

The Quran's View on Body Positivity: Thematic Interpretation Study

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ABSTRACT

The rising body image crisis in the digital era has led to serious consequences, including mental health issues, low self-esteem, and self-harm, particularly among youth. In response to beauty standards shaped by popular culture, the body positivity movement promotes self-acceptance and appreciation of physical diversity. However, its secular framing often overlooks spiritual aspects. This study explores the Qur'anic perspective on body positivity and how its values can foster spiritually grounded self-acceptance. Using a qualitative approach and thematic interpretation, relevant verses are analyzed, focusing on those concerning human creation, the prohibition of body denunciation, and gratitude for one's physical form. The findings suggest that the Qur'an regards the human body as a perfect creation, opposes physical discrimination, and prioritizes piety over appearance. It promotes self-love rooted in gratitude and spiritual responsibility. These insights reveal that Islam provides a comprehensive ethical foundation for body positivity, offering a more holistic alternative to secular discourse.

Keywords: *Body positivity; Body image; thematic interpretation; The perfection of creation; Self-love.*

ABSTRAK

Krisis citra tubuh yang meningkat di era digital berdampak serius pada kesehatan mental, terutama di kalangan remaja dan dewasa muda. Gerakan body positivity hadir sebagai respons terhadap standar kecantikan populer, namun sering mengabaikan dimensi spiritual. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi pandangan Al-Qur'an terhadap body positivity dan bagaimana nilai-nilai Qur'ani dapat membentuk penerimaan diri yang sehat. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif dan metode tafsir tematik, penelitian menganalisis ayat-ayat tentang penciptaan manusia, larangan mencela tubuh, serta pentingnya bersyukur atas fisik yang dimiliki. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa Al-Qur'an memandang tubuh sebagai ciptaan sempurna, menolak diskriminasi fisik, dan menekankan ketakwaan sebagai ukuran kemuliaan. Konsep self-love dalam Islam berpadu dengan nilai syukur dan tanggung jawab spiritual. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa Islam menawarkan fondasi etis dan spiritual yang kuat bagi gerakan body positivity, melampaui narasi sekuler.

Kata Kunci: *Body Positivity, Citra tubuh, Tafsir tematik: kesempurnaan ciptaan.*

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of body positivity has become increasingly prominent in recent decades, especially in the digital era, loaded with ideal body images framed by social media. The movement was originally born as a response to narrow and discriminatory beauty standards, which often discredit individuals with fat, dark-skinned bodies, or disabilities (Jannatania et al., 2023). In this context, body positivity means affirming that all human bodies (regardless of shape, size, skin color, or physical condition) have value and deserve to be appreciated. However, although this movement carries a message of self-acceptance, it is not uncommon for it to be misunderstood or abused to legitimize an unhealthy lifestyle or narcissism (Kautsar et al., 2023). On the other hand, the excesses of digital visual culture have exacerbated the body image crisis, especially among teenagers and young adults, who feel pressured to meet beauty standards determined by algorithms and online trends. In such a situation, an important question arises: whether Islam, especially the Qur'an, has a view on the issue of acceptance of the body and self-image (Purwati, 2024).

The study of this theme becomes relevant given the increasing rates of body image disorders, depression, and social anxiety rooted in dissatisfaction with physical appearance. In Muslim societies, this phenomenon is also present, although it is often not discussed openly (Wibowo et al., 2022). As the main source of Islamic teachings, the Qur'an contains principles that can be the foundation for forming a positive attitude towards the body. The principle of human creation in a balanced and perfect manner, the prohibition of reproaching others, and the appreciation of piety as a measure of glory show that Islam has an ethical framework that supports body positivity in a more spiritual and comprehensive form (Chusna & Anwar, 2024). Therefore, studying the verses of the Qur'an related to this issue is not only scientifically important but also very relevant in responding to contemporary social challenges.

The formulation of the problem in this study is: What is the Qur'an's view on the concept of body positivity? To answer this question, the author uses a thematic interpretation approach (*maudhū'ī*) by collecting and grouping verses related to the creation of man, the prohibition of denouncing the body, and the importance of accepting oneself as part of gratitude to Allah. With this method, it is hoped that a common thread can be found in the teachings of the Qur'an that form the Islamic paradigm about the human body and its acceptance. This study also seeks to see how Qur'anic values can be an alternative to the secular narratives that dominate the current body positivity discourse.

Several previous studies have addressed the theme of human creation and the concept of beauty in Islam, but most have not directly linked it to the body positivity movement that is developing globally. For example, the study of the interpretation of QS. At-Tin (95): 4 often highlights aspects of human glory in general, but not many have linked it to the implications for body perception (Hamzah & Rismanto, 2022). Similarly, there is a discussion of the prohibition of reproach and the command of self-love in the research of journal articles on QS. Al-Hujurat (49): 11 is more often interpreted from the aspect of the prohibition of criticizing others, or called bullying, and rarely interpreted as a form of affirmation of self-love (Shofwan & Munib, 2023). Therefore, this study tries to fill the gap by compiling a complete and contextual Qur'anic narrative of how Islam views the human

body in the framework of acceptance and self-esteem.

The purpose of this research is to explore and formulate the Qur'anic perspective on body positivity as part of Islamic spiritual and social values. The urgency of this study lies in the need to provide a strong theological foundation for Muslims, especially the younger generation, in the face of social pressure regarding body shape. By understanding that Islam does not judge humans by physical appearance, but by piety and morality, it is hoped that Muslims can develop a positive attitude towards their bodies. This research also aims to contribute to the development of thematic interpretations that are responsive to contemporary issues, as well as help strengthen Islamic approaches to mental health and psychological well-being.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with the method of thematic interpretation (*maudhū'ī*) to examine the Qur'an's view on the concept of body positivity. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to collect several verses related to a specific topic, in this case about the body, human creation, the prohibition of blasphemy, and self-respect, then analyze them as a whole and contextual sense of meaning. The focus of the study is not limited to one surah or verse, but on themes scattered in various places in the Qur'an that complement each other.

The primary data sources in this study are the Qur'an and tafsir, both classical and contemporary. Some of the tafsirs used include Tafsir Al-Misbah by M. Quraish Shihab, Tafsir Ibn Katsir, Tafsir al-Kasyaf, and Tafsir Fi Zilal al-Qur'an by Sayyid Qutb. Secondary data sources were obtained from relevant scientific articles, books on body positivity from the perspective of psychology and Islam, and literature that reviews the role of religion in shaping self-image and mental health.

The data collection procedure is carried out in the following stages: first, the identification of several verses of the Qur'an related to the theme of body positivity based on keywords such as human creation, prohibition of blasphemy, and the concept of glory. Second, the classification of verses is carried out based on themes that have been determined in the outline, such as "the creation of perfect humans", "piety as a benchmark", and "the command to respect oneself". Third, each verse is analyzed by referring to various interpretations to explore its meaning and context, both linguistically and socio-historically.

The data analysis technique in this study is carried out through three stages: description, interpretation, and synthesis. At the description stage, the researcher explains the content and intent of the verse based on interpretation. The interpretation stage is carried out by comparing interpretations from various sources and relating them to the phenomenon of body positivity. Finally, at the synthesis stage, the researcher draws thematic conclusions that integrate the Qur'anic values of the body and self-acceptance with the current social context. With this approach, it is hoped that a complete and relevant understanding of how the Qur'an provides direction in responding to the issue of body positivity can be obtained.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Definition and Background of the Body Positivity Phenomenon

Body positivity is a social and psychological movement that emphasizes the importance of acceptance of the body in various shapes, sizes, skin colors, and physical conditions. The essence of this movement is that every individual has the right to feel comfortable and proud of their body, without having to submit to narrow or discriminatory beauty standards. Body positivity encourages people to realize that a person's worth is not determined by physical appearance, but rather by their inner qualities and being as a whole (Jannatania et al., 2023). The movement also challenges popular cultural narratives that often feature thin, tall, light-skinned, and symmetrical bodies as ideal benchmarks. In this context, body positivity does not mean rejecting self-care or physical health, but opposing judgments that demean the non-ideal body. The concept also includes awareness of body diversity, as well as social justice for people who are marginalized due to their physical conditions, including people with disabilities and people with obese bodies (Arviany & Junaidi, 2023). Therefore, body positivity develops not only as a form of self-expression but also as a critique of social and economic systems that monetize body dissatisfaction.

The body positivity movement has long historical roots and dates back to protests against body discrimination, particularly against obese people, in the United States in the late 1960s. One of its early milestones was the formation of the "National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance" (NAAFA) in 1969, which fought for the rights of people of large stature to equal treatment in public service, work, and the media. In the early 1990s, the term "body positivity" began to be used more widely, especially in the feminist community and body rights activists (Suka et al., 2024). The internet and social media have become important mediums in spreading the message of this movement, with the emergence of hashtags such as #BodyPositivity and #EffYourBeautyStandards that are viral on various platforms. Over time, body positivity has grown into a global movement involving a variety of groups, including disability activists, people with certain skin conditions (such as vitiligo or albinism), and cancer survivors. However, it is not uncommon for this movement to be criticized because it is considered too focused on appearance and does not give space to health issues. Even so, body positivity is still relevant as a movement that fights for self-acceptance and body justice in a society that tends to glorify the ideal body image (Milatishofa et al., 2024).

In Muslim society, the phenomenon of body positivity is becoming known along with increasing access to global media and the involvement of the younger generation in digital platforms. Body acceptance campaigns are now not only found in the West, but also have begun to be developed by Muslim women who are active on social media. Figures such as Halima Aden, the first hijab-wearing model to appear on the international stage, have also become an important symbol for many Muslim women who have felt marginalized by mainstream beauty standards (Dzahabiyyah & Noviar, 2024). In Indonesia, the emergence of communities such as Hijabers Plus Size also shows a shift in the way of looking at the body and beauty in urban Muslim society. However, the reception of this movement has not always been smooth. Some people still associate physical appearance with morality or piety,

which can reinforce the stigma against bodies that are considered not ideal. On the other hand, there are also concerns that body positivity can open up space for a permissive lifestyle if it is not accompanied by spiritual values (Arumingtyas, 2019). Therefore, it is important to align the spirit of body positivity with Islamic principles that emphasize the balance between self-acceptance and responsibility for the body as a mandate from Allah.

The body positivity movement has a significant impact on self-confidence, especially for individuals who have been feeling marginalized because they do not meet general beauty standards. Various psychological studies show that acceptance of the body is positively correlated with levels of emotional well-being, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. Individuals who accept their bodies tend to be more resilient to social pressures and have healthier relationships with food and physical activity (Salsabila et al., 2024). In contrast, chronic body dissatisfaction is often a trigger for mental disorders such as depression, eating disorders, and social anxiety. In the context of Muslim society, the pressure to appear perfect comes not only from the mainstream media, but also from the social environment that sometimes judges a person's piety by the way they dress or the shape of their body (Hartati & Novianty, 2021). Therefore, it is important to integrate the concept of body positivity with Islamic values so that Muslims can develop a healthy and balanced understanding of their bodies. The body is not merely an object of social judgment but also part of a divine mandate that should be respected and grateful.

Body positivity is a response to cultural pressures that standardize beauty and limit the space for self-acceptance. The movement seeks to free individuals from unnecessary shame towards their bodies and foster an appreciation for physical diversity. In a global society, body positivity has become a discourse that continues to evolve and adapt to various cultural backgrounds, including in the Muslim community (Magafira et al., 2024). However, to be able to function constructively, this concept needs to be contextualized with religious values. Islam, through the Qur'an and its teachings, teaches that the human body is a perfect creation of Allah and should not be degraded. In the next section, it will be discussed how the Qur'an explicitly and implicitly provides a view of the body, the perfection of creation, and the prohibition of humiliating oneself and others. Thus, body positivity from the perspective of Islam is not only a social movement, but also part of spirituality and awareness of the essence of human beings as noble beings (M.I.S, 2021).

The Qur'an's View on Body Positivity

1. People were created with perfection

The Qur'an expressly states that man is created in the best form (*ahsani taqwīm*) as a manifestation of Divine perfection and justice. This principle not only affirms man's physical superiority but also implies that any difference in body shape, size, or condition is part of God's meaningful design (Kulsum, 2019). In the context of the body positivity movement that is developing in the modern era, the Qur'an's view of the perfection of human creation has become a spiritual foundation to reject narrow beauty standards that often trigger a crisis of body image.

In fact, in Q.S At-Tin verse 4 states:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

"We created man in the best design." (Itani, n.d.)

This verse affirms that man was created by God in the most perfect structure, both physically and spiritually. The concept of "ahsani taqwīm" refers not only to the harmonious proportions of the body but also includes the intellectual, moral, and spiritual potential that human beings possess. In the context of body positivity, this verse becomes the theological foundation that every individual has the right to be valued for his or her body shape, because all human beings have been created in the best form by the will and wisdom of the Creator (Hadidi bin musa, 2010). Tafsir Al-Misbah by Quraish Shihab explains that human excellence in this form includes the perfection of organs, upright position, and the ability to think and behave. Therefore, to denounce one's own body or that of others is to fulfill God's creation. This verse invites humans to be grateful and accept themselves as they are, because every body shape contains aspects of beauty and goals that have been set by God (Shihab, 2012). This awareness supports a narrative of body positivity that prioritizes acceptance and respect for physical diversity.

In another verse Allah says in QS. Al-Infithar verse 7:

الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ ﴿٧﴾

"He Who created you, and formed you, and proportioned you?" (Itani, n.d.)

This verse describes the process of human creation as something orderly, proportional, and full of harmony. The word "fasawwāka" refers to the refinement of the shape and structure of the human body, while "fa'adalak" reflects balance and precision in the creation. According to Ibn Kathir's commentary, this verse shows how Allah created man in a form that is by his functions and needs, so that no part of the body is wasted or disproportionate (Katsir, 1999). In the context of body positivity, this verse shows that each individual, regardless of his or her body shape differences, has been created with the right size and balance according to the Divine will. This balance does not have to be interpreted as physical uniformity, but rather as an ideal combination of forms, functions, and the value of human existence itself. Therefore, equating the beauty or perfection of the body with one particular standard as opposed to the divine balance described in the principle of this verse. Islam, through this verse, teaches that the human body is the result of Divine planning and design that cannot be considered defective simply because it differs from social aesthetic norms. Awareness of the meaning of this balance can foster respect for one's own body and others.

As for the process of creating perfect human beings in Surah Al-Mu'minun verse 14:

ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النَّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَاهُ
خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

“Then We developed the seed into a clot. Then We developed the clot into a lump. Then We developed the lump into bones. Then We clothed the bones with flesh. Then We produced it into another creature. Most Blessed is Allah, the Best of Creators.” (Itani, n.d.)

Allah describes the process of creating man from a drop of air to a creature that has a complete and perfect form. This verse mentions how humans are created through very complex but orderly stages: from nutfah (semen), to 'alaqah (a clot of blood), then mudhghah (a lump of flesh), until finally a bone is formed that is covered with flesh, and then given a spirit. This process illustrates how the creation of man was not something that happened by chance, but rather through a plan full of calculation and beauty (Az-Zuhaili, 2016). In the context of body positivity, this verse teaches that every human body, with all its forms and differences, is the result of God's perfect creative process. The body is not just a physical vessel, but a part of the miracle of creation that shows God's love and concern for His creatures. Therefore, feeling inferior or hating the body shape itself means ignoring the beauty of the creation process. This verse is a reminder for humans to be grateful for their existence and avoid judging other people's bodies.

Then Allah explains the perfection of soul and body as a form of His love in Surah Ash-Shams verse 7, which reads:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ۖ

“And the soul and He who proportioned it.” (Itani, n.d.)

Many mufasir explain that the word "nafs" in this verse not only refers to the spiritual or psychological aspect of humans, but also includes the physical dimension. The emphasis on "perfection" shows that human beings, both in the innate and inner aspects, have been endowed with balanced potential and perfection. In the context of body positivity, this perspective teaches that the human body cannot be separated from its spiritual value. The body is a part of the self that God has perfected, not something that should be compared to a certain standard or considered lacking. When a person accepts his body with gratitude and affection, it is in line with the understanding that he is a creation that has been perfected by God. This verse also teaches that human perfection does not necessarily mean "physically perfect" according to social standards, but rather the balance and functional completeness bestowed by God (Agama RI, 2016). Thus, self-acceptance and love for one's own body become part of spiritual consciousness.

In fact, all of Allah's creations are created in balance and without defects, as stated in Surah Al-Mulk verse 3:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ۚ مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَوُّتٍ ۚ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُتُورٍ ۚ

“He who created seven heavens in layers. You see no discrepancy in the creation of the Compassionate. Look again. Can you see any cracks?” (Itani, n.d.)

Although this verse speaks of the creation of the universe, scholars of interpretation such as Sayyid Qutb and Quraish Shihab mention that this message also describes the general pattern of Allah's creation: harmony, balance, and order. If only the sky, that is so vast and complex, is created flawlessly, let alone humans, who are made the most noble creatures. This verse indirectly invites humans to think of their own body as part of creation that is not spared from wisdom and beauty (Quthb, n.d.; Shihab, 2012). About body positivity, this verse affirms that the human body, with all its peculiarities, is a part of creation that can impossible to be vain or wrong. When a person is dissatisfied with his body shape, he is ignoring the principle that God did not create things arbitrarily. Instead, each body has its value, function, and beauty that may not always be visible on the surface. With this understanding, humans are invited to be more grateful, self-respectful, and not trapped in the paradigm of the ideal body that is often shaped by popular culture.

The above five verses collectively affirm that man was created by Allah in the best form (ahsani taqwīm), with a planned, balanced, and wise physical-spiritual perfection. The gradual process of creation (QS. Al-Mu'minun) and the perfection of the soul-body (QS. Ash-Shams) shows that every part of the human being is the result of a Divine design that does not contain defects (QS. Al-Mulk), even if it differs from worldly aesthetic standards. The concept of “balance” (ta'dīl) in QS. Al-Infithar emphasized that the diversity of body shapes is not an imperfection, but a manifestation of Allah's wisdom (Affandi et al., 2023). Thus, Islam rejects all forms of reproach against the body, either oneself or others, because it is contrary to the principle of gratitude for His creation. This Qur'anic view becomes the theological foundation for holistic body positivity: the acceptance of the body not only as a social movement, but as a recognition of the divine perfection in every human being (Latipah et al., 2021).

2. Physical Appearance Is Not a Priority Standard

From the perspective of the Qur'an, physical appearance is not a benchmark of human glory, but piety and morality, which are the essential parameters. In the context of modern societies trapped in the cult of physical beauty, this Qur'anic view offers a theological solution to free man from the shackles of narrow aesthetic standards (Ika Utami & Izzati, 2022). By placing spirituality above appearance, the Qur'an teaches that the body is only a means to a noble goal, not a worship-worthy end goal. This principle is not only in line with the spirit of *body positivity* that rejects physical discrimination, but also complements it with a transcendental dimension that leads human beings to a more essential meaning of existence (Sudi et al., 2017).

This is expressly affirmed in the 13th Verse of Surah Al-Hujurat which reads:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

“O people! We created you from a male and a female, and made you races and tribes, that you may know one another. The best among you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous. Allah is All-Knowing, Well-Experienced.” (Itani, n.d.)

This verse affirms the principle of universal equality in Islam, that biological and social differences such as race, ethnicity, skin color, and body shape are not a measure of one's glory. In the context of body positivity, this verse provides a normative basis that Islam does not judge humans based on outward appearance, but on spiritual qualities such as piety. The Tafsir Al-Misbah by Quraish Shihab emphasizes that the main message of this verse is to reject all forms of discrimination, including those based on physical characteristics. In a modern society that still often glorifies the ideal body as a benchmark of personal value, this message is very relevant to form the awareness that physical beauty is relative and not a determinant of a person's worth. Islam views physical diversity as part of the sunnatullah and not an excuse to demean each other (Shihab, 2012). Therefore, acceptance of one's own body and others should be based on a spiritual awareness of the value of piety as a true measure.

Then verse 76 in surah Shad which reads:

قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

“He said, “I am better than he; You created me from fire, and You created him from clay.”” (Itani, n.d.)

The verse tells the story of Satan's refusal to prostrate himself to Adam because he felt physically superior. Then Allah responded, *“Come down from heaven! It is not appropriate for you to brag here. Get out! Indeed, you are among the despised.”* This verse is a strong criticism of the mentality that measures self-worth based on physical origin or appearance. In Tafsir *Ruh al-Ma'ani* explained that this verse denounces arrogance born from the prejudice of material superiority, such as considering fire to be nobler than earth. In the context of body positivity, this story reminds us that the perceived “higher” standard of physical beauty (e.g., fair skin, thin body, or certain features) is a subjective construct that is irrelevant in the Divine perspective. The Qur'an affirms that true excellence lies in submission to Allah, not to outward attributes (Al-Alusi, 1999). Thus, this verse encourages Muslims to reject discrimination based on appearance, while also correcting a culture that glorifies physical beauty as a benchmark of glory.

As for QS. Al-Munafiqun verse 4 describes a hypocrite who looks physically attractive but is spiritually empty:

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ وَإِنْ يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعْ لِقَوْلِهِمْ كَانَتْهُمْ خَشَبٌ مُّسْنَدَةٌ يَّحْسَبُونَ كُلَّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرْهُمْ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكُونُوا يَفْهَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾

“When you see them, their appearance impresses you. And when they speak, you listen to what they say. They are like propped-up timber. They think every shout

is aimed at them. They are the enemy, so beware of them. Allah condemns them; how deluded they are!' (Itani, n.d.)

The metaphor of "leaning wood" in Ibn Kathir's commentary shows the helplessness and absence of intrinsic value behind the charming appearance. This verse reminds us that outward beauty without moral integrity, honesty, or piety is futile, even misleading. In the discourse of body positivity, this message is relevant to criticize modern culture that often sacrifices mental health to achieve artificial beauty standards. The Qur'an does not prohibit humans from taking care of their appearance, but emphasizes that the physical is only a temporary "wrap", while the essence of the self lies in the inner qualities (Katsir, 1999). Thus, Islam invites its people not to be trapped in the worship of the body alone, but to prioritize the balance between physical acceptance (as a gift of Allah) and character development (as a spiritual mandate). This value is in line with the body positivity movement that rejects human reductions to outward appearance, but in Islam, it is complemented by a transcendental dimension.

These three verses, if drawn to one conclusion, affirm that the Qur'an rejects any form of discrimination or superiority based on physical appearance. QS. Al-Hujurat (49:13) affirms that true beauty is measured by piety and morality, not by worldly aesthetic standards, in QS. Shad (38:76) criticizes Satan's arrogance, which is rooted in material prejudice, while QS. Al-Munafiqun (63:4) warned of the dangers of admiring the physical without considering spiritual values. This message is relevant to the body positivity movement that struggles against the stigma of a non-ideal body, but Islam gives it a theological foundation: self-acceptance is a form of gratitude, while respect for others is a reflection of recognition of God's greatness as Creator. Thus, body positivity from the perspective of the Qur'an is not just a social movement, but part of worship that integrates bodily appreciation with servitude to God (Larasati et al., 2025).

3. The Commandment of Self-Love and Self-Acceptance

Islam teaches a unique and balanced concept of self-love, where self-acceptance of the body given by Allah is a form of gratitude and recognition of His greatness as the Creator (Ningsih et al., 2024). In contrast to the concept of secular self-love, which is often trapped in narcissistic narratives, Islam, through QS. Al-Hujurat (49):11 strictly prohibits the practice of reproaching oneself and others, because it is contrary to the principle of respect for Allah's creation. Meanwhile, QS. Ibrahim (14):7 affirms that being grateful for physical favors will bring additional gifts from God. These two verses form a spiritual framework of self-love that not only stops at the acceptance of physical appearance but also encourages the responsibility to care for the body as a Divine mandate. In today's context filled with pressure on unrealistic beauty standards, this Islamic concept of self-acceptance offers a more holistic solution and also integrates mental health with the values of piety, as well as transforming the perception of self-love from mere aesthetic gratification to worship through gratitude and care for the body as a gift from God (Husna & Sa'adah, 2023).

In QS. Al-Hujurat (49): These 11 expressly prohibit the act of reproach (*sukhriyah*), both against oneself and others:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

“O you who believe! No people shall ridicule other people, for they may be better than they. Nor shall any women ridicule other women, for they may be better than they. Nor shall you slander one another, nor shall you insult one another with names. Evil is the return to wickedness after having attained faith. Whoever does not repent—these are the wrongdoers.” (Itani, n.d.)

In Tafsir Al-Kasyaf, it is emphasized that this prohibition includes all forms of insults, including those based on physical characteristics such as body, skin color, or disability. In the context of body positivity, this verse is an ethical foundation to break the cycle of self-criticism and physical comparisons that damage mental health. Islam teaches that everybody is a unique creation of Allah, so to denounce the body, whether one's own or someone else's, is to deny the perfection of Allah's design (al-Zamakhshari, 1995). Furthermore, this verse associates the practice of self-acceptance with faith: a Muslim who loves his body as a form of gratitude will avoid condescension to others. Thus, self-love in Islam is not narcissism, but a manifestation of monotheism, the recognition that all body forms are part of God's wisdom and justice.

While in QS. Ibrahim (14): 7 which reads:

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿٧﴾

“And when your Lord proclaimed: “If you give thanks, I will grant you increase; but if you are ungrateful, My punishment is severe.”” (Itani, n.d.)

The verse contains an exhortation to be grateful for blessings, including the body. Although this verse is general, Tafsir al-Qurthubi explains that "favours" include all physical and non-physical gifts, including a well-functioning body (Al-Qurthubi, 2006). From the perspective of body positivity, this verse teaches that self-acceptance is a form of active gratitude, not just surrendering, but optimizing the body's potential for good. For example, maintaining health, using the limbs for worship, or avoiding harmful actions (such as extreme diets for the sake of beauty standards). Gratitude also involves acknowledging that physical "imperfections" (by human standards) can be a path to rewards, such as patience with disabilities or illnesses. Thus, Islam views self-love as a balance between accepting the body as a gift (trust) and caring for it as an obligation. This concept is more holistic than the secular body positivity movement because it does not stop at aesthetic acceptance, but links it to spiritual responsibility.

These two verses form a unique Islamic perspective on self-love: QS. Al-Hujurat (49:11) forbids demeaning the creation of Allah, while QS. Ibrahim (14:7) affirms that loving oneself is the way to improve one's relationship with the Creator. In contrast to popular narratives that often separate self-love from moral values, Islam unites them within the framework of worship. The acceptance of the body is not a justification for a hedonistic lifestyle (e.g., neglecting health), but rather an awareness that the body is a tool to achieve noble goals. In practice, this means that a Muslim can feel confident in his body shape without obsessing over physical changes, as long as he still fulfills bodily rights (such as halal food and physical activity) and soul rights (such as developing piety) (Aufa et al., 2024). With this foundation, body positivity in Islam becomes a movement that not only frees humans from pseudo-beauty standards but also directs them to a higher meaning of existence, namely as a grateful servant (Lewis, 2019).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Qur'an offers a comprehensive and profound perspective on the human body, aligning with the values of the body positivity movement. Qur'anic verses such as QS. At-Tin (95:4), QS. Al-Infithar (82:7), and QS. Al-Mu'minun (23:14) affirms that the body is a perfect and wise creation of Allah. Islam rejects all forms of physical discrimination and upholds piety as the true measure of human dignity, as emphasized in QS. Al-Hujurat (49:13). Body acceptance, in this context, is not merely a response to societal pressure but a reflection of gratitude and recognition of divine wisdom. Islamic self-love involves spiritual responsibility, viewing the body as a trust to be cared for, thus offering a deeper alternative to secular narratives focused mainly on emotional and social validation.

Compared to popular beauty standards that promote narrow ideals, the Qur'an advocates for a more inclusive and spiritually meaningful understanding of physical diversity. Self-acceptance in Islam is part of worship, tied to the awareness of purpose in creation. Future studies may expand on these findings empirically by exploring the relationship between Qur'anic understanding and body acceptance among Muslims. Additionally, promoting a Qur'an-based body positivity discourse through religious education, social media, and da'wah networks can help build psychological resilience against misleading beauty ideals.

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