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'IT SEEMS that the Israeli media still enjoy credibility among the public,' the researchers concluded.
(Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

Public faith in media lowest in 15 years, shows study

Univ. of Haifa researchers say public broadcasters have highest credibility

• By JUDY SIEGEL

The level of public faith in Israeli journalists is at its lowest level in 15 years, according to a University of Haifa and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev study carried out before the US presidential elections.

Just three years ago, the credibility of Israeli journalists was the highest in a decade.

It was part of a study on the credibility of a variety of public-sector institutions that has been carried out jointly by the two universities since 2002.

Despite the discouraging findings, the researchers found that faith in the "main communications media" is higher than in the "media in general," said Prof. Eran Vigoda-Gadot, dean of the social sciences faculty, and Dr. Nissim Cohen of the University of Haifa's School of Political Science, who headed

the team, which also included Prof. Shlomo Mizrahi of the management and public policy department at BGU.

They graded the media from no credibility (1) to 5 (high credibility). The study was carried out using "conservative methodology that provides ongoing and comparative reports on positions and views of the public on a variety of services that the public receive."

The study included 453 men and women comprising a representative sample of the adult public.

Credibility of journalists had a 2.33 grade, putting them in the 18th place among 22 professions or public institutions that were chosen. In 2014, the score was 2.64, compared to 2.28 in 2013.

But if one divides up the media into its parts, the credibility of public broadcasting (Kol

Yisrael and Israel TV) – which the government wanted to dismantle – was highest at 2.99, putting the Israel Broadcasting Authority among the top 10.

"At a time when there is a public debate on the future of public broadcasting, the data we have shown relatively higher credibility in the IBA at a level that has been preserved for almost 15 years," the researchers said.

Going into the types of media, the study found that the credibility of Army Radio was relatively very high at 3.26, compared to 2.86 for journalists at Channels 2 and 10. But in general, there is a decline of credibility for all Israeli journalists – even though the average level remains at moderate and moderately high levels compared to other sectors. "It seems that the Israeli media still enjoy credibility among the public," they concluded.