

Flexing as a Marketing Strategy: A Perspective from Islamic Economic Law

Flexing sebagai Strategi Pemasaran: Perspektif Hukum Ekonomi Syariah

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze flexing in marketing from the perspective of Shariah economic law. The phenomenon of flexing, as a common marketing strategy, has recently become prevalent, particularly on social media. However, the current development of flexing presents several issues as it tends to disregard Shariah concepts, thereby potentially harming consumers. This study is a literature review that utilizes primary sources, such as interpretations by Yusuf Qardhawi and economist Reynal Kasali through YouTube channels, as well as secondary sources, including the phenomenon of flexing on social media. The findings of this research indicate that flexing can support marketing activities but tends to have negative impacts on society. Therefore, Islamic business practitioners are advised against employing flexing as a marketing tool, as it violates Shariah principles, such as avoiding defamation, arrogance, ostentation, extravagance, and hypocrisy.

Keywords: Flexing, Marketing Strategy, Shariah Economic Law

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis flexing dalam pemasaran dari perspektif hukum ekonomi syariah. Fenomena flexing, sebagai strategi pemasaran umum, belakangan ini menjadi populer, terutama di media sosial. Namun, perkembangan flexing saat ini menimbulkan beberapa masalah karena cenderung mengabaikan konsep-konsep syariah, sehingga berpotensi merugikan konsumen. Penelitian ini merupakan tinjauan pustaka yang menggunakan sumber utama, seperti interpretasi oleh Yusuf Qardhawi dan ekonom Reynal Kasali melalui saluran YouTube, serta sumber sekunder, termasuk fenomena flexing di media sosial. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa flexing dapat mendukung kegiatan pemasaran tetapi cenderung memiliki dampak negatif pada masyarakat. Oleh karena itu, praktisi bisnis Islam disarankan untuk tidak menggunakan flexing sebagai alat pemasaran,

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karena melanggar prinsip-prinsip syariah, seperti menghindari fitnah, kesombongan, pameran kemewahan, pemborosan, dan kemunafikan.

Keywords: Flexing, Strategi Marketing, Hukum Ekonomi Syariah

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1. Introduction

Post-truth emerges as a phenomenon in society, resulting from the development of communication and information technology, where individuals now tend to believe in a truth based solely on their level of trust, conviction, and emotions, without being grounded in objective facts. In other words, subjectivity can surpass objectivity in this era (Huda & Maharani, 2021). The post-truth era has brought about changes in social interaction patterns, particularly through the development of various platforms in social media. The online world offers diverse and limitless possibilities. Individuals can enter an abstract world that transcends time and space, thanks to electronic media (Fakhriah, 2017).

One of the changes in this post-truth era is the emergence of the flexing trend, performed by a group of individuals that has significant impact on society. Flexing or "showing off" is used as a way to brand oneself and as a marketing strategy to gain exposure from social media users (Widyaningrum, 2020).

Individuals who frequently showcase their wealth are commonly referred to as flexing. With the widespread use of social media, people compete to display their possessions or wealth, giving rise to this phenomenon. The showcased items include private jets, luxury goods, international vacations, and lavish items like ATMs. This is usually done with the intention of demonstrating one's social status, showcasing expertise, and garnering admiration from others (Darmalaksana, 2022).

Currently, flexing behavior has become deeply ingrained in society. People no longer hesitate to display signs of hedonism and consumerism. In order to appear wealthy, individuals engage in social climbing. Social climbers are individuals who behave or take actions to enhance their social status. Flexing practitioners construct their appearance, style, and lifestyle to resemble a higher status, in order to gain greater recognition in society (Mahyuddin, 2017). Flexing has gained more prominence with the widespread use of the internet, especially since the onset of the pandemic.

It is undeniable that the internet has numerous benefits. Through digital platforms, individuals can communicate, share information, sell products, and provide services to a larger audience in a practical manner. Social media and other digital platforms have become increasingly important for sharing information and engaging in public communication, whether through audio, images, or captivating videos. Almost every application can be used to generate income. Commonly used social media platforms include WhatsApp, Instagram, Meta (Facebook), YouTube, Twitter, and TikTok.

From a personal perspective, social media presence can lead anyone to become well-known and attract advertising offers and endorsements, provided they are creative and consistent in creating appealing content that keeps viewers engaged on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and others. For example, on YouTube, individuals can generate income through ad revenue, channel subscriptions, shopping, super chat & super stickers, super thanks, and YouTube Premium revenue, all of which have their own terms and conditions.

These developments have beneficial implications for individuals, the general public, and the business world. Companies that advertise on social media platforms, for instance, can use websites to promote their products to a wider audience, allowing anyone, anywhere to directly access the website and engage in online transactions. As the internet reaches every nation on Earth, it cannot be denied that this technology has the potential to serve as a strategic, efficient, and effective promotional medium (Sjahputra, 2010).

Promotion is an integral part of the marketing process, and showcasing one's products or services for promotional purposes is a necessity. According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), promotion is an effort to advance a business, whether it involves trade or other forms, by introducing the products through various strategies and available media. It also means propagating or introducing a business, product, and so on (Kartajaya, 2021). Advertising is one of the promotional media and a component of the marketing mix. Its goal is to bring customers closer to the products being offered, with the hope of making sales or purchases. Advertising is a marketing method that allows products to be sold as much as possible to consumers (Edwar & Danti, 2021). Advertising can be done overtly (hard selling) or subtly (soft selling).

A problem that arises is the abundance of advertisement content that involves flexing, whether by celebrity endorsers, business owners, or influencers, which is deemed inappropriate and purely propaganda aimed at boosting the sales of the promoted products. This tactic is sometimes necessary to persuade people to buy the offered products. Consequently, the content of such advertisements often appears exaggerated and disregards ethical and moral standards.

As a result, these advertisements often create a negative impression of the companies and are considered deceitful.

Islam is a complete religion that considers matters of faith, rituals, and ways of life, serving as a catalyst for change for Muslims (Sarjuni, 2019). Meeting needs through permissible means is allowed in Islam, as long as they align with the boundaries set by Shariah. Among these means is working, developing a profession, and engaging in sales or business activities. In Islam, all marketing activities should be guided by Allah SWT, and work should be done for the common good, rather than for individual or group interests alone.

From an Islamic perspective, flexing behavior is similar to *riya* (showing off for personal gain) and *istikbar* (arrogance). In the Arabic language, the verb "*riya*" means acting excessively to gain popularity. According to Imam al-Ghazali, *riya* refers to giving charity with the intention of seeking attention and achieving fame (Ghazali, 2016). Flexing behavior falls under the category of "*vices*" or blameworthy traits in human behavior. This can be observed through how individuals act, dress, speak, and engage in other actions related to worship. Nafis Mishbah explains that *riya* can be found in four categories, namely behavior, speech, actions, and friendships (Misbah, 1994).

Based on the aforementioned explanations, flexing combines elements of *riya*, *istikbar* (arrogance), *israf* (extravagance), *buhtan* (falsehood), *ujub* (self-admiration), hypocrisy, and other blameworthy traits.

The phenomenon of flexing from a religious perspective has been studied by several researchers. Firstly, Mustamin, in his work titled "The Phenomenon Of Flexing Behavior After The Pandemic Is A Contemporary Economic Problem From An Islamic Economic Perspective," concluded that flexing has negative social implications, exacerbating the social status gap between the rich and the poor, which contradicts the Indonesian culture of mutual respect.

Secondly, Zilal Afwa and Nafkhatul Wahidah conducted a study titled "The Phenomenon of Flexing on Social Media and its Relationship with Extravagance." The results of their research indicate that flexing is closely related to wastefulness of wealth and reflects the arrogance of wealthy individuals and public figures who lack empathy for others.

Thirdly, Nadia Kusuma Dewi et al. conducted a study titled "The Influence of Social Media on the Flexing Culture Phenomenon in Indonesian Society." The results of their research show that flexing brings benefits by increasing popularity, making it easier to attract customers. However, on the other hand, flexing becomes a medium for fraud or manipulation of goods.

Based on the issues and literature review above, the focus of this research is to analyze the effectiveness of flexing as a marketing medium, the positive and negative impacts of flexing, and the Islamic perspective on the legality of flexing (Jamaluddin, 2020).

2. Method

This study adopts a library research approach to examine the phenomenon of flexing as a marketing strategy through observations on social media. The observations on social media are complemented by a variety of books, articles, and other relevant documents. The data sources for this research encompass both primary and secondary data. The primary data sources include references from the Quran and Hadith, as well as insights from Yusuf Qardhawi and Prof. Reynal Kasali, an esteemed economist, obtained through their YouTube channels. The secondary data sources derive from the observable phenomena and trends within society as manifested on social media platforms (Nasution, 2016). The data analysis methodology employed in this study involves four main steps: data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

3. Result and Discussion

In a previous study published in the Journal of Informasi Cakrawala, JCI, Vol. 2 No. 1 (2022) 10-28, <https://doi.org/10.54066/jci.v2i1.158> by Jawade Hafidz, it was found that flexing, when carried out with the intention of committing fraudulent acts, as seen in cases like Binomo and other binary options, exhibits all the characteristics of criminal behavior. It encompasses not only investment fraud but also money laundering and the dissemination of false information (hoaxes). Perpetrators can face multiple charges. In essence, flexing is not inherently a crime as long as it does not harm others or violate the law. What sets this research apart from the aforementioned study is its examination of flexing when employed as a marketing strategy from the perspective of Shariah economic law.

Meaning of Flexing

Meaning of Flexing According to English-Indonesian dictionaries, "flexing" means showing off. The term "flexing" is derived from the Latin word "flex," which means "flexible" or "expand." In colloquial language, flexing means "boasting" or "showing off," as well as "demonstrating one's abilities, skills, possessions, and so on (Indonesia, 2000)." In English, flexing can be translated as synonyms such as flaunting, bragging, showcasing, boasting,

exaggerating, inflating, and empty talk. In mathematics, the term "flexing" refers to a turning point (Muhaimin, 2020).

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2013), flexing is the act of ostentatiously displaying one's possessions or achievements in a way that is unpleasant for others. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2022), flexing is the intentional display of something one possesses in a striking manner (Lathifatuddini dkk., 2022). Therefore, flexing behavior is the act of showing off one's belongings, luxury items, skills, accomplishments, and more, by exaggerating them to gain recognition or attention, even if they may not reflect the actual reality.

Prof. Rhenald Kasali, in a video presentation, explains that flexing can be utilized as a marketing strategy to build wealth and gain customers' trust. Examples of flexing include past cases like Boss Travel in Indonesia and recent cases that have faced sharp criticism from netizens, and some even led to the imprisonment of the perpetrators. The modus operandi remains the same: flexing perpetrators showcase their abundant wealth to attract customer trust, leading them to invest significant amounts of money in pursuit of similar success (Kasali, t.t.)

According to Prof. Rhenald Kasali's YouTube video uploaded in December 2011 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8fygkYmERc>), the characteristics of flexing are as follows:

1. Always talking about wealth, constantly promising ease, and always aiming for quick results.
2. Utilizing various factors to gain people's trust, including religion, wealth, and more. For example, the Langit Biru cooperative, which provided meat through the "Daging untuk Umat" (Meat for the People) program under the guise of religion, but later proved to have embezzled funds amounting to Rp 6.6 billion.
3. Lacking empathy, as flexing perpetrators emerge with all the comforts of life, wealth, abundance, and luxury during times of hardship and the pandemic, aiming to convince others that everyone can live a comfortable life. They believe the impacts of the pandemic can be overcome through enthusiasm and hard work.
4. Two-faced behavior: during promotions, they claim their products are excellent, and anyone can succeed. However, when others incur losses, they show no empathy and instead attribute their failures to a lack of effort and easily giving up. Initially, they fail to present a balanced assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of their business or products.

5. Attractive appearance: They use branded items as billboards for major brands, presenting themselves as attractive, successful, friendly, and more.
6. Narcissistic: They admire themselves, their wealth, and their abilities. They enjoy being referred to as wealthy and always strive to showcase their possessions.

The motivations behind flexing vary. It can be for content purposes, to attract endorsements, demonstrate credibility in a particular skill, gain trust, followers, and even for the sake of finding a wealthy partner. Flexing is not solely a form of self-image projection but can also serve as a marketing tool for companies through market signaling or sending marketing signals. Some businesses operate by utilizing flexing solely as a marketing strategy, while others employ it as a method of deception (Bachtiar, t.t.).

Marketing Strategy Concept

Marketing Strategy Concept Strategy is an integral part of a plan, and planning is a product of planning, which is one of the basic functions of a management process (Ruslan, 2002). Philip Kotler states that marketing is a social management process used by individuals or groups to obtain what they want by creating a product and trading it with others for something of value (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001). The basic concepts of marketing include needs, wants, demands, production, utility, value, satisfaction, as well as exchange, transactions, and market relationships.

Planning, pricing, advertising, and the distribution of goods and services that can satisfy and meet buyers' needs are all components of marketing strategy. To persuade and gain trust from the market's customers, this marketing strategy can be understood in various ways. High product value, attractive promotion, maintained product quality, strategic location, and affordable prices are among the strategies (Eko, 2019).

Tull and Kahle define marketing strategy as a planned basic tool to achieve a company's goals by developing competitive and sustainable product and service advantages through the entered market and the marketing programs used to serve the target market. Peter Drucker, a renowned management expert, states that sales will always be needed. However, the main objective of marketing is not just to make sales, but to ensure abundant sales (Misbah, 1994).

The goal of marketing is to know and understand customers well so that the products or services offered match the needs of society. In principle, marketing should generate customers, so what is needed next is to ensure that the product or service is always available. The goal of marketing is to recognize and understand customers so that the products or services

provided meet the needs of society. This understanding is given by the definition provided above. Marketing is not just a series of activities that occur before the start of a product; instead, marketing is understood as a system. Marketing is a series of socio-economic activities that focus on providing maximum satisfaction to individuals and groups by meeting their needs through exchange. According to Kuntjoroadi and Safitri (2011), marketing strategy plays a very important role in business competition because the market share actually depends on how close a company as a provider of products or services is to the needs of the market (Eko Ariwibowo, 2019).

The part of marketing that has a relatively direct relationship with customers is the message in the advertisement or promotion. Therefore, this writing will focus more on how to promote in advertisements.

Marketing Perspektif Islam

Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi stated that the Islamic view encompasses a broad and comprehensive understanding of Shariah (al-syumu). Islam regulates various aspects of life, including worship (hablun minallah), family matters (marriage, divorce, maintenance, wills, and inheritance), and business aspects (trade, industry, banking, insurance, debt, marketing, and endowments). Additionally, Islam governs economic aspects such as capital, zakat (obligatory charity), bait al-mal (public treasury), fa'i (unearned increment), ghanimah (war spoils), legal systems, international relations, and other aspects (Qardhawi, 1997).

From a Shariah perspective, marketing is a business activity that allows anyone to engage in it, grow, and utilize its benefits, guided by principles of honesty, fairness, transparency, and sincerity in accordance with the principles of contractual agreements in Islam. Its purpose is to bring about the welfare of humanity (Anastasia & Oktafia, 2021). Humans are bound to benefit from the commandments and prohibitions of Allah SWT in maintaining a balanced life.

As long as it is conducted legally and free from unjust elements, the marketing industry is permissible as a means of fulfilling human needs. Allah SWT states in Surah An-Nisa, verse 29.

Artinya :

"O you who have believed, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful." (Quran, Surah An-Nisa: 29)

Human beings are social creatures who naturally live in groups and depend on others to build a society together. Interactions among individuals to meet their needs are referred to as muamalah by Ahmad Azhar Bashir (Bashir, 1988). Islam pays great attention to how its followers engage in muamalah. This can be seen through the abundance of evidence regarding the principles of muamalah, especially in trade or business.

Healthy and God-compliant business practices are the aspirations of the Muslim community. Therefore, in conducting business activities, including marketing, it is essential to adhere to Islamic principles while being driven by the spirit of worshipping Allah SWT alone and always considering the welfare and social well-being. Considerations related to marketing include the following (Anastasia and Oktafia, 2021):

1. Possessing noble ethics that align with the ethics of the Prophet Muhammad, namely siddiq, amanah, tabligh, and fathanah. Having a good character, so that the orientation of marketing activities is not solely personal profit but also mutual assistance to those in need.
2. Providing the best service to customers with patience, sincerity, humility, and gentleness.
3. Acting with fairness, avoiding any form of oppression. Both sellers and buyers fulfill their obligations in a balanced manner, respecting each other's rights.
4. Acting with trustworthiness and honesty. Any form of deception is unacceptable in such transactions.
5. Refraining from bribery or corruption.

The practice of flexing in marketing has seemingly become a necessity. Yusuf Qardlawi explains several principles that need to be considered in marketing, particularly in advertising or the marketing process for goods and services (Al Qardhawi, 1990):

1. It is not permissible to mislead customers with the intention of making them purchase certain goods. Advertisements should not deceive the public and consumers, leaving them disappointed after obtaining the product.
2. Providing accurate information about the product, especially regarding safety and human well-being.
3. Avoiding coercion, especially in a blatant and obscene manner.

4. Not engaging in morally reprehensible behavior, such as violence, fraud, sexual harassment, discrimination, and other forms of degrading treatment towards fellow human beings, to name a few.

Flexing as a Marketing Strategy from the Perspective of Shariah Economic Law

From the above explanation, it can be understood that marketing requires a strategy to achieve the desired targets for individuals or companies. Marketing is not just about making a product sell; it aims to ensure that the marketed product or service sells well to a broader target market. One crucial aspect of marketing strategy is marketing itself, which can be directly observed through sales content (advertisements). However, it cannot be denied that in order to penetrate the intended market, individuals may resort to various tactics, including flexing.

According to Reynald Kasali, flexing is a means or tool that can be utilized by anyone. Flexing can be used to gain endorsements, demonstrate credibility in a particular skill, gain trust, attract followers, or even find a wealthy partner. Flexing is not just about self-image but can also be used as a marketing tool. According to Reynal Kasali, individuals who engage in flexing have noticeable characteristics that are all examples of negative behavior in the eyes of Islam. These characteristics include constantly talking about wealth, using anything to gain people's trust, lacking empathy, being two-faced, having an appealing appearance with branded items, and being narcissistic.

Regarding advertising ethics, as expressed by Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, it is prohibited to mislead or deceive customers. It is mandatory to provide all relevant information about the product, avoid coercion, and not engage in morally reprehensible behavior, such as violence, fraud, sexual harassment, discrimination, or any form of degrading treatment towards fellow human beings.

From a Shariah perspective, promotion is an effort to convey honest information to the public about a product or service. In this regard, Islamic teachings place significant emphasis on avoiding fraudulent practices and presenting false descriptions. Promotion can be creatively done using available technological advancements, but it should not cross the boundaries that harm others.

The Quranic verse in Surah An-Nisa:29 states:

"O you who believe! Do not consume one another's wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful." (Quran, An-Nisa:29)

In a hadith, it is mentioned:

"Ibn Umar narrated: 'I have been deceived in a transaction,'" a man complained to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). "Say to the person you are transacting with, 'You cannot deceive me!'" the Prophet commanded. From that moment on, he would say it during his business transactions." (Sahih Bukhari)

The mentioned hadith can be used as a reference for individuals or companies in their promotional efforts to sell products or services to prospective consumers, aiming to provide accurate and truthful information while avoiding deception that may harm consumers in the future.

According to Abdul Manan (Izzan & Widaningsih, 2022), Islamic economics is one branch of social science that examines economic issues from an Islamic perspective, taking into account social talents and an individual's religious understanding. The general principles of Islamic economic law, according to (Kholid, 2018), include the principles of tauhid (monotheism), maslahah (public interest), khalifah (stewardship), falah (prosperity), and kifayah (sufficiency). These five principles should be firmly upheld by Muslims in their business activities.

In the author's opinion, Flexing is not exactly the same as riya (showing off). As identified by Professor Reinald Kasali, flexing combines elements of riya, istikbar (arrogance), israf (excessive spending), buhtan (falsehood), ujub (self-admiration), hypocrisy, tadlis (deception), and other blameworthy traits that can lead to harm and corruption.

1. Riya A hadith narrated by Abu Daud No. 3511 states: "On the Day of Judgment, whoever wears luxurious clothing to be praised, he will wear it, and as Abu Awanah added, 'Then it will be consumed by the fire of Hell.'" (Narrated by Abu Daud)

Based on the above hadith, the act of riya, which is showing off something to others to seek praise, is prohibited, as it can even fall under the category of minor shirk (associating partners with Allah). However, showcasing goods or services for the

purpose of marketing is a necessity as long as it does not violate the provisions according to Islamic law.

2. Israf Israf refers to the act of wastefulness, squandering something while neglecting the blessings bestowed by Allah, spending on things without benefit, and exceeding limits in every action.

Allah SWT states in the Quran: "O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid, and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess." (Quran, Al-A'raf: 31)

The behavior of flexing, as shown in the Facebook reels by Willie Salim's account (<https://www.facebook.com/reel/604559301290467?s=yWDuG2&fs=e>), where he immersed a bathtub full of bubbles until it became rotten, and then added hand sanitizer, body soap, body care products, facial creams, serums, aloe vera creams, more soaps, and shampoo, is an example of israf. However, these excessive products cannot clean or remove the rotting bubbles in the bathtub. Creating promotional content requires investment and creativity, but there are certain boundaries that should be observed to avoid engaging in actions disliked by Allah SWT. Regardless of one's religion, as an influencer with a potential following, such behavior should be avoided or minimized. This type of promotion not only involves wastefulness but also falls into the category of tabdzir (wasting resources).

3. Tabdzir Tabdzir refers to wasting money or spending it on unnecessary things. The act of tabdzir is closely related to israf. Allah implies in Surah Al-Isra, verses 26 and 27: "And give to the near of kin his due and [also] to the needy and the traveler. And do not spend wastefully. Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful."

Based on the previous example, the behavior of flexing involves wastefulness and squandering something without deriving any benefit from it, contrary to its intended purpose. This is closely related to Professor Reinald Kasali's description of the characteristics of flexing, where there is a tendency to employ any means to make the content appealing. Additionally, it is highly unethical when some individuals cannot afford to purchase luxury skincare products while the flexer wastes them. This behavior indicates that flexing lacks empathy and falls into the category of tabdzir.

4. Tadlis Tadlis refers to the act of concealing defects in a contract object carried out by a merchant to deceive the buyer into thinking it is defect-free (DSN-MUI, 2000). One form of tadlis is buhtan, which means fabricating something that does not exist with the intention of deceiving others.

Allah SWT states in the Quran: "And avoid false statement." (Quran, Al-Hajj: 30)

Ibnu Majah narrated a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) which states: "It is not permissible to harm or cause harm to others, nor is it permissible to take revenge for harm caused by others."

Based on its characteristics, flexing perpetrators are not always honest about the condition of the products or services they offer. They present all the beauty and advantages of the products (goods or services) without fully and fairly disclosing their risks. This can disappoint consumers in the long run when their experiences do not match what they envisioned. Thus, the act of flexing involves elements of tadlis and buhtan, which have the potential to harm others, while a Muslim is prohibited from causing harm to others intentionally and deliberately.

5. Ujub In the book Minhajul Abidin, Imam Al-Ghazali defines ujub as praising oneself or thinking about one's significant achievements.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said in a hadith: "There are three things that cause ruin: stinginess, following one's desires, and admiring oneself." (Narrated by At-Tabrani)

Ujub is manifested through an artistic attitude by flexing perpetrators, such as admiring oneself, wealth, abilities, enjoying being perceived as rich, and always wanting to showcase what they possess, achieve, or wear. This behavior has many negative consequences, as it can lead to arrogance, belittling others, and even evoking feelings of envy or jealousy in others.

6. Nifaq Nifaq refers to the act of concealing wrongdoing and displaying goodness. When in front of the camera, flexing perpetrators may praise the taste and quality of a product to earn income as a professional, while in reality, the taste and quality may not match their claims. This can mislead consumers.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated in a hadith: "A person is a true hypocrite if four things are found in him. And if he has any of them, he will always have one branch of hypocrisy in him until he gets rid of it. He betrays trusts, lies when he speaks, breaks promises, and is dishonest when disagreements occur." (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim)

In addition to harming others, flexing also harms oneself. Besides *riya*, flexing perpetrators have engaged in *israf*, *tabdzir*, *tadlis*, *buhtan*, *ujub*, and *nifaq*, all of which are blameworthy behaviors in Islam.

4. Conclusion

Flexing is an attitude that prominently showcases one's possessions in an exaggerated manner to gain recognition and attention, thereby increasing purchasing power in society. However, it cannot be denied that flexing often sharpens social status differences. In Islam, flexing is associated with *riya* (showing off), *istikbar* (arrogance), *israf* (wastefulness), *tadlis* and *buhtan* (deception), *ujub* (self-admiration), *nifaq* (hypocrisy), and other blameworthy traits. The behavior of flexing is inconsistent with the principles of Islamic economic law, which prioritize the principles of *tauhid* (monotheism), *maslahah* (public interest), *khalifah* (stewardship), *falah* (prosperity), and *kifayah* (sufficiency). Indonesia does not yet have specific legislation regarding flexing; criminal offenses only emerge after a specific case occurs, and the cause is not necessarily flexing. Flexing can become a *modus operandi* for crimes that can lead individuals to criminal acts. Therefore, it is essential to educate the public, especially academics, about the importance of caution in the business realm, particularly in investments.

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