Seeking Validation Through Virtual Gifts: A Quranic Perspective On TikTok Live's Bizarre Trends

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Abstract

This study examines the phenomenon of virtual gifts on TikTok Live as a new face of digital culture that has become increasingly performative, where social recognition is no longer built through authentic interaction but through commodified digital symbols. The research employs a qualitative tafsir-based approach, analyzing Qur'anic verses related to the ethics of social interaction and the realities of contemporary digital culture. The findings reveal that the mechanism of virtual gifts creates an ecosystem of attention and emotional capitalization, driving creators to display themselves—even through extreme acts—in pursuit of superficial social legitimacy. This pattern exposes a paradox: while creativity is facilitated, human dignity is simultaneously diminished, as the illusion of algorithmic recognition measures self-worth. From the Qur'anic perspective, this phenomenon is critiqued as a modern form of *riya'*, as emphasized in QS. Al-Isra' [17]:70 on the innate dignity of humanity, QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:264 on the futility of deeds tainted by *riya'*, QS. al-Hujurat [49]:11–13 on piety as the proper standard of social honor, and QS. al-Munafiqun [63]:4 on the danger of hollow self-image. In conclusion, the culture of pseudo-validation through virtual gifts must be repositioned—not as a space for *riya'* and instant recognition, but as a digital sphere that affirms spiritual identity, preserves dignity, and cultivates authentic values grounded in faith.

Introduction

The TikTok Live phenomenon with virtual gifting represents a new transformation in digital culture, where social interaction is no longer solely based on verbal or visual communication but on symbolic digital commodities that function as benchmarks of self-recognition and social status(Cristea, 2024). Virtual gifts, which essentially exist only in digital form, have been reconfigured into commodities of validation, driving creators to perform various actions—from ordinary to extreme and absurd—in pursuit of legitimacy from their audiences. This pattern exposes a paradox: on one hand, it demonstrates creativity in utilizing technology, yet on the other hand, it indicates a crisis of dignity, as individuals willingly debase themselves for the sake of illusory "values" constructed by algorithms (Dr. A.Shaji George, 2024; Kuzmanov, 2025). The phenomenon extends beyond psychological and sociological dimensions of user behavior; it also

challenges humanitarian ethics, urging critical reflection—does digital validation truly reflect self-worth, or is it merely a fragile and misleading illusion of recognition?

In the Indonesian context, this paradox manifests vividly through viral practices such as *sleep streaming*, mud-bathing, or selling trivial items while performing eccentric acts to attract gifts from viewers. More troubling, however, is the proliferation of exploitative and extreme content deliberately crafted to manipulate audience sympathy or provoke shock. Some creators openly beg for gifts by dramatizing hardship, crying, or even involving children to evoke pity. In contrast, others establish "gift targets" that require them to perform painful or dangerous actions, such as pouring ice water on themselves, enduring prolonged discomfort, or feigning illness. Likewise, shock-oriented performances—risky stunts, near-fall scenarios, or messy acts involving mud and splashes—illustrate how suffering and risk are turned into commodities for fleeting validation. Added to this are repetitive engagement formats, where viewers are urged to continuously "tap" the screen or send small gifts in exchange for minor gestures, and collaborative challenges among creators competing to escalate their acts in pursuit of higher rewards. Such practices reveal that TikTok Live is not merely reshaping online entertainment but also normalizing the commodification of misery, self-harm, and even human dignity, reinforcing the ethical dilemma at the heart of digital validation(Pirdaus, 2024).

Amid the relentless tide of digitalization, the core issue lies not merely in the pursuit of instant popularity offered through virtual gifting, but in how this practice of seeking validation shifts human value orientation from sincerity toward concealed ostentation (*riya'*). The phenomenon reveals a problematic gap: creativity and self-expression, which should serve as mediums for identity formation, are reduced to performative arenas that marginalize dignity. Herein lies its urgency—we must examine how the culture of pseudo-validation in TikTok Live not only influences user behavior but also distorts the meaning of self-respect within the frame of social ethics, thereby demanding the presence of a stronger normative perspective to restore human orientation toward authentic values(Dr. A.Shaji George et al., 2024).

Recent research on virtual gifting in live streaming platforms shows that this practice has transformed from a simple interactive feature into a socio-economic mechanism sustained by parasociality, social influence, and social presence. The latest systematic reviews map the surge of gifting studies across platforms and highlight that virtual gifts function as symbols of status, support, and validation within an increasingly institutionalized creator economy(Alida Volkmer & Meißner, 2024). Quantitative studies within the pan-entertainment ecosystem identify determinants of gifting intentions from both viewers and streamers—such as streamer attractiveness, interactivity, social reciprocity, and emotions—which collectively reinforce gifting as an exchange of meaning and as affirmation of community identity(Zhang & Liu, 2024). Likewise, multi-method empirical evidence demonstrates parasocial relationships as strong predictors of virtual gifting intentions; even hybrid SEM–neural network models reveal non-linear patterns, strengthening the role of emotional closeness and perceived benefits in shaping gifting decisions(Hou et al., 2024). In the specific context of TikTok Live in the United Kingdom, mixed-method approaches highlight layered motivations—including appreciation, game participation, social affiliation, and status signaling—illustrating how feature design and broadcast dynamics actively orchestrate validation demands. Cross-cultural findings (Korea–U.S.) further generalize that engagement, donations, and subscriptions are driven by parasocial drives and social connection needs, relevant for explaining the persistence of paid gifting across diverse genres(Archer et al., 2025). Overall, the state of the art affirms a mature economic and theoretical landscape (parasitism, social presence, social

influence) but leaves open a normative gap—namely, a Qur'anic ethical framework to assess the boundaries between legitimate motivation and concealed ostentation (*riya'*) in the pursuit of validation through virtual gifts.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to critically interrogate the practice of validation-seeking through virtual gifts on TikTok Live by employing a Qur'anic exegesis approach to uncover the thin boundary between authentic motivation and concealed ostentation. The novelty of this study lies in integrating exegetical analysis with contemporary digital phenomena—an intersection rarely addressed in academic scholarship, despite its urgency in responding to the dignity and ethical crises emerging from pseudo-validation culture. By combining a Qur'anic normative framework with recent empirical findings on social media user behavior, this research contributes theoretically by offering a new perspective on religion-based digital ethics, and practically by providing orientation for healthier, dignified, and spiritually grounded social media practices. Thus, this study not only interprets the phenomenon but also proposes an alternative paradigm that positions human beings not merely as seekers of illusory recognition but as dignified subjects who safeguard intention, values, and identity in digital spaces.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with phenomenological–critical analysis. Its primary focus is to explore the meaning of the "virtual gifts" phenomenon on TikTok Live and to examine its relevance to the Qur'anic worldview. The phenomenological lens allows for exploring the experiences and perceptions of creators and audiences in virtual gifting. At the same time, the critical framework functions to uncover the ideological and ethical dimensions underlying the practice. (Williams, 2021)

Research data were drawn from two main sources. Primary data were collected through observation of TikTok Live, including trending content, creator–audience interactions, and patterns of virtual gifting. Secondary data consisted of academic literature on social media, the psychology of social validation, studies on TikTok, and Qur'anic exegesis. The analysis combined critical discourse analysis (CDA) of narratives and practices on TikTok Live, thematic exegesis (tafsir maudu'i) of Qur'anic verses addressing validation, self-worth, and ethics of interaction (e.g., Qur'an 49:11–13; 17:70; 2:264; 63:4), and a comparative reflection between digital phenomenological findings and normative Qur'anic principles.

Findings
The Phenomenon of Virtual Gifts on TikTok Live

The phenomenon of virtual gifts on TikTok Live has given rise to a new interaction pattern that is not only based on communication but also on the symbolization of social status. Digital "gifts," initially intended as a simple form of appreciation, have now transformed into symbols of recognition, social legitimacy, and even measures of audience loyalty toward creators(Guido, 2025; Nachtwey & Schaupp, 2024). The creator-audience relationship has shifted from an egalitarian participation space to a hierarchical relationship determined by the scale of digital material contributions. In this context, gifts are no longer merely virtual icons but social signs that produce new power structures in the digital space.

Furthermore, the economic mechanisms underpinning this phenomenon demonstrate how the platform monetizes attention and exploits creators' performativity(Gill & Dorsen, 2024). TikTok systematically capitalizes on users' emotions, interactions, and time, turning live-streaming

performances into a competition to collect as many gifts as possible. Every interaction and expression displayed by creators is ultimately directed toward maximizing engagement, which leads to economic gain for both creators and the platform. This process reveals market logic penetrating the personal realm, turning identity and self-expression into commodities traded in the digital economy(Bhargava, 2022; Bleier et al., 2024).

The psychological impacts of this phenomenon cannot be overlooked. The continuous act of sending virtual gifts creates a cycle of validation addiction, where creators feel compelled to maintain popularity at any cost, including sacrificing authenticity. Absurd and extreme trends—such as engaging in self-degrading actions or jeopardizing mental health in exchange for gifts—are symptomatic of an existential crisis in the digital era. This phenomenon illustrates how the basic human need for social acceptance can be manipulated into a capitalist instrument, which in turn produces a paradox: the more gifts one receives, the more fragile the foundation of self-worth built upon them becomes(Bojic, 2022; Hofstetter & Gollnhofer, 2024; Mears & Beauvais, 2025).

One important aspect revealed in the literature concerns why users send virtual gifts. Empirical studies show several underlying motivations: appreciation toward creators, the desire for social recognition, competition within fan communities, and the enjoyment of entertainment interaction. For example, the study *Influencing Factors of Users' Shift to Buying Expensive Virtual Gifts in Live Streaming* in China found that verbal and virtual physical intimacy significantly increase users' willingness to purchase more expensive gifts(Cao et al., 2022). These motivations are further reinforced by the anxiety of immediacy in direct interaction—the desire for interactions to feel immediate and exclusive—driving users to send gifts as a quick form of social response.

However, while appreciation and recognition appear as positive motivations, many gift-giving practices reveal a darker side. In some cases, creators exploit or manipulate gifts—baiting audiences with provocative content, promising shout-outs or exclusive interactions for gift senders, or leveraging guilt and social pressure within the audience. This illustrates that gifts are an expression of voluntary support and a medium of social control and social pressure within digital communities(Gilbert, n.d.).

From the perspective of social psychology theory, these motivations align with the esteem needs in Maslow's hierarchy and the social presence theory, which posits that interactions perceived as more intimate or emotionally engaging enhance the sense of social presence and make users more inclined to give gifts. Additionally, social competition among viewers further strengthens the motivation to give gifts, as individuals strive to appear superior or more generous in public. Research also supports the idea that the presence of other interacting viewers increases pressure on individuals to stand out by giving gifts(Fehr & Charness, n.d.; Shi & Wu, 2023).

Ethically, this phenomenon creates a value conflict: on the one hand, appreciation and support for creators can foster a sense of community or solidarity; yet on the other hand, when gifts become prerequisites for gaining attention or status, they lose their sincerity and instead become symbols of manipulative social transactions. If left unchecked, such practices risk undermining the ability of both creators and audiences to build genuine interactions—because internal motivation shifts toward external incentives: receiving rewards, public recognition, or social status(Barbosa et al., 2025; Jiang, n.d.; Riedmann-Streitz et al., 2025).

Critical Analysis: Virtual Gifts as a Mechanism of Social Validation

Virtual gifts on TikTok Live can be understood as mechanisms of attention and emotion capitalization(Andriyanto & Retnowati, n.d.; Cristea, 2024). This phenomenon illustrates how

social interactions, which should ideally be grounded in authentic communication, are reduced to symbolic transactions measured in material value. Each "gift" is not merely a digital icon but a representation of monetized emotion and commodified attention. Within the framework of the digital economy, this reflects a shift from organic social relations to commodified ones, where recognition and appreciation are no longer free but must be purchased through financial participation.

From a psychological perspective, this phenomenon can be analyzed through Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, particularly the *esteem* level, which encompasses the need for recognition, respect, and social status. TikTok Live creators continuously strive to satisfy these esteem needs through performativity that attracts gifts. This aligns with Erving Goffman's dramaturgical concept, where individuals present a particular "face" on the social stage to gain recognition from the audience(Gault, 2022; Lin et al., 2024). The key difference, however, lies in scale and intensity: in digital spaces, dramaturgy occurs incessantly, is permanently recorded, and directly linked to economic incentives, thereby heightening the pressure to sustain performance.

In addition, gift-giving behavior can be interpreted through Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "symbolic economy," where symbolic exchanges carry social value even when not strictly material. On TikTok, this symbolic economy undergoes a radical transformation: gifts function as signs of symbolic appreciation and materialize into tangible forms of the digital economy. In other words, symbolic capital in recognition and prestige is directly converted into economic capital, benefiting creators and the platform(Jezierski & Żmudzki, 2024; Raza, 2024; Tuke, 2021). This conversion illustrates the sophistication of digital capitalism, in which symbols, emotions, and social recognition are produced, exchanged, and harvested in an instant commodified form.

The Qur'anic Perspective

In addressing the phenomenon of virtual gifts on TikTok Live—which represents the pursuit of social validation through digital mechanisms—the Qur'an offers a normative framework that is both critical and transformative. The Qur'an does not merely regard humans as social beings but affirms them as dignified, rational, and responsible entities (Hendawi et al., 2024; Rezaei et al., 2024; Tavakkoli, 2024; Yongbao, 2023). Any form of interaction that reduces human worth to mere commodities of artificial recognition runs contrary to these fundamental values upheld in Islam. Through its ethical principles, the Qur'an provides an orientation that rejects self-exploitation for superficial popularity (Abdillah Achmad Al Faruq et al., 2025; Benussi, 2022; Kovaleva, n.d.), while affirming that proper validation arises only from piety (*taqwā*), noble character, and genuine contribution to humanity. Within this framework, four Qur'anic principles serve as a foundation for analysis: human dignity, the prohibition of *riya'* (ostentation) and *sum'ah* (seeking reputation), the ethics of social interaction, and the critique of falsehood and image-making.

1. The Principle of Human Dignity

Qur'an 2:264 declares:

"And We have certainly honored the children of Adam, and carried them on the land and sea, and provided them with good things, and preferred them greatly over many of those We created."

According to al-Tabari, this dignity is manifested in humanity's ability to govern, to traverse land and sea, and to enjoy lawful sustenance. He further explains that human superiority lies in the capacity for labor and skillful use of the hands to fulfill life's needs—a quality absent in other

creatures. Thus, human dignity is inherent, bestowed directly by God, and not contingent upon external recognition or artificial symbols (Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari, 1992).

Applied to the context of digital phenomena, this verse offers a profound critique of the pursuit of validation through virtual gifts. When the number of digital tokens received measures self-worth, humans reduce the dignity God has bestowed upon them. The paradox emerges: beings honored by God degrade themselves in pursuit of fragile and temporary artificial recognition. Hence, Qur'an 17:70 reaffirms that proper validation is not a product of digital performance but derives from God's recognition of piety and righteous deeds.

In *Tafsir al-Misbah*, Quraish Shihab expands on this by emphasizing that *karamna* (honor) is granted universally to all humans regardless of race, faith, or social status. This honor manifests in intellect, freedom of choice, creativity, and knowledge—qualities that establish humanity's responsibility. He distinguishes between *karramna* (inherent honor) and *faddalna* (relative superiority), referring to innate human dignity and the latter to additional, relative advantages. Thus, human dignity is not exclusive but intrinsic to all descendants of Adam. This principle underscores that chasing digital recognition contradicts the Qur'anic affirmation of inherent dignity, reducing it to fragile transactional symbols (M. Quraish Shihab, n.d.).

2.   The Prohibition of Riya' and Sum'ah

Qur'an 2:264 declares:

"O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders or injury, as does one who spends his wealth to be seen by the people and does not believe in Allah and the Last Day."

Al-Tabari interprets this as highlighting the futility of deeds motivated by *riya'*—acts performed to seek human praise rather than divine approval. Such actions may appear virtuous outwardly but are void in God's sight. The Qur'an likens them to a barren rock washed clean by heavy rain—seemingly substantial but ultimately empty (Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari, 1992).

This warning resonates strongly with today's culture of digital performance, where TikTok Live often becomes a stage for *sum'ah*—performing acts, talents, or lifestyles for public recognition rather than sincerity. Validation pursued through gifts, likes, or comments mirrors *riya'* condemnation in the Qur'an. Quraish Shihab emphasizes that deeds rooted in insincerity lose both spiritual reward and intrinsic value, likening them to seeds sown on a smooth rock, incapable of growth. In the digital context, acts of kindness, creativity, or religious expression reduced to performative content lose their essence and risk becoming spiritually barren (M. Quraish Shihab, n.d.).

3.   The Ethics of Social Interaction

The Quran (49:11-13) emphasizes that honor and recognition in Islam are not contingent upon performance but on the cultivation of taqwa. These verses prohibit mocking, defaming, and backbiting, underscoring the equality and unity of believers. Al-Tabari elucidates that humiliating others, regardless of their circumstances, such as poverty or sin, is akin to humiliating oneself, as believers constitute a unified body. Verse 13 further emphasizes universal equality, asserting that the most noble among humanity is not the most affluent or popular but rather the most God-conscious.(Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari, 1992).

This principle directly critiques digital cultures of flexing and artificial recognition. As Quraish Shihab notes, these prohibitions aim at individual morality and preserving social cohesion. Gossip, mockery, and toxic comparisons in online spaces erode trust and harmony, reducing communities

to cycles of envy and hostility. Thus, these verses offer a counter-narrative: digital recognition and performative popularity are superficial measures, while true honor lies in spirituality and morality (M. Quraish Shihab, n.d.).

4. The Critique of Falsehood and Image-Making

Qur'an 63:4 describes hypocrites as:

"When you see them, their bodies please you, and if they speak, you listen to their speech. They are like pieces of wood propped up."

Al-Tabari explains that this verse highlights the hollowness of outward appearances without inner sincerity. Hypocrites impress with their physique and eloquence but are spiritually barren, like lifeless wood. This metaphor resonates with digital culture, where self-presentation often masks emptiness. The performative "flexing" of luxury or status online exemplifies this hollowness: impressive externally yet fragile internally (Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari, 1992).

Quraish Shihab underscores that such falsehood is not merely a personal flaw but a threat to faith and social integrity. The Qur'an condemns such superficiality as inherently unstable, producing constant anxiety and fear of exposure. This critique parallels modern digital culture, where self-worth is tied to image-making and performativity. The Qur'an warns that such practices are spiritually empty and socially destructive (Shihab, 2002).

To illustrate the contrast between Qur'anic principles and the culture of *virtual gifts* on TikTok Live, the following table summarizes the ethical tensions that emerge. While the Qur'an emphasizes dignity, sincerity, and authentic human value, the digital practices surrounding *virtual gifting* often reduce these principles to superficial recognition metrics. The comparison highlights the paradox of seeking validation in digital spaces and the urgent need for a normative framework to restore human orientation toward genuine worth and sincerity.

Table 1. Qur'anic Principles vs. the Culture of Virtual Gifts on TikTok Live

No	Qur'anic Principle	Explanation	Virtual Gift Phenomenon	Form of Contradiction
1	Human Dignity (Qur'an 17:70)	Humans are honored with reason, freedom, and creativity	Self-worth is measured by the number of digital gifts	Dignity reduced to numbers/icons
2	Prohibition of Riya' and Sum'ah (Qur'an 2:264)	Deeds done for show hold no value before God	Performing live to show off for gifts and popularity	Actions lose sincerity
3	Ethics of Social Interaction (Qur'an 49:11–13)	Honor is determined by piety, not status/popularity	Flexing, insults, and toxic comments during live sessions	Emergence of mockery, envy, and hedonism
4	Critique of Falsehood (Qur'an 63:4)	Outward appearance may impress, but inwardly empty	Fake self-image (luxury, lifestyle)	"Digital emptiness" emerges

Discussion

This study's findings indicate that virtual gifts on TikTok Live are not merely an interactive digital practice but have evolved into a mechanism of social validation laden with psychological, sociological, and ethical dimensions. Once expressed through simple appreciation, validation is now reduced to numbers, icons, and digital symbols that determine a creator's status. This result

affirms earlier studies on parasocial relationships and social presence, arguing that emotional closeness and recognition are key drivers of gifting behavior (Cao et al., 2022; Hou et al., 2024; Zhang & Liu, 2024). However, this research further shows that such practices conflict with the Qur'anic normative framework, emphasizing human dignity, sincerity, and ethical social interaction.

The finding concerning reducing human dignity into digital measurement aligns with critical studies on algorithmic culture, where humans are often commodified as data (Lamers et al., 2022; Samet et al., 2024). Nevertheless, through a Qur'anic perspective, this study asserts that measuring dignity through virtual gifts degrades human value. Qur'an 17:70 affirms that humanity is honored because of reason, freedom, and creativity—not because of the number of digital symbols received. Thus, this research extends the discourse of digital ethics by introducing a spiritual framework that rejects the reduction of human worth to artificial parameters.

The discussion of the prohibition of riyā' and sum'ah (Qur'an 2:264) finds its relevance in the performative culture of TikTok Live. Many creators present themselves with the primary aim of receiving virtual gifts and gaining popularity, rather than working out of sincerity. This phenomenon is consistent with previous quantitative studies highlighting social reciprocity and the need for recognition as determinants within the pan-entertainment ecosystem (Shi & Wu, 2023; Yang, n.d.). However, this research adds a normative critique by categorizing such practices as digital riyā'—a hidden ostentation in which actions lose their spiritual essence.

The ethics of social interaction articulated in Qur'an 49:11-13 also provide a critical lens for analyzing the culture of flexing, insults, and toxic comments on TikTok Live. While earlier research has emphasized user engagement and interactivity as positive aspects (Dağ et al., 2024; Fan et al., 2022; Felix & Rembulan, 2023; H. L. O'Brien et al., 2022; Vinerean & Opreana, 2021), this study reveals the darker side of digital interactions that breed mockery, envy, and hedonism. This demonstrates that audience engagement does not always equate to healthy participation but can instead foster the erosion of social ethics. Such a finding underscores the need for ethical regulations in digital spaces to ensure that interactions do not harm social cohesion.

Furthermore, the Qur'anic critique of falsehood (Qur'an 63:4) finds direct relevance in self-presentation within digital culture. This study observes that many creators project images of luxury and superficial status to attract virtual gifts. While consistent with previous research on self-presentation in social media (Bhargava, 2022; Dr. A.Shaji George, 2024; Singer & Jones, 2025; Skulsuthavong & Wang, 2025), which highlights the importance of image, this study introduces a new dimension by showing that such practices constitute "digital emptiness"—appealing on the outside but hollow within. Thus, this research contributes a sharper ethical critique of image-making practices in the digital sphere.

The discussion highlights the gap between digital cultural practices and Qur'anic normative principles. Previous studies have emphasized psychosocial motivations for virtual gifting, such as emotional closeness, interactivity, and status signaling. In contrast, this study offers an alternative framework that evaluates the practice from a Qur'anic ethical standpoint, opening new discursive space for "religiously grounded digital ethics."

Finally, this study recommends that Muslim creators adopt ethical strategies that align with Qur'anic values: (1) prioritizing sincerity (ikhlāṣ) in content creation rather than seeking recognition; (2) fostering positive and respectful communication in accordance with Qur'an 49:11–13; (3) resisting the culture of ostentation by promoting modesty and authenticity; and (4) using their platforms for da'wah bil-ḥāl—demonstrating good values through practice, not only through

words. By internalizing these strategies, the Muslim creator community can transform social media from a site of commodified attention into a medium of meaningful engagement, spiritual growth, and ethical social interaction.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of virtual gifts on TikTok Live reveals a new face of digital culture that is increasingly performative, where social recognition is no longer built through authentic interaction but through digital symbols that are commodified. This mechanism creates an ecosystem of capitalized attention and emotion: creators are driven to display themselves—even through extreme and absurd acts—to obtain virtual gifts that are transformed into social legitimacy. This pattern presents a paradox: creativity indeed finds a platform, yet human dignity is simultaneously diminished, as self-worth becomes measured by the illusion of recognition fabricated by algorithms and the digital market. Thus, virtual gifts are not merely entertainment but a sign of an existential crisis that positions self-esteem as a fragile commodity.

From the Qur'anic perspective, this practice needs to be critiqued as a modern form of *riya'* that shifts human orientation from sincerity to self-display. Surah al-Isra' [17:70] affirms that human dignity is innate and not determined by artificial symbols, while Surah al-Baqarah [2:264] warns that deeds born of *riya'* ultimately lead to emptiness. The ethical principles of interaction in Surah al-Hujurat [49:11–13] also emphasize that the standard of social respect lies in piety, not in digital performativity. In contrast, Surah al-Munafiqun [63:4] cautions against the fragility of hollow self-representation. From this perspective, it becomes clear that the culture of pseudo-validation promoted by TikTok Live must be repositioned—not as an arena for *riya'* and instant recognition, but as a space that affirms spiritual identity, safeguards human dignity, and upholds authentic values rooted in faith.

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