

## The Rise of Flexing among Muslim Youth on Social Media :Negotiating Prestige and Ethics in Islamic Contexts

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| Article                                                                                                                                 | Abstract                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| <b>Article History:</b><br>Received : Sept, 21, 2025<br>Reviewed: Sept, 23, 2025<br>Accepted: Oct, 09, 2025<br>Published: Oct, 09, 2025 | In recent years, the development of the times, technological advancements, and the rapid flow of information have made social media increasingly popular with various phenomena and trends that have grown into people's habits in the digital era. As long as the trend does not contradict the teachings of the Qur'an, it can be considered reasonable. However, problems arise when the growing trend is not in line with the values of the Qur'an and Hadith. One example is the flexing trend that is rampant by a number of circles, such as celebrities, artists, celebrities, and officials. The focus of this research lies in how flexing is understood in a social context, how to analyze the impact of the flexing phenomenon on social media, as well as examining how Islam views the practice. This research applies mixed methods, which is an approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative aspects in a complete research design. The phenomenon of flexing is clearly contrary to the moral teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad (saw) as stated in the Qur'an and hadith. This behavior is prohibited because it contains various despicable elements that receive a strong threat from Allah SWT. Through the solutions that have been offered in Islam, namely zuhud and tawāḥḥuṣ behavior, it is hoped that it can be the main provision in facing the rapid trend and lifestyle that is rampant in the digital era. |
| <b>Keywords:</b><br><i>Flexing, Social Media, Ethics, Islam.</i>                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

### INTRODUCTION

Basically, social media has a very diverse and complex function in the life of modern society. It is not only a forum for digital interaction that allows individuals to communicate with each other without space and time limits, but also plays an important role in building and expanding a network of relationships, both in the scope of friendships, work, and business. More than that, social media has developed into a strategic means of promotion, where various groups can use it to introduce ideas, products, and services with a much wider reach than conventional methods (Nurhayat & Noorrizki, 2022, p. 369).

In recent years, the development of the times, technological advancements, and the rapid flow of information have made social media increasingly popular with various phenomena and trends that have grown into people's habits in the digital era. As long as the trend does not contradict the teachings of the Qur'an, it can be considered reasonable. However, problems arise when the growing trend is not in line with the values of the Qur'an and Hadith. One example is the flexing trend that is rampant carried out by a number of groups, such as celebrities, artists, celebrities, and officials (Mubarok, 2023, p. 2). The degree of this showy behavior is generally influenced by a person's social status and environment. Usually, what is shown is luxury items, well-known brands, or something that is rarely owned by others because of its high price. This can be intended as a symbol of personal achievement or as a form of promotion for certain branded products (Ani Amalia & Maburur, 2024, p. 256). Some people flex solely to show their social prestige by taking pictures and displaying them to the public. The form can be in the form of exhibitions of luxury goods such as accessories, ATM balances,

visits to tourist destinations, to a selection of fast food restaurants that are considered prestigious (Usrah, 2023, p. 1).

Flexing in English means "to show off". Meanwhile, in a more detailed explanation, the Cambridge Dictionary mentions that flexing is the act of showing something that is owned or achieved in a way that is often considered unpleasant to others (Shine Al Anjuwi et al., 2023, p. 200). Meanwhile, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, flexing or showing off is the act of displaying something that you have openly and clearly to others. In the economic context, the flexing trend is understood as the behavior of consumers who spend their money to buy luxury goods or exclusive services to show their financial condition or economic ability. In line with the phenomenon that is rampant today, flexing is intended as a way to show wealth in order to maintain one's existence or even for certain other purposes (Mardiah, 2022).

The phenomenon of flexing in the realm of economics and social behavior is actually not new, but has been known since 1899. This issue was again popularized by Thorstein Veblen through his work *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study in Evolution of Institution*. In his study, Veblen discusses flexing as one aspect of the study of the evolution of institutions and economic structures at that time (Pohan, 2023, p. 2). Although this practice has been known for a long time, the term flexing has resurfaced and has become a hot topic in today's era. Its development is increasingly rapid in line with technological advances and the widespread use of social media (Al- Asy'ari, 2024, p. 3).

From a social psychology perspective, the culture of flexing encourages social comparisons which in turn can cause self-dissatisfaction, feelings of sadness, reduced confidence when interacting with friends, and causing anxiety in the form of fear of missing out (FOMO) symptoms in the audience of the content. This phenomenon has an impact on mental well-being, especially for individuals who feel that their lives are not in line with the image of success displayed on social media. Furthermore, the phenomenon of flexing has an impact not only on individual behavior, but also on social structures and collective identities in society (Hayati & Romziana, 2025, p. 213).

The impact of the flexing phenomenon can vary, depending on who is assessing it as well as how a person does it. On the positive side, flexing can be interpreted as a form of self-motivation by showing appreciation for the achievements achieved, as well as being an inspiration to others that they can also achieve similar successes (Arsyad, 2022). The phenomenon of flexing can be understood through the thinking of Erving Goffman with his dramaturgical theory, which explains that each individual performs a different role according to the situation when on the "stage." In today's context, the stage can be interpreted as social media (Herman, 2023).

From a religious perspective, the practice of showing off or flexing is not recommended, because the goal is more to seek recognition or want to be known by others. Islam itself rejects arrogance, because such behavior not only has a negative impact on the perpetrator, but can also have a bad influence on others (Shine Al Anjuwi et al., 2023, p. 203). There are also postulates that support the method in a more flexible and prudent way. Inappropriate attitudes need to be avoided because they have the potential to cause tension and arrogance, which is clearly contrary to religious values and can have bad consequences. Therefore, it is very important for social media users to use it effectively in order to bring positive benefits, both for themselves and others. In line with that, there is a need for understanding and education so that people are aware of wrong attitudes and foster good behavior in interacting in cyberspace (Pohan, 2023).

The focus of this research lies in how flexing is understood in a social context, how to analyze the impact of the flexing phenomenon on social media, as well as examining how Islam views the practice. This research aims to understand the meaning of flexing in a social context,

uncover the influence of flexing on, and understand the attitude of Islamic teachings in response to this phenomenon. Flexing, which is synonymous with showing off behavior in cyberspace, is basically done in order to get attention and appreciation from the public. This habit can have negative impacts, such as the emergence of a tendency to always want attention, which ultimately disrupts a person's mental balance. In the perspective of Islamic education, the practice of flexing is clearly prohibited. The prohibition is rooted in Islamic moral values that emphasize the importance of humility, staying away from arrogance and showing off, and avoiding behavior that stands out in front of others.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research applies mixed methods, which is an approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative aspects in a complete research design. The selection of this method is based on the consideration that the combination of the two can produce a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of flexing in Social Media, both in terms of numerical data analysis and deepening the meaning, experience, and perception of research participants. By combining these two approaches, this study is expected to be able to present results that not only describe the relationship between variables statistically, but also interpret the social context and meaning behind the data obtained.

The quantitative approach in this study was used to identify the level, frequency, and pattern of respondents' behavioral tendencies in using social media and its relationship with mental well-being. Data collection is carried out through structured surveys using assessment-scale questionnaires, such as the Likert scale, so that statistical analysis can be carried out both descriptively and inferentially. Through this analysis, this study seeks to describe the pattern of relationship or correlation between the intensity of social media use and various indicators of mental well-being, including the level of stress, anxiety, sadness and emotional balance of respondents.

The qualitative approach in this study is used to deepen the interpretation of quantitative results, especially in understanding the subjective aspects that affect individual mental well-being due to flexing behavior on social media. Data collection was carried out through open-ended questions in the survey, so that researchers could further explore the life experiences, views, and reflections of respondents regarding the social and emotional impacts of social media use and the impact of flexing behavior.

The application of mixed methods in this study is based on the principle of data triangulation, which is the combination of various types of data and analysis techniques to increase the validity and credibility of research results. This approach provides a more comprehensive picture, as quantitative data is able to show general patterns and population trends, while qualitative data presents an in-depth and contextual understanding of emerging phenomena. Thus, the mixed method is seen as the most appropriate to answer research questions that demand not only empirical measurements, but also contextual interpretation of respondents' social experiences on the impact of flexing behavior on social media.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Flexing Definition

Terminologically, flexing can be understood as the act of highlighting or showing oneself through various aspects of life, both in the form of a glamorous lifestyle, wealth and luxury, as well as achievements and positions that a person has achieved (Al- Asy'ari, 2024, p. 8). According to the Cambridge Dictionary, flexing is defined as the act of showing off something you own in a way that others find unpleasant, or displaying it excessively and conspicuously. The term flexing itself has been around long before the 2000s, with some

opinions mentioning its appearance in 1899, while others mention 1992. In his work *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study in Evolution of Institutions*, Thorstein Veblen introduced the term conspicuous consumption, which refers to the practice of showing social status through the ownership of certain goods or objects in order to gain recognition or validation from others (Veblen, 1899, p. 68).

The term flexing became popular in Indonesia after being discussed by Prof. Renald Kasali through his YouTube channel with the title "This is the Rich Boong-Boongan that Millennials Exhibit and Trust and Imitate Widely." In his explanation, he assessed that the practice of flexing is one way to deceive the public. He gave an example of the behavior of Indra Kenz and Doni Salmanan who showed off instant success through trading promotions. In addition, Prof. Renald also mentioned the case of Andika Surachman, the owner of CV Karya Utama which is engaged in tourism and Umrah services. Andika often displays various uploads on social media to attract public attention. In 2021, he managed to recruit around 63,000 pilgrims, but ultimately failed to dispatch them because the funds collected were actually used for personal interests. As a result, the losses incurred reached around IDR 905 billion (Ajidin & Wahidah, 2023, p. 5).

Flexing is a symptom of contemporary culture related to the behavior of showing off luxury and social status. During Ibn Sina's lifetime, this kind of phenomenon was not yet known. Although Ibn Sina does not explicitly discuss flexing, his philosophical ideas can be used as a framework for understanding such behavior. From his point of view, flexing is most likely seen as an unwise act and not in line with the goal of true happiness. Ibn Sina paid more attention to the urgency of developing moral and intellectual aspects than to the accumulation of material possessions and the search for worldly recognition (Hayati & Romziana, 2025, p. 217). So that his view is contrary to the hedonistic lifestyle which is actually characterized by a strong drive to get praise from others. A hedonistic lifestyle is characterized by the urge to get validation from the people around you. Therefore, individuals with hedonistic tendencies often flex, namely displaying a luxurious lifestyle and showing off branded goods as an effort to gain legitimacy or acceptance from their social environment (Usrah, 2023, p. 11).

### **The Concept of Prestige and Forms of Flexing**

The term prestige in everyday parlance actually has no obvious technical equivalent in classical Islamic literature (Kholifatun Aslamiah, 2019). However, this concept can be linked to several aspects of morality and morality, especially those related to showy behavior, subtle forms of arrogance, the urge to maintain social status, and intentions that are not based on sincerity (Marpaung & Rahma, 2023).

Prestige can be interpreted as a person's drive or desire to present themselves or gain recognition at a certain level of having something to look high value or luxury in front of others. From an Islamic perspective, if this prestige impulse gives birth to deviant intentions (such as highlighting work, wealth, or even worship with the aim of getting praise), then it has the potential to approach the nature of *riya'* and can even develop into *takabbur* (arrogance) (Yolanda Mey Erwadi et al., 2025).

Based on the definition that has been explained, flexing can be associated with a number of concepts in the Qur'an, including *riyā'*, *ujub*, *takabbur*, and *ʿub al-dunya*.

### **Riyā'**

The word *riya'* comes from the words *ara'a* (seeing) and *riya'un* (showing). Linguistically, *riya'* means to show pious deeds to others or to show them off (Ali et al., n.d., p. 165). As for the term, *riya'* is the behavior of a Muslim who displays his deeds of worship in front of others for a certain purpose, such as seeking position, dignity, or even wealth from them, not solely because of Allah (Nuh, 1995, p. 224).

According to the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI), *riya'* or showing off is defined as the act of showing something you have to others with the aim of showing your advantages or superiority, so that it contains an element of arrogance (Farwati, 2020, p. 31). Abu Ja'far defines *riya'* as a person's tendency to seek praise from people for the good deeds he does (Mufid, 2018, p. 30).

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jauziyah emphasized that every form of showing off is included in the act of shirk. A person who performs acts of worship with an intention other than Allah, or expects a reward from someone other than Him, means that he has committed shirk in his intention (Jauziyah, 2007, p. 218). *Riya'* is included in the liver disease that has a serious impact, because it can destroy one's charity until it is worthless, like flying dust. Many deeds that are done and collected by a person can be in vain just because they are accompanied by the intention of *riya'* (Farwati, 2020, p. 1).

*Riya'* is understood as the behavior of showing acts of worship with the aim of displaying a good image in front of others in order to gain praise or attention. Sufism scholars classify *riya'* as one of the most destructive diseases of the heart. Habib Abdullah bin Alawi al-Haddad explained that *riya'* occurs when a person performs deeds in the hereafter not because of Allah, but solely to seek position or recognition in the eyes of people (Hayati & Romziana, 2025, p. 217).

### **Ujub**

Etymologically, *i'jab* means a sense of pleasure, joy, or considering something as a good thing. The expression *a'jabahu al-amru* means "something makes him happy or happy," while *u'jiba bihi* means "he feels happy or joyful about something. The word can also be interpreted as admiration, considering something noble, or seeing it as big and important (Prasojo, 2020, p. 72).

*Ujub* in Arabic is understood as an attitude of pride or amazement at oneself because of a certain thing (Nurkamiden, 2016, p. 117). According to Al-Junjani, *ujub* is a person's assumption of his excess or height, even though he has no right to feel that way at all. The nature of *ujub* is seen as reprehensible and includes very reprehensible feelings. The heart of the person who is overwhelmed by *ujub* becomes blind, so that he thinks he is in salvation when in fact he is in destruction, feeling right when he is wrong. A stubborn attitude makes a person underestimate the sins committed, forget the mistakes that have been committed, and even view the sinful deeds as if they are not sins, so that they continue to do it. A person who is arrogant tends to weaken his fear of Allah SWT and at the same time increase his arrogance before Him (Amin, 2001, p. 166).

Imam al-Ghazali explained that *'ujub* means to feel admiration or magnify oneself for the deeds that have been done. In general, *'ujub* is divided into two forms, namely *'ujub* towards oneself and *'ujub* towards one's own opinion or thought. This term can also be interpreted as an attitude of self-pride. God hates those who have such qualities. *'ujub* behavior often appears unconsciously, for example when a person is able to do things that are beyond the ability of others, and then feels that he is the greatest. In fact, all intelligence, abilities, and true advantages come from Allah, so it is not appropriate for humans to behave *'ujub* (Hayati & Romziana, 2025, p. 219). because the most important thing for a servant is to instill patience in facing trials and to be grateful for every help that Allah gives.

The two main principles in life are patience when facing trials and gratitude when receiving help from God. Peace of heart and steadfastness of faith must always be maintained. Humans should not be arrogant, because the wealth they own is not entirely his. Similarly, it is not worthy to feel great, because in essence human beings are only weak and limited beings. The only thing to be proud of is God's love and grace, because without His grace, man would not be able to live life in this world (Hayati & Romziana, 2025, p. 220).

## Takabbur

Etymologically, *takabbur* has a meaning that is equivalent to *ta'aṣūm*, which is to show one's majesty and greatness and to feel high and noble. This attitude is reflected when a person believes that he is more important than others, and is of the view that he is entitled to something that others do not have (Prasojo, 2020, p. 73). According to Al-Ghazali, *kibr* or arrogance is a condition when a person feels that he has a superior position to others, so that a feeling of greatness, strength, and superiority appears in his heart, until he finally looks at others with contempt (Mufid, 2018).

*Takabbur* can be interpreted as an attitude or attitude of rejecting the truth (*al-kibr batharu al-haqq*), which is one of the causes of damage and badness in a person. This quality can close the human heart from the light of God. Excessive self-admiration often breeds arrogance and arrogance, thus making a person look down on and belittle others in society. The Qur'an itself contains many verses that condemn the nature of *takabbur*, especially for polytheists and hypocrites who reject the truth because of their inherent pride (Nurkamiden, 2016, p. 122).

In terms, *takabbur* is understood as the attitude of a person who shows excessive admiration for himself by demeaning and belittling others, even refusing to accept the truth that comes from them (Nuh, 1995, p. 200). *Takabur* can also be interpreted as the assumption that they are higher than others, or feel that they have perfection that puts them above them.

The difference between *takabbur* and '*ujub* lies in the involvement of others. '*Ujub* can appear only in a person, even when he is alone, while *takabbur* requires the existence of another person who is then looked down upon or underestimated. Thus, *takabbur* can be considered as an advanced stage of '*ujub*. The factors that cause '*ujub* can basically also trigger the birth of *takabbur*. Usually, pride in something that is not immediately eliminated can develop into '*ujub*, and eventually increase into *takabbur* when a person begins, both outwardly and internally, to belittle and degrade others (Hawwa, 2001, p. 228).

### ▢ *ub al-Dunya*

▢ *ub al-dunya* is rooted in greed, which is greed that makes a person never feel satisfied. This term means excessive love for the world, which often encourages a person to be miserly and greedy. People who are mastered by this trait will continue to try to accumulate wealth in order to achieve wealth. However, when the wealth is abundant, he tends to keep it tightly because he is too attached to his love for the world. The pleasure of the pile of treasure can eventually make him negligent, as depicted in the story of Qarun and Pharaoh (Hayati & Romziana, 2025, p. 221).

The word greed comes from the Arabic root ط - م - ع which means a strong impulse to acquire something. In the definition listed in the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language, greed is defined as the trait of always wanting to get more, especially for one's own interests (Tahir, 2013, p. 14). Greed is the urge in a person to acquire something beyond what he already has, with the sole purpose of self-interest (Tahir, 2013, p. 24).

In the Al-Munawir Dictionary, the term greed is derived from the word طمع - يطمع which means greedy, strong desire, greed, and having a lot of traits towards something (Munawwir, 1997, p. 866). According to Shaykh Khalil Al-Farahidi in *Kitab Al-'Ain*, the term greed (طمع) linguistically it is interpreted as *harisun* (حريص), which means greedy. He also added another meaning, namely is *rizqul jund* (رزق الجند) which means giving to the soldier (Al-Farahidi, n.d., p. 1094). Meanwhile, Ibn Faris in *Maqāyīs al-Lughah* explained that greed is a form of masdar from the word طمعا - يطمع - طمعا (طمع يطمع طمعا), which is understood as a strong desire in the heart to obtain something (Faris, n.d., p. 425).

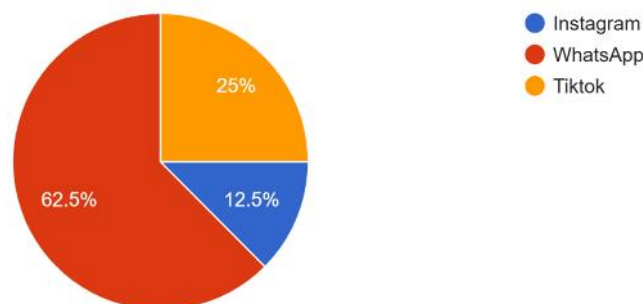
Based on an examination of a number of opinions of Arabic linguists in their works, researchers found that Ibn Faris in *Mu'jam al-Maqāyīs* specifically interpreted greed as a strong

desire in the heart. This view is in line with Ibn Mandhur's opinion, only Ibn Mandhur added that greed also means greed and giving to soldiers. Meanwhile, Ibn Khalil and al-Zamakhshari have different views, which limit the meaning of greed to the meaning of greed and giving to soldiers only (Zamakhshary, n.d., p. 620).

### The Impact of Flexing on Social Media

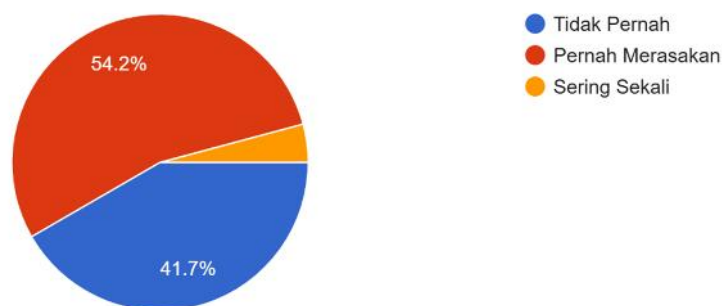
In this study, the sample used consisted of 24 respondents who received an online questionnaire. To find out what social media is used the most by respondents, the author processes raw data using descriptive statistical calculations. The author provides three widely used social media options, namely Instagram, TikTok and WhatsApp. Thus, a clear picture will be obtained about the sample of respondents in this study. The following is a descriptive overview of the 24 respondents based on the most widely used social media.

Figure 1.1



Based on figure 1.1 above, it can be seen that the most widely used social media among the three options above is WhatsApp with 62.5% of respondents who received online questionnaires.

Figure 2.1



From the data collected, it is known that around 54.2% of respondents have had negative experiences in the use of social media. Both social comparisons, bad comments, anxiety and so on.

After the author conducted interviews with a number of active social media users, some of them admitted that the phenomenon of flexing on social media had a negative impact on them. One of them is that there are those who compare the achievements of others, lack of gratitude, envy and insecurity (Faridah, 2025). However, there are also those who reveal that flexing on social media has a positive impact on daily life. One of them was revealed by Lu'luatul Fauziah in an interview. She feels that flexing on social media is good and she is happy, because she feels always motivated by it (Fauziah, 2025).

Flexing activities on social media have the potential to have a negative impact on community life, especially related to the emergence of social inequality. Flexing often shows off a side of life that is luxurious and seems perfect, thus creating an unrealistic perception of

other people's lives. This condition can cause envy, dissatisfaction with one's own situation, and worsen social inequality (Hayati & Romziana, 2025, p. 223).

This kind of gap further has an impact on people's psychological conditions, especially related to confidence and the emergence of anxiety. Some individuals report that after watching flexing content, they begin to feel inferior and lack confidence. This feeling of inferiority arises from the assumption that to be considered successful or attractive in the eyes of others, one must display a certain lifestyle that looks luxurious and glamorous, when in reality it is not realistic for everyone (Bamazruk et al., 2025).

The phenomenon of flexing or showing off wealth on social media can affect norms and standards of value in society. In practice, only individuals who wear expensive clothes, own luxury vehicles, or show other symbols of wealth are considered "acceptable" on social media. Those who are less fortunate, but interact in this kind of environment, may be encouraged to emulate the behavior. This phenomenon seems to be a race to gain recognition from others, especially through digital platforms. Indirectly, flexing also encourages an increase in consumptive behavior in the community. The support of technology and various online shopping platforms, which provide easy credit facilities and loans, make anyone who is not wise in following this trend at risk of falling into a consumptive lifestyle to create a burden of debt (Wahidah & Khodijah, 2023, p. 31). Flexing has the potential to damage interpersonal relationships, as individuals may feel jealous or depressed by seeing the posts of friends who seem to be more successful, richer, or have a better life than themselves (Hayati & Romziana, 2025).

Flexing as a form of the FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) phenomenon, can worsen dissatisfaction in living a personal life. The desire to show a perfect life identity on social media, which is at the heart of flexing, triggers harmful social comparisons. Both the individuals who flex and those who witness it, are often caught up in an ongoing cycle of FOMO. They are driven to continue to flaunt certain material achievements and lifestyles, not out of inner satisfaction, but driven by the fear of being perceived as outdated or worthless. This condition causes considerable mental stress and reduces a person's ability to enjoy real moments and interactions in the real world (Hayati & Romziana, 2025, p. 225).

Dishonesty in self-representation on social media, as outlined earlier, is a direct consequence of emerging social pressures. This phenomenon illustrates how FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) triggered by flexing behavior is able to blur perceptions of objective reality and images deliberately formed by individuals for social gain or public perception.

### **Islamic Views on the Phenomenon of Flexing on Social Media**

The phenomenon of flexing is clearly contrary to the moral teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad (saw) as stated in the Qur'an and hadith. This behavior is prohibited because it contains various despicable elements that receive a strong threat from Allah SWT. Among the attitudes inherent in flexing are arrogance, envy, condescending others, and the urge to over-emphasize oneself (Sauri, 2023).

The phenomenon of flexing should be avoided because it can foster *riya* nature in a person. *Riya'* is a reprehensible behavior that is not recommended in Islam, because it can have a negative impact on both the perpetrator and the surrounding environment. This attitude includes actions that can plunge people into the torment of hell. People who are accustomed to doing *riya* are even equated with those who have weak faith in Allah and do not heed His verses (Parlina et al., 2022). This is closely related to arrogance, because *riya* is essentially born from arrogance.

Pride is a major factor that drives a person to view others as inferior to him and plunge him into inappropriate behavior. This is affirmed by Allah SWT in His words in QS. Al-Isrā' [17]:37.

و تَمْشِ شِرَافٍ وَرِضٍ مِمَّ مَآحِكُ لَنْ لَنْ تُرْقِ الْأَرْضَ وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طَوَّلاً

"Do not walk on the earth with pride, for you are not able to penetrate the earth and you are not able to reach the top of the mountain."

Pride in a Muslim can be a barrier to entering heaven. In fact, anyone who has arrogance in his heart even though it is only as heavy as a zarrah seed, will not be allowed to enter it. The most dangerous form of pride is arrogance that makes a person reluctant to benefit from knowledge, reject the truth, and close himself off from the right path (Shine Al Anjuwi et al., 2023, p. 204).

The Prophet Muhammad Saw said in a hadith:

لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ

"A person who has the pride of even a small seed of zarrah in his heart will not attain paradise" (Ibn al-ʿajjāj, 1955, no. 91).

The Prophet also affirmed the serious consequences for arrogant behavior. He said:

يَحْشُرُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَمْثَالَ الذَّرِّ فِي صُورِ الرِّجَالِ يَغْشَاهُمُ الذَّلُّ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ

"On the Day of Judgment, those who are arrogant will be resurrected as large as ants in human form. Humiliation enveloped them from all directions" (Abū Dāwud, 2009, no. 4090; Tirmiziy, 1996, no. 2492).

The hadith presents a symbolic illustration that emphasizes that arrogance is not only a despicable morality in worldly life, but will also lead to humiliation in the hereafter as a form of retribution from Allah SWT. This condition is relevant to contemporary reality, where the practice of flexing on social media can be considered as a representation of modern arrogance that further emphasizes the urgency of living spiritual values in daily life.

The practice of showing off on digital platforms, complete with the negative impact it causes, emphasizes the urgency of efforts to apply spiritual principles in daily activities and behaviors. This phenomenon not only affects a person's behavior, but can also change social norms and people's perceptions of success, status, and happiness (Usrah, 2023). In this context, the Qur'an and Hadith are present as comprehensive guidelines, providing direction that touches on all aspects of human life, both individual and social. These teachings serve to guide humans to follow the right path, maintain a balance between material and spiritual needs, and achieve true happiness in this world and in the hereafter (Al- Asy'ari, 2024). With this understanding, the Qur'an and Hadith offer relevant solutions to deal with the negative impacts of flexing culture, such as dissatisfaction, social gaps, and excessive consumptive behavior, while instilling the values of simplicity, gratitude, and self-control in modern life. The solutions offered include:

### **Zuhud**

Epistemologically, the meaning of zuhud is expressed in the term *raghiba 'an syai'in wa tarakahu*, which means an attitude of not being interested in something and then choosing to leave it. In the context of religious life, the expression *zahada fi al-dunya* is interpreted as an effort to empty oneself from worldly pleasures and pleasures in order to be more focused on carrying out worship. A person who lives a lifestyle like this is then called a zahid. In the plural, the term is known as *zuhhad* or *zahidun*, which refers to people who consistently make the world's life a means, not the main goal, and prioritize the ukhrawi orientation in every aspect of their lives (Abdul Muqit, 2020, p. 40).

As for terminology, zuhud is understood as an inner attitude characterized by indifference to worldly affairs. In other words, the world is no longer the center of attention or

the main goal in his life. The foundation of the teachings on *zuhud* in Islam comes from the Qur'an, which provides instructions so that people do not get caught up in the charm of the mortal world. According to the opinion of the *rajih* (a view that is considered stronger), some scholars consider that the world and all its contents do not have great value before Allah. Therefore, they view the world and all its ornaments as something small and not even worthy of being the ultimate purpose of life (Abdul Muqit, 2020, p. 40).

*Zuhud* is basically a lifestyle that has a certain spiritual orientation and goes through clear stages. In simple terms, *zuhud* can be understood as the attitude of turning away from purely worldly affairs, by viewing the world only as a means or path that leads a person to the highest goal, namely closeness to Allah Swt. In the perspective of Imam Al-Ghazali as stated in *Mukhtashar Ihya' 'Ulumuddin*, *zuhud* is interpreted as the attitude of rejecting something and replacing it with something else that is more valuable. In other words, whoever is able to abandon worldly advantages, reject them, and direct his heart and hope to the hereafter, then that person can be called *zahid* towards the world (Al-Syāfi'ī, 1992).

Furthermore, Al-Ghazali emphasized that there is a common misconception among the public that people who leave behind worldly wealth can automatically be called a *zuhud* expert. In fact, the essence of *zuhud* is not that simple. It is true that *zuhud* is closely related to the issue of property, but its essence is not limited to material aspects only. *Zuhud* also includes an inner attitude towards rank, position, and worldly honor. Thus, *zuhudan* is not merely a matter of leaving something outwardly, but rather of the orientation of the heart that puts the world in a secondary position and confirms Allah as the main goal (Fauzi, 2024, p. 1296).

*Zuhud* in essence teaches humans not to be deceived by the urge to show off wealth or luxury, but to foster awareness to always be grateful for every blessing bestowed by Allah SWT. Thus, the attitude of *zuhud* can be understood as a middle path full of wisdom, which functions to protect a person from the temptation of flexing behavior or excessive showmanship, as well as leading him to a calmer state of soul. Peaceful, and oriented towards spiritual values.

Although there is no specific term in the Qur'an that explicitly uses the word *zuhud*, there are a number of verses that can be understood to be closely related to the practice or practice of *zuhud*. Some of them can be used as a reference as the basis for the values of *zuhudan*, including the following:

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا  
وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ

“Whoever expects a reward in the Hereafter, We will add to it for him. And whoever gives priority to the reward of this world, We give him a portion of it, but he will not have a share in the Hereafter at all.” (QS. Asy-Syura: 20)

According to the Qurṭubiy, the fact that people who are deceived by the glitter of the world are those who do not believe in Allah SWT, thus making the world the ultimate goal. On the contrary, for believers, the world is positioned only as a means and provision to achieve Allah's pleasure and as a way to His paradise (Al-Qurṭubi, n.d., p. 262). Ibn al-Qayyim explained that a *zahid* is a person who removes the love of the world from his heart. Because, the world is only a deceptive pleasure so that it is not worthy to occupy the heart of a *zuhud* member (Abdul Muqit, 2020, p. 48).

The pleasures of the world actually have no essential substance, because all forms of pleasure offered are only based on deception and pseudo-mirages. The world with all its glittering often fools people, making them complacent to the point of forgetting the real purpose of life. In such a state, the world not only ensnares the heart with a temporary charm, but also plunges its owner into the shadow of a deceptive illusion, thus hindering spiritual

consciousness and forgetting the orientation of the hereafter as an eternal place of return (Quḥub, 2007, p. 172).

Thus, this verse provides an encouragement for humans to prepare provisions for the afterlife from an early age. Allah SWT promises a multiplied reward for anyone who earnestly does it. Because, death is an inevitable certainty, so preparing yourself for the afterlife becomes very urgent. If one is only focused on the affairs of the world, it will never bring true satisfaction, because the life of the world is limited by short life, mortal health conditions, and energy that diminishes with time.

### **Tawāḥu'**

Etymologically, the term *tawāḥu'* comes from the word *waḥā'a* which means degrading, as well as from the word *ittā'a* which contains the meaning of humility. In another sense, this word can also be understood as a low attitude towards something. As for terminology, *tawāḥu'* is interpreted as an attitude of showing humility in the face of something glorified. Some scholars also explain that *tawāḥu'* includes the behavior of glorifying others because of their virtues, accompanied by a willingness to accept the truth and various other commendable attitudes that show one's humility (Rozak, 2017, p. 176).

Terminologically, *tawāḥu'* is interpreted as an attitude of humility, which is the opposite of arrogance or *takabbur* (Ilyas, 2007, p. 123). According to Al-Ghazali, *tawāḥu'* means to give up a sense of position or superiority, while at the same time viewing others as more important than oneself (Al-Syāfi'ī, 1992). According to Ahmad Athoilah, the essence of *tawāḥu'* is born from a deep awareness of the greatness of Allah SWT and from an open view of the heart to His attributes. By realizing the glory and majesty of Allah, man is encouraged to humble himself, because all the advantages he has come from Allah alone (Atha'illah, 2006, p. 448).

The concept of *tawāḥu'* in Islam has a foundation that can be attributed to the words of Allah Swt. as stated in QS. Luqman [31]:18.

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

“Thou shalt not turn thy face away from others out of pride, and thou shalt not walk on earth haughty. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are arrogant and too proud.”

In *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, Buya Hamka emphasized that this verse contains teachings about ethics in communicating and interacting socially, which is essentially a reflection of noble morals. One of the main keys is to show respect and give full attention to the interlocutor. Facing your face directly when talking is not only limited to the ethics of manners, but also reflects the seriousness and readiness of the heart to listen with sincerity. On the other hand, looking away can cause offense, as it makes others feel unappreciated or their words are considered unimportant. In the context of shaking hands, showing friendly eye contact accompanied by a sincere smile can strengthen the bond of friendship, especially when meeting many people. In fact, the habit of remembering and mentioning someone's name is also seen as a form of deep appreciation, which serves to strengthen social relationships while fostering mutual respect (Hayati & Romziana, 2025, p. 229).

Referring to various previous definitions, it can be understood that the attitude of *tawāḥu'* plays a role in guiding the human soul to always be in harmony with the teachings of Allah Swt, namely through obedience to His commands and avoidance of all His prohibitions. This attitude guides a person to become a sincere person, able to accept the situation openly, and place him in the environment of people who are also sincere in accepting as he is. Thus, *tawāḥu'* gives birth to the nature of staying away from greed and greed, as well as fostering loyalty in devotion to Allah, obedience to His Messenger, and love for fellow creatures He created. If man's behavior has been reflected in these forms, then he can be said to have a true attitude of *tawāḥu'* (Ilyas, 2007, p. 123).

By instilling these values in life, one can avoid harmful flexing behaviors, while returning to the principles of simplicity and humility. In the end, this attitude will bring us closer to Allah SWT. and strengthen the dimension of spirituality that we have.

## CONCLUSION

From the results of research and studies that have been conducted, it can be concluded that flexing is a person's practice to raise their image or social position, in other words trying to display a higher status than reality. This is usually seen through uniformity in style, appearance, and lifestyle. The phenomenon of showing off on social media actually aims to attract attention and gain recognition from others. However, the urge to continue seeking attention can have a negative impact, as it has the potential to affect a person's character and personality. In an Islamic perspective, flexing behavior is clearly prohibited. This prohibition is rooted in religious ethical values that emphasize humility, avoiding arrogance, not demeaning others, and not displaying wealth excessively. Flexing is even considered a reprehensible act because it contains elements of arrogance, envy, and showmanship, all of which are contrary to the teachings of Islam. Therefore, character education is an important step in preventing this phenomenon. Through the solutions that have been offered in Islam, namely behaving *zuhud* and *tawāḥuḥ* is expected to be the main provision in dealing with the rapid flow of trends and lifestyles that are rampant in the digital era.

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