

Public Attitudes in Israel towards Nudges

Research Report

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Summary

In recent years, behavioral tools have been increasingly used by government organizations around the world. These tools are often referred to as 'nudges' and include a wide range of measures that alter the choice architecture within which decision makers function, without significantly impairing freedom of choice and without substantially altering the economic incentives system. These nudges include changing the registration options for organ donations, publishing health / calorie information on food products, sending out appointment reminders and enabling automated appointment setting in advance. The public's attitudes towards this use of behavioral tools, and with nudges in particular have recently been measured in a number of countries around the world. The results of these findings may help policy leaders choose which tools to use and adapt them optimally.

The population of the State of Israel is composed of distinct and special groups, in terms of their needs and desires. Therefore, the aim of the research presented here is to identify the public's attitudes across various sectors of society to different nudges as applied in a variety of situations. We surveyed 609 respondents in a representative sample of the Jewish (secular and religious) and Arab population groups in Israel. Specifically, we examined these groups' respective positions on 13 nudges, in the fields of healthcare, consumerism, citizenship and the environment. The results of the study show strong support for most of the surveyed nudges, across all societal sectors. However, we also found important differences that should be taken into account when designing and implementing different nudges for these population groups.

Nudge is a change in how choices are defined and presented to the decision-maker. While nudges may predictably influence the choice of the decision maker, they do so without limiting the freedom to choose from other alternatives. Nor do nudges significantly alter the economic incentive package of these various options. Nudges aim to help decision-maker choose the option that would most benefit themselves or society. Prominent examples of nudges include setting defaults for savings and pension schemes, highlighting health information on food products and sending timely reminders for pending payments.

Findings

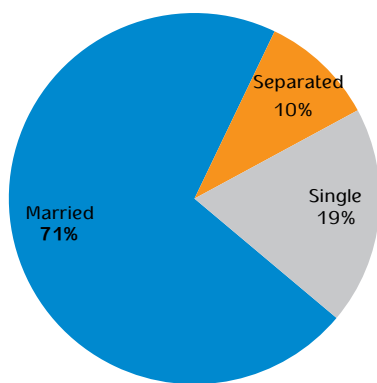
1. In the general sample, we found **high levels of support for nudges**, particularly, **automated appointment making for periodic checkups, a health-related 'traffic light' coloring scheme for products and alerts about credit card limits**. In contrast, a relatively low level of support was generated for nudges that prompt **students to sign off on a pledge to not cheat before taking an exam, distance candy from supermarket cashiers and requests to register for organ donations upon issuing or renewing driver's licenses**.
2. Respondents from the non-Haredi Jewish sector expressed greater support for most nudges than respondents from the ultra-Orthodox sector and more support than recorded from the Arab sector.
3. In the ultra-Orthodox community, there was **strong opposition to the nudge that prompts requests for organ donations**, and in the Arab sector, there was **opposition to distancing candy from supermarkets' cashiers**.
4. The nudges that received the highest levels of support were those primarily oriented **towards the individual** (as opposed to society in general) or nudges that **encourage conscious thinking** (as opposed to those that rely on automatic behavior).
5. There were some significant differences in the rates of support for certain nudges among respondents based on political affiliation, educational level and age.
6. No significant correlation was found between the **level of trust in government** and support for nudges, either across the entire sample or within each separate sector.
7. In comparison with specific nudges that were examined around the world, the rate of opposition to the use of nudges in Israel was among the lowest of all surveyed countries.

Background and Objectives. Public attitudes towards government intervention can be of great importance for the effective planning and implementation of public policy in areas such as healthcare, economics, consumerism, safety and the environment. In recent years, the use of nudges has increased around the world – a 'soft' form of intervention that does not limit freedom of choice. Surveys in several countries have shown general support for the use of many nudges, though there has not yet been a comprehensive examination of the Israeli public's views on the subject. Israel's large heterogeneity (in terms of nationality, religiosity, economic

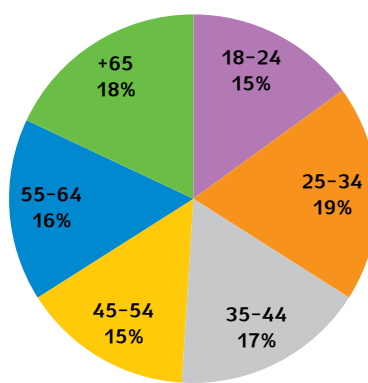
gaps, political positions, etc.) intensifies the need to explore the attitudes of the country's various populations towards different nudges. This is the goal of our study.

Sample. We commissioned a national telephone survey of a sample representative group, conducted by the Geocartography Research Institute during March 2017. The responses of 609 participants were collected. The sample included 507 respondents from the Jewish sector (82%) and 102 respondents from the Arab sector (17%). We also oversampled the ultra-Orthodox population, to obtain 100 respondents from that group.

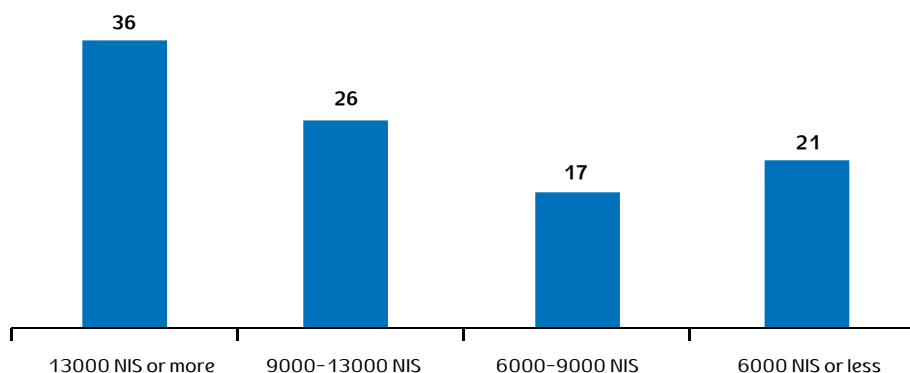
Marital Status



Respondents' Age

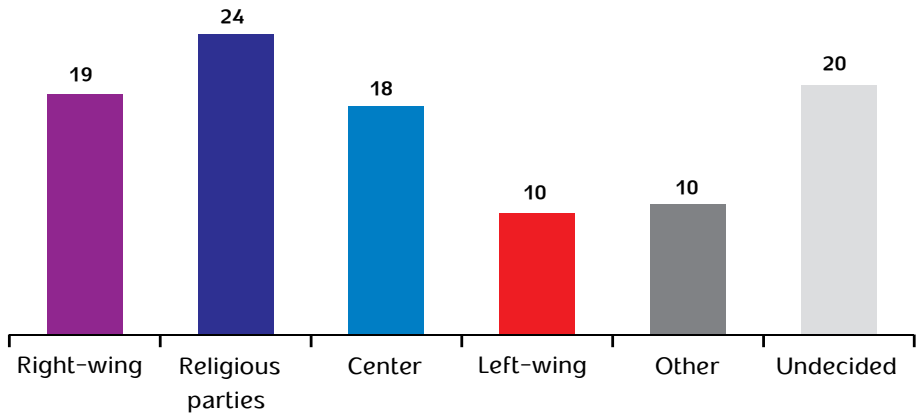


Household Income

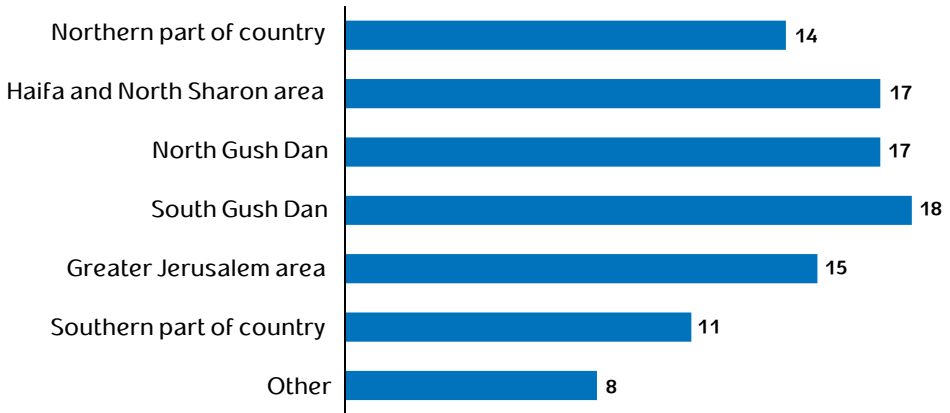


* All the charts that appear in this report were produced by its authors.

Political Affiliation



Location of Residence



Tools and Methodology

The survey began with a brief introduction about the purpose of the study, which was followed a description of 15¹ nudges to respondents, who were then asked to express their opinions, on a scale of 1 (very much opposed) to 5 (very much in favor). The reading order of the nudges was randomized. Next, the respondents were asked to express their positions on two non-nudge items, which served as points of comparison. The respondents also expressed their confidence (or lack thereof) in the government's ability to act on behalf of Israeli citizens and the government's desire to do so (two separate items).

Nudges as Presented to Survey Participants

Caloric value of menu items	1. Restaurants will display the caloric value of each item on their menus.
Health-related 'traffic light' icon on food products	2. Food manufacturers and marketers will add a health-related value label to their products, based on Ministry of Health criteria. Healthy products will be marked with a green label and unhealthy food stuffs with a red label.
Organ donations registration with driver's license	3. When issuing for or renewing a driver's license, drivers will be asked to indicate whether they are willing to join an organ donation database.
Distancing candy from cashiers	4. Food chains will not display candy for sale at the cashier stations.
Default privacy settings for online social networks	5. When content (posts or images) is uploaded to a social network, it will only be available to members, unless the user chooses another option.



1 Two nudges that were included in the original survey ("Towels left on racks during a stay at all Israeli hotels will not be washed, so as to save energy and water, and thus help the environment." and "In every will, a clause will be added stipulating the allocation for charity.") were discovered to be incomprehensible to many respondents and problematic from a psychometric perspective. Therefore, these two nudges were not included in the analyses of the study's results.



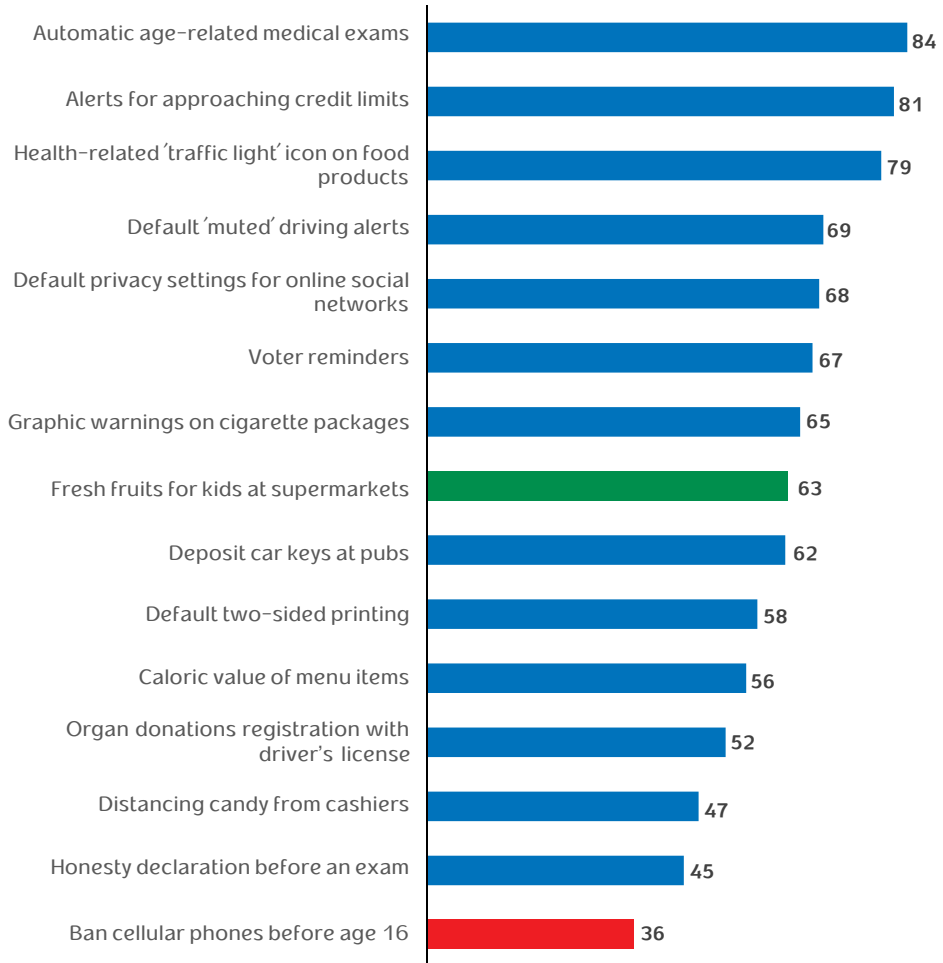
Graphic warnings on cigarette packages	6. Cigarette companies will print a visual description of the damage caused by smoking, such as a picture of black lungs, on cigarette packages.
Alerts for approaching credit limits	7. Credit companies will alert their customers (by email or SMS) as soon as they approach their credit limit.
Voter reminders	8. A day before elections, voter reminders will be sent (via email or SMS), with instructions on how to get to the polls.
Default two-sided printing	9. In new printers, manufacturers will specify that printing will take place on both sides of the page, unless the user selects otherwise.
Default 'muted' driving alerts	10. When using mobile navigation applications (such as Waze) while driving, messaging services (SMS or WhatsApp) will be muted, unless the driver specifies otherwise.
Automatic age-related medical exams	11. The HMOs will automatically set and send appointments to their patients for age-appropriate medical exams (such as a mammography for early detection of breast cancer or colonoscopy for the detection of gastro diseases).
Deposit car keys at pubs	12. Pubs and clubs will enable drivers to deposit their keys at the entrance. Drivers will receive their keys back after they pass a breathalyzer test that shows that their blood alcohol level is normal.
Honesty declaration before an exam	13. Before an exam, students will sign a form stating that they promise not cheat.
(The following non-nudge items were included as comparison items only and were always asked at the end of the survey):	
Non-nudge negative	14. Cell phone use will be prohibited for anyone under the age of 16.
Non-nudge positive	15. A basket with fresh fruits will be placed at supermarket entrances, so that every child who enters will be able to take a fruit for free.

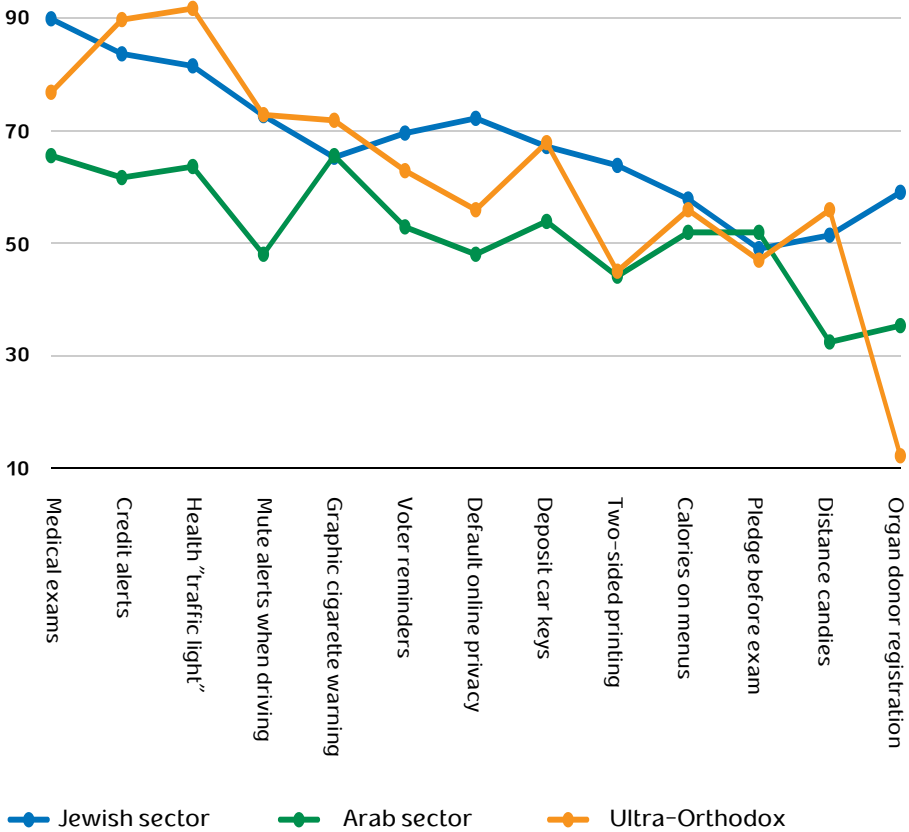
Results

Most nudges received a high level of support (over 60%), while very high support (about 80% or more) was registered in favor of three noteworthy nudges: automatic medical exams, credit alerts and health-related 'traffic-light' icon.' These three nudges also received the highest levels of support from both the non-Haredi and ultra-Orthodox sectors. In the Arab sector, support was significantly lower for most nudges, though graphic warnings on cigarette packages received a higher relative rank of support compared with other surveyed groups. Opposition to nudges among the ultra-Orthodox and Arab sectors was recorded mainly for the registration of organ donations while issuing / renewing a driver's license. The Arab sector was strongly opposed to distancing candy from supermarket cashiers. There was also low support in all sectors surveyed for students pledging not to cheat before taking a test. In addition, adding the caloric value of items to restaurant menus did not generate much support. In the ultra-Orthodox and Arab sectors, but not in the non-ultra-Orthodox Jewish sector, we noted reservations regarding the default definition of two-sided printing in printers.

In total, the number of nudges that received the support of a majority (over 50%) of respondents was 12 in the non-Haredi Jewish sector, 10 in the ultra-Orthodox sector and eight in the Arab population group.

Rates of support for nudges in the entire sample



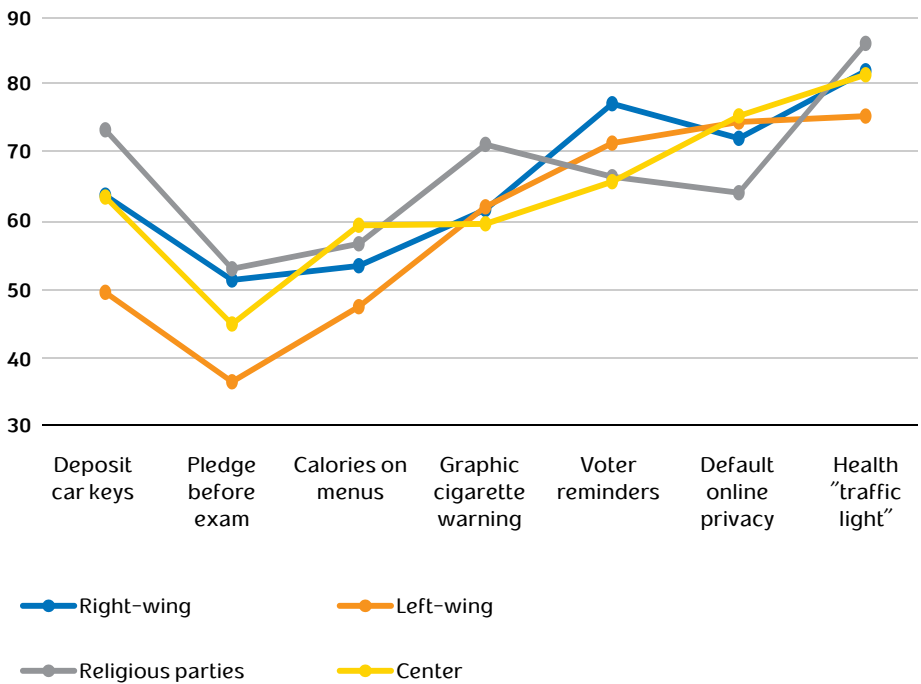


Left-wingers Like Some Nudges Less than Everyone Else

Overall, average support for nudges was very similar (approximately 66%) for respondents with all the different political views. However, there were some specific nudges where we discerned differences based on political orientation. Left-wing voters, in comparison to respondents who belong on the rest of the political spectrum, were less supportive of nudges for depositing car keys at pubs/clubs, having students sign a pledge to not cheat before an exam, displaying the caloric information of items on restaurant menus and a health-related 'traffic light' for food products. Voters for religious parties, in addition to their opposition to the introduction of organ donation registration while issuing or renewing a driver's

license, were less supportive of default privacy choices on the Internet (a finding that may be more due to general opposition to online social networks than to a specific nudge). Religious party voters also expressed greater support than the rest of the respondents for adding graphic warnings on cigarette packs. Meanwhile, Right-wing voters supported the sending of reminders to voters at a higher rate than the rest of the surveyed sample. Out of all the groups surveyed, the support rates of centrist voters most similarly reflected the attitudes of the entire sample.

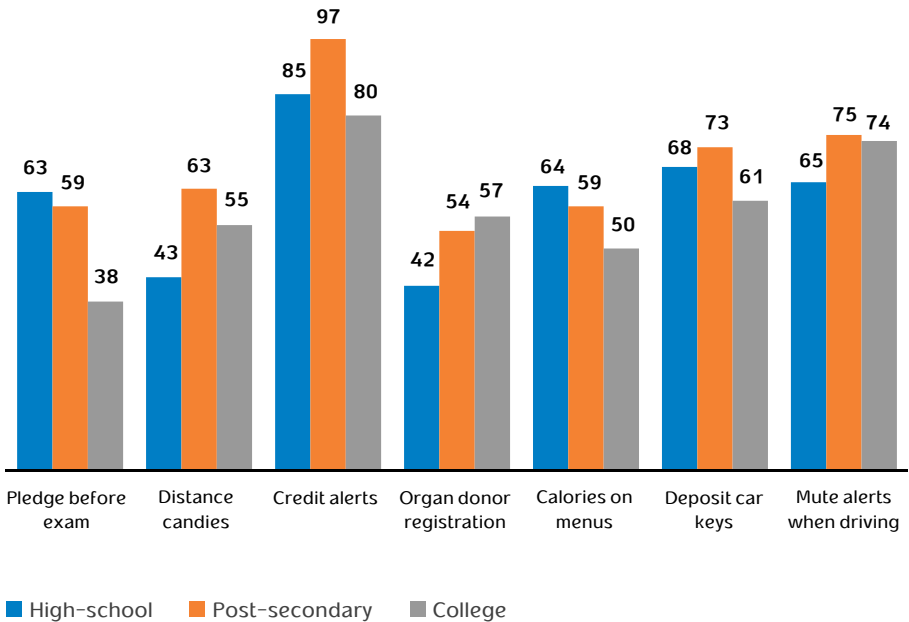
Nudges with differences by political affiliation



Post-Secondary Education: Nudges' Top Supporters

The highest support for nudges (71% on average) was found among respondents with a post-secondary education², compared with slightly lower support from other groups (66%). Particularly conspicuous was the high level of support that people with a post-secondary education had for the delivery of credit limit alerts, distancing of candies from cashier stations and depositing of car keys at the entrance to places of entertainment. In contrast, those with a college degree objected to the request for the signing of a pledge to not cheat before an examination and supported at lower levels than the rest of the respondents the nudge of adding caloric information to restaurant menus. Those with a high school education or less objected to distancing candy from cashier stations and to registering for organ donations while issuing or renewing a driver's license.

Support for nudges by education level



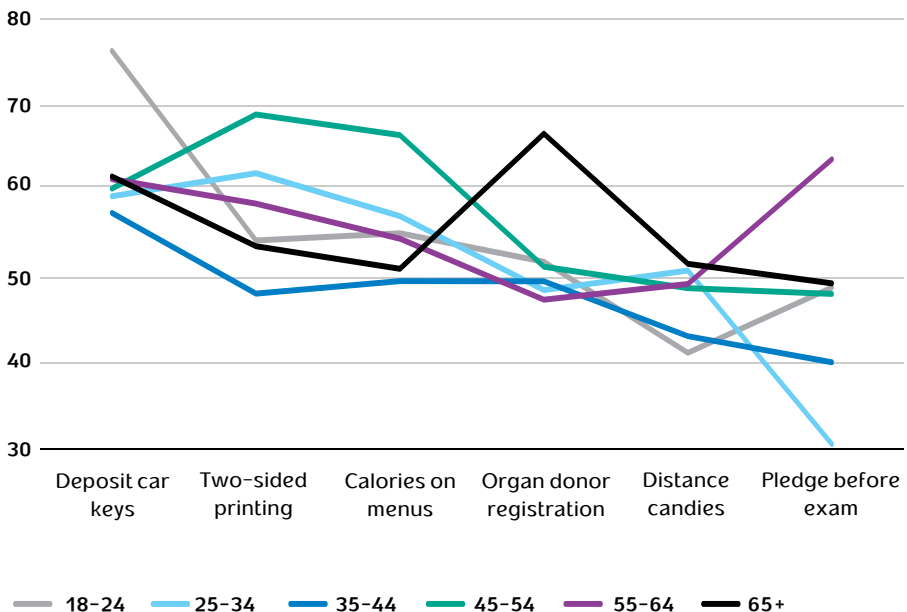
² Matriculation certificate holders and matriculation studies.

Age Only Plays a Role in Certain Nudges

In general, there were no significant differences in levels of support for nudges, as measured by age distribution, with three exceptions:

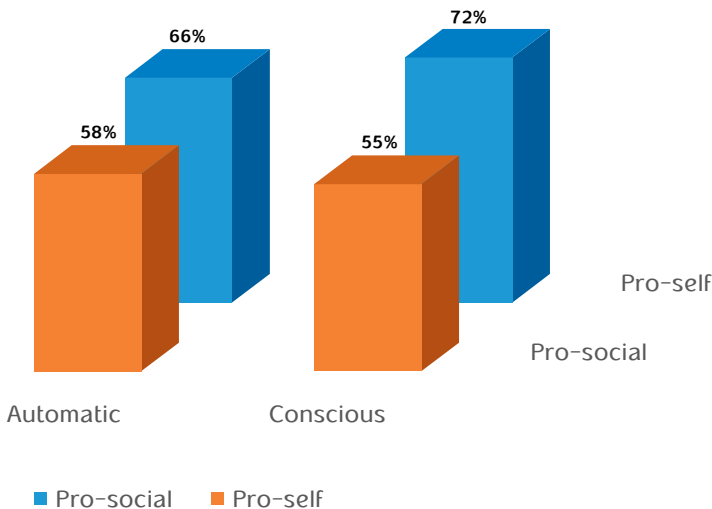
- A. As expected, those aged 65 and over supported registration for organ donations at a high rate (67%), in comparison with younger age groups (50%).
- B. Respondents aged 18-24 expressed greater support (76%) than other participants (60%) for depositing car keys at pubs. It's possible that younger people are more acutely aware of the danger of drunken driving, as well as their own difficulty in avoiding such situations. As such, this cohort may opt to use this nudge as a sort of preemptive mechanism.
- C. A similar gap was also recorded in the support for having students sign pledges not to cheat prior to taking a test: those aged 45 and over support this nudge much more (54%) than the younger strata (39%), on average.

Nudges that showed differences by age



People are More Supportive of Nudges that Encourage Informed Thinking or Benefit the Individual

Some nudges encourage a person to engage in active thinking (for example, adding caloric value to a restaurant's menu encourages a more informed comparison). On the other hand, some nudges rely on automatic behavior and habits (for example, setting a default for two-sided printing takes advantage of people's habit of not regularly checking a printer's settings). We found that support for nudges that encourage informed thinking is significantly higher than the support for nudges that rely on automatic behavior. For example, the two nudges that received the highest levels of support (automatic scheduling of medical exams and credit limit alerts) are those that are based on informed thinking. Meanwhile, the two nudges that received the least amount of support (candy removal and registration for organ donation) use more automated behavior. The survey also shows that support for nudges aimed mainly at benefiting the individual (e.g., automatic scheduling of medical exams) is higher than those whose main goal is to benefit the wider society, usually at the expense of the individual. In examining these two factors together, we found that nudges that both encourage informed thinking and pro-self behavior received the highest levels of support.



No Correlation between Trust in Government and support for Nudges

Support for nudges run by the government (for example, voting reminders or organ donor registration) was not significantly different from support for nudges operated by private organizations (such as credit limit alerts or two-sided printing). Thus, nudges operated by the government received an average of 65% support, while those run by private organizations were supported at a very similar rate of approximately 63%.

These findings are consistent with the a very weak between support for nudges and respondents' confidence in the government's ability and willingness to act on behalf of its citizens (two items that appeared at the end of the survey).

Although there were significant differences in the level of trust in government in all three surveyed sectors (non-ultra-Orthodox, ultra-Orthodox and Arab), support for nudges within each sector was similar for respondents who expressed low, medium or high levels of confidence in the government's ability and willingness to act on behalf of the citizenry.

One possible explanation for this phenomenon may be related to the fact that the nudges in our survey were presented to respondents without mentioning the government's role in their implementation. In contrast, previous surveys conducted around the world explicitly stated this fact. Therefore, the relatively high level of support found for nudges throughout this survey can perhaps be attributed to reflecting the respondents' actual preference, one that is not confounded by political affiliation.

The Objection Rates to Certain Nudges in Israel is Lower Compared to the Rest of the World

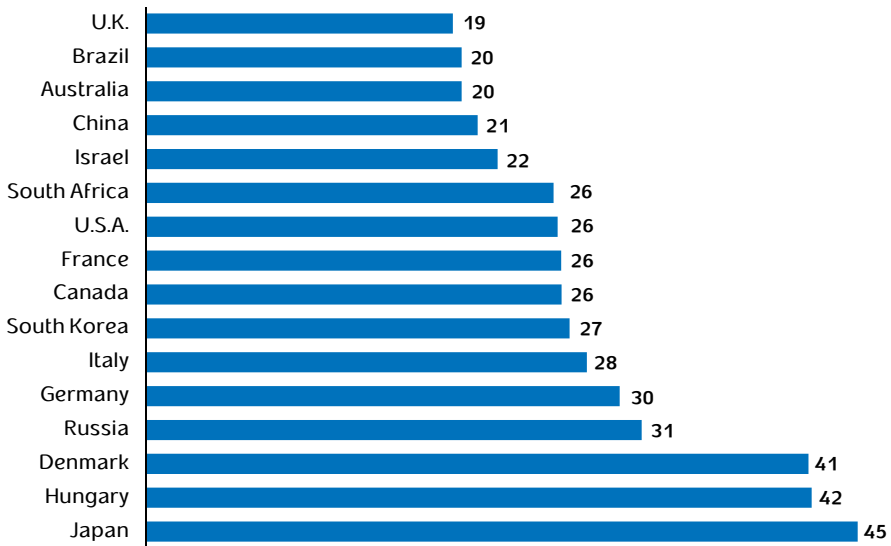
The survey included four nudges that were also examined in other countries over the past two years: adding caloric values to menus, providing a health-related 'traffic light,' registration for organ donations and distancing candy from the supermarket cashiers. Because the other surveys used different methods of measurement, the comparison made here is based on **rate of objection** (in the Israeli survey,

respondents who either answered that they were 'very opposed' or 'opposed'; in international surveys – respondents who said they 'disapprove').

As such, our survey shows that the objection rate to these four nudges is lower in Israel compared to other countries. Only 22% of respondents in Israel (on average) objected to these nudges, which is similarly low as the 19% rate in the U.K., where the lowest rate of opposition to these specific nudges was found, based on the international surveys.

However, since this is a comparison of specific nudges only, a more comprehensive comparative study is still needed to explore the attitudes of the Israeli public in comparison to other countries regarding the use of other nudges, specifically, and the use of behavioral tools in general.

Objection rates for specific nudges surveyed in other countries



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