

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF  
EDUCATION, PSYCHOLOGY  
AND COUNSELLING  
(IJEPC)**[www.ijepec.com](http://www.ijepec.com)**THE CONCEPT OF SHOWING OFF ON SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE  
CONTEMPORARY ERA: AN ANALYSIS BASED ON IMAM AL  
GHAZALI'S PERSPECTIVE**Siti Nazirah Saidin<sup>1\*</sup>, Abdul Rahman Al Osman<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup> Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia  
Email: nazirah.saidin@live.iiu.edu.my<sup>2</sup> Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia  
Email: abdulrahman@iiu.edu.my

\* Corresponding Author

**Article Info:****Article history:**

Received date: 24.10.2024

Revised date: 18.11.2024

Accepted date: 24.12.2024

Published date: 31.12.2024

**To cite this document:**

Saidin, S. N., & Al Osman, A. R. (2024). The Concept Of Showing Off On Social Media In The Contemporary Era: An Analysis Based On Imam Al Ghazali's Perspective. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, 9 (56), 954-960.

DOI: 10.35631/IJEPC.956059

This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)**Abstract:**

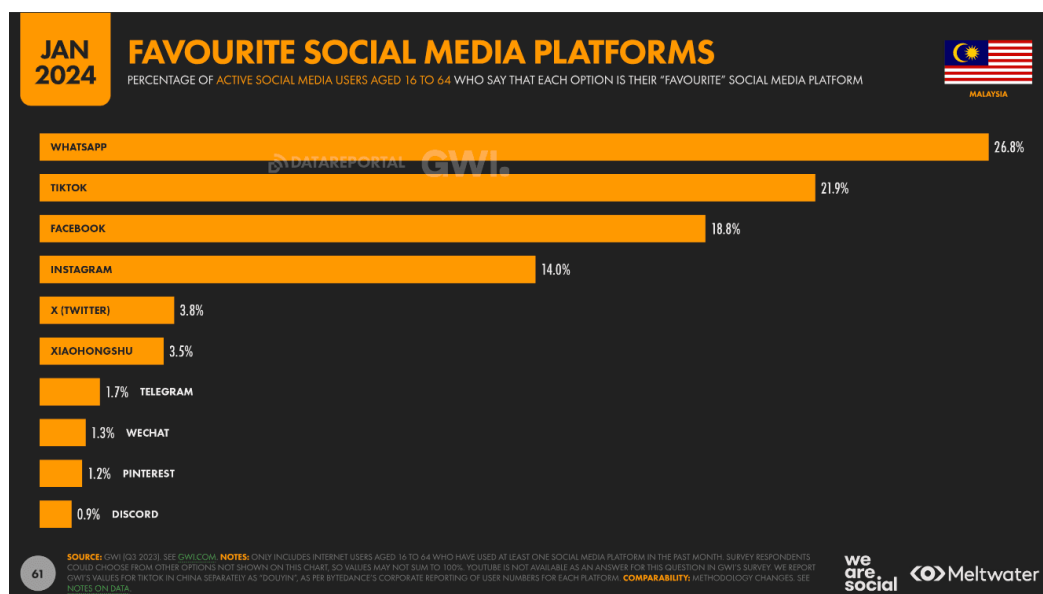
In contemporary era, social media plays a vital role in every aspect of society's life. It tends to be a platform for people to share their daily life to the world just by clicking at fingertips. This study aims to explore the concept of showing off on social media among the students at International Islamic University Malaysia, to determine the concept of showing off from Imam Ghazali's perspective and to analyze the effects of showing off towards Muslims' spirituality. The study used qualitative method by distributing online survey to 30 students in International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The data was collected using an online questionnaire through Google Form. The main findings of this study showed that the act of showing off can be determined based on personal intention, showing off can be refer to *riya'* in Arabic terms is considered as spiritual disease based on Imam Al Ghazali's view and the impacts of showing off towards Muslim's spirituality are can destroy someone's self-esteem, lead to arrogance (*takabbur*), develop the feeling of envious or jealousy and distract Muslims from their spiritual practices and obligations.

**Keywords:**

Contemporary Era, Social Media, Showing Off, Imam Al Ghazali

## Introduction

In this advanced technology era, it cannot be denied that social media is a current technology that connects society with the world and society in a quick way. Furthermore, Kosmo (2023) revealed that Malaysia is the second rank of the highest percentage of social media platform usage (8.75%) in the world shared with Filipina after the United Arab Emirates (UAE) which is 9.55%. Apart from that, Sik Wei et al. (2023) mentioned that people almost spending most of their daily time by looking on the social media because of the addiction towards it since for a long time ago. However, Salam and Sundari (2023) illustrated that this technology is absolutely providing a lot of conveniences among society nowadays compared to the previous era which was limited social media sources such as television. Thus, people can reach the issues related to world by accessing on social media and all individuals of all ages from child to senior citizen can access it. Hamizi (2023) mentioned the social media platforms that are mostly used by society in the daily life such as Instagram, Tiktok, Facebook, WhatsApp, X(Twitter), Youtube and blogs and were utilized it for a variety of purpose such as entertainment, information, news, games, education and others. The following chart indicated the statistic of media social consumption in 2024:



**Figure 1: The Statistic Of Social Media Consumption**

(Resource: Data Reportal Global Digital Insight 2024)

Based on Figure 1, it described that WhatsApp became the top and active social media that have been used by people and followed by Tiktok and Facebook. From that, it can be assumed that it will be increased day by day. By using this variety of social media, it shapes the modernization era that give a new change from cultures, values and lifestyles of society nowadays. Lubis and Sazali (2023) illustrated people are more exposed to practice the new norm which is flexing culture which it is a slang or the other term "showing off" can be defined as displaying of wealth or luxury for self-recognition or existence. Mardiah (2022) described that this issue appeared during the Covid-19 pandemic that have been increased in 2020 especially for the marketing purpose. However, the trend still expands till now for many purposes such as to show off their academic achievement for the public and others. As stated by Adlina et al. (2022) that social media users tend to upload the content in the platform such

as Instagram, Facebook and Tiktok in order to attract the attention of other social media users. In addition, Susanto et al. (2023) illustrated that aside from this information, social media was additionally influenced by some of national artists or celebrities who frequently posted content about their wealth on social media or even on national media until the term "sultan" or "crazy rich" finally appeared in Indonesia several years back. The most showing off that people like to expose is sharing their wealth on social media such as Instagram and Facebook such as showing off the branded item that they had to gain popularity. Apart from that, the society who view the posting will attract them to hit "like" button as the sign of their interest towards the post will encourage the rise of showing off among people nowadays. However, the validity of post by anyone cannot be trusted as some people like to brag about their possessions even though they do not actually own them also can be considered as showing off.

Regarding to that, this showing off need to be taken cautiously as the exaggeration of showing off can affect in Muslim's spiritual which it can be defined as the *riya'*. Ab. Rahman et al. (2019) defined the term *riya'* is the Arabic term that means the act of practicing good activities or religious rituals to impress or gain the approval of others, rather than for the only purpose of pleasing Allah. Based on previous statistic, it can be assumed that the most consumers of social media are among youth generation as stated by Adlina et al. (2022) that Muslim youth is considered as a part of population that have contributed in consuming social media actively. Thus, this study aims to explore the concept of showing off on social media among the students at International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), to determine the concept of showing off in Imam Ghazali's perspective and the impact of showing off towards Muslim's spirituality.

## Literature Review

### *The Concept of Showing Off on Social Media in This Contemporary Era*

Today, social media cannot be separated in society's life which really plays an impactful role in the daily life especially teenagers (Yohanna, 2020). Indeed, the application of social media brings a lot of positive impacts in human's life especially in this era such as enhanced citizen engagement with the government, an opportunity for delivering religious messages, sharing of knowledge, and a platform for learning. However, it can also bring negative impacts if the users used it in the wrong way such as the presence of problems associated with physical growth, decline in moral and religious values, and the risk of cybercrime (Hamizi, 2023).

Furthermore, the recent statistic active social media users in Malaysia in January 2024 displayed that approximately 83.1 percent of the Malaysian were actively engaged in using social media. The number of social media users in Malaysia in 2024 increased by 4.6 percent compared to 2023, reaching around 78.5 percent of the entire population (Statista Research Department, 2024). Regarding that, teenagers are the main group of users that consumed a lot of their time with the application. They allocated much of their time by engaging with social media platforms, that lead them to the showing up of every thought and expression on these platforms (Ivan et al., 2023). From that, the people tend to show their lifestyle, achievements, and the preferred images to others easily just by clicking on fingertips. Moreover, this trend is being normalized by people of all ages to gain popularity and validation from others. For instance, they can share some luxury travel photos, impressive academic achievements, or highlighting significant career accomplishments in the social media. Consequently, the act of showing off can impact towards the viewers' mental health such as feeling jealousy and low self-esteem.

### ***The Concept of Showing Off from Islamic Perspective***

Showing off or the *riya* ' as in Islamic term brings the meaning that a person who practices and presents oneself to others as virtuous and submissive to Allah SWT with the false hope of gaining respect, admiration, and affection for the benefit of Allah SWT. Ab Rahman et al. (2019) stated that this practice can lead to the punishment and bring the anger and torments of Allah S.W.T to His servants from the perspective of Muslim scholars. The scholars also observed that all true actions will depend on the quality, purity, and sincerity of the original intention to determine the nature of *riya* '.

From Surah Al-Baqarah verse 264: *O you who have attained to faith! Do not deprive your charitable deeds of all worth by emphasizing your own charity and hurting [the feelings of the those in need], as does he who spends his wealth only to be seen and praised by men and believes not in God and the final Judgement Day.* From this verse, it totally explained that the showing off are really prohibited in Islam as these people shall have no gain whatever from all their good works and God does not guide people who refuse to acknowledge the truth. Halim et al. (2024) described that *riya* ' is a significant issue in Islam since it tends to harm one's connection with Allah and threaten the purity of intentions. This phenomenon is considered as a serious sin that has the potential to destroy the genuineness of worship and significantly impact the moral aspects of Islam.

### ***The Concept Of Showing Off From Imam Ghazali's Perspective***

The phenomenon known as *riya* ' can express itself in a variety of ways and can take place anywhere and at any moment in time. People are exposed to have this kind of showing off themselves when they put the personal intention to raise the attention from others. There are some Muslim scholars who have discussed about Sufism field which the main purpose to get closer with Allah S.W.T. Imam Al Ghazali is one of the prominent Muslim scholars who made a lot of contribution for Ummah included this Sufism field. Apart from that, Ab Rahman et al. (2019) illustrated there are five types of *riya* ' according to Imam Al-Ghazali as the following:

1. *Riya* ' refers to the act of displaying physical attributes, such as a skinny physique and a pale face, to give the impression of being a person who fasts or stays awake to perform Tahajud prayer.
2. *Riya* 's physical appearance and behaviour. For instance, individuals may demonstrate their devotion to prayer by kneeling themselves, placing their forehead on the ground, and donning attire like that worn by religious practitioners.
3. Express *Riya* ' in written form. Frequently engaging in discussions about religion to convey an image of devoutness and professing a deep affection for the faith.
4. *Riya* is the act of purposely praying in front of the public to be perceived as a religious person.
5. *Riya* seeks friendship by approaching religious individuals to be regarded as one of them.

As stated above, all the following types of *riya* are a serious topic that can damage all good deeds that have been done and it can be worthless as it will diminish in just a blink of an eye. Apart from that, Mat Rani et al. (2022) explained that there are several stages about the importance of knowledge and worship in Imam Al Ghazali's book which entitled as Minhaj al-Abidin. According to Imam al-Ghazali, a servant will encounter the sixth stage when '*uqbah*, who harms and impairs their acts of worship, would be present. *Riya* ', which is the act of

displaying obedience to others, and '*ujub*', which is the feeling of superiority over others, are two attributes that impair the sincerity of a servant's worship. These two detrimental elements can be minimized through sincerity and recognizing the compassion of God, which is persistently guarded and protected by Him.

### Research Methodology

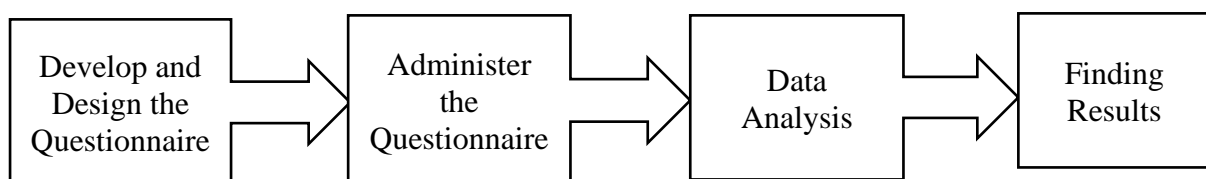
This study used qualitative method to explore the concept of showing off on social media among the students at International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The online survey was conducted in this study to gather the data by distributing Google Form questionnaire to the selected participants. According to Creswell, W. & Guetterman, C. (2019) the survey research design is used by researchers to describe the opinions, behaviors, attitudes or characteristics of the population. The sample of study was comprised from 30 respondents (21 female students and 9 male students) who are from different backgrounds of study in IIUM using a random sampling technique. They are selected in this study suitable with researchers' need which to explore the concept of showing off on social media among teenagers specifically the students in IIUM. The demographic information of participants is presented below in Table 1.

**Table 1: Demographic Information Of Participants**

Item	Category	Number (n=30)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	9	30
	Female	21	70
Year of Study	Year 1	10	33.3
	Year 2	3	10
	Year 3	6	20
	Year 4	11	36.7
Kulliyah	Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences	11	36.7
	Education	6	20
	Engineering	6	20
	Economic and Management Sciences	5	16.7
	Information and Communication Technology	1	3.3
	Architecture	1	3.3

### Finding and Discussion

This part illustrated the findings of data analysis from 30 respondents who are students at International Islamic University Malaysia. They participated in this study by answering the online survey, Google Form that have been distributed randomly. The process of data collection is presented as below:



**Figure 2: Flow Chart of Data Collection**



The researchers divided the survey into three main sections which are time consumption on social media, types of showing off from Imam Al-Ghazali's perspective and the effects of showing off towards Muslim spirituality. All these sections are important as to realize the researchers' objectives which to explore the concept of showing off on social media among the students at International Islamic University Malaysia, to determine the concept of showing off from Imam Ghazali's perspective and to analyze the effects of showing off towards Muslim spirituality.

### ***Section A: Time Consumption on Social Media***

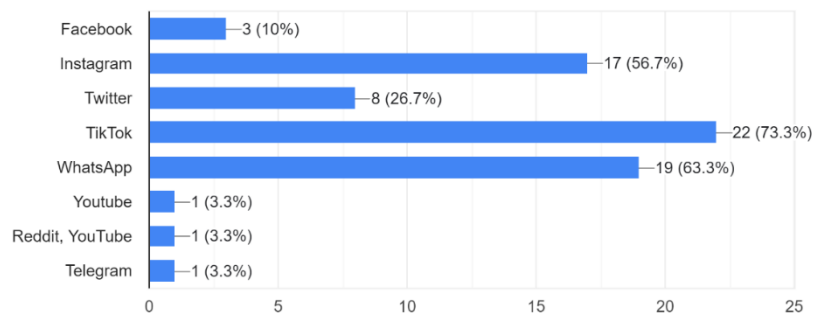
In this section, there are four main questions regarding to time consumption, content and intention on social media. The finding of data as in the Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Time Consumption On Social Media Among IIUM Students**

Item(s)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	1	3.3
1-2 hours	5	16.7
3-4 hours	8	26.7
More than 4 hours	16	53.3

Which social media platforms do you use the most?

30 responses



**Figure 3: The Types Of Social Media That Used By IIUM Students**

From the Table 2 and Figure 3 above, it showed that most of students spent their time on social media more than 4 hours in daily life. It supported by Roslan and Fuad (2023) that Malaysians' consumption of social media shows annually rise, with an approximate average usage of six hours per day or 42 hours per week. Apart from that, the most three of social media platforms that have been used by them are TikTok (73.3%) followed by WhatsApp (63.3%) and Instagram (56.7%). These applications are convenient for them to share their life updates to the world easily and quickly.

Regarding to that, the two following questions have been asked generally in this section to explore the students' perception on the content of social media and the data analysis are as below:

**Table 3: Students' Perception On The Content Of Social Media By Themselves**

<b>Students' perception on the content of social media</b>					
Item (s)	Rating scales/ Percentage (%)				
	1 (Strongly disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neutral)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly agree)
Q3: Do you posted content on social media to gain attention or approval from others?	7 (23.3%)	11 (36.7%)	7 (23.3%)	4 (13.3%)	1 (3.3%)
Q4: Do you consider the intention behind your social media posts before sharing them?	1 (3.3%)	3 (10%)	7 (23.3%)	8 (26.7%)	11 (36.7%)

The table 3 displayed two questions and in the Question 3(Q3), most of respondents are disagreed with the statement of posting content on social media to gain attention or approval from others as 11 respondents (36.7%) disagreed, and 7 respondents (23.3%) strongly disagreed. However, the researchers give option open-ended question to the respondents to state their personal views related to (Q3) and the following are as stated:

**Table 4: Students' Perception On The Content Of Social Media By Themselves**

No.	Comment
1	<i>"I believe that <b>not all people posting on social media for the sake of showing off</b>. Sometimes they just want to <b>share their happiness with others</b>. One more, let say they are paid to do that (posting), indirectly it can <b>help someone business</b> by promoting it."</i>
2	<i>"In my opinion, people nowadays use social media in a wrong way, <b>most of them post things to show off</b>. I can say this because everything that happens in their lives will be posted on social media, sometimes posts that are not suitable to be shared publicly such as household problems. "</i>
3	<i>Personally, those who show off are people who never had those things in their life aka "orang kaya baru". The shock from encountering new lifestyle urge them to let people know about their changes so that they will gain more attention, respect and validation.</i>
4	<i>Anything that we do, we <b>must look at our intention (niat)</b> first whether it is bad or good. If we have an intention to make someone jealous with whatever we have, then it can be included for being takabbur or showing off. If we have a niat (intention) to motivate and encouraging people then, we gain a good deed.</i>

5 *I personally think that showing off is based on personal intention. For instance, a woman post unnecessary selfie might be an effort to gain self-confident, but it can be the other way around, which is to show herself off*

6 *From my point of view, usually we upload medias on social media sometime with intention of "I want to upload this so people can see me yadayadab..." like we upload because of we want people look at us. And we hope people will see what we upload up. So, from this, we can see that intention for this because for people. But if something upload gives benefit to people like, sharing his/her lose weight journey will influence other people to lose weight and can lead to a healthy lifestyle is a good thing too but as long not against Islam like expose aurah and more. And as long our intention is not "showing off" then it's okay, I think.*

According to the item(s) 3 above, the finding showed that 11 respondents (36.7%) strongly agreed and 8 out of 30 respondents (26.7%) agreed with the statement. Thus, the intention is the main element to determine someone's purpose of posting anything in social media whether to show off or opposite to this. It was supported in the hadith Rasulullah SAW: Actions are according to intentions, and everyone will get what was intended. (HR Bukhari and Muslim). There are some views from respondents about the concepts of intention behind posting posts on social media such as following:

### **Section B: The Concept of Showing Off from Imam Al Ghazali's Perspectives**

In this section, there are eight questions that have been answered by all the respondents to explore their opinions about the types of showing off from Imam Al Ghazali's perspectives. The findings of information are as in the following table:

**Table 5: Students' Perception On The Concept Of Showing Off From Imam Al Ghazali's Perspectives**

Types of Showing Off from Imam Al Ghazali's Perspectives					
Item (s)	Rating scales/ Percentage (%)				
	1 (Strongly disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neutral)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly agree)
Q1: Do you agree that showing off on social media contradicts Islamic teachings on humility ( <i>tawaduk</i> ) and modesty?	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (10%)	9 (30%)	18 (60%)
Q2: Do you think that showing off on social media aligns with the concept of <i>riya'</i> in Islamic teachings?	0 (0%)	1 (3.3%)	4 (13.3%)	10 (33.3%)	15 (50%)
Q3: According to Imam Al Ghazali, showing off is	0	1	3	8 (26.7%)	18



considered a spiritual disease. Do you agree with this perspective?	(0%)	(3.3%)	(10%)	(36.7%)	(60%)
Q4: Do you believe that sharing wealth (e.g., expensive possessions) on social media can be a form of showing off?	0 (0%)	1 (3.3%)	3 (10%)	11 (36.7%)	15 (50%)

**Table 5: Students' Perception On The Concept Of Showing Off From Imam Al Ghazali's Perspectives (Follow)**

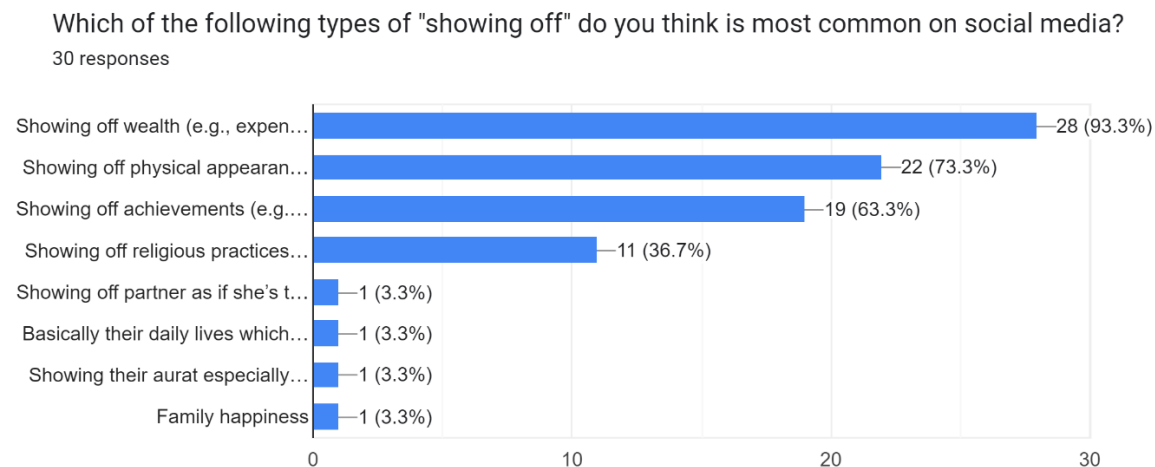
Q5: Do you believe that sharing physical appearance (e.g., selfies, fashion) on social media can be a form of showing off?	1 (3.3%)	5 (16.7%)	9 (30%)	9 (30%)	6 (20%)
Q6: Do you believe that sharing achievements (e.g., academic, professional, career) on social media can be a form of showing off?	2 (6.7%)	3 (10%)	10 (33.3%)	12 (40%)	3 (10%)
Q7: Do you believe that sharing religious practices (e.g., photos of praying, attending religious events) on social media can be a form of showing off?	2 (6.7%)	5 (16.7%)	9 (30%)	4 (13.3%)	10 (33.3%)

According to Table 5, in general, most respondents believed that showing off is considered a spiritual disease (Q3), as 18 out 30 respondents (60%) strongly agreed and followed by 8 respondents (26.7%) also agreed with the statement. Lubis and Sazali (2023) mentioned that from Imam Al Ghazali's view, the presence of a flexing culture contributes to the rise of *riya'* (displaying wealth) and arrogant attitudes. The act of showing off on social media in real life has a significant effect on individuals, leading them to be influenced by *riya'*'s arrogant attitude. These attitudes are prohibited in Islam as it can damage all good deeds that have been done. Apart from that, in Q1, 18 out 30 respondents (60%) strongly agreed and followed by 9 respondents (30%) also agreed that showing off on social media contradicts Islamic teachings on humility (*tawaduk'*) and modesty (*haya'*). It was linked as stated by Putu et. Al (2022) that the flexing is a term commonly used by teenagers to describe the act of showing a person's wealth with the goal to attain social status, popularity, and a strong sense of self-worth using social media. It contrasts the concept of humility and modesty. Huda (2019) explained the humility can be defined as the state of being humble, refers to a person's modest, submissive,

and respectful nature, characterised by a lack of pride and arrogance while Elshinawy (2021) described modesty (*haya'*) encompasses the concepts of conscientiousness, shame, modesty, bashfulness, and other associated emotions that prevent an individual from engaging in immoral behaviour.

In Q2, half of respondents which 15 out of 30 respondents (50%) convinced that showing off on social media aligns with the concept of *riya'* in Islamic teachings. According to Lubis and Sazali (2023), *riya'* is the Arabic term that has been derived from the root word (رأى) that means "to see". Zulfikar (2018) stated that in Arabic speech, this term implies the act of showing exaggerated actions with the goal of getting popularity. Mardiah (2022) mentioned that showing off is included in of the *riya'* attitudes and it is one of the minors *shirk* that can lead to major sin.

From Q4 to Q7, it described about the types of showing off on social media according to Imam Al- Ghazali that are relevant with this contemporary era such as showing off on wealth, physical appearance, achievements and religious practices. The researchers allowed the respondents to choose more than one option and can add the other personal answer from their perspective. The following chart showed the finding of students' perception of types of showing off.



**Figure 4: Students' Perception On The Types Of Showing Off On Social Media**

Based on Figure 4, the showing off wealth on social media is the top rank that have been chosen by 28 out of 30 respondents (93.3%). It followed by showing off physical appearances from 22 respondents (73.3%), showing off achievements from 19 respondents (63.3%) and showing off religious practices from 11 respondents (36.7%). The other types of showing off from respondents' perspectives are such as showing off couple partner, daily lives, private parts (*aurat*) and the happiness of family members. The additional views that have been given by respondents can be logic issues as nowadays people tend to share everything on social media without considering the permissible and prohibited matters in Islam.

From Q4 to Q7 in Table 4, the types of showing off were analysed separately to get the clear result of finding. However, it showed a little different from the sequences of types showing off compared to Chart 2. From that, the sharing on wealth (Q4) with percentage 50% and religious practices (Q7) with percentage 33.3% have been viewed as the main types of showing off on social media among the respondents. Regarding to Q4, Susanto et al. (2023) explained that the showing off wealth on social media can be happened because the luxurious lifestyle in this contemporary era led to a new culture that is frequently be seen on every day, known as the "flexing" culture, which implies extravagantly showing one's wealth. Individuals commonly show themselves on social media platforms. It can be seen through their social media such as Facebook status updates, symbols and images, Instagram photos, and activities on TikTok. This situation is frequently encountered in daily life. While in Q7, 10 respondents (33.3%) are the bigger rating who believed that sharing religious practices such as photos of praying, attending religious events on social media can be a form of showing off.

**Table 6: Students' Perception On The Types Of Showing Off On Social Media**

No.	Comment
1	<i>That's why I choose strongly disagreed for the worship and academic part, because the examples of umrah content and get excellent results, people just <b>want to make memories and appreciate people's efforts</b> because they want to achieve and get things not easy, right?</i>
2	<i>The act of showing off is wrong in literal sense. However, posting good deeds or religious activities can be beneficial if the intention is not to show off but to <b>encourage people to follow or learn from watching/reading the posts.</b></i>

Table 6 above illustrated that there are two different views from respondents related to the types of showing off on social media which some kinds of content that have been posted in social media such as related to spiritual, academic achievement and doing good deeds can also motivate others to achieve the good things.

### **Section C: Analyzing the Effects of Showing Off Towards Muslims' Spirituality**

In this section, there are four main questions that have been asked and the data was analyzed as in the Table 7 below:

**Table 7: Students' Perception On The Effects Of Showing Off Towards Muslims' Spirituality**

The Effects of Showing Off Towards Muslims' Spirituality					
Item (s)	Rating scales/ Percentage (%)				
	1 (Strongly disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neutral)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly agree)
Q1: Do you believe by seeing others' posts on social media can affect your self-esteem?	3 (10%)	1 (3.3%)	7 (23.3%)	11 (36.7%)	8 (26.7%)

Q2: Do you believe that frequently showing off on social media can lead to arrogance (takabbur)?	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)	3 (10%)	12 (40%)	14 (46.7%)
Q3: Have you ever felt envious or jealous when seeing others' posts on social media?	1 (3.3%)	3 (10%)	8 (26.7%)	12 (40%)	6 (20%)

**Table 7: Students' Perception On The Effects Of Showing Off Towards Muslims' Spirituality (Follow)**

Q4: Do you think that "showing off" on social media can distract Muslims from their spiritual practices and obligations?	1 (3.3%)	2 (6.7%)	4 (13.3%)	13 (43.3%)	10 (33.3%)
--	-------------	-------------	--------------	---------------	---------------

Table 7 displayed the students' perception on the effects of showing off towards Muslims' spirituality. In Q1, it can be considered that most respondents who are 11 respondents (36.7%) and 8 respondents (26.7%) acknowledged by seeing others' posts on social media can affect their self-esteem. In Q2, the most respondents, 14 out of 30(46.7%) totally agreed that frequently showing off on social media can lead to arrogance (*takabbur*) and 12 out of them (40%) also agreed with the statement. Next, in Q3 showed that most of them tend to feel envious or jealous when seeing others' posts on social media which 6 respondents (20%) strongly agreed, 12 respondents (40%) agreed, and 8 respondents (26.7%) feel neutral about this statement. In Q4, most of them believed that "showing off" on social media can distract Muslims from their spiritual practices and obligations as 10 respondents (33.3%) are strongly agreed, and 13 respondents (43.3%) also agreed with that statement. Apart from that, there are some points of personal views of respondents that related to the effects of showing off towards Muslim's spirituality.

**Table 8: Students' Perception On The Content Of Social Media By Themselves**

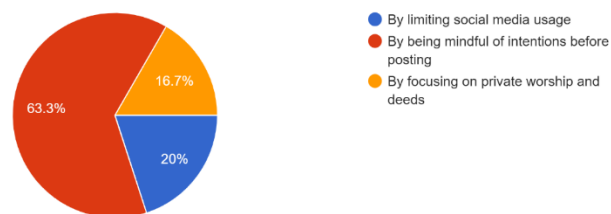
No.	Comment
1	<i>For me, as a viewer we think it is showing off when we start <b>feel jealous or envious</b> about it. Maybe they just want to share about their happiness on their achievements.</i>
2	<i>I personally think that showing off on social media could <b>affect one's insecurity the most</b>, especially into thinking something like 'why couldn't I be like him/her?'</i>

3 *People should prevent from over sharing since some of the social media users will have bad perspective like **hasad (jealousy)**.*

4 *I do believe these people know **the concept of evil eye**, but they just don't care. People that are inflicted **with envy and jealousy are very dangerous**. They don't think when they do bad things. They just want to see you suffer. Evil eye is real. **Sihr is real**. It can even cause death. It's even worse when they post their sins online. Vaping, smoking, relationship posts with bf/gf. Once it's out there online, the bad deed count just keeps on going even after your death*

From Table 8, it can be concluded that the effects of showing off towards Muslim spirituality and mental health such as can damage individuals' self-esteem and increase their insecurity level. Then, it can lead to build the arrogances (*takabbur*) and increase the level of jealousy and envious in themselves. Mardiah (2022) illustrated showing off is the one of arrogance act that prohibited in Islam. The doer of showing off will be punished and humiliated in the Day of Judgement because all their good deeds considered as worthless. There are Quranic verse that explained the situation as in Surah al Ghafir verse 60, Allah mentioned that those who are arrogant and reluctant to worship Him will get humiliated in Hell. Finally, it can also distract Muslims from their spiritual practices and obligations to attain Allah's pleasure because they reacted to the materialism matters more than the real purpose in worshipping God.

Q5. In your opinion, how can Muslims avoid the trap of "showing off" on social media?  
30 responses



**Figure 5: Students' Perception On Strategies To Overcome "Showing Off" On Social Media**

According to Figure 5, 19 respondents (63.3%) believed that being mindful of intention before posting on social media is the best way to overcome the act of showing off in daily life, followed by 6 respondents (20%) to limit the usage of social media in daily life and 5 respondents (16.7%) focused on performing worship and deed in private. Regarding to that, there is significant personal view that was be highlighted about the importance of intention before posting such as:



**Table 9: Students' Perception On The Content Of Social Media By Themselves**

No.	Comment
1	<i>In my opinion, it is all started with the <b>original intention of posting on social media</b>. This is because some people want to drive other people to do good deeds. As example, Alif Satar posting on "Solat Subuh Macam Solat Jumaat" has affects the awareness of Muslim about the importance of praying especially Subuh. Like Ebit Liew encourage people to give charity (sadaqah) although not much by his donation posting. Maybe there are people who show off their wealth, achievements, happiness just to gain attention of viewers without any benefits and that is not good since it will cause jealousy, intention to bring the account owner down with fitnah and make the account owner live with fake happiness which is human approval where it supposed to live for Allah only. In conclusion, the account owner should think, plan, consider their original intention before posting. For the viewer, we should not judge them just by looking at their posts. If we feel jealous or it make us low self-esteem, we must correct our intention of living which is for Allah SWT only.</i>

Based on Table 9, it can be summarized that the intention is the main pillar to determine someone's behaviour because the showing off is the hidden act that only God knew the purpose behind every act of His servants. In this modern era, social media can be positive platform for those who using it in delivering knowledge to strengthen the relationship with God. As mentioned by Respondent M, some program that have been organised by Malaysian influencers such as Alif Satar, the actor and singer who give the big impact for society and encouraged themselves to perform Subuh prayer in congregational.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this study revealed the concept of showing off among IIUM students, the types of showing off based on Imam Al Ghazali's perspective and the effects of showing off towards Muslim spirituality. Indeed, the act of showing off give several impacts towards Muslim's doers and viewers in term of spirituality and mental health such as destroying self-esteem, can lead to arrogance (*takabbur*), develop the feeling of envious or jealousy and can distract Muslims from their spiritual practices and obligations. Therefore, the researchers advised in a way to minimize the act of showing off, people can keep the intention of posting on social media not to show off, but it is a way to spread awareness and benefits of good actions towards others. Although this study has provided an overview of the concept of showing off (*riya'*) on social media based on Imam Al Ghazali's perspective and the effects of showing off towards Muslims' spirituality in IIUM, there are limitations in clearly proving the impact of showing off on students' spirituality. Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to demonstrate clearly the relationship between this concept and its effects on the spirituality of Muslims by using more comprehensive methodological approach.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and extended special gratitude to the Global Academic Excellence (M) Sdn Bhd, who granted the Publication Grant Scheme for this project and everyone who supported us in this research publication.

## References

- Ab Rahman, Z., Mohd Nor, A.Y., & Ibrahim, M. (2019). Implementing the Element of Islamic Perspective View in Mental Health Problems, *International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology* 10(3), 1182–1191.
- Active social media users as percentage of the total population in Malaysia from 2016 to 2024. (2024, June 4). Retrieved from Statista Research Department. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/883712/malaysia-social-media-penetration/#:~:text=As%20of%20January%202024%2C%20about,the%20total%20population%20in%20Malaysia.>
- Adlina, A.U., Fuqohak, M.A.Z., Rahmajati, E., & Prafitri, D. (2022). The Study of Hadith in Uyubun Nafsi's Book to Understand Self-Centered Thinking Errors and Histrionic Personality Tendencies in Youth Muslims Using Social Media. *The 8<sup>th</sup> International Prophetic Conference (SWAN 2022)*. 472-286.
- Creswell John W. & Guetterman Timothy C. (2019). Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research. Pearson Sixth Edition.
- Elshinawy, S.M. (2021). Haya: More Than Just Modesty in Islam. Yayasan Yaqeen Malaysia. Retrieved from <https://yaqeeninstitute.org.my/read/paper/haya-more-than-just-modesty>
- Halim, N.G., Nur Aini, M., Muhid, & Muthoharah, I.L. (2024). A Study of Hadiths About Riya' in the Book of *Hidayatus Salikin* Perspective of Abdul Samad Al-Falimbani. *International Journal of Islamic Studies*. 36(1). 1-11.
- Huda (2019). How is Humility Important in Islam?. Learn Religious. Retrieved from <https://www.learnreligions.com/humility-in-islam-2004505>
- Lubis, R.M. & Sazali, H. (2023). Analysis of Flexing Phenomenon on Social Media: Islamic Perspective. *Komunika: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi*. 17(1). 89-101.
- Malaysia negara kedua di dunia paling 'ketagih' media sosial. (2023, Mei 11). Suara Kontemporari Kosmo. Retrieved from <https://www.kosmo.com.my/2023/05/11/malaysia-negara-kedua-di-dunia-paling-ketagih-media-sosial/>
- Mardiah, A. (2022). Fenomena Flexing: Pamer di Media Sosial dalam Perspektif Etika Islam. *International Conference on Tradition and Religious Studies*. 1(1). 310-319.
- Mat Rani, M.A., Said, S., Izham, S.S., Zulkifli, H.S., Hasanuddin, A., ... Abbas, M.S. (2022). The Book of Minhaj Al-Abidin: The Contribution of Al-Ghazali's Thought in the Moral Education of Today's Society. *International Journal of Mechanical Engineering*. 7(4). 93-99.
- Mohd Hamizi, M.A.F. (2023). Penggunaan Media Sosial Sebagai Media Baharu dan Impaknya Terhadap Masyarakat Malaysia. *Perspektif Jurnal Sains Sosial Dan Kemanusiaan*, 15, 24–37. <https://doi.org/10.37134/perspektif.vol15.sp.3.2023>
- Putu, A.B., Puspawati, S., & Suryosumonar, J.A.Z. (2022). Perspektif Etika Hindu Terhadap Perilaku Flexing pada Pengguna Instagram. 13(2). 217-227.
- Roslan, R., & Ahmad Fuad, N. (2023, July 12). Rakyat 'gila' media sosial, tengok telefon 6 jam sehari. Suara Kontemporari Kosmo. Retrieved from <https://www.kosmo.com.my/2023/07/12/rakyat-gila-media-sosial-tengok-telefon-6-jam-sehari/>
- Salam, R. & Sundari, D. (2023). Pengaruh Flexing di Sosial Media dalam Perspektif Islam. *Al-Sharf Jurnal Ekonomi Islam*. 4(3). 276-285.

- Sik Wei, I.E., Shun Lin, H., Kuan Pang, L., Jia Ching, B.L., Xu Zu, C., & Wen Kang, N. (2023). Pengaruh Media Sosial terhadap Pembentukan Akhlak Mahasiswa. *Human Sustainability Procedia*. 3(1). 106-121.
- Susanto A.E.H., Nadiroh, Abaas, H., & Purwanto, A. (2023). Lifestyle: Flexing Behaviour in Social Media. *International Journal of Economics*. 2(1). 27-31.
- Yohanna, A. (2020). The Influence of Social Media on Social Interaction among Students. *Indonesian Journal of Social Sciences*. 12(2). 34-48.
- Zulfikar, E. (2018). Interpretasi Makna Riya dalam Al Quran: Studi Kritis Perilaku Riya dalam Kehidupan Sehari-hari. *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Al-Quran dan Tafsir*. 3(2). 143-157.