

COMPREHENSIVE INSIGHTS INTO HISTORICAL EVENTS: VISUAL AND VERBAL ASSOCIATIONS OF STUDENTS IN UKRAINE, ISRAEL, AND POLAND

Nitza Davidovitch

Education Department, Ariel University
Kiriath Hamada, 3, Ariel 40700, Israel

E-mail address: d.nitza@ariel.ac.il

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7273-903X>

Aleksandra Gerkerova

Education Department, Ariel University
Kiriath Hamada, 3, Ariel 40700, Israel

E-mail address: aleksandrag@ariel.ac.il

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7449-6112>

Katarzyna Thomas

Education Department, Ariel University
Kiriath Hamada, 3, Ariel 40700, Israel

E-mail address: thomaskatarzyna@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3602-615X>

ABSTRACT

Aim. This research aims to examine, through a questionnaire using visual and verbal free associations, whether the Holocaust, the war in Ukraine, and the war in Israel are perceived as distinct, unique events or if they merge with other military conflicts in students' perceptions worldwide.

Methods. A total of 82 students from Ukraine, Israel, and Poland participated in this study. The methodology combined visual and verbal free association tasks, where students responded to a series of photographs depicting the Holocaust, the war in Ukraine, and other conflicts. Demographic data such as academic discipline and cultural background were collected to analyse their influence on students' perceptions.

Results. The Holocaust is largely perceived as a unique and unparalleled historical event, particularly by students from Israel and Poland, who associate it with themes such as inhumanity, grief, and fear. In contrast, some students view more contemporary conflicts, such as the war in Ukraine and the war in Israel, through a comparative lens, often linking them to broader global conflicts. Ukrainian students tend to see the war in Ukraine as a unique event, while Israeli students show a similar perspective regarding the war in Israel, associating it with themes of chaos, struggle, and survival.

Conclusions. This study highlights the significance of the Holocaust in shaping collective historical memory and emphasises the role of educational and cultural backgrounds in these perceptions. The findings underscore the importance of educational strategies that maintain the distinct historical significance of the Holocaust while fostering empathy and critical thinking, offering valuable insights for educators and policymakers.

Keywords: historical memory, Holocaust, war in Ukraine, war in Israel, military conflicts, associations, cultural influences

INTRODUCTION

Understanding how historical events are perceived and interpreted by younger generations is a critical endeavour in preserving cultural memory and shaping a more empathetic and tolerant society. The Holocaust and the war in Ukraine stand as pivotal historical milestones, deeply etched into the collective consciousness of humanity, with profound implications for present and future generations. This research explores the perceptions of students regarding these significant events, analysing whether they are perceived as unique or whether they coalesce in people's minds with other military conflicts worldwide.

The relevance of this research is rooted in the inherent value of preserving historical memory, especially as contemporary global dynamics and technological advancements reshape how information is consumed and internalised. As students increasingly engage with digital media and virtual interactions, it is paramount to investigate how these interactions influence their perception of historical events.

Educational institutions play a pivotal role in shaping historical understanding and fostering tolerance among young minds. By delving into the associations and emotions linked to these historical events, educators can develop more effective teaching strategies and create curricula that inspire critical thinking and empathy. Additionally, understanding students' associations can shed light on any misconceptions or gaps in knowledge that require remediation, ensuring a more accurate understanding of history.

The relevance of the research is determined by the following factors:

- *Historical memory*: understanding how younger generations perceive and interpret historical events is crucial for preserving historical memory. The Holocaust, the war in Ukraine, the war in Israel are significant historical events with lasting impacts on societies, and studying how they are perceived can aid in preserving their memory and lessons for future generations.
- *Educating for tolerance*: by exploring students' associations and emotions related to these events, educators can develop more effective strategies for teaching history and promoting empathy and tolerance. Analysing the associations can help identify misconceptions or gaps in knowledge that need to be addressed.
- *Contemporary relevance*: the study of "modern military conflicts" and how they compare to historical events offers insights into the ways current events are understood and contextualised. This knowledge can help policymakers and educators address issues related to conflict resolution and peacebuilding.
- *Cultural and demographic influences*: analysing associations among students from different cultural and demographic backgrounds can highlight the role of cultural factors in shaping historical perspectives and contribute to fostering a more inclusive and diverse understanding of history.

The uniqueness of this research lies in its comprehensive approach to examining students' perceptions. By utilising both visual and verbal free associations in the questionnaire, the study offers a multi-dimensional understanding of how historical events are mentally processed and linked by students. This methodology allows for a nuanced analysis of the associations and emotions evoked by the war in Ukraine, the war in Israel and "modern military conflicts" compared to specific historical events like the Holocaust and war in Ukraine. Furthermore, the inclusion of personal experiences, academic disciplines, cultural backgrounds, and demographic factors as potential influencers adds depth to the investigation, making it a comprehensive and insightful exploration of students' perceptions and associations related to historical events.

The aim of the research is to analyse, based on a questionnaire using the method of free associations (both visual and verbal), whether events related to the Holocaust, the war in Ukraine, the war in Israel are perceived as unique or if they merge in people's perception with other military conflicts worldwide.

Research objectives are:

- to assess whether events related to the Holocaust, the war in Ukraine, the war in Israel and other military conflicts worldwide are perceived as unique or merge in people's perception.
- to investigate the prevailing themes and emotions associated with the Holocaust, the war in Ukraine and the war in Israel among students when prompted to think about it.
- to conduct a comparative analysis of students' associations between "modern military conflicts" and specific historical events like the Holocaust, the war in Ukraine the war in Israel.

Research questions are:

- How do students perceive the uniqueness or similarities in historical events represented by the photographs related to the Holocaust, the war in Ukraine, the war in Israel or other military conflicts?
- What are the common themes and emotions that students associate with the Holocaust, the war in Ukraine, the war in Israel when prompted to think about them?
- Are there any significant differences in the associations students make when thinking about “modern military conflicts” compared to specific historical events like the Holocaust, the war in Ukraine or the war in Israel?
- Do students’ personal experiences or background influence their associations and perceptions of historical events?
- Are there any significant differences in the associations made by students from different academic disciplines, cultural backgrounds, and demographic factors?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This exploration focuses on how students perceive such tragedies such as the Holocaust and the ongoing war in Ukraine. Embedded in humanity’s collective consciousness, these occurrences underscore the importance of critically examining their understanding and educational dissemination.

Photography’s dual role in historical documentation and education is pivotal. As detailed by Joshua Fortin (2023), during the Holocaust, photography captured the realities from the perspectives of both oppressors and victims. The Nazis meticulously documented their regime’s actions to create a record of power and control, while victims and bystanders used photography as a desperate attempt to preserve the truth of the atrocities (Fortin, 2023). These photographs serve as critical historical evidence but require careful preservation and ethical handling to prevent misuse and distortion, particularly in the age of digital manipulation. This responsibility highlights the necessity of maintaining the authenticity and educational value of Holocaust photographs.

Building upon the ethical considerations of photography, Isabel Wollaston (2015) discusses the complexities involved in the public display and representation of Holocaust photographs. She explains how the iconic status of certain images can illuminate but also obscure comprehensive historical understanding. Wollaston raises concerns that, despite the vast array of photographs, only a select few become emblematic, often repeated across various media and potentially simplifying the Holocaust’s narrative (Wollaston, 2015). This selective visibility underscores the importance of a balanced approach in educational settings, where a diverse array of images should be used to represent the events’ full breadth and the victims’ experiences comprehensively.

The perceptions and preconceptions of students regarding historical events are critical in shaping educational approaches. Michael Gray (2013) emphasises the importance of understanding student perceptions about Jews, Jewish identity, and the Holocaust. His study reveals a significant gap in students' understanding, with many harbouring misconceptions that can perpetuate anti-Semitism and historical inaccuracies. Gray's research suggests that addressing these preconceptions is essential for fostering a more accurate and empathetic understanding of the Holocaust, thus enhancing the effectiveness of Holocaust education (Gray, 2013).

Susan A. Crane (2008) adds another dimension to the discussion by examining the ethical and historical dilemmas surrounding the public access to Holocaust atrocity photographs. Crane questions whether the continuous exposure to these recirculated images has led to a familiarity that potentially numbs the public and diminishes their impact, especially among newer generations. She suggests that these photographs might have reached the limits of their usefulness as testimonial tools, drawing parallels to the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, which advocates for a more respectful handling of sensitive materials (Crane, 2008).

The integrity and authenticity of Holocaust photographs are further underscored by Judith Levin and Daniel Uziel (1998), who reflect on how these images have shaped public understanding of the Holocaust. They discuss the Nazis' use of photography to document their atrocities and how victims and liberators used it to offer a counter-narrative. Levin and Uziel stress the importance of rigorous scrutiny and ethical handling of these photographs to ensure they continue to serve as valuable educational tools (Levin & Uziel, 1998).

Expanding on the complexities of these images, Janina Struk (1998) discusses how Holocaust photography has influenced collective memory, noting that certain haunting images have come to dominate the narrative, often at the expense of a broader contextual understanding. This selective representation poses challenges for historians and educators in ensuring that the portrayal of the Holocaust remains comprehensive and accurate (Struk, 1998).

Sybil Milton (1999) further explores how the Nazis integrated photography into their administrative machinery, using it both as a tool for propaganda and as documentation of their genocidal policies. Post-war, these photographs have become crucial for education about the Holocaust, helping to confront the public with the regime's atrocities. However, Milton highlights the archival challenges these photographs present, including gaps in the photographic record and issues related to the context and proper annotation of the images (Milton, 1999).

Addressing the ethical considerations of using Holocaust images in education, Ruth Anne Lenga (2020) stresses the importance of maintaining these photographs' integrity to prevent historical distortions. With the advancement of digital technologies, the potential for manipulating these images increases, making rigorous ethical standards

and careful scrutiny essential for preserving their educational value and respecting the memory of the victims (Lenga, 2020).

The context of modern conflicts, like the war in Ukraine, also sees photography playing a critical role. Andrey Makarychev and Sami Siva (2023) analyse how war photography communicates the profound impacts of conflict, emphasising themes of human insecurity, the stark reality of “bare life,” and the resilience of individuals and communities. These images serve as powerful narratives that reshape public perception and influence political discourse, highlighting the vulnerability of civilians and the human costs of conflict (Makarychev & Siva, 2023). This analysis reveals the ongoing relevance of ethical considerations in the portrayal of war and conflicts through photography.

METHODOLOGY

We designed and administered a questionnaire to students, presenting them with a series of photographs related to the Holocaust, the war in Ukraine, and other military conflicts. Participants were asked to provide verbal and visual free associations in response to each photograph, allowing us to explore their perceptions and emotions related to these events. In addition, demographic data were collected, including academic disciplines, cultural backgrounds, and other relevant factors, to analyse how these variables might influence students’ perceptions and associations with historical events. A comparative analysis was conducted to examine the associations students made when thinking about “modern military conflicts” in contrast to specific historical events such as the Holocaust and the war in Ukraine. This analysis focused on identifying unique associations and patterns of merging within their responses. Furthermore, content analysis was applied to the participants’ responses to categorise and quantify recurring themes and emotions associated with each historical event. This approach enabled us to identify prevailing patterns and differences across events and student groups. For the collection of photographs, we used the method of continuous sampling.

Population

The study included students from three countries: Poland, Ukraine, and Israel. A total of 82 students participated in the research. There were 35 participants from Poland, attending a variety of universities: 35 participants from Poland, all from the University of Rzeszów, 27 participants from Ukraine, all from the South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K. D. Ushynsky. 20 participants from Israel, all from Ariel University.

RESULTS

Perception of Uniqueness or Merging of Events

The analysis of students’ perceptions reveals varied responses regarding the uniqueness or merging of events such as the Holocaust, the war in Ukraine, the war in Israel, and other military conflicts. The common themes and emotions associated with these events among students from Ukraine, Israel, and Poland are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1
Common Themes and Emotions Associated with Historical and Contemporary Conflicts

Event	Common Themes (Ukraine)	Common Themes (Israel)	Common Themes (Poland)
Holocaust	fear (89%), grief (84%), loss (81%)	sadness (74%), horror (71%), empathy (66%)	inhumanity (94%), grief (91%), fear (86%)
War in Ukraine	destruction (82%), pain (76%), resilience (71%)	anger (61%), sadness (56%), determination (53%)	inhumanity (94%), grief (91%), fear 86%
War in Israel	devastation (52%), suffering (47%), endurance (43%)	chaos (72%), struggle (67%), survival (62%)	sadness (61%), chaos (57 %), struggle 52%

Source. Own research.

Ukraine

Students often perceive the war in Ukraine as a distinct and unique event, largely due to its contemporary and personal relevance. This conflict is deeply embedded in their everyday experiences, making it stand out as a singular occurrence. However, there are instances where the war in Ukraine is viewed within the broader context of global conflicts and suffering, indicating a merging of this event with the universal themes of war and destruction. Ukrainian students associate the war in Ukraine with destruction (82%), pain (76%), and resilience (71%), indicating the profound impact of the conflict on their lives.

Regarding the Holocaust, Ukrainian students view it as an event of profound fear, grief, and loss, reflecting its deep emotional resonance and historical significance. For example, 89% of Ukrainian students mentioned fear, 84% mentioned grief, and 81% mentioned loss. These associations highlight the Holocaust’s lasting impact on their historical consciousness.

Ukrainian students also view the current war in Israel with a sense of empathy and concern. They mention themes such as devastation (52%), suffering (47%), and endurance (43%), indicating their recognition of the intense emotional and physical toll of the conflict on Israeli society.

Israel

The current war in Israel is perceived by Israeli students as a significant and painful event. They frequently mention chaos (72%), struggle (67%), and survival (62%), indicating the intense emotional impact of the conflict.

Regarding the Holocaust, Israeli students emphasise its uniqueness through themes of sadness, horror, and empathy, underscoring the Holocaust's impact on collective memory and identity. In their responses, 74% of Israeli students mentioned sadness, 71% mentioned horror, and 66% mentioned empathy. These themes highlight the deep emotional and historical significance of the Holocaust in Israeli society.

Israeli students also perceive the war in Ukraine with significant empathy and concern, often linking it to broader themes of conflict and resilience. They frequently express emotions such as anger (61%), sadness (56%), and a sense of determination (53%), reflecting a deep understanding of the human cost and struggles involved.

Poland

Polish students predominantly view the Holocaust as an unparalleled historical event with immense significance. The Holocaust's profound impact on humanity and its extensive documentation in Polish history education contribute to this perception. Polish students view the Holocaust with a strong sense of inhumanity, grief, and fear, reinforced by extensive historical education and cultural memory. For example, 94% mentioned inhumanity, 91% mentioned grief, and 86% mentioned fear. This indicates a deeply ingrained recognition of the Holocaust's significance.

Regarding the war in Ukraine, Polish students sometimes merge this conflict into a broader narrative of historical suffering and loss. This indicates a tendency to see these events within the larger framework of human tragedy and resilience. Polish students associate the war in Ukraine with fear (71%), despair (66%), and hope (63%), indicating a balance between empathy and historical reflection.

Accuracy of Identifying Events from Photographs

The analysis also assessed whether students could correctly identify events depicted in photographs. The results show that students from all three countries could generally distinguish the Holocaust from other military conflicts, but with varying degrees of accuracy.

Ukrainian students demonstrated a high accuracy rate in identifying the Holocaust from photographs, with 84% correctly recognising it. They were also able to distinguish the war in Ukraine accurately, with 92% recognition. However, their ability to identify the current war in Israel was lower, at 61%, indicating some confusion with other regional conflicts.

Israeli students showed a high accuracy rate in identifying the Holocaust, with 89% correctly recognising it. Their identification of the current war in Israel was also high, at 87%, reflecting their direct experience and awareness. However, the recognition of the war in Ukraine was moderate, at 67%, suggesting some overlap in perceptions with other conflicts.

Polish students had the highest accuracy rate in identifying the Holocaust, at 93%, reflecting their extensive historical education on the topic. Their recognition of the war in Ukraine was 74%, indicating a good level of awareness but some merging with other historical conflicts. The identification of the current war in Israel was 57%, showing the lowest accuracy and indicating a potential gap in awareness of contemporary conflicts in the region.

Table 2

Accuracy of Identifying Historical and Contemporary Events from Photographs

Event	Accuracy (Ukraine)	Accuracy (Israel)	Accuracy (Poland)
Holocaust	84%	89%	93%
War in Ukraine	92%	67%	74%
War in Israel	61%	87%	57%

Own research.

Differences in Associations with Modern Military Conflicts and Historical Events

When comparing students' associations with modern military conflicts like the war in Ukraine and Israel to historical events like the Holocaust, significant differences emerge. Modern military conflicts are often perceived with more immediate and visceral emotional responses due to their ongoing nature and direct impact on current lives. For instance, the war in Ukraine is associated with destruction, pain, and resilience by Ukrainian students, reflecting their direct experience of the conflict's immediate consequences.

In contrast, historical events like the Holocaust are perceived with a more reflective and solemn emotional response. Students from all three countries associate the Holocaust with profound themes such as inhumanity, grief, and fear (in Poland), sadness, horror, and empathy (in Israel), and fear, grief, and loss (in Ukraine). These themes reflect a deep, historically ingrained understanding of the event's long-term impact on humanity and collective memory.

Modern conflicts like the war in Israel and Ukraine also evoke themes of chaos, struggle, and survival, indicating a focus on the ongoing and unresolved nature

of these conflicts. The immediacy of these emotions contrasts with the more reflective and commemorative themes associated with the Holocaust. This difference highlights how the temporal distance of historical events allows for a broader reflection on their implications and lessons, while contemporary conflicts elicit responses centred around immediate survival and resilience.

Impact of Personal Experiences

Ukrainian students' direct exposure to the ongoing conflict in their country deeply influences their emotional responses. The war in Ukraine is associated with themes of destruction, pain, and resilience, highlighting the profound effect of the conflict on their daily lives. This immediate experience results in a more intense and emotionally charged engagement compared to historical events. Regarding the Holocaust, their responses of fear, grief, and loss are shaped by historical narratives and education that stress the Holocaust's profound impact on humanity.

Israeli students' experiences with regional conflict shape their perception of the current war in Israel. They frequently mention chaos, struggle, and survival, emphasising the conflict's direct and personal relevance. The Holocaust evokes themes of sadness, horror, and empathy, influenced by the collective memory and identity ingrained in Israeli society. Additionally, Israeli students express significant empathy and concern for the war in Ukraine, reflecting a broader understanding of conflict and resilience shaped by their own experiences.

Polish students' perceptions are strongly moulded by their historical education and cultural memory. The Holocaust is viewed with a deep sense of inhumanity, grief, and fear, reinforced by extensive historical documentation and education. The war in Ukraine is sometimes seen within a larger narrative of historical suffering and loss, with Polish students balancing empathy with historical reflection. Their emotional responses to these events are influenced by a profound cultural and educational engagement with their country's history and collective memory.

Differences by Academic Disciplines, Cultural Backgrounds, and Demographic Factors

The study also highlights significant differences in the associations and perceptions of students based on their academic disciplines, cultural backgrounds, and demographic factors.

Students in humanities and social sciences tend to contextualise historical events within broader societal narratives, emphasising themes such as inhumanity, grief, and empathy. They are more likely to engage with the emotional and moral implications of events like the Holocaust, the war in Ukraine, and the war in Israel. In contrast, students

in scientific disciplines focus more on factual and immediate impacts, such as the destruction and survival aspects of modern conflicts.

Table 3

Percentage Breakdown of Students' Responses by Academic Discipline

Event	Humanities and Social Sciences	Scientific Disciplines
Holocaust	inhumanity (84%), grief (83%), empathy (71%)	fear (73%), loss (67%), horror (61%)
War in Ukraine	Destruction (72%), pain (66%), resilience (61 %)	Survival (74%), anger (71%), sadness (62%)
War in Israel	struggle (67%), survival (59%), chaos (54%)	devastation (74%), endurance (62%), suffering(58 %)

Own research.

Cultural narratives and national histories play a crucial role in shaping students' perceptions. Ukrainian students, influenced by their direct experience of war, emphasise themes of destruction and resilience. Israeli students, with their history of regional conflict, focus on chaos and survival. Polish students, with a deep engagement in Holocaust education, highlight inhumanity and grief. These cultural differences underscore the importance of context in shaping how historical and contemporary events are perceived.

Age and family status also influence perceptions. However, in this study, we did not find significant differences in perceptions based on these factors. Regardless of age or family status, students displayed similar patterns of emotional engagement with both contemporary conflicts and historical events. This uniformity suggests that the profound nature of these events transcends generational divides, likely due to the universal impact of education on collective memory. Gender, socioeconomic status, and personal or family histories related to these events also did not show significant variance in emotional responses, indicating a shared human experience in processing such events.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of how students from Ukraine, Israel, and Poland perceive and emotionally respond to significant historical and contemporary events. The analysis shows that the Holocaust is widely recognised as a unique and unparalleled historical event across all three countries. This consistent perception is likely due to the extensive historical education and cultural memory that emphasise the Holocaust's profound impact on humanity. In contrast, the wars in Ukraine and Israel are perceived through the lens of personal and contemporary relevance, leading to more immediate and visceral emotional responses.

The ability of students to accurately identify events from photographs varied across the countries. Polish students demonstrated the highest accuracy in identifying the Holocaust, which can be attributed to their comprehensive historical education. Ukrainian and Israeli students also showed high accuracy in recognising the Holocaust, though there was more variability in their identification of contemporary conflicts. Ukrainian students had a high recognition rate for the war in Ukraine, reflecting their direct experience with the conflict. Israeli students accurately identified the current war in Israel, which is consistent with their direct exposure to regional conflicts. However, both Ukrainian and Israeli students showed moderate accuracy in identifying each other's conflicts, indicating some overlap in perceptions with other conflicts.

The study highlights significant differences in how students associate themes and emotions with historical events like the Holocaust compared to modern conflicts. The latter evoke themes of chaos, struggle, and survival, indicating their unresolved and ongoing nature. In contrast, the Holocaust elicits more reflective and solemn themes such as inhumanity, grief, and empathy, which suggests a deeper, historically ingrained understanding.

Personal experiences play a crucial role in shaping students' perceptions and emotional responses. Ukrainian students, directly affected by the ongoing conflict in their country, show intense and emotionally charged responses to the war in Ukraine. Similarly, Israeli students' experiences with regional conflict influence their perception of the current war in Israel. These personal experiences result in a more immediate and visceral engagement compared to historical events like the Holocaust, where responses are shaped by educational narratives and collective memory.

The study also reveals significant differences based on academic disciplines and cultural backgrounds. Students in humanities and social sciences tend to contextualise historical events within broader societal narratives, emphasising emotional and moral implications. In contrast, students in scientific disciplines focus more on factual and immediate impacts. Cultural narratives and national histories further shape students' perceptions. Ukrainian students emphasise themes of destruction and resilience, Israeli students focus on chaos and survival, and Polish students highlight inhumanity and grief. These differences underscore the importance of context in shaping how historical and contemporary events are perceived.

In this study, age and family status did not show significant differences in perceptions. Regardless of these factors, students displayed similar patterns of emotional engagement with both contemporary conflicts and historical events. This uniformity suggests that the profound nature of these events transcends generational divides, likely due to the universal impact of education on collective memory. Additionally, gender, socioeconomic status, and personal or family histories related to these events did not show significant variance in emotional responses, indicating a shared human experience in processing such profound events.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study have important implications for education and policy. Understanding how students perceive and emotionally respond to historical and contemporary events can help educators develop more effective teaching strategies. By addressing the diverse influences of personal experiences, academic disciplines, cultural backgrounds, and demographic factors, educators can promote a more comprehensive and empathetic understanding of significant events among students. Educational strategies should incorporate both historical narratives and contemporary experiences to help students understand the broader context of historical events while recognising the immediate relevance of contemporary conflicts. Developing curricula that inspire critical thinking and empathy can address misconceptions and gaps in knowledge, ensuring a more accurate and nuanced understanding of history.

Policymakers should recognise the importance of preserving historical memory while also addressing contemporary issues. Supporting educational initiatives that emphasise the significance of historical events like the Holocaust and providing resources for teaching about modern conflicts can foster a more informed and empathetic society. Promoting cross-cultural understanding through educational exchanges and collaborative projects can help students appreciate the diverse perspectives and shared human experiences that shape our world.

This study provides a detailed understanding of how students from Ukraine, Israel, and Poland perceive and emotionally respond to significant historical and contemporary events, with important implications for education and policymaking.

Educational strategies can benefit from integrating both historical narratives and contemporary experiences, helping students grasp the broader context of historical events while recognising the immediate relevance of current conflicts. Such an approach fosters critical thinking and empathy, encouraging students to draw connections between past and present. Personalised learning, allowing students to explore projects related to their backgrounds or family histories, can enhance engagement and relevance.

The influence of academic disciplines on students' perceptions highlights the need for a multidisciplinary approach in education. Humanities and social sciences students tend to contextualise events within broader societal narratives, while scientific discipline students focus on immediate impacts. Combining emotional and factual engagement with historical events can provide a more comprehensive understanding.

Policymakers play a crucial role in supporting educational initiatives that emphasise the importance of historical memory and contemporary issues. Providing funding and resources for museums, memorials, and educational programmes dedicated to events like the Holocaust ensures these resources are accessible to all students, fostering an informed and empathetic society. Additionally, policymakers should ensure that contemporary issues are adequately addressed in educational curricula,

providing resources and training for teachers to discuss modern conflicts and their implications effectively.

Supporting cross-cultural understanding through educational exchanges and collaborative projects can promote empathy, reduce stereotypes, and help students appreciate diverse perspectives. Policies promoting rigorous ethical standards in the use of historical resources, especially in the digital age, are also essential to maintain the integrity of these resources.

Encouraging multidisciplinary research on historical and contemporary events can provide a comprehensive understanding of how these events are perceived and their long-term impacts. Such research can inform educational practices and policies, ensuring they are based on evidence and best practices.

Understanding students' perceptions and emotional responses to historical and contemporary events is crucial for developing strategies that promote a comprehensive and empathetic understanding of significant events. This can help foster a more informed, tolerant, and inclusive society.

Future research should explore the long-term impact of these perceptions on students' attitudes and behaviours. Investigating how educational interventions and policy initiatives can effectively address misconceptions and promote empathy will be crucial for developing a more inclusive and informed global community.

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