

Jilid : 6, Nomor :1 , July 2025

## Digital Vulnerability and Public Response to Sextortion in Muslim Urban Society

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### Abstract

The rapid development of digital technology in urban Muslim societies creates new opportunities for education and social participation, but it also increases vulnerability to cybercrime, particularly sextortion. This crime threatens personal privacy and contradicts Islamic cultural and religious values, especially the principle of *hifz al-'ird* (protection of honour). This study examines digital vulnerability and public responses to sextortion cases in Pontianak City, as well as the role of Islamic values in shaping awareness, prevention, and victim support. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research combined a survey of 120 respondents with in-depth interviews involving five key informants, including victims, digital activists, law enforcement officers, educators, and religious leaders. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and logistic regression, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. The findings show that 62.5% of respondents were aware of sextortion cases, but only 18.4% were willing to report them. Trust in law enforcement was low (22.5%), and most respondents had a medium level of digital literacy (48.3%). Regression analysis revealed that individuals with high digital literacy were 2.4 times more likely to actively support victims. Qualitative findings indicate that stigma, shame, and fear of religious consequences discourage reporting, while law enforcement faces technical barriers. Educators highlighted digital literacy as prevention, and religious leaders reframed sextortion through *maqāsid al-sharī'ah*, emphasising victim protection. The study concludes that addressing sextortion requires integrated digital education, empathetic religious discourse, and stronger institutional capacity.

**Keyword** : *Digital Vulnerability, Public Response, Sextortion, Muslim Urban Society*

### INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed patterns of social interaction, communication, and identity formation. On the one hand, digital technology opens new opportunities in education, economic activity, and public participation; on the other hand, it increases vulnerability to various forms of cybercrime. One of the most alarming forms of cybercrime is sextortion, defined as sexual extortion through digital

media in which perpetrators threaten to distribute a victim's intimate material unless certain demands are met (O'Malley & Holt, 2020). Globally, sextortion is recognised as a highly destructive crime, yet it is frequently underreported due to the psychological, social, and legal consequences faced by victims (Hone et al., 2020).

In Muslim-majority societies such as Indonesia, sextortion not only threatens individual privacy and security but also violates fundamental cultural and religious values. Within Islamic ethics, the principle of *hifz al-'ird* (protection of honour) is central to safeguarding personal dignity, family reputation, and social trust. Consequently, sextortion carries profound social and spiritual implications, reinforcing stigma against victims and making it difficult for them to seek justice and social support.

Despite the high level of internet penetration and social media use in urban areas such as Pontianak City, public awareness of sextortion and of available prevention and response mechanisms remains limited. Many victims are reluctant to report their cases due to fear of social stigma, potential victim-blaming, and low levels of trust in formal law enforcement institutions. Digital media plays a paradoxical role in this context: while it serves as a space for awareness campaigns and expressions of solidarity, it also functions as a channel for the spread of rumours, doxing, and morally charged harassment.

Existing approaches have tended to emphasise legal and technical dimensions, while paying insufficient attention to the socio-religious dynamics that strongly influence attitudes and behaviours in Muslim communities. Religious values, however, play a significant role in shaping public perceptions of victims, perpetrators, and appropriate responses to sextortion cases.

This study aims to analyse public responses to sextortion cases in Pontianak City, evaluate the role of digital media in shaping awareness, prevention, and victim support, and identify social, cultural, and institutional factors that influence the success or failure of case handling. Furthermore, the study seeks to formulate strategic interventions grounded in Islamic ethical principles and digital engagement strategies that are better suited to the context of urban Muslim communities.

Previous studies on sextortion have largely focused on legal, psychological, or technological dimensions, with limited attention to religious ethical frameworks that play a crucial role in shaping responses within Muslim societies (Aina & Olujobi, 2023; Muslimin et al., 2024; Pacilli et al., 2024; Ray & Henry, 2024). Islamic principles such as *amānah* (trustworthiness and responsibility), *hifz al-nafs* (protection of life and psychological well-being), and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (the overarching objectives of Islamic law) provide a normative foundation for developing more empathetic and justice-oriented approaches to prevention and victim support.

This study is based on the assumption that higher levels of digital literacy and a deeper internalisation of Islamic values oriented toward the protection of human dignity are positively associated with more supportive public responses to sextortion victims. Accordingly, the hypothesis proposes that digital literacy and the internalisation of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* values significantly influence public willingness to engage in prevention efforts and victim support.

Theoretically, this research contributes to interdisciplinary scholarship on cybercrime prevention by linking digital vulnerability with Islamic ethical perspectives, an approach that remains underexplored in international literature. Practically, it offers strategic recommendations for policymakers, religious leaders, educators, and digital rights activists to strengthen social resilience, reduce stigma, and promote community-based prevention mechanisms. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* values with digital literacy as an innovative framework for addressing sextortion in urban Muslim communities. By situating sextortion within both digital moral discourse and socio-religious realities, this study provides a perspective that is relevant not only to the local context of Pontianak but also to comparative research in similar socio-religious environments.

## METHOD

This research uses a mixed-methods approach by combining quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a fuller understanding of digital vulnerability and public responses to *sextortion* in Pontianak City. This design was chosen so that the research would not only capture statistical trends through surveys, but also be able to explore the social, cultural, and religious experiences that shape people's attitudes and behaviours in dealing with the phenomenon.

The quantitative approach was conducted through a survey of 120 respondents who were purposively selected by considering demographic diversity, such as age, gender, educational background, and intensity of digital media use. The survey used a structured questionnaire containing indicators of digital literacy, level of trust in formal reporting mechanisms, involvement in awareness campaigns, and attitudes towards victims of *sextortion*. The data collected was analysed with descriptive statistics to see general trends, followed by logistic regression analysis using SPSS to test the influence of digital literacy and institutional trust on reporting behaviour and support for victims.

Meanwhile, the qualitative approach was conducted through in-depth interviews with 5 key informants, consisting of victims, digital activists, law enforcement officials, educators, and religious leaders. The selection of informants was carried out using *snowball sampling* technique to reach relevant participants, especially victims who are difficult to access due to sensitive issues. Qualitative data was analysed using a thematic analysis approach, so as to reveal the narrative patterns, social construction, and Islamic ethical framework used by the community in responding to *sextortion* cases. The entire research process was carried out by paying attention to ethical principles, including through *informed consent*, maintaining the confidentiality of respondents' identities, and adjusting interview techniques so as not to cause new trauma. This research was conducted in Pontianak City for four months, including survey, interview, and data analysis stages.

## RESULT

### Patterns of Knowledge, Attitude, and Public Trust towards Sextortion Respondents' Knowledge Level

To understand more comprehensively how the public responds to the phenomenon of sextortion in the digital realm, this research first captured general trends through a quantitative survey . The data collected from 120 respondents provides an overview of the public's level of knowledge of sextortion cases, variations in attitudes shown when faced with such events, the level of trust in formal mechanisms, their digital literacy, and perceptions of the role of social media. These quantitative results not only show statistical trends, but also provide an important basis for interpreting social and psychological dynamics that are then deepened through qualitative findings.

**Table 1. Respondents' Level of Knowledge about  
Sextortion Cases in the Digital Sphere (N=120)**

Respondents' Knowledge Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Knowing (have heard)	75	62,5
Through social media	53	44,2
Through online news	34	28,3
From relatives/friends	21	17,5
Did not know at all	45	37,5
Total	120	100

Source: Processed data (2025)

Out of a total of 120 respondents, the majority (62.5%) stated that they had heard or known about *sextortion* cases in their digital sphere, either through social media (44.2%), online news (28.3%), or stories from relatives or friends (17.5%). However, there were 37.5% of respondents who claimed not to know about this phenomenon at all, which shows that there is still an information gap in the community.

### Attitudes and Responses to the Case

When asked about the attitudes they would take if faced with a sextortion case, respondents showed an interesting variety of responses. Most, 41.7%, said they would delete or ignore the content as a form of distancing themselves from potential risks. Meanwhile, 29.9% of respondents affirmed their willingness to provide moral support to victims, reflecting empathy and social concern. Only 18.4% of respondents expressed readiness to report the case to the authorities, a relatively low figure and indicative of barriers in the formal reporting aspect. The remaining 10% chose not to get involved at all for fear of being dragged into a bigger problem. This variation illustrates that while there is awareness of the need to support victims, fear and hesitation towards formal mechanisms are still major obstacles in shaping an active community response. The low reporting rate (18.4%) suggests significant structural and psychological barriers.

**Table 2: Respondents' Attitudes towards Sextortion Cases (N=120)**

Respondents' Attitudes	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Delete/ignore the content	50	41,7
Provide moral support to the victim	36	29,9
Reporting to the authorities	22	18,4
Not involved (afraid of getting into trouble)	12	10,0
Total	120	100

Source: Processed data (2025)

**Table 3. Respondents' Level of Trust in Formal Mechanisms (N=120)**

Level of Trust	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Full trust (police/Communications)	27	22,5
Partial trust (trust but doubt effectiveness)	65	54,2
Do not believe at all	28	23,3
Total	120	100

Source: Processed data (2025)

Only 22.5% of respondents expressed full trust in formal mechanisms such as the police or Kominfo. A total of 54.2% showed partial trust (trust but doubt about effectiveness), while 23.3% did not trust at all. This distrust is driven by experiences of slow response from the authorities, concerns over the confidentiality of personal data, and the stigma that victims often experience when interacting with formal institutions.

**Table 4. Respondents' Digital Literacy Level (N=120)**

Digital Literacy Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
High	39	32,5
Medium	58	48,3
Low	23	19,2
Total	120	100

Source: Processed data (2025)

**Table 5. Results of Logistic Regression Analysis:  
Digital Literacy and Active Response**

Digital Category	Literacy	Odds (OR)	Ratio	Interpretation
High vs Low		2,4		Respondents with high literacy were 2.4 times more likely to respond actively.
Medium vs Low				Not explicitly mentioned in the data.

Source: Processed data (2025)

The results of the digital literacy measurement showed that 48.3% of respondents were in the medium category, 32.5% were high, and 19.2% were low. Logistic regression analysis showed that respondents with high digital literacy were 2.4 times more likely to respond actively (report or support victims) compared to low literacy respondents.

**Table 6. The Role of Social Media**

Respondents' Perception	Number respondents	Percentage (%)
Believes that social media plays a positive role in opening a space for digital safety discussions	89	74,1
Ever confused valid information with malicious content (doxing/slander)	56	46,7

Source: Processed data (2025)

A total of 74.1% of respondents considered social media to play a positive role in opening up discussion about digital safety and online harassment. However, 46.7% also claimed to have experienced confusion in distinguishing between valid information and harmful content such as *doxing* and digital slander. This shows that social media has an ambivalent role: as an educational tool as well as an arena for stigma reproduction.

### **Narratives of Experience, Structural Challenges, and Socio-Religious Perspectives in Sextortion Cases**

In interviews, victims of sextortion described psychological burdens that went far beyond direct threats from the perpetrator. A female informant who was a male victim said that she was more afraid of the reaction of the social environment than the threat of spreading personal content.

*"Honestly, I'm more afraid of my friends at work finding out than the person's threats. If it gets out, my family will be seen as failing to look after their children. I'd rather keep quiet,"* (Informant, male victim, 21 years old).

This kind of pressure makes victims choose to remain silent, even though it causes deep anxiety, nightmares, and impaired concentration in activities. The victim's silence is not a sign of weakness, but a reflection of the complex moral dilemma between protecting

the dignity of the family and fighting for the rights of the violated individual. The decision to remain silent has wider social consequences. In the absence of an official report, perpetrators feel safe and are emboldened to repeat their actions against other victims. One digital activist emphasised:

*"As long as the victim continues to remain silent, the perpetrator actually feels victorious. They know the victim is afraid of being stigmatised, so the threats become more and more severe,"* (Informant, male victim, 28 years old).

This culture of silence reinforces *the normalisation of* digital violence, where sextortion is considered difficult to expose and therefore "worthy" of being a recurring instrument of extortion. Furthermore, a society that tends to blame the victim-for example, with the narrative of *"it's her own fault for sending private photos"*-adds a layer of stigma and narrows the safe space for victims to seek help. As a result, the cycle of digital violence repeats itself: perpetrators become bolder, victims become more afraid to speak out, and society becomes trapped in a spiral of silence that nurtures crime. Officials recognise the huge challenges in uncovering sextortion cases. Digital evidence is often erased, while procedures for requesting data to international platforms take a long time.

*"Many reports end up stopping at the investigator's desk because the evidence has been deleted. If you request official data to overseas platforms, it can take months. Meanwhile, victims are already afraid,"* (Informant, police officer, 35 years old).

In addition to technical obstacles, the authorities highlighted the low level of reporting from the community. The lack of courage for victims to report closes the opportunity for the law to ensnare the perpetrators.

*"The problem is not only evidence, but also the courage to report. Many victims end up withdrawing the report because they are afraid that other people will find out,"*  
(Informant, police officer, 37 years old).

Teachers and lecturers who became informants in this study view that sextortion cases cannot be handled by relying solely on legal regulations and law enforcement officials. According to them, the most strategic preventive measures should start from the world of education. Teachers at the high school level, for example, asserted that students should have been given an early understanding of the risks of sextortion and how to protect themselves in the digital space. A 34-year-old high school teacher said,

*"Children from high school to university students must be taught about the risks of sextortion. If you just rely on the police, it's too late. Education must be the first shield."*

This expression shows the belief that education has a key position as the frontline to equip young people to face threats in cyberspace. However, educators are also aware of the obstacles in delivering this sensitive material. Awkwardness and embarrassment often arise when the issue of sextortion is discussed in a large classroom. Therefore, lecturers and teachers prefer a more personalised approach by using small forums such as group discussions. In a more intimate forum, students are more likely to share their experiences and be more open to discussing stigmatised topics. A 35-year-old IAIN Pontianak lecturer said,

*"In big classes they are shy, but in small groups they are more open. We can build awareness without judgement."*

This statement illustrates educators' awareness of the importance of creating a safe space in the teaching-learning process, so that digital literacy is not just theoretical

material, but also a learning experience that frees from fear. On the other hand, teachers and lecturers also face a big challenge in the form of strong social stigma in society. Often sextortion cases are seen as a personal or family disgrace, so students are reluctant to open up and choose to remain silent. This makes the role of education even more important to erode the stigma through an approach based on awareness, empathy, and religious and cultural values. According to them, digital literacy should be integrated into the school and college curriculum, not only in the form of technical knowledge, but also character education that emphasises media ethics and moral responsibility.

Thus, teachers and lecturers do not only act as teachers who transfer knowledge, but also as facilitators of critical awareness. They strive to make schools and campuses a space of protection and prevention, where students not only understand the dangers of sextortion, but also have the courage to speak out and protect themselves.

Religious leaders who became informants in this study considered that sextortion is not only a legal or technological issue, but also a serious threat to the basic values of Islam. They stressed the importance of the principles of *ḥifẓ al-'ird* (protecting honour) and *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protecting the soul) as ethical frameworks in understanding the impact of this digital crime. For them, sextortion not only undermines individual privacy, but also has the potential to undermine the dignity of families and communities. Therefore, society's response should not be directed at misusing the concept of guarding honour by blaming victims, but rather at protecting them from greater harm. A 45-year-old preacher asserted,

*"In Islam, preserving honour ('ird) does not mean covering up disgrace by blaming the victim. Instead, we must protect them from greater harm."*

This realisation has prompted some religious leaders to start integrating the issue of digital ethics into da'wah spaces. They see that Friday sermons and recitations can be an important medium to build public awareness and erode the culture of blaming victims.

A 50-year-old local cleric even said that he routinely mentions the dangers of sextortion and social media etiquette at the religious pulpit. He said,

*"I often mention in the khutbah, do not easily spread people's disgrace on social. media. It is not only a sin, but also prolongs the victim's wounds."*

This statement shows that religious figures not only act as moral reminders, but also as agents of social change who try to present religious perspectives that are more empathetic and protective of victims.

Thus, exposure from religious leaders shows that the religious dimension plays an important role in shaping society's response to sextortion. Da'wah that frames the issue from a perspective of protection rather than stigmatisation is a relevant moral strategy in the context of urban Muslim communities. Through sermons, recitations, and other religious discourses, they seek to present a safe space that emphasises compassion, protection, and empathy, so that people not only understand sextortion as a digital crime, but also as a moral and spiritual issue that must be addressed together.

## DISCUSSION

### **Digital Literacy, Social Stigma, and the Role of Religious Education in Public Responses to Sextortion**

The results of the study show that the public's understanding of sextortion is still lame. Most respondents, 62.5 per cent, claimed to have heard of sextortion cases, but almost 40 per cent did not know about it at all. This condition is exacerbated by the level of digital literacy, the majority of which is in the medium category, while only a third of respondents have high digital literacy. This finding directly correlates with people's behaviour in responding to cases: only 18.4 per cent expressed willingness to report to the authorities, with a very low level of trust in formal mechanisms, only 22.5 per cent.

Regression analysis reinforced this relationship, with respondents with high digital literacy 2.4 times more likely to respond actively than those with low literacy.

This quantitative data found a deeper explanation in the qualitative interviews. Victims described a heavy psychological burden, where fear of social stigma, family disgrace and socio-religious consequences were far more intimidating than direct threats from the perpetrator. The victim's silence is not merely a sign of weakness, but reflects a complex moral dilemma: between maintaining the good name of the family and educational institution, or fighting for the right to legal protection. It is this stigma that ultimately reinforces the phenomenon of underreporting, as victims choose to remain silent, while perpetrators increasingly feel safe to repeat their actions.

The lack of reporting is also exacerbated by institutional weaknesses. Law enforcement officials themselves recognise technical difficulties in handling cases, ranging from digital evidence that is quickly lost to the long bureaucracy in requesting data from international platforms. When combined with the slow response of the authorities, this fuels public distrust and weakens the courage of victims to seek formal protection. As a result, the burden of prevention and support has shifted to education and communities.

Teachers and lecturers see education as the first line of defence against sextortion. For them, legal regulations will not be enough if students are not equipped with knowledge and awareness from an early age. "High school students to university students must be taught about the risks of sextortion. If you just rely on the police, it's too late. Education must be the first shield," said a high school teacher. However, they also realise that this issue is sensitive and difficult to discuss in large classes. Therefore, small forums are considered more effective. A IAIN Pontianak lecturer said, "In large classes they are shy, but in small groups they are more open. We can build awareness without judgement." This shows that a pedagogical approach that is more intimate, non-punitive, and focuses on safe spaces can be an important strategy for shaping collective consciousness.

Meanwhile, religious leaders provide a different but complementary perspective. They frame the phenomenon of sextortion within the framework of *maqāsid al-sharī'ah*, specifically *ḥifẓ al-'ird* (protecting honour) and *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protecting the soul). With this approach, society's narrative is directed no longer at the misuse of the concept of honour to blame victims, but rather at the obligation to protect them. An ustaz asserted, "In Islam, protecting honour (*'ird*) does not mean covering up disgrace by blaming the victim. Instead, we must protect them from greater harm." Some clerics have even started to include the theme of digital ethics and the dangers of sextortion in khutbahs and recitations. A local cleric added, "I often mention in sermons, don't easily spread people's disgrace on social media. It is not only a sin, but also prolongs the victim's wounds." Thus, da'wah serves as a medium for public education as well as a means of reducing stigma, building empathy, and strengthening solidarity with victims.

This integrated presentation shows that the phenomenon of sextortion in urban Muslim communities cannot be viewed solely in terms of law or technology, but needs to be understood in a social, educational and religious context. Low digital literacy and strong stigma explain why cases are rarely reported (Yan et al, 2022). However, the role of teachers, lecturers and religious leaders opens up opportunities for education and da'wah to be the motor of collective behaviour change. By building safe spaces, strengthening literacy, and framing the issue as a moral-spiritual obligation, communities can move from a culture of silence to active solidarity in protecting victims and preventing the recurrence of digital violence (.Setyaningsih et al, 2024).

### **Operational Strategies and Prioritisation of Actions in Sextortion Prevention**

Efforts to prevent sextortion in urban Muslim communities require operational strategies that are planned, gradual, and sustainable. This research recommends strategic measures that can be implemented from the short, medium, to the long term, with a focus on education, law enforcement, and strengthening the role of religious leaders.

In the short term, strategies are directed towards quick and practical interventions, particularly through education. A simple digital literacy module consisting of three sessions-introducing sextortion and its risks, privacy practices and prevention, and victim support and reporting procedures-can be applied to high school and university students. This module should be conducted in small groups to allow participants to discuss without embarrassment or fear of judgement (Mansor, 2023). At the same time, there needs to be training for teachers and lecturers as *first responders* in the school and campus environment. They must be equipped with the ability to handle cases sensitively, maintain confidentiality, and refer victims to safe support services. This preventive approach is complemented by short da'wah campaigns in the form of khutbah or recitation materials, which emphasise the importance of protecting victims and the prohibition of spreading other people's shame.

In the medium term, the strategy is extended to the structural level. The integration of digital literacy and media ethics into the official curriculum of schools and universities needs to be done so that education about sextortion is not just an additional activity, but becomes part of formal learning (Huda & Hashim, 2021; Lee, 2018). An inter-institutional response unit also needs to be established, involving law enforcement officials, Kominfo, non-governmental organisations, and religious leaders, so that there are clear handling protocols ranging from *rapid takedown*, victim protection, to psychological assistance. In this phase, it is also important to establish victim-friendly reporting channels, such as anonymous hotlines or portals that guarantee confidentiality and provide access to legal and psychosocial support.

In the long term, strategic measures focus on systemic strengthening. Digital forensic procedures in the police force need to be improved through increased tools, resources and operational standards, as well as international technical cooperation so that data from overseas platforms can be accessed more quickly. In addition, evaluation of the impact of education through longitudinal studies is crucial to assess whether the integration of digital literacy actually decreases incidents of sextortion and increases case

reporting. Long-term programmes should also foster a community culture that supports victims, by involving Islamic boarding schools, community organisations and local media to normalise empathic behaviour and solidarity.

To ensure effectiveness, a number of monitoring and evaluation indicators can be used. For example, the proportion of students who are aware of sextortion is expected to increase by at least 30 per cent within the first year; the percentage of victims who dare to report is expected to increase from 18.4 per cent to 30 per cent after one year of intervention; the response time of authorities in handling digital data requests is targeted to decrease; and the number of sermons and recitations that include digital ethics messages is monitored regularly.

Even so, this study has limitations. The survey sample of 120 people was purposively selected so that the quantitative results are indicative for the Pontianak context and cannot be widely generalised. The snowball sampling technique in the interviews also had the potential to produce bias, as it only involved victims who were willing to share their experiences. In addition, this study highlighted attitudes rather than actual behaviour, so follow-up is needed to see if the intention to report is actually realised. The technical constraints of the apparatus related to digital evidence have also not been measured quantitatively, so additional data is needed to strengthen the analysis.

Based on these limitations, further research is recommended to conduct a cohort study in schools and campuses that have implemented the literacy module, to measure its impact on support and reporting behaviours. In addition, a more detailed analysis of the law enforcement process, including the average time of data requests to platforms and the outcome of cases in court, should be conducted. Field experiments on the effectiveness of proselytising messages with different approaches can also help find the most appropriate formula to reduce *victim blaming*.

Taking into account the results of this analysis, three priority steps can be taken immediately. First, design and implement a three-session digital literacy module in schools and campuses as a pilot programme. Second, organise short training for teachers

and lecturers as *first responders* to provide sensitive and safe initial handling. Third, develop concise sermon and recitation materials with local religious leaders to build public awareness that protecting victims of sextortion is a shared moral obligation. These three steps, if done simultaneously, can be the foundation for a more comprehensive medium and long-term strategy.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that sextortion in urban Muslim societies, particularly in Pontianak, is a complex phenomenon that cannot be addressed solely through legal or technological perspectives. Public responses are shaped by the interaction of digital literacy, social stigma, institutional trust, and religious values. While awareness of sextortion exists, it does not automatically translate into active reporting or support for victims due to fear of shame, family dishonour, and perceived religious consequences. Digital literacy plays a critical role in enabling more proactive responses, yet its impact is constrained by weak confidence in formal institutions and persistent moral stigma. Religious discourse, when framed within the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, emerges as a powerful means to shift public attitudes from victim-blaming toward victim protection. These findings highlight the need to view sextortion as a socio-digital and moral issue embedded in community structures rather than merely a criminal act.

Based on these findings, this study recommends the development of a comprehensive prevention strategy that integrates digital literacy education, empathetic religious engagement, and institutional strengthening. Educational institutions should prioritise contextual and participatory digital literacy programmes that empower individuals to recognise risks and seek support without fear. Religious leaders are encouraged to actively incorporate narratives of compassion, dignity, and protection of honour into *da'wah* to reduce stigma and encourage reporting. At the institutional level, law enforcement agencies should enhance technical capacity and inter-agency cooperation to handle digital evidence more effectively and build public trust. Future research should expand the scope of participants, examine actual behavioural responses,

and explore the effectiveness of educational and religious interventions in fostering safer digital environments and social transformation.

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