

# Motivations for Using Religious Digital Media: A Hierarchical Regression Analysis Among Jordanian University Students

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## Abstract

It is necessary to study the factors that motivate young people to follow religious websites to feel their intellectual and behavioral effects. Through hierarchical regression analysis, this study investigated the factors influencing motivations for using religious digital media (RDMUM) among 330 Jordanian university students. The analysis reveals that demographic factors, particularly age and gender, significantly predict motivations, with younger individuals and males showing higher engagement. Educational level, explicitly having a BA degree, also influences motivation, whereas university location and specialization do not have significant effects. The type of digital media used (websites, social media, podcasts) does not significantly impact motivations, although a negative association with Twitter suggests that platform-specific characteristics may affect engagement. Prior knowledge and specific interests in Islamic thought faith and jurisprudential topics are strong motivators, highlighting the importance of content relevance and depth. The final model, which explains 49% of the variance in RDMUM, underscores the robust explanatory power of the included variables. These findings emphasize the need for tailored content addressing users' interests and knowledge levels. Content creators and practitioners can leverage these insights to develop more engaging and effective religious digital media, ultimately enhancing user engagement and satisfaction. Moreover, this study's potential to inspire and guide future research in this field is significant, contributing to the academic community's understanding of religious digital media.

**Keywords:** Digital Media; Islamic Websites; Jordanian University Students; Motivations; Social Media



## INTRODUCTION

Digital media have emerged as a crucial medium for worldwide communication and engagement, facilitating knowledge acquisition (Flew, 2018). The modern landscape has observed a proliferation of religious websites and a variety of prominent advocates for youth groups with diverse orientations (Beckham, 2023; Cheong et al., 2009; Helland, 2005). Some websites pursue constructive objectives, however several others advocate for violence (Aly & Thoyibi, 2020; Juliansyahzen, 2023; Kaskeleviciute et al., 2023; Slama, 2018).

A trend exists among Jordanian university students utilizing online platforms featuring religious information. This can be ascribed to the characteristics of Jordanian society and the evolution of digital media. The Jordanian society displays varied apprehensions regarding religious trends and their interplay with political, sectarian, and cultural dynamics (Maqableh, 2023; Munnik, 2023; Tessler, 2020).

Indicators illustrate the impact of content from diverse religious movements on society (Azadarmaki & Moaddel, 2002; Wang, 2024). Digital media have enhanced communication, monitoring, and access to information. Extremist organizations have impacted youth, with social media serving as a primary instrument for victim recruitment. In contrast, numerous websites advocate for a culture of collaboration and social harmony (Braizat et al., 2017). It is important to clarify that labeling any group as “Islamic” does not imply endorsement of its actions or objectives. Furthermore, all parties must recognize that anyone who does not identify as “Islamic” is inherently considered secular within Muslim society (Gutkowski, 2016). In Jordanian society, the Islamic faith is perceived as both a cultural element and a framework for articulating organized social and political movements and trends (Wiktorowicz, 2001).

In this context, the interest of young individuals in religious content indicates varied preferences of the essence of these subjects

and their religious affiliations. Numerous Islamic websites and influencers possess substantial followings. This demonstrates their considerable influence on Jordanian society. Websites contain diverse perspectives on faith, worship, interpersonal relationships, and Islamic jurisprudence about numerous facets of life. Certain forums concentrate on giving fatwas that elucidate Islamic judgments on quotidian matters (Abdel-Salhein, 2018; Mohiuddin, 2023; Warren, 2015). A cohort of influencers with varied interests has arisen in Islamic campaigning. It is significant that influencers have surpassed the limitations of specific states or local communities via digital media (Turner, 2007). Consequently, due to the utilization of a shared language, there exists an audience throughout Arab nations.

In the last thirty years, concerns have escalated over the difficulties encountered by youth in the context of the rise of digital media. In addition to the noticeable decrease in engagement with religious communities, there are growing concerns about the education of young individuals in religious settings and outreach initiatives, as well as the proliferation of controversial websites that propagate both accurate and inaccurate religious ideologies (Hess, 2023). Modern information technology, media, and social networking platforms are helpful in cultivating new social ties among friends, family, and individuals, hence facilitating relationship building. This study sought to augment the function of social media within Islamic society and investigate its application in accordance with Islamic principles for the advancement of social welfare. Prior research has indicated that, from an Islamic viewpoint, social media exerts both markedly good and harmful influences on Islamic society (Aliyu et al., 2013; Islam, 2019; Sule & Sulaiman, 2021).

Golan's (2023) analysis of digital youth and religion reveals that prominent religious leaders, especially those interacting with adolescents, have created ways to endorse new media by highlighting

its educational, religious, and social benefits. Instead of rejecting or contesting modern media, some religious influencers adopt its utilization. Diverse religious and extremist groups have embraced this methodology. By utilizing modern innovations, they have successfully exerted their religious influence over youth and shaped their perceptions and beliefs. A difference exists between the beneficial and detrimental effects of a website's religious content. Al-Amer et al. (2023) found that TikTok and Snapchat are the most significant social media platforms utilized by university students in combating intellectual extremism. Furthermore, social media exerts a significantly adverse effect on intellectual security. This was ascribed to the characteristics of content distribution and its impact on users.

The literature review demonstrated that digital media in Jordan plays a multifaceted role in shaping religious culture, public opinion, and social values. Although these platforms offer significant opportunities for engagement and discourse, they also present challenges, including the spread of extremism and hate speech. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that includes regulatory reforms, public awareness initiatives, and targeted interventions to harness the positive potential of digital media, while mitigating its risks. Digital media have become a significant force in shaping Jordan's religious discourse, beliefs, and practices. Various studies have highlighted the profound impact of social media platforms on Jordanian society, particularly in the religious context. The increasing use of digital media has led to the emergence of influential religious websites and personalities, particularly those with large followers. These platforms are crucial for shaping religious discourse, influencing spiritual culture, and guiding religious practices. Several studies emphasize the need to understand the most influential religious websites and figures ([Azadarmaki &](#)

Moaddel, 2002; Braizat et al., 2017), suggesting that these platforms have a substantial impact on religious culture in Jordan.

In addition to their influence on religious practices, social media platforms in Jordan have been linked to the spread of extremist ideologies. Al-Khataibeh's (2019) study of Jordanian university students revealed that social media platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and YouTube, play a significant role in disseminating extremist ideas, posing a threat to intellectual security. This study underscores the need for comprehensive strategies to address the risks associated with social media, including implementing political and economic reforms and enhancing government regulation. The influence of social media extends beyond religious discourse and significantly affects public opinion in Jordan. Research involving Jordanian university students found that social media platforms play a crucial role in shaping opinions, beliefs, and ideas (AlKhudari et al., 2024). These platforms facilitate the exchange of ideas, contributing to the formation of public opinion and adoption of new ideas or changes in existing beliefs. The findings underscore the importance of understanding the role of social media in shaping public opinion, particularly among the younger generation.

Another critical social media issue in Jordan is the prevalence of hate speech. Studies have shown that hate speech is widespread on social media platforms, and university students are particularly aware of its impact. The ease of spreading hate speech through smart devices has raised concerns regarding the influence of such content on users' attitudes and feelings of safety (Alserhan & Elareshi, 2020). These findings highlight the need for strategies to mitigate the effects of hate speech, particularly in educational institutions. Islamic media in Jordan have also been investigated for their role in addressing issues such as electronic addiction. Research indicates that Islamic media play a moderate role in reducing electronic addiction among

Jordanian university students (Al Shogran et al., 2024). The study found significant differences in the impact of Islamic media based on gender, suggesting the need for targeted interventions to address electronic addiction within different demographic groups.

Social media platforms, such as YouTube and Facebook, have also been recognized for their role in reducing religious extremism among Jordanian youth. Studies conducted from the perspective of mosque imams have revealed a moderate impact of these platforms in curbing extremism (Al-Khalidi, 2021). The research emphasized the importance of verifying the accuracy of religious content on social media and the role of mosque imams in guiding youth toward a correct religious understanding.

Finally, social networks in Jordan have been found to play a significant role in shaping religious and social values, particularly among students of World Islamic Sciences and Education University. Research indicates that social media use contributes to differences in spiritual and social values among students, highlighting the potential of these platforms to influence value formation (Al-Mosa, 2015). These findings suggest that social networks can be leveraged to promote positive religious and social values among the youth.

The present study sought to examine the most prominent religious websites and figures, emphasizing those with the largest follower counts, and evaluating their influence on spiritual culture. This study sought to comprehend how these platforms influence religious discourse, beliefs, and practices among their audiences, as well as to evaluate their impact on current religious culture.

## **Originality**

This study significantly advances the understanding of motivations for using religious digital media among Jordanian university students by identifying key demographic predictors, such as age, gender, and educational level. It uniquely contributes to the

field by delving into socio-cultural influences on digital media usage and examining how cultural norms and societal expectations shape engagement with religious content. Furthermore, this study explores emerging digital trends, including the impact of new social media platforms and the role of interactive and immersive technologies in religious education, thus providing fresh insights.

Additionally, the study addresses the critical task of identifying websites that positively influence intellectual, doctrinal, and jurisprudential topics, while highlighting those that negatively impact culture and behavior. By focusing on these under-researched areas, this study emphasizes the importance of content relevance and depth and offers a comprehensive view of the evolving landscape of religious digital media. This approach underscores the study's potential to inspire future research and guide content creators to develop more engaging and effective religious digital media, ultimately enhancing user engagement and satisfaction.

## **Objectives**

This study aims to comprehensively examine the motivations for using religious digital media by exploring the roles of prior knowledge, specific interests, demographic predictors (such as age, gender, and educational level), and the impact of digital media formats, university location, and specialization on user engagement. It delves into how a solid foundation in religious topics significantly enhances user engagement, emphasizing the importance of content relevance. By aligning digital media with users' pre-existing knowledge and specific interests, such as Islamic thought and jurisprudential topics, this study provides actionable insights for content creators to develop materials that resonate with their audiences. Additionally, the study assessed the impact of educational background on engagement by comparing motivations between individuals with bachelor's and postgraduate degrees. It also

investigates whether university location and specialization influence religious digital media use. Furthermore, the study analyzes the effectiveness of different digital media formats, including podcasts, websites, and social media platforms, such as Twitter, in engaging users with religious content. Finally, the study suggests directions for future research, exploring additional factors that may influence motivations, such as digital literacy and cultural background, and the effectiveness of various digital media formats and interaction styles.

## METHOD

### Participants

Data (N = 332, 71% female students) were collected in Jordan between November and December 2023. As shown in [Table 1](#), 29% of the participants were male and 71% were female. In terms of age groups, 16.6% of the students were aged 18 to 20 years, 15.7% were aged 21 and 22 years, 17.2% were aged 23 and 24 years, and 50.6% were aged 25 to 30 years (50.6%). Of the students, 40.1% were from central universities, 49.7% from northern universities, and 10.2% from southern universities. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and the researcher expresses gratitude to the students for their valuable contributions.

**Table 1**

*Sample Characteristics*

Variable		%	N
Gender	Male	0.29	96
	Female	0.71	236
Age (years)	18 - < 21	16.6	55
	21 - < 23	15.7	52
	23 - < 25	17.2	57
	25 - 30	50.6	168
	Central Universities	40.1	133

University's Location	Northern universities	49.7	165
	Southern universities	10.2	34
Degree of usage and following of religious websites	Daily	39.8	132
	Once a week	35.2	117
	Once a month	7.8	26
	Rarely follow	17.2	57
Total		100%	332

Source: Primary data.

## Study Design

The questionnaire consisted of categorical variables related to university students and three main scales with 16 items. The first scale consisted of seven items, and the other three items consisted of three items each.

## Categorical variables

This study analyzed the relationship between various demographic and situational variables and religious digital media use using the Religious Digital Media Use Motivations (RDMUM) scale. For example, gender differences have been found to influence media consumption habits, with males showing a slight but significant difference in their engagement with religious digital media compared with females (Maqableh, 2023). Age is another critical factor: younger age groups (18-20 years and 21-22 years) demonstrated significantly higher engagement levels than those aged 25-30, highlighting generational differences in digital religious media consumption (Al-Khataibeh, 2019). The university's location also plays a role, as students from the North and Central regions of Jordan showed varying levels of engagement compared to those from the South, possibly reflecting sociocultural and infrastructural influences (Al-Mosa, 2015). Educational level further impacts usage, with undergraduate students showing higher engagement than postgraduates, suggesting that lower educational attainment might be

linked to a higher reliance on digital media for religious content (Alserhan & Elareshi, 2020). Specialization, particularly between students in Sharia and Islamic Studies versus those in scientific disciplines, reveals that academic focus influences the type of religious digital content consumed (Al-Khalidi, 2021). The type of digital media used also varies; for instance, websites and social media platforms show different levels of engagement compared with podcasts, which are less frequently used for religious purposes (Braizat et al., 2017). Among the social media platforms, Telegram users were more engaged in religious content. In contrast, platforms such as Facebook and Twitter show varying degrees of negative or neutral engagement, possibly due to the different content types and user interactions typical of these platforms (Al Shogran et al., 2024).

### *The Religious Digital Media Use Motivations (RDMUM) scale*

The Religious Digital Media Use Motivations (RDMUM) scale highlights various reasons why individuals engage with religious digital media. Users follow these platforms to stay informed about news related to Muslims and seek answers to spiritual questions that arise. They also use digital media to deepen their knowledge of Islam and its laws, follow their favorite preachers, and explore different intellectual and jurisprudential trends. In addition, social networks serve as venues for discussing and debating individuals with differing doctrinal and jurisprudential views. These motivations reflect broad engagement with religious content to enhance understanding, connect with spiritual leaders, and participate in meaningful dialogue.

A seven-item scale was developed to measure the contribution of religious websites to the spiritual culture among a sample of Jordanian university students (Fuente-Cobo et al., 2023; Latt & Tun Aung, 2017; Moberg et al., 2020). Responses like (Strongly Agree) were given 5 points, (Agree) 4 points, (Neither Agree nor Disagree) 3 points, (Disagree) 2 points, and (Strongly Disagree) 1 point.

### ***Independent Factors***

The Religious Digital Media Use Motivations (RDMUM) scale evaluates various aspects of user engagement with religious digital content. It includes the Prior Knowledge Scale (Eveland & Scheufele, 2000), which assesses users' knowledge of Islamic history, spiritual practices, and Islamic law and their interest in further exploring these topics. The Usage Frequency Scale measures how often users access religious digital media, categorizing their Internet use as daily, weekly, monthly, or infrequent (Cantwell & Rashid, 2015). The Interest in Islamic Thought scale includes items that gauge user engagement with Islamic philosophy, theological debates, and influential historical figures. Similarly, the Interest in Faith Topics scale assesses users' interest in topics of doctrinal differences as well as metaphysical issues. Finally, the Interest in Jurisprudential Topics scale measures users' engagement with Islamic jurisprudence, legal schools of thought, and Sharia law (Alfaize, 2015; Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2019). These scales offer a comprehensive view of users' motivations for interacting with religious digital media, reflecting their knowledge, usage patterns, and interests in various religious and legal domains.

### **Data Analysis**

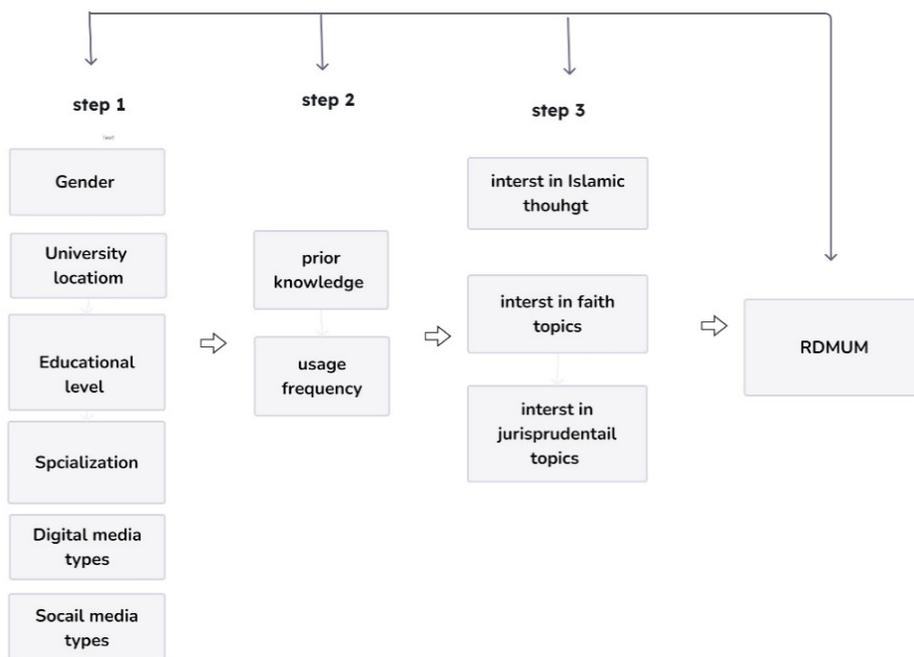
The internal validity of the questionnaire was evaluated by item analysis, with correlation coefficients computed for each item (Devriendt et al., 2012). The coefficients assessed the validity percentage for each item by analyzing the correlations among each item, the overall score, and its corresponding domain, as well as between each domain and the total score. The correlation coefficients varied between 0.39 to 0.84. All coefficients were deemed acceptable and statistically significant. As a result, no items were eliminated from the questionnaire. Reliability indicators of the field study scale (Bonett

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& Wright, 2015) were derived by calculating the correlation coefficients between the scale items and the total score, utilizing a sample of 50 students not included in the study sample. The test-retest strategy was employed utilizing the Pearson correlation coefficient (Leppink & Pérez-Fuster, 2017). Furthermore, they employed Cronbach's alpha to ascertain the internal consistency coefficient. This resulted in a correlation coefficient of 0.807, signifying an adequate level of reliability. To ascertain the presence of differences in sample responses based on variables such as gender, age (years), university location, and academic degree, we employed an independent sample t-test to detect statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) concerning the gender variable.

Figure 1

A Framework of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for the Third Model: Religious Digital Media Use Motivations Scale Predictors (RDMUM))



Source: Primary data.

Furthermore, we computed the means and standard deviations and performed a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the remaining variables. These pertain to Age (years) and University Location. To ascertain the origin of the discrepancies in the one-way ANOVA test, we used a post-hoc Scheffe test. The hierarchical regression analysis model incorporated variables with P values. Figure 1 illustrates the structure of hierarchical regression analysis for the third model, which pertains to the predictors of the religious digital media use motivation scale (RDMUM).

## **RESULTS**

### **Description of Participants' Essential Characteristics and Their Correlations with RDMUM**

Table 2 provides insights into how different characteristics of participants relate to their motivations for using religious digital media, as measured by the Religious Digital Media Use Motivations Scale (RDMUM). The p-value helps to determine whether the observed differences are statistically significant or likely due to chance. For instance, gender does not significantly impact motivation, as indicated by a p-value of 0.97, meaning that both female and male participants had similar average scores on the RDMUM scale. Age, however, showed a significant effect with a p-value of 0.000, suggesting that younger participants (ages 18-22) were more motivated to use religious digital media than older participants (ages 23-30). This indicates a notable difference in motivation across age groups.

University location does not significantly affect motivation, with a p-value of 0.08 above the conventional threshold of 0.05. Similarly, specialization does not show a significant difference, as evidenced by a p-value of 0.35, meaning that the field of study (Sharia and Islamic Studies, Humanities, or Scientific Colleges) does not substantially

influence motivation. In contrast, educational level significantly impacted motivation, with a p-value of 0.000. Participants with a bachelor's degree had higher average scores than those with postgraduate degrees, highlighting that education level affects motivations for using religious digital media.

Digital media type is another significant factor with a p-value of 0.02, indicating that the type of media used (websites, social media, or podcasts) affects motivation. Website users exhibit higher motivation than do those who use social media or podcasts. However, when it comes to different social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok, the p-values are all above 0.05, suggesting that these platforms do not significantly differ in how they impact motivations for using religious digital media. This explanation clarifies how each characteristic and media type influences participants' motivations, with some factors showing significant effects while others do not.

**Table 2**

*The participants' basic characteristics and relationship with RDMUM (N =330)*

Variables	N%	M (SD)	p-value
Gender			0.97
female	67 (0.20)	2.86 (0.55)	
Male	263 (0.78)	2.86 (0.58)	
Age			0.000
18-20	55 (16.5)	2.9 (0.57)	
21-22	58 (17.4)	2.9 (0.52)	
23-24	54 (16.2)	2.5 (0.51)	
25-30	163 (48.4)	2.5 (0.54)	
University location			0.08
Central of the country	128 (38.3)	2.7 (0.55)	
North of the country	170 (51.9)	2.6 (0.57)	
South of the country	32 (9.4)	2.4 (0.63)	
Educational level			0.000
BA	286 (73.7)	2.75 (0.57)	

Variables	N%	M (SD)	p-value
Postgraduate	44 (25.1)	2.48 (0.53)	0.35
Specialization			
Sharia and Islamic Studies	130 (38.9)	2.7 (0.58)	
Humanities colleges	108 (32.3)	2.6 (0.57)	0.02
Scientific colleges	92 (27.5)	2.6 (0.55)	
Digital media types			
websites	44 (13.2)	2.8 (0.69)	
social media	256 (76.6)	2.6 (0.53)	
podcasts	30 (9.0)	2.5 (0.62)	0.69
social media types			
Facebook	184 (55.1)	2.6 (0.60)	
WhatsApp	7 (2.1)	2.8 (0.93)	
Twitter	7 (2.1)	2.5 (0.58)	
YouTube	107 (32.0)	2.7 (0.51)	
TikTok	15 (4.5)	2.7 (0.45)	
Telegram	10 (3.0)	2.8 (0.57)	

Note: M = means; SD = standard deviation; \*p <.05; \*\*p <.01; \*\*\*p < .001. (RDMUM): Religious digital media use motivation scale.

Source: Primary data.

Table 3 provides an overview of how various factors relate to motivations for using religious digital media, measured by the Religious Digital Media Use Motivations Scale (RDMUM). To understand these relationships in depth, researchers used hierarchical regression analysis to determine how different factors contribute to the motivations for using religious digital media while accounting for the influence of other variables. This type of analysis builds on initial correlations to examine how each factor uniquely affects motivation. Table 3 shows the average scores and Pearson correlation coefficients for factors such as Prior Knowledge, Usage Frequency, and different types of interest (Islamic Thought, Faith Topics, Jurisprudential Topics). For instance, the average RDMUM score was 2.68, with a Prior Knowledge score of 1.85, and Usage Frequency of 2.96. These correlations indicate the strength and direction of the relationships

between these factors. For example, RDMUM had a modest positive correlation with Prior Knowledge (0.211) and Usage Frequency (0.244), suggesting that higher prior knowledge and more frequent usage are associated with greater motivation. Stronger correlations are observed with interest in Islamic Thought (0.475), Faith Topics (0.530), and Jurisprudential Topics (0.551), indicating that more significant interest in these areas is strongly linked to higher motivations. The p-values in the table, with values less than 0.01, show that these relationships are statistically significant, meaning that they are unlikely to be due to random chance. By examining these correlations before conducting hierarchical regression, researchers can identify the relevant factors and understand how they interact. This ensures that the regression models provide a clear picture of how each factor contributes to the motivation to use religious digital media.

**Table 3**

Scores for each factor and Pearson correlation coefficients (N =330).

	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. RDMUM	2.68 (0.57)						
2. Prior Knowledge	1.85 (0.80)	.211**					
3. Usage Frequency	2.96 (1.07)	.244**	.544**				
4. Interest in Islamic Thought	2.83 (0.78)	.475**	.158**	.291**			
5. Interest in faith topics	1.82 (1.12)	.530**	0.072	0.107	.306**		
6. Interest in jurisprudential topics	1.88 (1.05)	.551**	0.011	0.074	.297**	.740**	1

Note: M = mean; SD = standard deviation; \*p <.05; \*\*p <.01; (RDMUM): Religious digital media use motivation scale.

Source: Primary data.

## **Hierarchical Regression on RDMUM**

Hierarchical regression is a statistical technique used to explore how different sets of variables contribute to explaining variations in a dependent variable (Woltman 2012). Our dependent variable is the Religious Digital Media Use Motivation Scale (RDMUM). This method allows us to see how adding different groups of predictors impacts our understanding of what drives the motivations for using religious digital media.

Hierarchical regression helps us build our understanding incrementally, starting with essential sociodemographic factors and progressively adding more detailed predictors (Jeger 2014). By evaluating each step, we can see how each group of variables uniquely contributes to explaining the RDMUM scores. The results clarify that, while sociodemographic factors provide a foundational understanding, including prior knowledge, usage frequency, and specific interests, they offer a complete picture of what motivates people to use religious digital media. This approach highlights the importance of general demographic characteristics and specific personal interests in shaping media-use behaviors.

We began with sociodemographic variables, including age, sex, and education level. These essential characteristics provided the initial model, explaining 14% of the variance in RDMUM scores.  $F=3.24$ , with a p-value of less than 0.001, indicating that sociodemographic factors significantly contribute to understanding motivation, although they account for only a portion of the variation. This first step helps establish a baseline by showing how fundamental demographic characteristics influence motivation for media use.

Second, we added Prior Knowledge (how much individuals already know about religious topics) and Usage Frequency (how often they use religious digital media). Incorporating these variables increased the model's explanatory power to 20%, as evidenced by an

F=12.00 and a p-value of less than 0.001. This improvement demonstrates that these factors provide additional insights beyond the sociodemographic variables. By including Prior Knowledge and Usage Frequency, we assessed how personal engagement with religious topics and media consumption patterns further explain motivations, showing their significant role in shaping media use.

Finally, we included variables related to specific interests such as Islamic Thought, general faith topics, and jurisprudential issues. This step significantly enhanced the model, with the explanatory power rising to 49% (F=36.92, p-value < 0.001). The substantial increase in explained variance indicates that personal interest in these religious topics is crucial for understanding motivations. This final step captures how individuals' specific interests in religious subjects provide a deeper and more comprehensive explanation of their motivations for media use. This significant improvement in the model underscores the importance of personal relevance and content interest in driving engagement with religious digital media (Table 4).

**Table 4**

*Hierarchical regression on RDMUM (N =330).*

	Step 1 ( $\beta$ )	Step 2 ( $\beta$ )	Step 3 ( $\beta$ )
<b>Gender</b> (ref: female)			
Male	0.12*	0.00	0.00
<b>Age</b> (ref: 25-30 years)			
18-20	0.25***	0.24***	0.05
21-22	0.18***	0.17**	0.01
23-24	0.028	0.01	0.00
<b>University location</b> (ref: South of the country)			
Central of the country	0.09	0.08	0.11
North of the country	0.13	0.10	0.10
<b>Educational level</b> (ref: Postgraduate)			
BA	0.12*	0.14**	0.08

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<b>Specialization</b> (ref: Scientific colleges)			
Sharia and Islamic Studies	0.00	0.08	0.01
Humanities colleges	0.04	0.10	0.07
<b>Digital media types</b> (ref: podcasts)			
websites	0.11	0.11	0.08
social media	0.05	0.02	0.04
<b>social media types</b> (ref; Telegram)			
Facebook	-0.063	-0.03	-0.22
WhatsApp	0.018	0.02	-0.02
Twitter	-0.043	-0.06	-0.13*
YouTube	-0.055	-0.05	-0.17
TikTok	0.012	0.01	-0.07
Prior Knowledge		0.18**	0.16**
Usage Frequency		0.10	0.01
Interest in Islamic Thought			0.28***
Interest in faith topics			0.18**
Interest in jurisprudential topics			0.29***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.14***	0.20***	0.49***
ΔR <sup>2</sup>		0.06***	0.29***

Note: M = mean; SD = standard deviation; ( $\beta$ ): beta standardized coefficients, R<sup>2</sup>: R Square, ΔR<sup>2</sup>: R Square change; \*p <.05; \*\*p <.01; \*\*\*p <.001. (RDMUM): Religious digital media use motivation scale.

Source: Primary data.

Considering the entire model, Interest in Islamic Thought due to a positive correlation with all the five scales (Table 3) was not a significant predictor of RDMUM, despite their bivariate relationships. Males had a significantly higher mean RDMUM level than females in the first step. The mean RDMUM level was considerably higher at 18-20 compared than at other ages in the first and second steps. BA educational level was associated with a significantly higher mean RDMUM level than postgraduate level in the first and second steps. The categories, including specialization, digital media, and social media types, are insignificant, despite Twitter being associated with a significantly lower mean.

## **DISCUSSION**

This hierarchical regression analysis provides nuanced insights into the factors influencing the motivations for using religious digital media. The observed patterns offer a deeper understanding of user behavior and have broader implications for content creation and media strategy.

### **Age and Gender**

The analysis revealed that younger individuals (ages 18-20 and 21-22) and males exhibit higher motivations for engaging with religious digital media. Several factors may explain this pattern. Traditional gender roles and cultural factors could have influenced the higher motivation observed in males. In many cultures, males may experience different societal expectations and pressures regarding religious engagement than females. This may drive higher engagement levels among males, as they may seek to assert or reinforce their beliefs more publicly (Scarcelli et al., 2021; Van Laar et al., 2024; Wider et al., 2023; Zayer et al., 2012). Younger users are more digitally native and growing up with technology as an integral part of their lives. They may be more inclined to use digital platforms to explore and engage with religious content as part of their broader search for personal identities and belief systems. This aligns with research showing that younger generations are more adaptable to new media and technology (Hysa et al., 2021; Lissitsa & Laor, 2021; Szymkowiak et al., 2021; Workman, 2014).

### **University Location and Specialization**

The lack of significant differences based on university location (South, Central, North) suggests that geographical factors are less critical in shaping religious media consumption motivations. This implies that religious digital media content has a broad, universal appeal that transcends regional differences. Widespread access to

digital platforms equalizes opportunities for engagement across various regions (Buzeta et al., 2020; Chan, 2021; Hoang et al., 2020; Kircaburun et al., 2020; Qin, 2020).

Similarly, the non-significant impact of academic specialization indicates that motivation is not heavily influenced by one's field of study. This universality suggests that religious media appeals to a wide audience regardless of academic background, emphasizing that personal interests and prior knowledge are more influential in determining media use. Specialization in religious studies or related fields does not necessarily translate into greater or lesser motivation to use religious digital media.

### **Digital Media Types and Platform Characteristics**

The analysis suggests that the type of digital media (websites, social media) does not significantly impact motivation, highlighting that content substance is more critical than the delivery format. Users are more likely to focus on the relevance and depth of content rather than the medium through which it is delivered (Lam et al., 2020; Salonen et al., 2024; Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021).

### **Platform-Specific Influences**

A negative association with Twitter indicates that platform characteristics can affect engagement. Twitter's limitations, such as character constraints and rapid content turnover, may lead to less effective engagement with detailed and nuanced religious content. This contrasts with platforms that allow for more in-depth discussions or longer content, suggesting that different platforms may be better suited to various types of religious content (Ng, 2023; Waymer & VanSlette, 2021; Wilson & Ayad, 2022).

## **Role of Prior Knowledge**

The strong influence of prior knowledge on motivation underscores the importance of content-relevance. Users with a solid foundation in religious topics are more motivated to engage with digital media that align with their existing knowledge. This finding highlights the need for content creators to provide material that builds upon users' pre-existing knowledge and caters to their specific interests (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Gupta & Dutt, 2024; Ilin, 2022; Klein, 2023).

## **Role of Specific Interests**

Interest in particular religious topics (e.g., Islamic thought and jurisprudential topics) also significantly drives engagement. This suggests that users are motivated by the content that resonates with specific areas of interest. Tailoring content to match users' interests can enhance their engagement and ensure that the media is a valuable resource for expanding their understanding (Arriagada & Ibáñez, 2020; Drummond et al., 2020; Moran et al., 2020).

## **Broader Implications**

The findings of this study offer several broad implications for content creation and strategies in religious digital media. First, the strong influence of prior knowledge and specific interests highlights the importance of tailoring content to existing knowledge bases and areas of interest. By developing content that builds upon users' prior knowledge and addresses their specific interests, content creators can foster deeper engagement and make media a more valuable resource (Arriagada & Ibáñez, 2020; Drummond et al., 2020; Moran et al., 2020). Additionally, the varying effectiveness of different platforms underscores the need to adapt the content to leverage the unique strengths of each medium. For example, Twitter's character constraints and rapid content turnover may necessitate a different

content approach than platforms that support more in-depth discussion (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Gupta & Dutt, 2024; Ilin, 2022; Klein, 2023). This implies optimizing the content for each platform's interaction style and format preferences. Furthermore, the observed patterns in age and gender suggest that content strategies are sensitive to demographic differences. Creating targeted content that resonates with different age groups and genders can increase relevance and engagement (Scarcelli et al., 2021; Van Laar et al., 2024; Wider et al., 2023; Zayer et al., 2012). Lastly, while the minimal impact of geographical and academic factors indicates a broad, universal appeal of religious digital media, exploring regional cultural contexts and academic influences could provide additional insights into content preferences and enhance engagement strategies (Al-Menayes, 2015; Jensen, 2020). These insights emphasize the need for a nuanced approach to content creation and platform strategy to enhance user engagement and satisfaction across diverse demographic segments.

## CONCLUSION

The hierarchical regression analysis of the Religious Digital Media Use Motivations (RDMUM) scale reveals original insights into the factors driving engagement with religious digital media. Age and gender were vital predictors, with younger individuals aged 18-20 showing the highest motivation ( $Mean = 2.9, SD = 0.57$ ), and males were slightly more motivated ( $Mean = 2.86, SD = 0.58$ ) than females ( $Mean = 2.86, SD = 0.55$ ). Educational level also affects motivation, with bachelor's degree holders scoring higher ( $Mean = 2.75, SD = 0.57$ ) than those with postgraduate degrees ( $Mean = 2.48, SD = 0.53$ ). University location and specialization had minimal effects on motivation.

The type of digital media used generally did not influence motivation, with scores ranging from 2.5 for podcasts ( $SD = 0.62$ ) to

2.8 for websites ( $SD = 0.69$ ). Twitter was notably less effective for religious content, with a lower score ( $Mean = 2.5, SD = 0.58$ ). Prior knowledge and specific interests in Islamic thought and jurisprudence were strong drivers, with higher engagement ( $Mean = 2.68, SD = 0.57$ ) and significant correlations with RDMUM (0.475–0.551). The final model, which explains 49% of the variance, highlights the importance of these factors in user engagement.

Given these original insights, content creators should focus on tailoring digital religious content to users' interests and knowledge levels, particularly in Islamic thought and jurisprudence, to enhance their engagement and satisfaction. Future research should explore additional factors, such as cultural background and digital literacy, to optimize content for diverse audiences.

### **Limitations**

Although this study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing motivations for using religious digital media, several limitations should be acknowledged. A sample size of 330 participants may not fully represent the broader population, and the cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality or observe changes over time. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce biases, and the scope of the variables considered does not include potentially influential factors such as personality traits, cultural influences, and socio-economic status. Additionally, the study identifies a negative association with Twitter but does not explore platform-specific characteristics in depth. These findings are based on a specific context and sample, which may limit their generalizability to other settings. Finally, while the RDMUM scale was validated, it may not capture all dimensions of motivation, suggesting the need for additional measures to provide a more nuanced understanding. Future research should address these limitations by using more extensive and diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and further measures to capture a

broader range of motivational dimensions. Addressing these limitations in future research could enhance the robustness and applicability of the findings and provide deeper insights into the motivations for using religious digital media.

### **Author Contributions**

Conceptualization: M.J.T.; Data curation: M.J.T.; Formal analysis: M.J.T.; Funding acquisition: M.J.T.; Investigation: M.J.T.; Methodology: M.J.T.; Project administration: M.J.T.; Resources: M.J.T.; Software: M.J.T.; Supervision: M.J.T.; Validation: M.J.T.; Visualization: M.J.T.; Writing – original draft: M.J.T.; Writing – review & editing: M.J.T.

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### **Institutional Review Board Statement**

This study was approved by Department of Islamic Studies, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan.

### **Informed Consent Statement**

Informed consent was obtained before the respondents filling the questionnaire.

### **Data Availability Statement**

The data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

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### **Conflicts of Interest**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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