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Study finds link between considerate behavior and income

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Being polite pays: Rudeness in government offices significantly higher here than in US, Jerusalem Institute for Market Studies finds.

Is the assertion that "Israelis are rude" a cliché of bitter tourists, disenchanting immigrants and anti-Semites, or does it contain a kernel of truth? Ahead of Yom Kippur, as many Israelis search their souls and ask their relatives and friends for forgiveness for the past wrongs they have committed against them, a study on politeness released Tuesday by the Jerusalem Institute for Market Studies attempted to determine whether Yom Kippur is the only time of year when consideration, politeness and good manners are in vogue.

The results of the survey clearly show that in everyday situations such as driving, shopping, speaking on mobile phones, treatment of the elderly, and so on, Israeli women are in general more polite than Israeli men, and new immigrants are more polite than native Israelis.

According to the JIMS research, the more Jewishly observant are more polite. The most polite people in Israeli society are the haredim, leaving behind people defining themselves as traditional or secular, the survey showed.

No connection was found between politeness and marriage, the number of children in the household or the nature or level of education.

"The results of the survey are disturbing, for they suggest that the public educational system in Israel is not fulfilling its basic function," Prof.

Robert Sauer, the president of JIMS, told The Jerusalem Post on Tuesday.

Focusing as it does almost exclusively on improving grades and cognitive skills, Israeli schools do not succeed in improving non-cognitive skills such as manners, self-control, and persistence, he said.

"The answer is for the state to start investing into the noncognitive part of education, that should begin at a very early age," Sauer said.

The research further reveals that people coming from more affluent classes of Israeli society are more polite and that politeness, in return, has a large payoff in terms of income.

"It seems not to be a coincidence that a 10% increase in the politeness score is directly linked with a substantial 5.8% increase in family income. It is clear that Israeli employers highly value politeness and that it pays off in the long run," Sauer concluded.

The JIMS statistics show that the rudeness Israelis encounter in stores, shopping centers, at workplaces and the airports is similar or even lower than the level encountered in the US.

JIMS asked where Israelis encounter rude behavior, and compared the findings to a similar survey

conducted in the US. The percent of respondents who encounter rudeness in stores and shopping centers (31%), at work (13%), in the airport (13%) or in one's close environment (9%) is similar or lower than the percentage reported in the US.

But when dealing with government agencies, the percent of Israelis reporting rudeness (28%) is 1.5 times the reported rate in the US (19%).

The survey was conceived by JIMS and conducted by the Dahaf Institute. It included 992 adults representing the Jewish population, and its margin of error is 4.5%.



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