

Religious Education and Digital Ethics Awareness Against Doxing: A Quantitative Study of University Students in Indonesia

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Article Info

Article history:

Received April 30, 2026

Accepted June 20, 2026

Published June 30, 2026

Keywords:

Digital Ethics;

Doxing;

Religious Education;

Social Media;

University Students.

ABSTRACT

Doxing the non-consensual public disclosure of personal information constitutes a growing threat to digital privacy among university students in Indonesia. This study examines the influence of compulsory Religious Education learning on students' digital ethics awareness in the context of doxing. A cross-sectional descriptive-correlational survey design was employed. Using purposive sampling and Slovin's formula ($e = 5\%$), 94 participants were recruited from a population of 123 students who had completed Religious Education at Politeknik Negeri Batam, Indonesia. Data were collected via a validated 36-item Likert-scale questionnaire (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.912$ and 0.897). Analysis incorporated descriptive statistics, Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality testing, ANOVA linearity testing, Spearman rank correlation, and simple linear regression. Most students demonstrated high Religious Education internalization (98.9%) and high digital ethics awareness (95.7%). Spearman correlation indicated a very strong positive association ($r_s = 0.833$, $p < .001$). Simple regression confirmed that Religious Education explained 71.6% of the variance in digital ethics awareness ($R^2 = 0.716$; $F = 231.90$; $p < .001$; Cohen's $f^2 = 2.52$), with a regression coefficient of $b = 0.956$ (95% CI [0.832, 1.081]). Religious Education serves as a substantively effective instrument of digital character formation. The theological grounding of Islamic ethical values — particularly *hifzh al-'irdh* (safeguarding dignity) — appears to confer moral robustness beyond that of rule-based or literacy-oriented approaches. Implications for curriculum design, institutional policy, and interdisciplinary research on digital ethics education are discussed.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The global proliferation of digital communication technologies has fundamentally restructured the social fabric of information sharing, interpersonal interaction, and civic participation (Asimakopoulous et al., 2025). In Indonesia, this transformation has been

both rapid and extensive: by 2024, more than 167 million individuals — representing 60.4% of the total population — were active social media users, with university students constituting one of the most persistently engaged demographic cohorts (Tewu et al., 2025). While such connectivity affords unprecedented opportunities for learning, collaboration, and civic engagement, it simultaneously creates conditions conducive to novel forms of digital harm, most notably those targeting personal privacy and ethical conduct in online spaces.

Among the most consequential of these emerging harms is doxing, defined as the deliberate aggregation and public disclosure of an individual's private information—including residential addresses, telephone numbers, and financial records—without consent and with the intent to intimidate, harass, or cause social harm (Li et al., 2024; Geldenhuys, 2024). The consequences for victims extend well beyond reputational injury; documented cases demonstrate associations with serious psychological trauma, physical endangerment, occupational disruption, and long-term social stigma (Balqis & Monggilo, 2023). Indonesia's National Cyber and Crypto Agency has reported a statistically significant upward trend in digital privacy violations, while legal scholars have confirmed that doxing is actionable under Law No. 27 of 2022 on the Protection of Personal Data (Saly & Sulthanah, 2023).

Despite a growing body of international scholarship on digital ethics, privacy norms, and online harmful behavior, an important empirical gap persists. Prior research has addressed the cognitive dimensions of doxing engagement through social cognitive theory (de Vaate et al., 2023; Li et al., 2024; Mazhar et al., 2026), the legal regulation of doxing in the Indonesian context (Yudiana et al., 2022), and the broad relationship between Islamic religious education and social responsibility (Kholidah, 2022; Mugambwa et al., 2019). However, no quantitative study has directly measured the relationship between religious education learning—as a formal, structured pedagogical experience—and students' awareness of doxing as a specific form of digital harm. Studies addressing digital ethics have tended to treat it as a generalized construct or have conflated it with digital literacy without isolating how deeply internalized moral values translate into concrete anti-doxing dispositions.

This gap is particularly significant in the Indonesian higher education context for two reasons. First, Religious Education is a universally mandated component of the undergraduate curriculum under Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education, making it the single most universally shared formative educational experience across Indonesia's diverse student population (Ismail et al., 2024). Second, Indonesia's 2022 National Digital Literacy Index recorded a composite score of only 3.54 out of 5.00—a middling result—with the digital ethics sub-dimension scoring as the weakest component across all measured domains (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika RI & Katadata Insight Center (Anom & Rasanjani, 2026). These two realities together generate a compelling research question: Does the moral scaffolding provided by religious education substantively equip students to recognize and resist doxing behavior?

The theoretical significance of this question is grounded in a key distinction in moral philosophy and educational theory. Religious values, when genuinely internalized,

function not as externally imposed regulatory constraints but as constitutive features of personal identity and moral self-understanding (Van Tongeren et al., 2021). In the Islamic tradition, values such as *hifzh al-'irdh* (the obligation to safeguard the dignity and honor of others); the prohibition of *ghiba* (backbiting) and *buhtan* (slander)—grounded textually in *Surah Al-Hujurat: 12*—and the imperative of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining right and forbidding wrong) carry theological authority that renders compliance intrinsically motivated rather than extrinsically enforced. Setiawan et al. (2025) argue that precisely this theological grounding is what makes Islamic ethical values uniquely resilient in digital environments characterized by low accountability and high behavioral latitude.

The field data collected for this study provide additional contextual grounding for its urgency: 62.8% of respondents reported having personally witnessed a doxing incident, confirming that for this population, the phenomenon is not an abstraction but a feature of lived digital experience. This prevalence, combined with Indonesia's documented weakness in the digital ethics dimension of digital literacy, positions the present study at the intersection of immediate practical relevance and broader theoretical interest.

The present study pursues three specific objectives: (1) to describe the level of religious education value internalization among university students; (2) to describe the level of digital ethics awareness specifically related to doxing; and (3) to quantitatively determine the magnitude and significance of religious education's influence on digital ethics awareness. The guiding hypothesis is that Religious Education learning exerts a significant, positive influence on students' digital ethics awareness in the context of doxing ($H_1: \rho > 0; \alpha = .05$).

Literature Review

Doxing as a Form of Digital Harm

Doxing is conceptually situated at the intersection of digital surveillance, harassment, and privacy violation. Li et al. (2024), drawing on social cognitive theory, demonstrate that doxing behavior is shaped by moral reasoning processes: individuals who engage in cognitive moral justification—reframing the disclosure of private information as legitimate exposure of wrongdoing—are substantially more likely to perpetrate doxing. This finding implies that the antidote to doxing is not primarily legal or technical but moral: cultivating students' capacity to recognize and reject the moral distortions that rationalize privacy violations.

Balqis and Monggilo (2023) document the concrete harms associated with doxing in the Indonesian context, tracing cases in which online journalists were subjected to targeted personal information disclosure with demonstrable consequences for their physical safety, professional standing, and mental health. The authors note a pervasive pattern of passive witnessing—bystanders who recognize the harm being done but do not intervene—which they analyze through the lens of the bystander effect. This passive-witnessing tendency will prove relevant to interpreting sub-scale score patterns in the present study.

Religious Education and Moral Formation

The role of religious education in shaping moral attitudes and prosocial behavior has been examined across multiple empirical contexts. [Kholidah \(2022\)](#) found that problem-based Islamic religious education significantly enhanced university students' sense of social responsibility—a construct closely related to anti-doxing commitment. [Jufriadi and Wahibah \(2025\)](#) demonstrated that value-based learning cultures rooted in Islamic principles fostered more socially accountable student identities in higher education settings. [Yalvaç Arıcı \(2025\)](#) situates these findings within a broader theory of Islamic educational reconstruction, arguing that Religious Education must move beyond the transmission of theological knowledge to the cultivation of moral character capable of responding to contemporary ethical challenges.

Digital Ethics and Religious Values

The relationship between religious value internalization and digital ethical behavior has received growing scholarly attention. [Sari and Nopita \(2023\)](#) documented a significant positive correlation between digital literacy and digital ethical values among Islamic religious education students, suggesting that value internalization and digital literacy operate as complementary rather than competing pathways to ethical digital conduct. [Setiawan et al. \(2025\)](#) argue that Islamic ethics provides a particularly robust foundation for digital character education precisely because its values function as internal moral convictions rather than externally imposed rules—a distinction with significant implications for behavioral durability in low-accountability online environments.

[Nguyen et al.'s \(2025\)](#) information ethics framework offers a theoretical synthesis: values embedded in personal and communal identity generate more durable ethical resistance than cognitive or compliance-oriented moral education because they shape the agent's motivational structure rather than merely their rule-following behavior. This theoretical prediction aligns with the empirical pattern this study sets out to examine.

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational survey design. The cross-sectional design is appropriate given the study's objective to describe the distribution of two constructs at a single point in time and to quantify the direction and magnitude of their association. Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional research ethics board, and all participants provided informed consent prior to data collection.

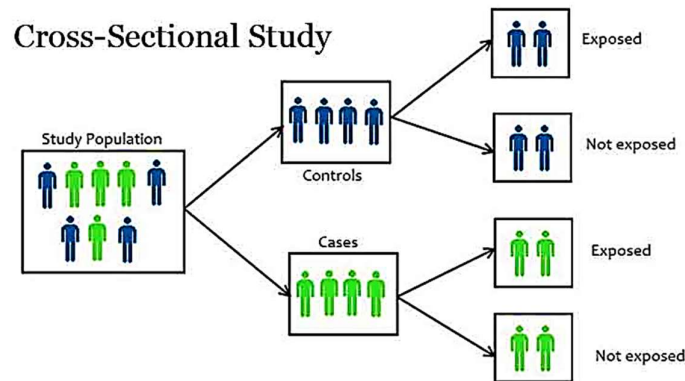


Figure 1. The Cross-Sectional Design

The target population comprised 123 active students at Politeknik Negeri Batam, Indonesia, who had completed the compulsory Religious Education course. The required sample size was calculated using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error: $n = N / (1 + N \cdot e^2) = 123 / (1 + 123 \times 0.05^2) \approx 94$. Ninety-four participants were recruited through purposive sampling based on three pre-specified inclusion criteria: (a) active enrollment from the second semester onward; (b) documented completion of Religious Education with a minimum passing grade; and (c) self-reported active social media use of at least three sessions per week. Exclusion criteria included incomplete questionnaire responses and first-semester enrollment. No participants were excluded from post-recruitment.

The independent variable (X) was Religious Education Learning; the dependent variable (Y) was Digital Ethics Awareness in Responding to Doxing. Both variables were operationalized through purpose-built Likert-scale instruments comprising 18 items each (36 items total), rated on a five-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The Variable X instrument measured four theoretically grounded dimensions: (1) understanding of *hifzh al-'irdh* (the Islamic obligation to protect the dignity and honor of others); (2) knowledge of the Quranic prohibition against backbiting and slander (*QS. Al-Hujurat: 12*); (3) application of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* in digital contexts; and (4) quality of the Religious Education learning experience. The Variable Y instrument assessed four complementary dimensions: (1) knowledge about doxing; (2) attitudes toward digital privacy; (3) anti-doxing commitment; and (4) readiness to prevent and challenge doxing behavior.

Prior to full data collection, the instrument was piloted with 30 students outside the main sample. Item validity was assessed using Pearson Product-Moment correlation, with *r*-obtained values required to exceed the critical value $r\text{-table} = 0.361$ ($\alpha = 5\%$, $df = 28$). All 36 items passed this criterion, with *r*-obtained values ranging from 0.389 to 0.821. Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, with a minimum acceptable threshold of .70 (Nunnally, 1978; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Resulting coefficients were $\alpha = 0.912$ for Variable X and $\alpha = 0.897$ for Variable Y — both indicative of excellent internal consistency.

The analytical strategy comprised five sequential steps: (1) descriptive statistics, with categorical classification of scores following ideal norm formula using population

parameters $\mu = 54$ and $\sigma = 12$; (2) Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality testing to determine the distributional properties of both variables; (3) ANOVA-based linearity testing to verify the appropriateness of a linear model; (4) Spearman rank correlation as the primary inferential statistic, selected given demonstrated non-normality in both raw variable distributions; and (5) simple linear regression to quantify the proportion of variance in Y explained by X, with effect size interpreted against Cohen's criteria ($f^2 > 0.35 = \text{large effect}$). All analyses were conducted in IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 26. The significance threshold was set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Sample Characteristics

Demographic data are summarized in Table 1. The sample ($N = 94$) was predominantly male (75.5%; $n = 71$) and concentrated in the second semester (98.9%; $n = 93$), with a modal age of 19 years (51.1%; $n = 48$). The most frequently used social media platform was TikTok (50.0%; $n = 47$), followed by Instagram (35.1%; $n = 33$). A noteworthy finding from the demographic screening was that 62.8% of respondents ($n = 59$) reported having personally witnessed a doxing incident, indicating that the phenomenon represents lived experience for a substantial proportion of this sample rather than a purely hypothetical risk.

Table 1. Sample Demographic Characteristics ($N = 94$)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	71	75.5
	Female	23	24.5
Modal Age	19 years	48	51.1
Semester	2nd	93	98.9
Daily Social Media Use	3–5 hours/day	38	40.4
Primary Platform	TikTok	47	50.0
	Instagram	33	35.1
Doxing Exposure	Witnessed an incident	59	62.8

Variable Distributions

Descriptive statistics and categorical distributions for both variables are presented in Table 2. Variable X (Religious Education Learning) produced a mean of 82.47 ($SD = 7.63$; $Mdn = 84.50$), with 98.9% of respondents ($n = 93$) classified in the High category (≥ 66) and 1.1% ($n = 1$) in the Moderate category. Variable Y (Digital Ethics Awareness) yielded a mean of 80.64 ($SD = 8.62$; $Mdn = 83.50$), with 95.7% ($n = 90$) classified as High and 4.3% ($n = 4$) as Moderate. No respondents fell into the Low category on either variable.

Dimensional analysis revealed that the strongest sub-scale within Variable X was understanding of *hifzh al-'irdh* (M per item = 4.70/5.00), followed by knowledge of the prohibition against backbiting and slander (4.61/5.00). Within Variable Y, the Attitude Toward Digital Privacy sub-scale produced the highest mean (4.60/5.00), while the

Readiness to Prevent and Challenge Doxing dimension recorded the lowest score (4.21/5.00) — a differential that will be addressed in the Discussion.

Table 2. Variable Score Distributions

Variable	Category	Score Range	n	%	M (SD)
X: Religious Education	High	≥ 66	93	98.9	82.47 (7.63)
	Moderate	42–65	1	1.1	—
	Low	< 42	0	0.0	—
Y: Digital Ethics Awareness	High	≥ 66	90	95.7	80.64 (8.62)
	Moderate	42–65	4	4.3	—
	Low	< 42	0	0.0	—

Assumption Tests

Table 3 presents the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality testing. Both Variable X (D = 0.181, p = .004) and Variable Y (D = 0.152, p = .024) departed significantly from normality, justifying the use of Spearman rank correlation as the primary inferential test. Regression residuals, however, satisfied the normality assumption (D = 0.116, p = .149), consistent with Field's (2018) clarification that linear regression requires normally distributed residuals — not predictors or outcomes. ANOVA linearity testing confirmed a significant linear relationship between the two variables (F = 11.42, p < .001).

Table 3. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test Results

Data	D (KS)	p-value	α	Result
Variable X (Religious Education)	0.181	0.004	0.05	Non-normal
Variable Y (Digital Ethics Awareness)	0.152	0.024	0.05	Non-normal
Regression Residuals	0.116	0.149	0.05	Normal ✓

Correlation and Regression Analysis

Table 4 presents the Spearman correlation and regression results. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient indicated a very strong positive association between Religious Education learning and digital ethics awareness ($r_s = 0.833$, $p < .001$). Simple linear regression yielded a model with strong explanatory power: $R^2 = 0.716$, $F(1, 92) = 231.90$, $p < .001$, indicating that Religious Education learning accounts for 71.6% of the variance in digital ethics awareness. The unstandardized regression coefficient was $b = 0.956$ (95% CI [0.832, 1.081], $p < .001$), and the regression equation takes the form:

$$\hat{Y} = 1.786 + 0.956X$$

The slope of 0.956 indicates that each one-unit increase in Religious Education internalization is associated with a near-equivalent increase of 0.956 units in digital ethics awareness. The constant ($a = 1.786$, $p = .734$) was not statistically significant, indicating that the intercept does not meaningfully differ from zero in this sample. The Cohen's f^2 effect size of 2.52 substantially exceeds the large-effect threshold ($f^2 > 0.35$; Cohen, 1988), confirming that the practical magnitude of this relationship is not merely statistically significant but substantively large. The null hypothesis ($H_0: \rho = 0$) is rejected; H_1 is accepted at $\alpha = .05$.

Table 4. Spearman Correlation and Simple Regression Results

Statistic	Value	p-value	R ²	Interpretation
Spearman Correlation (r_s)	0.833	< .001	—	Very Strong, Positive
Regression F-statistic	231.90	< .001	0.716	Significant
Regression Coefficient (b)	0.956	< .001	—	95% CI [0.832, 1.081]
Constant (a)	1.786	.734	—	Not significant
Cohen's f^2	2.52	—	—	Large effect (> 0.35)

Discussion

The Mechanism of Moral Influence

The central finding—that Religious Education learning accounts for 71.6% of the variance in students' digital ethics awareness regarding doxing—demands a mechanistic explanation. Why does religious education exert such powerful predictive force on a domain as specific as anti-doxing awareness? The answer, we argue, lies in the distinction between rule-following and value-constituted agency.

When students genuinely internalize the principle of *hifzh al-'irdh*, they do not require a legislative framework to conclude that exposing another person's private information without consent is morally impermissible. The value itself constitutes the moral judgment. [Nguyen et al. \(2025\)](#) makes this point with precision in his information ethics framework: values that are constitutive of personal and communal identity generate motivational robustness that regulatory or purely cognitive moral education cannot reliably produce. This robustness is particularly consequential in digital environments, where enforcement mechanisms are limited, anonymity is available, and the social costs of harmful behavior are attenuated by physical distance from victims.

[Setiawan et al. \(2025\)](#) advance a complementary argument: the theological grounding of Islamic ethical values—their derivation from divine command as mediated through scriptural authority—confers on them a motivational weight that secular or institutionally imposed norms typically lack. In this framework, the prohibition against disclosing another's private information without consent is not merely a policy to be complied with; it is a religious obligation whose violation carries consequences that extend beyond the legal or social domain. This theological weight appears to translate into higher baseline ethical commitment, as reflected in the present study's finding that 95.7% of students demonstrated high digital ethics awareness.

Consistency with Extensions of Existing Literature

The present findings align with, and extend, the existing body of empirical research in theoretically meaningful ways. [Kholidah \(2022\)](#) found that problem-based Islamic religious education significantly improved social responsibility—a construct that overlaps substantially with the anti-doxing commitment measured in Variable Y. [Sutikno \(2026\)](#) documented that Islamic value-based learning cultures foster more socially accountable student identities. [Sari and Nopita \(2023\)](#) identified a significant positive correlation between digital literacy and digital ethical values among religious education students. Collectively, these studies suggest that religious education and

digital literacy represent complementary pathways to ethical digital conduct rather than competing or substitutable approaches.

The data from [Li et al. \(2024\)](#) provide an additional interpretive layer. Their finding that exposure to doxing incidents heightens individuals' moral sensitivity to the harm it causes converges with the present study's demographic observation that 62.8% of respondents had personally witnessed a doxing incident. This high prevalence of direct exposure, combined with a religious education that has already sensitized students to the moral weight of privacy violations, suggests a compounding mechanism: religious values prime students for moral responsiveness to privacy harm, while experiential exposure with doxing activates and sharpens that responsiveness.

The Knowing-Acting Gap and its Curricular Implications

The dimensional analysis introduces an important qualification to the otherwise positive pattern of results. While the Attitude Toward Digital Privacy sub-scale produced the highest mean (M per item = 4.60/5.00), the Readiness to Prevent and Challenge Doxing dimension recorded the lowest score (4.21/5.00). Although this latter score still falls within the High category, the differential is theoretically significant.

[Balqis and Monggilo \(2023\)](#) identified a pervasive tendency toward passive witnessing among individuals who observe doxing—a recognition that harm is occurring without a corresponding disposition to intervene. This pattern mirrors the social psychological phenomenon of the bystander effect and suggests that strong ethical conviction and knowledge are necessary but not sufficient conditions for moral action. Students appear to have internalized religious education values at the level of attitude formation and commitment, but the translation of those values into active, visible intervention in doxing situations requires an additional dispositional development that current religious education curricula may not adequately address.

The implication for curriculum design is direct: Religious Education that aims to shape digital ethical behavior must go beyond the transmission of values and the development of attitudes. It must cultivate moral courage—the willingness to act on one's convictions even in the face of social costs ([Nurhayati et al., 2025](#)). Case-based pedagogical methods, role-playing scenarios, and structured reflection on past witnessing experiences may serve this developmental goal.

Unexplained Variance and the Case for Integration

The 28.4% variance in digital ethics awareness not explained by religious education is not residual noise; it is a substantively important signal. Indonesia's composite digital literacy score of 3.54/5.00—with the digital ethics sub-dimension ranking as the weakest component ([Hefner, 2022](#); [Nurhayati et al., 2025](#); [Wedi et al., 2025](#))—suggests that cognitive knowledge about digital risks, rights, and technical mechanisms of harm represents an independent pathway to ethical digital conduct that religious education alone does not fully supply.

The optimal architecture for digital character education in Indonesian higher education is likely integrative rather than singular: religious education provides the

motivational scaffolding and moral identity (Siliwangi, 2026); digital literacy education supplies the contextual and technical knowledge necessary to recognize and respond to specific forms of digital harm; and institutional policies on digital conduct reinforce both through structural accountability. The present study provides empirical grounding for the first of these three pillars. Future research should examine the additive and interactive effects of all three.

Limitations

Several limitations qualify for the interpretation of these findings. First, the single-institution, purposive sample limits external validity; results may not generalize to students at institutions with different institutional cultures, student demographic profiles, or pedagogical approaches to Religious Education. Second, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference; while the regression analysis establishes a statistically robust predictive relationship, it does not permit the conclusion that Religious Education causes the observed variation in digital ethics awareness. Longitudinal or quasi-experimental designs would be required to support stronger causal claims. Third, both constructs were assessed through self-report measures, introducing the possibility of social desirability bias — particularly for ethical attitudes, where respondents may answer in accordance with perceived social norms rather than actual dispositions. Fourth, the study did not measure level of religiosity as an independent variable; future research should examine whether the predictive relationship between Religious Education and digital ethics awareness is moderated by degree of religious commitment.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined whether Religious Education learning substantively shapes university students' digital ethics awareness in relation to doxing, and the answer is affirmative on three counts. First, the overwhelming majority of students demonstrated high internalization of Religious Education values (98.9%), with the *hifzh al-'irdh* (dignity-protection) dimension emerging as the most robustly internalized sub-construct. Second, digital ethics awareness was commensurately high across the sample (95.7%), though the dimension assessing readiness to take active preventive action lagged slightly behind attitudinal awareness, pointing to a meaningful knowing-acting gap. Third, Religious Education learning explained 71.6% of the variance in digital ethics awareness ($r_s = 0.833$; $R^2 = 0.716$; $F = 231.90$; $p < .001$; Cohen's $f^2 = 2.52$) — an effect that is simultaneously statistically significant and practically large, affirming that Religious Education functions not merely as a graduation requirement but as an effective instrument of digital character formation.

Three practical implications follow. For Religious Education instructors, the findings support the explicit and systematic integration of contemporary digital ethics challenges — including doxing, personal data protection, and online privacy norms — into course content, with case-based and problem-based pedagogical methods designed to develop moral courage alongside ethical knowledge. For institutional leadership and

policymakers, the study provides empirical grounds for anchoring digital ethics policies in religious values frameworks, not only in legal or regulatory language — with the expectation that value-grounded policies will be more durably motivating than compliance-oriented mandates. For researchers, the study establishes a foundational quantitative benchmark; future work should extend this design to multi-institution samples, incorporate religiosity as a moderating variable, introduce digital literacy as a parallel predictor, and pursue longitudinal designs capable of supporting stronger causal inference.

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