporary society. At the high school level, history learning aims not only to memorize historical facts but also to develop critical and analytical thinking skills that will be useful in their lives. Furthermore, the purpose of history learning is to serve as a foundation for building national and state life, both now and in the future (Nadia et al., 2020).

As education in Indonesia advances, it is crucial for students to master not only historical knowledge but also higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). HOTS is defined as a high-level cognitive ability encompassing analysis, evaluation, and creation (Rimadia et al., 2026). This competency is crucial in preparing students to address complex real-life problems, while fostering critical and creative thinking. The application of HOTS has been proven effective in improving students' abilities from basic to advanced levels, including analysis, evaluation, and the creation of innovative solutions, enabling them not only to memorize information but also to apply it in broader contexts (Maslihah et al., 2025). This approach emphasizes in-depth, systematic, and reflective higher-order cognitive processes, enabling students to integrate knowledge with real-life contexts (Hermawati & Safitri, 2023). Thus, learning is no longer one-way but develops into a space for intellectual interaction that encourages the exploration of ideas and problem-solving abilities. Therefore, history learning that integrates HOTS is highly relevant for developing students' thinking skills holistically.

To achieve these goals, a HOTS-oriented history learning assessment management model is a much-needed approach in history education. This model focuses not only on memorization but also on developing critical thinking skills and students' ability to apply historical knowledge to solve problems relevant to their lives. Through HOTS-based assessments, teachers can measure students' ability to analyze historical events, evaluate various perspectives, and relate them to current social, political, and cultural conditions (Nadia et al., 2020; Gunartha, 2024).

Strengthening historical literacy is one of the main objectives of HOTS-based history learning. Historical literacy encompasses the ability to critically understand, interpret, and evaluate historical events (Agung, 2025). In Maluku, which has a long and diverse history,

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strengthening historical literacy is crucial, given the importance of understanding the local historical context, including the region's role in Indonesian history as a whole (Touwe, 2023). Good historical literacy will help students not only understand historical facts but also connect past events to their social and cultural lives (Miskawi et al., 2025).

A public high school in Ambon City, one of several public schools in the region, has implemented a HOTS-oriented assessment management model in history learning. Based on pre-research interviews and observations at several public high schools in Ambon City, the school has attempted to improve the quality of history education with this approach. The HOTS assessment model implemented aims to encourage students to not only memorize historical facts but also to process, analyze, and relate history to their social and cultural conditions. However, the implementation of this model still requires further study to assess its effectiveness in achieving these goals in public high schools in Ambon City.

Research conducted by Ramadhani et al. (2026) shows that the application of HOTS can increase student engagement, deepen conceptual understanding, and foster historical awareness relevant to contemporary life. Furthermore, HOTS-based learning also encourages students to develop reflective thinking skills and improve decision-making. The implementation of HOTS in history learning aligns with the principles of SDG 4, which emphasizes the importance of inclusive, equitable, and quality education. Research by Sari & Suprijono (2022) also states that through familiarizing students with HOTS questions based on knowledge construction, it is proven that students can think critically and analytically about historical sources, thereby improving their historical literacy skills.

This study has significant novelty, namely analyzing in depth how the HOTS-oriented history learning assessment management model is implemented in Ambon City State Senior High Schools and its impact on strengthening students' historical literacy. The main objective of this study is to explore the application of the HOTS assessment model in history learning in Ambon state schools, as well as evaluate its contribution to improving students' critical thinking skills and historical understanding. This research also has high urgency, considering the importance of HOTS-based history learning in preparing the younger generation who not only master knowledge, but also are able to think critically and reflectively about future challenges.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore in-depth the phenomenon of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)-oriented history learning assessment

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management to strengthen Maluku historical literacy in Ambon City State Senior High Schools. This methodology aims to uncover the complexity of specific contexts through comprehensive analysis that goes beyond simply collecting numerical data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach allows researchers to understand the application of HOTS assessments in the context of history learning more holistically and contextually, by considering factors that influence assessment management and the learning process in schools.

Informants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, namely by selecting individuals deemed to have knowledge, experience, and a direct role in the implementation of assessment management in Ambon City State Senior High Schools. The main informants consisted of the principal as the policy maker, the history teacher who carried out learning activities, and the administrative staff involved in assessment management. The number of informants was adjusted to the data needs and the principle of information sufficiency, so that the data obtained could reflect the existing conditions in a representative manner.

Data collection was conducted through triangulation methods, including participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Primary data sources involved key informants, namely the principal, teachers, and administrative staff, who provided direct insights into the implementation of HOTS assessments in history learning. Participant observation was conducted to understand how assessments are implemented in the context of daily learning, while in-depth interviews aimed to explore the informants' perspectives, experiences, and challenges related to assessment management.

Data analysis adopted an interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In this analysis process, researchers adhered to the principles of validity and credibility of qualitative research, as suggested by Miles et al. (2014). Data validity was strengthened through member checking techniques, namely by confirming interview results and data interpretation with informants to ensure the accuracy of the information obtained. Furthermore, researchers also applied prolonged engagement techniques, namely prolonged interaction at the research site to build trust, understand the context in depth, and avoid misperceptions. To ensure the accuracy and quality of data analysis, researchers also conducted peer debriefings or discussions with colleagues. This technique was used to obtain critical input on the data analysis process and interpretation of results, thereby ensuring the accuracy and credibility of the information obtained academically.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

HOTS-Oriented History Learning Assessment Management Model in Ambon City State Senior High Schools

Ambon City State Senior High School has developed a history learning assessment management model oriented toward Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), which aims to improve students' critical, analytical, and creative thinking abilities (Gufran et al., 2025). This assessment model is designed to encourage students not only to memorize historical facts but also to develop their abilities to analyze historical events, evaluate historical sources, and apply the knowledge they have learned in everyday contexts. History learning in this high school focuses on higher-order thinking skills that go beyond mere factual understanding.

The implementation of the HOTS assessment model at a public high school in Ambon City began with a paradigm shift in history teaching. Learning, which previously tended to focus on memorization, has transformed into a more interactive and reflective approach. History teachers at this school use various types of assessments, such as project assignments, analysis-based exams, and presentations, which test not only students' memorization but also their ability to connect historical knowledge to contemporary phenomena. This serves as the foundation for an assessment management model aimed at developing students' critical thinking skills (Syarifah et al., 2025).

The implementation of HOTS assessments also involves the development of clear and transparent assessment rubrics (Sukenti & Anggraini, 2025). Teachers establish assessment criteria that encompass aspects such as analytical skills, evaluation, synthesis, and application in assigned tasks (Suhadak, 2024). For example, in analyzing historical events, students are asked not only to explain the sequence of events but also to critique the causes and effects of those events and relate them to current socio-political conditions. This rubric helps students understand teacher expectations and motivates them to think more deeply.

Furthermore, this assessment management model integrates assessment triangulation, where various measurement methods are used to evaluate student abilities (Paramita, 2025). Assessment is conducted through written exams, direct observation during class discussions, and evaluation of individual or group assignments that require higher-order thinking skills (Endrayanto, 2021). Project-based assessment also provides opportunities for students to express their understanding in more creative and applicable forms, such as creating a timeline of historical events or a documentary video that connects historical facts to current socio-cultural conditions.

Teachers at Ambon City State Senior High Schools adopt an assessment approach based

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on constructive feedback. Throughout the learning process, students are given the opportunity to receive direct feedback on their work (Misnawati et al., 2025). This feedback not only focuses on errors or deficiencies but also provides guidance for improvement and the development of critical thinking skills (Mahfuzh, 2024). This approach emphasizes self-reflection as an integral part of the learning process, where students are expected to identify their weaknesses and seek solutions to address them.

This assessment management model also involves strengthening collaboration between students and teachers, creating an inclusive and mutually supportive learning environment. In HOTS-oriented history learning, collaboration between students is crucial, as students are encouraged to discuss, exchange views, and solve problems in groups (Gradini & Umar, 2025). This enriches the assessment process by providing space for in-depth interactions and broadening their perspectives on the historical events being studied.

One of the challenges faced in implementing the HOTS assessment model is the readiness of students and teachers to adapt to this more complex approach. Some students have difficulty grasping higher-order thinking concepts, which were not previously a primary focus of history lessons. Therefore, teachers at Ambon City State Senior High Schools are taking a phased approach by providing exercises aimed at developing critical thinking skills, such as historical source analysis exercises or group discussions on the relevance of history to current social issues.

Despite challenges in its implementation, overall, the HOTS-oriented assessment management model in Ambon City's public senior high schools has yielded positive results in improving students' historical literacy. Students are not only able to memorize historical facts but also develop critical and creative thinking skills in analyzing historical events and their applications in everyday life (Miskawi et al., 2025). This model demonstrates that HOTS-based assessment, when implemented well, can enrich students' learning experiences and have a significant impact on improving the quality of history teaching in schools (Iffa et al., 2026).

The Impact of the HOTS-Oriented History Learning Assessment Management Model on Strengthening Students' Historical Literacy in Maluku

The implementation of a Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)-oriented history learning assessment management model in Ambon City State Senior High Schools has had a significant impact on strengthening students' historical literacy, particularly in understanding Maluku history. Students' historical literacy is not only limited to mastering historical facts but also includes the ability to connect historical events to current social, political, and cultural contexts (Septiana et

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al., 2025). By implementing the HOTS assessment model, students are encouraged to think more deeply, analyze, and evaluate various historical events relevant to their lives (Musyaffa & Atno, 2025).

The first visible impact of implementing this model is an improvement in students' abilities in historical analysis. Through HOTS-based assessments, students not only memorize historical events but are also encouraged to identify cause-and-effect relationships and evaluate the impact of these events on the development of Maluku society (Musyaffa & Atno, 2025). For example, when studying the history of conflict in Maluku, students are asked to analyze the causes, socio-political impacts, and the steps taken to resolve them. This allows them to understand history not only as isolated facts but as a series of interconnected events.

The implementation of HOTS assessments also impacts students' ability to critique historical sources (Sari & Suprijono, 2022). In this assessment model, students are tasked with evaluating various historical sources, both primary and secondary, to assess their validity and relevance to the current context. For example, students are invited to analyze historical archives depicting Maluku's role in Indonesia's struggle for independence and assess whether these sources contain bias or a particular perspective. These skills are essential for developing a more objective and critical understanding of history.

Another impact is the improvement of students' ability to synthesize and apply historical knowledge. In the HOTS assessment model, students are not only required to know facts but are also tasked with connecting historical knowledge to contemporary issues (Batubara & Siregar, 2022). For example, students are asked to examine how values embodied in Maluku history, such as the spirit of mutual cooperation and interfaith tolerance, can be applied to address current social and cultural challenges. This leads to the development of historical literacy that focuses not only on the past but also on the relevance of history in everyday life.

Furthermore, the HOTS assessment model also strengthens students' sense of identity and pride in Maluku's history. By deepening their understanding of local history, students become more aware of its importance within the context of Indonesian history as a whole. The HOTS-based assessment, which encourages students to explore Maluku's role in Indonesian independence and its cultural diversity, strengthens their sense of belonging and pride in their region's historical heritage.

Another significant impact is the improvement of students' collaborative skills. The HOTS assessment model at Ambon City State Senior High Schools encourages students to discuss and work together in groups to analyze historical events or complete history-based projects. This

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collaboration not only improves students' social skills but also enriches their perspectives on history, as they can discuss and share perspectives from various perspectives. This enhances their understanding of the complexities of history and how different perspectives can influence how we view historical events.

However, implementing the HOTS assessment model also presents several challenges in strengthening students' historical literacy. One of these challenges is students' readiness to face more complex learning based on higher-order thinking skills. Some students, especially those accustomed to simpler learning, struggle to understand and apply critical, analytical, and evaluative thinking skills. Therefore, more gradual learning and intensive mentoring are needed to help students adapt to this more challenging assessment approach.

Despite the challenges, the overall impact of implementing the HOTS assessment management model on students' historical literacy has been very positive. Students not only memorize history but also develop the ability to think critically, analyze, and connect historical events to their lives. Thus, this model not only strengthens their historical literacy but also helps them become more skilled at using historical knowledge to understand the world around them and address existing social challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the implementation of a HOTS-oriented history learning assessment management model in Ambon City State Senior High Schools has had a positive impact on strengthening students' historical literacy. With this model, students not only memorize historical facts but are also trained to think critically, analytically, and creatively in processing historical knowledge. HOTS-oriented learning enables students to analyze, evaluate, and connect historical events with current social and cultural issues, as well as deepen their understanding of Maluku history. Visible impacts include improved historical analysis skills, knowledge synthesis, and the application of historical values in real-life contexts. Although there are challenges in terms of student readiness for a HOTS-based approach, overall, this model has enriched students' learning experiences and strengthened their historical literacy.

Based on the research results, it is recommended that the implementation of the HOTS assessment management model can be further developed by prioritizing gradual training, so that students who are previously unfamiliar with HOTS-based learning can adapt more easily. In addition, there is a need for increased mentoring for teachers in designing and implementing HOTS assessments, so that assessments do not only focus on measuring higher-order thinking

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skills, but can also stimulate other skills such as collaboration and communication. Finally, this study also suggests conducting further studies related to the challenges and successes of the HOTS assessment model, so that history learning in Ambon City State Senior High Schools can be more effective in improving the quality of history education and students' historical literacy.

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