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The Role of Self-Esteem in Mental Health Problems Arising from Social Media Use: A Thematic Qur'anic Exegesis

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Abstract

This study is motivated by the increasing prevalence of mental health problems associated with social media use, particularly those related to social comparison, the pursuit of validation, low self-esteem, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. This study aims to analyze the concept of self-esteem from the perspective of the Qur'an and to explain its role as a preventive measure against mental health problems arising from social media use. This study employs a qualitative approach using library research and a conceptual thematic exegesis method. The primary data consist of Qur'anic verses related to human dignity, self-respect, psychological resilience, and tranquility of the heart. These verses are analyzed through the interpretations of Qur'anic exegetes and discussed in relation to contemporary psychological studies. The findings indicate that Qur'anic self-esteem is constructed through the values of *al-izzah*, *aḥsan taqwīm*, *karramnā*, *a'lawna*, and *'iffah*. These values affirm that human self-worth is rooted in faith, awareness of the dignity bestowed by Allah, self-control, optimism, and reliance on Allah. The study concludes that Qur'anic self-esteem can serve as a psychological and spiritual safeguard against the negative effects of social media, particularly social comparison, insecurity, despair, and dependence on external validation.

Self-Esteem; Mental Health; Social Media; Thematic Exegesis; Qur'an

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh meningkatnya masalah kesehatan mental yang berkaitan dengan penggunaan media sosial, khususnya yang berhubungan dengan perbandingan sosial, pencarian validasi, rendahnya harga diri, kecemasan, dan gejala depresi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konsep harga diri (self-esteem) dalam perspektif Al-Qur'an serta menjelaskan perannya sebagai upaya preventif terhadap masalah kesehatan mental akibat penggunaan media sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan dan metode tafsir tematik konseptual. Data primer berupa ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an yang berkaitan dengan kemuliaan manusia, penghormatan terhadap diri, ketahanan psikologis, dan ketenangan hati. Ayat-ayat tersebut dianalisis melalui penafsiran para mufasir dan didiskusikan dengan kajian psikologi kontemporer. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa self-esteem Qur'ani dibangun melalui nilai *al-izzah*, *aḥsan taqwīm*, *karramnā*, *a'lawna*, dan *'iffah*. Nilai-nilai tersebut menegaskan bahwa harga diri manusia berakar pada iman, kesadaran terhadap kemuliaan yang dianugerahkan Allah, pengendalian diri, optimisme, dan ketergantungan kepada Allah. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa self-esteem Qur'ani dapat menjadi benteng psikologis dan spiritual dalam menghadapi dampak negatif media sosial, khususnya perbandingan sosial, insecurity, keputusasaan, dan ketergantungan pada validasi eksternal.

Kata Kunci: Harga Diri; Kesehatan Mental; Media Sosial; Tafsir Tematik; Al-Qur'an

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital social media has transformed the way people obtain information, communicate, build relationships, and present their identities. Social media has evolved beyond a communication tool into a social space that influences behavior, lifestyles, and self-perception.

The rapid flow of digital information requires users to engage with social media more critically because it can shape attitudes and perceptions of social reality (Mustofa et al., 2022). Although social media facilitates access to information and expands social networks, continuous exposure to other people's achievements, lifestyles, and idealized self-presentations may also create psychological pressure (Kusuma, 2020; Zsila & Reyes, 2023).

One of the most significant psychological pressures arising from social media use is social comparison. Exposure to idealized appearances, achievements, and lifestyles can encourage individuals to evaluate themselves negatively, leading to insecurity, anxiety, low self-worth, and depressive symptoms. Among emerging adults in Indonesia, the intensity of Instagram use has an indirect relationship with self-esteem through upward social comparison (Ardiany & Ardi, 2022). Social media use may also contribute to negative self-comparison, cyberbullying, addictive behavior, and reduced direct social interaction, all of which can affect mental health (Ginting et al., 2021). These conditions indicate that self-esteem plays an important role in determining how individuals respond to digital social pressures.

In psychological studies, self-esteem refers to individuals' perceptions, beliefs, and evaluations of their own worth and significance (Branden, 2001). Individuals with healthy self-esteem tend to cope more effectively with criticism, failure, and social pressure, whereas those with low self-esteem are more vulnerable to unrealistic social standards and dependence on external validation. Self-esteem has a negative correlation with depression, indicating that higher self-esteem is associated with a lower tendency toward depressive symptoms (Tanoko, 2021). Healthy self-esteem also supports more positive self-presentation and may reduce vulnerability to social comparison on social media (Latupeirissa & Wijono, 2022).

The problem of self-esteem is also reflected in digital validation seeking. Likes, comments, follower counts, and other forms of online feedback can gradually become measures of social acceptance and personal worth. Narcissistic tendencies in social media use are associated with the desire to obtain validation, feedback, and positive evaluations from others regarding content presented in digital spaces (Kristinsdottir et al., 2021). When self-worth becomes dependent on such responses, individuals may continuously seek recognition and feel insignificant when expected social feedback is absent. This condition contradicts healthy self-respect, which constitutes an important element of sound mental health (Fakhriyani, 2019).

From an Islamic perspective, self-esteem and mental health are not limited to psychological dimensions but are closely related to spirituality and faith. Abu Zayd al-Balkhi describes mental health as a state characterized by tranquility and happiness and freedom from excessive anger, sadness, depression, fear, panic, and negative inner thoughts (Al-Balkhi, 2023). The Qur'an similarly provides guidance for psychological balance through faith, remembrance of Allah, patience, gratitude, self-control, and the prohibition against despair. In Said Nursi's thought, faith is not merely an inner conviction but also a moral foundation that guides human behavior, ways of life, and character formation (Dahlan & Darmadi, 2025). QS. Ar-Ra'd [13]:28 further emphasizes that hearts find tranquility through the remembrance of Allah (Kementrian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019). Such spiritual awareness is particularly relevant in digital environments, where individuals are continuously exposed to external judgments and changing social standards.

The Qur'an also prohibits despair of Allah's mercy, as stated in QS. Yusuf [12]:87. Despair reflects weakened optimism, whereas stronger faith encourages hope and a positive orientation toward life (Shihab, 2002). Optimism itself is an important resource in dealing with the uncertainties and pressures of life (Zulkifli, 2016). The role of faith in strengthening psychological resilience is also illustrated through the experiences of Bilal ibn Rabbah and Prophet Ayyub, whose steadfastness demonstrates that religious conviction can sustain individuals in the face of suffering (Sukiman & Kasimah, 2021). In addition, QS. Ash-Shams [91]:8–9 emphasizes that human beings possess both positive and negative potentials and bear responsibility for purifying and directing the self toward goodness. From this perspective, Qur'anic self-esteem is not merely self-appreciation but an awareness of human dignity, moral responsibility, and the obligation to protect oneself from inferiority, despair, arrogance, and excessive dependence on human judgment.

Previous studies provide an important foundation for examining these issues. Research among emerging adult social media users in Indonesia shows that social media can provide information and social support but may also negatively affect mental health when used inappropriately (Fatahya & Abidin, 2022). Other studies associate intensive social media use with depressive symptoms through negative self-comparison, cyberbullying, addiction, and reduced direct interaction (Ginting et al., 2021). Self-esteem has also been shown to correlate negatively with depression (Tanoko, 2021), while low self-esteem is associated with narcissistic tendencies among social media users (Dewi & Ibrahim, 2019). Narcissism in digital spaces is further linked to the desire for validation and positive feedback (Kristinsdottir et al., 2021), whereas balanced self-esteem may support healthier self-presentation on social media (Latupeirissa & Wijono, 2022). At a broader level, social media has a dual effect: it can strengthen social support and access to information while simultaneously contributing to anxiety and disturbances in psychological well-being (Zsila & Reyes, 2023).

Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, discussions of mental health emphasize tranquility, faith, moral conduct, and spiritual resilience. Al-Balkhi's conception of psychological well-being highlights freedom from excessive negative emotions (Al-Balkhi, 2023), while Said Nursi's thought places faith as a moral foundation for human behavior and character formation (Dahlan & Darmadi, 2025). Nevertheless, existing psychological studies largely focus on the relationship between social media, self-esteem, depression, narcissism, and self-presentation, while Islamic studies generally address faith, *dhikr*, patience, gratitude, optimism, and tranquility separately. Few studies have integrated these perspectives to formulate a Qur'anic concept of self-esteem specifically in response to contemporary digital pressures.

Therefore, the research gap addressed in this study lies in integrating modern psychological studies with thematic Qur'anic exegesis to formulate Qur'anic self-esteem as a preventive psychological-spiritual framework. This framework is intended to respond to social comparison, cyberbullying, fear of missing out, social media addiction, validation seeking, identity crises, insecurity, anxiety, and other emotional disturbances associated with digital life. By examining Qur'anic expressions related to human dignity, self-respect, psychological resilience, and self-control, this study seeks to construct a concept of self-esteem that is both psychologically relevant and grounded in Qur'anic values.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative library research approach because it focuses on interpreting concepts and analyzing textual data derived from the Qur'an, Qur'anic commentaries, books, journal articles, and other relevant scholarly literature. The literature was traced, collected, classified, and analyzed according to the research focus on self-esteem, mental health, social media use, human dignity, psychological tranquility, and self-control. Thus, the study relies on systematically examined written sources rather than field data (Moleong, 2017; Zed, 2008).

The analytical method used is conceptual thematic exegesis (*tafsir maudhu'i*). Since the term *self-esteem* is not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an, its meaning is identified through verses related to human dignity, self-respect, psychological resilience, tranquility, self-control, and the prohibition against despair. The analysis follows the thematic exegesis stages described by Abdul Mustaqim: determining the theme, collecting relevant verses, classifying them into subthemes, examining their meanings through Qur'anic commentaries, identifying thematic relationships, and formulating a comprehensive Qur'anic concept (Mustaqim, 2014). The selected verses were grouped around the concepts of *al-'izzah*, *ahsan taqwim*, *karramnā*, *a'lawna*, *'iffah*, *dhikr*, tranquility of the heart, purification of the soul, and the prohibition against despair.

The primary data consist of relevant Qur'anic verses and Qur'anic commentaries, while the secondary data include books, journal articles, theses, and scholarly literature on self-esteem, mental health, social media, Islamic psychology, and thematic exegesis. The data were analyzed descriptively and analytically through classification, thematic interpretation, comparison with contemporary psychological studies, and synthesis of findings. This process was directed toward identifying the relationship between Qur'anic values of self-esteem and psychological problems associated with social media use, ultimately formulating Qur'anic self-esteem as a preventive framework for social comparison, insecurity, validation seeking, anxiety, and psychological vulnerability in digital life.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Qur'anic Self-Esteem in Thematic Exegesis

The concept of self-esteem is not explicitly expressed in the Qur'an using modern psychological terminology; however, its substance can be identified through Qur'anic expressions related to human dignity, self-awareness, psychological resilience, and self-control. In modern psychology, self-esteem refers to an individual's evaluation of oneself that produces feelings of worthiness, competence, and deservingness of happiness (Branden, 2001). From a Qur'anic perspective, however, self-esteem is rooted not merely in subjective self-evaluation but in the awareness that human beings are honored by Allah. Qur'anic self-esteem can therefore be understood as *ihtiram al-nafs*, or self-respect grounded in faith, human dignity, and moral responsibility. Unlike egocentric self-esteem, it is not constructed through arrogance, self-image, or social validation, but through faith, humility, and spiritual awareness.

Thematically, Qur'anic self-esteem can be constructed through five key expressions. First, *al-'izzah* in QS. Al-Munāfiqūn [63]:8 affirms that true honor belongs to Allah, His Messenger, and the believers. Such dignity is not derived from wealth, popularity, social status, or human recognition, but from faith and closeness to Allah. In *Tafsir al-Azhar*, the dignity of believers is

associated with submission and humility rather than arrogance (Hamka, 1989). This principle is consistent with the saying of the Prophet Muhammad Saw.:

مَا تَوَاضَعَ عَبْدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلَّا زَادَهُ اللَّهُ عِزًّا

“No servant humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah increases him in honor.” (Narrated by Imam Ahmad).

The hadith demonstrates that Qur’anic dignity balances self-respect and humility. Individuals recognize their worth as a dignity bestowed by Allah without developing superiority over others. Thus, Qur’anic self-esteem encourages good character, respect for others, and independence from human praise as the primary source of self-worth.

Second, *ahsan taqwīm* in QS. At-Tīn [95]:4 provides a theological foundation for self-acceptance:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

“Indeed, We have created human beings in the best form.” (QS. At-Tīn [95]:4).

The expression *ahsan taqwīm* refers not only to physical excellence but also to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual potential of human beings. Within the framework of self-esteem, this verse encourages individuals to recognize their potential without evaluating themselves solely through appearance, popularity, achievement, or social media responses. Awareness of being created in the best form strengthens self-acceptance, gratitude, and personal development, thereby reducing inferiority and excessive negative comparison. Self-acceptance and the optimal development of individual potential are important for maintaining psychological stability (Fakhriyani, 2019). In digital environments characterized by idealized representations of life, *ahsan taqwīm* therefore prevents social media from becoming the primary standard of personal worth.

Third, *karramnā* in QS. Al-Isrā’ [17]:70 affirms the inherent dignity bestowed upon the children of Adam:

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا

“Indeed, We have honored the children of Adam, carried them on land and sea, provided them with good things, and greatly favored them above many of those We have created.” (QS. Al-Isrā’ [17]:70).

The expression *karramnā* indicates that human dignity does not depend on social status, economic circumstances, physical appearance, or public acceptance. Human dignity is related to the gift of reason, which enables individuals to think, choose, and live responsibly (Hamka, 1989), while its spiritual dimension is strengthened when intellectual potential is guided by faith (Al-Qusairi). Thus, Qur’anic self-esteem integrates rational and spiritual dimensions: reason enables individuals to recognize and develop their potential, while faith directs that potential toward moral conduct. In the context of social media, this awareness provides a stable foundation of self-worth and protects individuals from insecurity, excessive validation seeking, and social comparison.

Fourth, *a’lawma* in QS. Āli ‘Imrān [3]:139 reflects the psychological resilience inherent in Qur’anic self-esteem:

وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

“Do not lose heart or grieve, for you will have the upper hand, if you are true believers.” (QS. Āli ‘Imrān [3]:139).

Revealed as encouragement after the hardship of the Battle of Uhud, this verse contains both theological and psychological dimensions. It instructs believers not to remain trapped in weakness, grief, or despair. In relation to self-esteem, faith becomes a source of resilience when individuals face criticism, rejection, failure, or social pressure because their worth is not entirely determined by external circumstances but by their relationship with Allah and commitment to self-improvement.

Fifth, *‘iffah* in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:273 associates self-esteem with the preservation of dignity and independence from excessive dependence on others. In the context of social media, *‘iffah* can be understood as self-control that prevents likes, comments, praise, and recognition from becoming the primary measure of personal worth. Individuals with *‘iffah* maintain their dignity through moderation, self-control, and moral steadfastness rather than degrading themselves for social attention.

Accordingly, Qur’anic self-esteem is constructed through the values of *al-‘izzah*, *ahsan taqwīm*, *karramnā*, *a’lawna*, and *‘iffah*. Together, these values establish self-worth through divine dignity, self-acceptance, rational and spiritual potential, faith-based resilience, and moral self-control. This framework provides a more stable foundation for self-esteem in confronting social pressure and the culture of digital validation.

Characteristics of Individuals with Qur’anic Self-Esteem

Qur’anic self-esteem is manifested not only in the awareness that human beings are honored by Allah but also in their character and daily behavior. Individuals with Qur’anic self-esteem do not base their worth on praise, social status, or human acceptance; rather, their self-perception is grounded in faith and the awareness that human dignity is a divine trust. QS. Āli ‘Imrān [3]:139 emphasizes that believers should not become weak or excessively sorrowful, indicating that faith can function as a source of psychological resilience. In Said Nursi’s thought, faith is not merely an inner conviction but a moral foundation that shapes behavior, ways of life, and character formation (Dahlan & Darmadi, 2025). Accordingly, faith-based self-esteem enables individuals to face failure, rejection, and social judgment without losing their sense of worth.

The first characteristic is psychological resilience and self-confidence grounded in faith. Qur’anic self-confidence does not imply superiority over others, but confidence that Allah has bestowed human beings with potential, guidance, and dignity. This principle is reflected in QS. Al-An‘ām [6]:82:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

“Those who believe and do not mix their faith with wrongdoing [polytheism] are the ones who will have security, and they are rightly guided.” (QS. Al-An‘ām [6]:82).

This verse links faith with security and guidance. As-Sa‘diy explains that believers who do not mix their faith with polytheism and sinful acts attain security from fear, suffering, and misery (As-Sa‘diy, 2022). In the context of self-esteem, spiritual security strengthens psychological stability

and prevents individuals from allowing criticism, failure, or social judgment to determine their dignity.

The second characteristic is the *mutmainnah* soul, or inner tranquility cultivated through prayer, remembrance of Allah, and spiritual closeness. The Qur'an describes human beings as vulnerable to anxiety and restlessness when spiritual orientation is weak, as stated in QS. Al-Ma'arij [70]:19–23:

﴿إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ

"Indeed, humankind was created impatient: distressed when touched with evil and withholding when touched with good, except those who are devoted to prayer, those who are constant in their prayers." (QS. Al-Ma'arij [70]:19–23).

These verses show that tranquility must be cultivated through closeness to Allah. Prayer develops inner stability through surrender and awareness of human limitations, while QS. Ar-Ra'd [13]:28 further affirms that hearts find tranquility through remembrance of Allah. From a mental health perspective, *dhikr* and prayer can strengthen emotional regulation and reduce anxiety. Therefore, Qur'anic self-esteem directs individuals to seek inner stability through spiritual relationships rather than relying solely on social validation.

The third characteristic is humility (*tawadhu'*). Awareness of human dignity must not develop into arrogance because such dignity is a divine trust. QS. Al-Isrā' [17]:37 states:

وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَخْرِقَ الْأَرْضَ وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُولًا

"Do not walk on the earth arrogantly, for you can neither split the earth apart nor reach the mountains in height." (QS. Al-Isrā' [17]:37).

The verse emphasizes a balance between dignity and humility. Human dignity should not lead individuals to regard themselves as superior to others (Hamka, 1989), while *tawadhu'* reflects spiritual awareness that all dignity ultimately originates from Allah (Al-Qusairi). Thus, healthy self-esteem combines awareness of personal worth with humility and self-control. This is consistent with research showing that *tawadhu'*, together with patience (*sabar*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), and gratitude (*syukur*), contributes to psychological well-being by strengthening self-acceptance, inner tranquility, and adaptive responses to life pressures (Afandi & Pranajaya, 2023). Qur'anic self-esteem therefore protects individuals from both inferiority and arrogance.

The fourth characteristic is personal integrity. Individuals with Qur'anic self-esteem preserve their dignity through honesty, moral firmness, and avoidance of meaningless behavior. QS. Al-Furqān [25]:72 states:

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا

"And those who do not bear false witness and, when they encounter frivolous behavior, pass by it with dignity." (QS. Al-Furqān [25]:72).

This verse indicates that Qur'anic self-esteem is closely related to the ability to protect oneself from falsehood, deception, and meaningless behavior. This characteristic is particularly relevant to digital life because social media often encourages individuals to become involved in

negative comments, false self-presentation, unproductive arguments, and the consumption of meaningless content. Individuals with Qur'anic self-esteem will preserve their integrity both in physical and digital spaces. They do not use social media as a platform for constructing a false image, excessively seeking recognition, or degrading others. Therefore, the characteristics of Qur'anic self-esteem are manifested in resilience grounded in faith, inner tranquility, humility, and moral integrity, all of which guide individuals to maintain their dignity across every sphere of life.

The Impact of Social Media on Mental Health and the Role of Qur'anic Self-Esteem

Social media has become an integral part of contemporary life by facilitating communication, information exchange, networking, and self-expression. However, intensive use may also create psychological pressure when individuals use digital spaces as standards for evaluating success, happiness, and self-worth. Likes, comments, views, and follower counts can become markers of social acceptance and personal value, increasing vulnerability to disturbances in self-esteem. The number of social media users in Indonesia was projected to reach 236.97 million by 2026, reflecting both its growing importance and its psychological challenges (Abdillah, 2022).

One major challenge is social comparison. Users are frequently exposed to selectively presented achievements, lifestyles, body images, and success, which may create unrealistic standards and encourage negative self-evaluation. Individuals with low self-esteem may consequently experience insecurity, anxiety, emotional distress, and depressive symptoms. Social media can provide information and social support, but inappropriate use may negatively affect the mental health of emerging adults (Fatahya & Abidin, 2022). Its intensity has also been associated with depressive symptoms through negative self-comparison, cyberbullying, addiction, and reduced direct social interaction (Ginting et al., 2021).

Another problem is dependence on external validation. Digital rewards such as likes, comments, and follower counts may be interpreted as indicators of personal acceptance. When self-worth depends on these responses, individuals become more vulnerable to feelings of rejection or worthlessness when expected feedback is absent. This dynamic may encourage excessive self-presentation and digital narcissism. Narcissism in social media use is associated with the need for validation, feedback, and positive evaluations from others (Kristinsdottir et al., 2021). Thus, apparent confidence in digital spaces may sometimes reflect fragile rather than strong self-esteem.

From a Qur'anic perspective, this dependence can be addressed through *'iffah*, which emphasizes the preservation of dignity and independence from excessive dependence on human recognition. QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:273 portrays individuals who maintain their dignity and refrain from begging. In digital life, this principle discourages excessive self-presentation or behavior aimed solely at attracting attention. Qur'anic self-esteem therefore directs individuals to construct self-worth through faith, morality, and spiritual awareness rather than through algorithms, trends, or public responses.

Social media may also generate *fear of missing out* (FOMO), leading individuals to remain constantly connected to digital platforms and increasing restlessness and dependency. FOMO has been associated with self-esteem among Generation Z TikTok users, as individuals may evaluate themselves according to their involvement in digital social trends (Kanova et al., 2025). Social media intensity may also relate to anxiety because repeated exposure to digital content can

influence users' attitudes and behavior (Chandra et al., 2026). In this context, Qur'anic self-esteem functions as an internal filter that prevents identity and self-worth from being shaped entirely by algorithms, trends, and rapidly changing digital standards.

Cyberbullying and exposure to negative content present additional risks. Cyberbullying can reduce self-esteem and contribute to anxiety, stress, depression, shame, and social withdrawal (Ningrum & Amna, 2020; Pakpahan et al., 2025; Rofi'i et al., 2025). Negative content such as body shaming, hate speech, unrealistic beauty standards, and provocative information may also reinforce negative self-image. Qur'anic self-esteem counters these pressures by affirming that human dignity derives from Allah rather than from human judgment. QS. Āli 'Imrān [3]:139 further instructs believers not to become weak or overwhelmed by sadness, providing a foundation for psychological resilience. Thus, Qur'anic self-esteem functions as a mechanism of self-regulation, emotional control, and mental resilience, enabling individuals to engage with social media in a healthier, more balanced, and dignified manner.

A Preventive Model of Qur'anic Self-Esteem in Social Media Use

A preventive model of Qur'anic self-esteem can be formulated through spiritual strengthening, digital literacy, self-control, self-acceptance, and moral responsibility. This model addresses not only patterns of social media use but also the way individuals evaluate themselves in digital spaces. When self-worth depends on likes, comments, follower counts, or social recognition, individuals become more vulnerable to insecurity, anxiety, and social comparison. Conversely, faith provides a more stable foundation for self-worth. Individuals with healthy self-esteem tend to accept themselves realistically, regulate their emotions, and become less vulnerable to social judgment (Virginia et al., 2025). This corresponds with the view that self-esteem develops through awareness, self-acceptance, self-responsibility, and consistent behavior (Branden, 1995).

The first strategy is spiritual strengthening through faith and *dhikr*. QS. Ar-Ra'd [13]:28 emphasizes that tranquility of the heart is attained through the remembrance of Allah. In the context of social media, *dhikr* functions not merely as a verbal practice but as spiritual awareness that helps individuals maintain their orientation toward Allah and distance themselves from excessive dependence on digital validation. Sound mental health is characterized by freedom from excessive anger, sadness, depression, fear, panic, and negative inner thoughts (Al-Balkhi, 2023). Thus, faith and *dhikr* can strengthen inner stability and help individuals manage psychological pressures arising from social media.

The second strategy is *tadabbur* and digital literacy. *Tadabbur* involves reflecting upon and evaluating the consequences of actions, while digital literacy enables individuals to critically analyze and filter information. This principle is consistent with QS. Al-Isrā' [17]:36, which emphasizes responsibility for knowledge, hearing, sight, and the heart. Digital literacy includes the ability to critically analyze and evaluate information received through digital media (Ririen & Daryanes, 2022). Such competence helps users avoid misinformation, provocation, harmful comparison, and algorithmic pressure, particularly because social media can influence communication patterns, lifestyles, social behavior, and self-perception (Kusuma, 2020).

The third strategy is self-control in social media use. Uncontrolled use may encourage addiction, validation seeking, and dependence on social responses. Self-control is an important

component of self-esteem because it enables individuals to act according to their values rather than external pressures (Gyun., 2022). In the Qur’anic framework, this principle corresponds with *‘iffah*, or the preservation of dignity through self-restraint. It can be practiced by limiting social media use, selecting beneficial content, avoiding excessive validation seeking, and refraining from harmful interactions. QS. Al-Furqān [25]:72 similarly emphasizes maintaining dignity when encountering meaningless behavior, providing an ethical basis for avoiding hate speech, body shaming, false information, unnecessary arguments, and excessive self-presentation.

The fourth strategy is self-acceptance and self-responsibility. Individuals with low self-esteem may doubt their abilities, fear mistakes, blame themselves excessively, and conceal their weaknesses (Dweck, 2021). Healthy self-acceptance, by contrast, enables individuals to acknowledge limitations without self-hatred and to develop their potential without imitating unrealistic social standards. Respect for oneself and others is also an important characteristic of psychological well-being (Fakhriyani, 2019). In Qur’anic self-esteem, self-acceptance does not imply passivity but recognition that human beings possess the potential for improvement and moral development. QS. Yūnus [10]:108 emphasizes personal responsibility for guidance and its consequences. Therefore, self-acceptance and self-responsibility enable individuals to maintain dignity while continuously improving themselves amid the pressures of digital life.

Table 1. Conceptual Preventive Model of Qur’anic Self-Esteem in Social Media Use

Digital Problem	Qur’anic Value	Conceptual Foundation	Preventive Mechanism	Implications for Mental Health
Social comparison, insecurity, and feelings of inferiority resulting from exposure to idealized images on social media	Aḥsan taqwīm and karramnā	Human beings are created in the best form and honored by Allah	Developing self-acceptance, gratitude, and awareness that self-worth is not determined by digital social standards	Reducing feelings of inferiority, strengthening self-acceptance, and developing a healthier self-image
Dependence on likes, comments, follower counts, and external validation	Al-‘izzah and ‘iffah	True dignity derives from Allah rather than human recognition	Controlling the desire for recognition, preserving personal dignity, and avoiding the use of digital responses as a measure of self-worth	Reducing social anxiety, digital narcissism, and dependence on external validation
Anxiety, emotional pressure, and psychological restlessness resulting from excessive social	Dhikr and tranquility of the heart	Hearts attain tranquility through the remembrance of Allah, as emphasized in	Strengthening spiritual orientation, creating emotional distance from digital pressure,	Increasing inner tranquility, reducing anxiety, and strengthening psychological resilience

media consumption		QS. Ar-Ra'd [13]:28	and stabilizing emotions	
Dissemination of unverified information, provocation, and algorithmic pressure	Tadabbur and responsibility for knowledge	QS. Al-Isrā' [17]:36 emphasizes accountability for hearing, sight, and the heart	Analyzing, evaluating, and filtering information before accepting or disseminating it	Reducing anxiety caused by misinformation, provocation, and exposure to negative content
Negative comments, cyberbullying, and involvement in unproductive content	Personal integrity and 'iffah	QS. Al-Furqān [25]:72 emphasizes maintaining dignity when encountering meaningless behavior	Avoiding hate speech, unproductive arguments, body shaming, and false self-presentation	Strengthening self-control, preserving personal dignity, and reducing digital social pressure
Despair, failure, and psychological pressure caused by social judgment	A'lawna and faith-based optimism	QS. Āli 'Imrān [3]:139 emphasizes the prohibition against weakness and excessive sorrow	Developing the conviction that self-worth is not determined by failure, criticism, or social rejection	Strengthening optimism, psychological resilience, and the ability to cope with external pressure

Based on Table 1, the preventive model of Qur'anic self-esteem integrates Qur'anic values with self-regulation and mental health. *Aḥsan taqwīm* and *karramnā* strengthen self-acceptance; *al-ʿizzah* and *ʿiffah* reduce dependence on external validation; *dhikr* promotes inner tranquility; *tadabbur* supports digital literacy; and *a'lawna* fosters optimism and psychological resilience. Through spiritual awareness, self-control, self-acceptance, and moral responsibility, this model helps individuals maintain healthier and more dignified social media use. Balanced self-esteem also supports positive self-presentation without loss of self-control (Latupeirissa & Wijono, 2022), thereby protecting individuals from insecurity, anxiety, social comparison, validation seeking, and excessive dependence on digital responses.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Qur'anic self-esteem can be understood as *iḥtirām al-naḥs*, or self-respect grounded in faith, human dignity, and moral responsibility before Allah. Thematically, it is reflected in the values of *al-ʿizzah*, *aḥsan taqwīm*, *karramnā*, *a'lawna*, and *ʿiffah*, which emphasize divine dignity, human potential, psychological resilience, humility, self-control, and freedom from dependence on social judgment. The study contributes theoretically by integrating modern psychological understandings of self-esteem with Qur'anic values through thematic exegesis, thereby showing that self-esteem is not only related to self-acceptance and personal confidence but also to spiritual awareness and the responsibility to preserve human dignity.

In the context of social media, Qur'anic self-esteem functions as a mechanism of self-regulation and a psychological-spiritual safeguard against social comparison, insecurity, validation seeking, anxiety, depression, and dependence on digital self-image. It can be strengthened through *dhikr*, *tadabbur*, digital literacy, self-control, and awareness that human worth derives from Allah rather than from social media responses. Although this study offers a conceptual preventive model, further empirical research is needed to examine its application and effectiveness among social media users, particularly adolescents, university students, and young Muslim populations.

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DECLARATION OF AI USE

The authors declare that artificial intelligence-based tools were used in a limited manner during the preparation of this article, particularly to assist with language refinement, sentence structure, and writing coherence. All ideas, analyses, Qur'anic interpretations, source selection, and conclusions were thoroughly reviewed, edited, and remain fully the responsibility of the authors.

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