

Bibliometric Analysis Of Flexing Phenomenon In The Digital Era

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the development of studies on the phenomenon of *flexing* in the digital era and map the main topics that have become the focus of research over the past decade. The phenomenon of *flexing*, which refers to the behavior of showing off wealth, achievements, or lifestyle on social media, has become an important issue in digital social and economic studies because it is related to consumptive behavior, self-image, and the dynamics of interaction in virtual spaces. The method used in this study is bibliometric analysis, with publication data from the period 2015–2025 which produced 343 articles obtained from relevant scientific databases. The data were analyzed using VOSviewer software to visualize keyword networks, relationships between authors, and thematic clusters. Publication trend analysis was also conducted to observe the development of the number of researches each year. The results of the study showed a significant increase in the number of publications related to *flexing*, especially starting in 2020

Abstrak: Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis perkembangan studi tentang fenomena *flexing* di era digital dan memetakan topik-topik utama yang menjadi fokus penelitian selama dekade terakhir. Fenomena *flexing*, yang merujuk pada perilaku memamerkan kekayaan, prestasi, atau gaya hidup di media sosial, telah menjadi isu penting dalam studi sosial dan ekonomi digital karena berkaitan dengan perilaku konsumtif, citra diri, dan dinamika interaksi di ruang virtual. Metode yang digunakan dalam studi ini adalah analisis bibliometrik, dengan data publikasi dari periode 2015–2025 yang menghasilkan 343 artikel yang diperoleh dari basis data ilmiah yang relevan. Data tersebut dianalisis menggunakan perangkat lunak VOSviewer untuk memvisualisasikan jaringan kata kunci, hubungan antar penulis, dan kluster tematik. Analisis tren publikasi juga dilakukan untuk mengamati perkembangan jumlah penelitian setiap tahunnya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan jumlah publikasi terkait *flexing*, terutama dimulai pada tahun

and reaching its peak in 2022. Bibliometric visualization identified four main objectives, namely (1) *flexing* and consumer lifestyle, (2) personal branding and digital identity, (3) digital literacy and ethics, and (4) social psychology perspectives related to validation needs. The keyword network shows that the terms “*human*” and “*social media digitalization*” are the center of connection in the research. Overall, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the direction of flexing research development and opens up opportunities for further research on the psychological, social and ethical impacts of digital in the future.

Keywords: Flexing; Social Media; Digitalization; Bibliometrics.

2020 dan mencapai puncaknya pada tahun 2022. Visualisasi bibliometrik mengidentifikasi empat tujuan utama, yaitu (1) flexing dan gaya hidup konsumen, (2) personal branding dan identitas digital, (3) literasi digital dan etika, dan (4) perspektif psikologi sosial terkait kebutuhan validasi. Jaringan kata kunci menunjukkan bahwa istilah “manusia” dan “digitalisasi media sosial” merupakan pusat koneksi dalam penelitian. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini memberikan gambaran komprehensif tentang arah perkembangan penelitian flexing dan membuka peluang untuk penelitian lebih lanjut tentang dampak psikologis, sosial, dan etika digital di masa depan.

Kata Kunci: Pamer; Media Sosial; Digitalisasi; Bibliometrik.

A. Introduction

In this era of digitalization, technology is developing rapidly, and society tends to focus more on the virtual world than on reality. People are willing to do anything to present themselves well in the virtual world, which usually refers to life on social media like YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and others. Recently, the culture of flexing has emerged and been adopted by almost all social media users in their efforts to seek popularity. Flexing, in simple terms, means showing off oneself with the aim of gaining the attention of others. Currently, the world has experienced many developments, this includes various sectors, from the economy, education, health, social, and last but not least, the information technology sector, where the development of information technology has had a significant impact on humans in exchanging information and communicating. (Alaida et al., 2025)

Social media is an application developed as a tool for expressing ideas, feelings, or content, which serves as a form of self-representation for various purposes. Social

media is evidence of the ongoing technological developments that continue to evolve over time. Easy access to social media has triggered various phenomena (Lisda Waty Harianja, 2023). This development has resulted in a new phenomenon, including the desire to become famous or popular. Many social media users have made popularity a lifestyle and are willing to do anything to achieve it. One such phenomenon is flexing, a term that refers to the tendency to display oneself by highlighting one's glamour, abundance, or wealth. It's common to find people building their personal image or brand by flaunting their wealth (Mardiah, 2022). This has become commonplace among us as an effort to attract public attention.

The flexing phenomenon in Indonesia is becoming increasingly prominent with the rapid use of social media. Data from We Are Social in 2023 showed that there were 167 million active social media users in Indonesia (which is around 60.4% of Indonesian internet users), making Indonesia one of the countries with the highest levels of digital platform usage in the world. This large number of users creates a vast space for individuals and influencers to showcase their lifestyles, achievements, and social status symbols (Pakpahan & Yoesgiantoro, 2023). The emergence of the flexing phenomenon is inseparable from the influence of social media, which encourages people to stand out and gain recognition. The rise of this phenomenon is in line with the increasing number of people who They appear super-rich (crazy rich). These "crazy rich" actively express their existence through social media, displaying clothing styles and habits synonymous with luxury goods. The things they publish are usually related to the individual's social status and living environment. This generally involves luxury goods, well-known brands, or items rarely owned by others due to their high price (Sugita & Sinarwati, 2022).

This phenomenon can be interpreted as an attempt to prove their achievements or as a form of promotion for certain branded goods. Referring to the social facts mentioned above, flexing can be interpreted as a behavior aimed at gaining recognition regarding the individual's social status through social media. Often, after investigating

the facts, the claimed social status of flexers is always the opposite of the facts of their daily lives outside of media. This behavior is also sometimes used as a method of fraud to attract people who observe the behavior to join an application that makes them 'suddenly' rich, such as Binomo and other online gambling sites (Arsyad, 2022).

According to research (Solikhah, 2023) entitled " The influence of flexing and personal branding on social media on the lifestyle of millennial Muslim students in Yogyakarta, Indonesia " examined the influence of flexing and personal branding on the lifestyles of millennial Muslim students in Yogyakarta. The results showed that both variables significantly influence the formation of a lifestyle that is more oriented towards image, appearance, and prestige. Social media provides a space for students to build their ideal self-perception, but it also triggers psychological pressure to continuously project a "perfect" version of themselves online. This study confirms that flexing can be a driving factor in lifestyle changes among the younger generation.

According to research (Hariyono et al., 2024) entitled "The Phenomenon of Flexing on Social Media: Generation Z's Perception," the phenomenon of flexing is examined from the perspective of Generation Z through a phenomenological approach. The research findings indicate that Generation Z views flexing as an image strategy as well as a way to gain social validation. However, some informants also realize that this behavior is often inconsistent with reality and can give rise to social pressure and a lack of self-confidence. This research provides an understanding that flexing is not only related to material things, but also related to the psychological dynamics of social media users.

The phenomenon of flexing on social media has been extensively researched before, but the majority of the research has been qualitative or specific case studies. With the title “ Analysis of the Flexing Phenomenon: The Relationship Between Lifestyle and Popularity ” (Umi & Noor, 2024) emphasizes social, psychological, and social class factors that influence flexing behavior. This study presents significant innovations through a bibliometric approach, which distinguishes it from previous

research. This study maps the flexing literature quantitatively, including the number of publications per year, the geographic distribution of research, collaborations between authors and institutions, and the most frequently used keywords. This provides an objective understanding of research trends, in contrast to previous studies that are narrative or qualitative in nature.

Research Objectives: Bibliometric visualization produces four main research objectives, namely 1). Flexing and Consumptive Lifestyle, which discusses the relationship between flexing and excessive consumption, hedonism, and branded purchasing behavior 2). Personal Branding and Digital Identity, which focuses on flexing as a strategy for building self-image, impression management, and creating symbolic value 3). Digital Literacy and Ethics, which highlights the impact of flexing on perception, digital culture, and the need for increased literacy to prevent misinformation and manipulated behavior 4). Social Psychology Perspective, which examines flexing from the perspective of validation needs, social pressure, and its influence on mental well-being.

B. Research Method

This study uses a quantitative research approach with a focus on analyzing scientific publications using the keywords "*flexing and digitalization*". The data used are secondary data in the form of journal articles indexed in the Scopus database. The publication period of eleven years, namely from the year (2015–2025) was chosen to capture the developments, trends, and dynamics of the latest research relevant to this topic. This period is considered sufficient to reflect the maturity and emerging directions in this field. The analysis was limited to only original research articles. This decision was made to ensure the validity of the data, as journal articles that have undergone peer review generally offer higher reliability, methodological rigor, and academic contribution. Data were collected using Scopus software, through keyword-based searches. The obtained metadata were exported to Microsoft Excel to identify and

remove duplicate data. Articles were then downloaded in RIS (Research Information System) and PDF formats, with RIS files imported into Mendeley Desktop for reference management and organization .

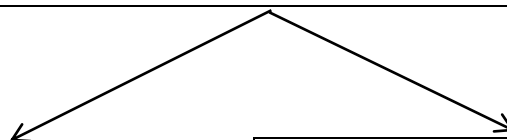
To ensure data validity, a manual screening process was conducted to evaluate the relevance of each article to the research focus. Only articles that directly related to the topic of “ *flexing and digitalization* ” included in the final data. The data were analyzed using bibliometric mapping techniques through *VOSviewer software* . This analysis included categorizing articles by publication year, author, and journal publisher, as well as visualizing bibliometric networks, including keyword co-occurrence. cluster formation, and the evolution of thematic trends over time. The purpose of this analysis is to identify research patterns, highlight emerging keywords, and uncover underexplored areas in the Supply and Demand literature. These findings are expected to contribute to the development of a structured research roadmap. and to inform studies that will be taken up by subsequent researchers.

The following is a summary of the stages of the research process as described in Figure 1.

1. *Open the Publish or Perish software* , then select search using Scopus Search, and type the keywords " *flexing and digitalization* ".
 2. Data taken over the last 11 years, namely from 2015 to 2025



Save data in RIS format



- Analyzing research maps:

 1. Open *VOSviewer* ;
 2. Create maps based on text data;
 3. Read text data from reference manager
 4. Data extraction based on title and abstract
 5. The number of keywords is 4,741, so 891

Analyzing the development of research topics per year:
Open *Microsoft Excel* ;
Search results relevant to the research
or the filtering that is taken is only in the form of articles

meet the criteria.
6. Verify the keyword

The image above illustrates the stages of the research process. The data obtained in this study was obtained through secondary data. The data search begins by opening *the Publish or Perish Software* , then selecting a search using *Scopus Search* , and typing the keywords "*flexing and digitalization*". Then the data retrieved is limited, namely publications for the last 11 years, from 2015 to 2025. After the search, metadata is found. The data is then stored in RIS Before processing the data, because in this study the data used is only in the form of publications in the form of articles, data filtering is carried out. Furthermore, to analyze the data processing, *VOSviewer software is used*.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Results

Data collection obtained from Scopus, there were 1,191 articles showing publications on flexing over a period of 11 years, namely from 2015 to 2025. After filtering, there were 71 scientific publication articles on flexing and there were 272 scientific publications on digitalization. The results of the study showed that scientific publications on flexing and digitalization showed that there was an increase in publications from year to year. The lowest number of publications was found in 2015 with 6 articles. Meanwhile, the highest number of publications was found in 2022, namely 53 articles. This brings the total to 343 articles. The following is publication data on "flexing and digitalization," as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Journal Publication Data

Year	Number of Publications
2015	6
2016	11
2017	14
2018	19
2019	21
2020	39
2021	37
2022	53
2023	45
2024	48
2025	50

Based on data collection over 11 years, from 2015 to 2025, a total of 1,000 published articles on "flexing and digitalization" were indexed by Scopus. The types of publications in this study were limited to articles. The following graph shows the development of published articles indexed by Scopus over the 11 years from 2015 to 2025.

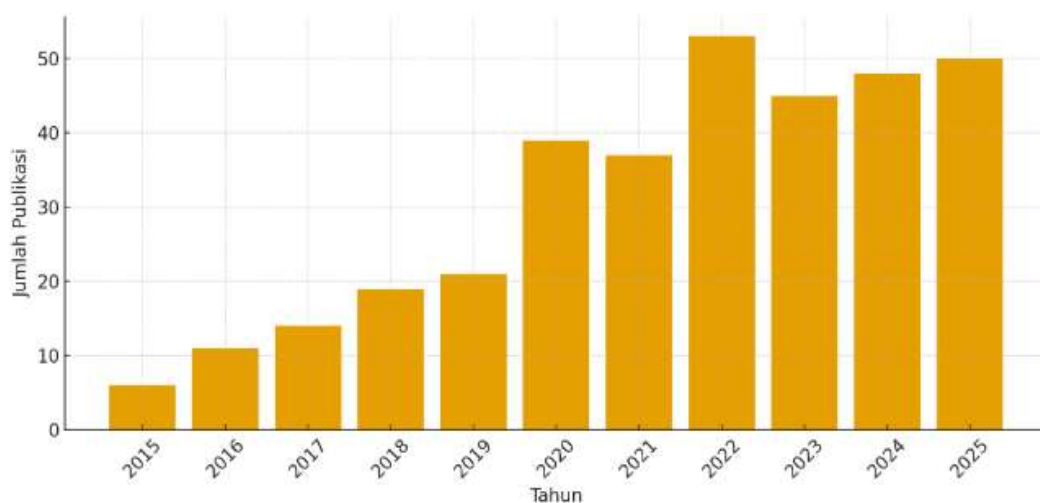


Figure 2. Journal Publication Bar Chart

Based on the diagram shown in Figure 2, there has been an increase in the number of publications from year to year. This indicates a growing interest in publishing articles related to "flexing and digitalization." Based on the collected data, the publications were further analyzed using VOSviewer software, which generated three types of visualizations: Network Visualization, Overlay Visualization, and Density Visualization.

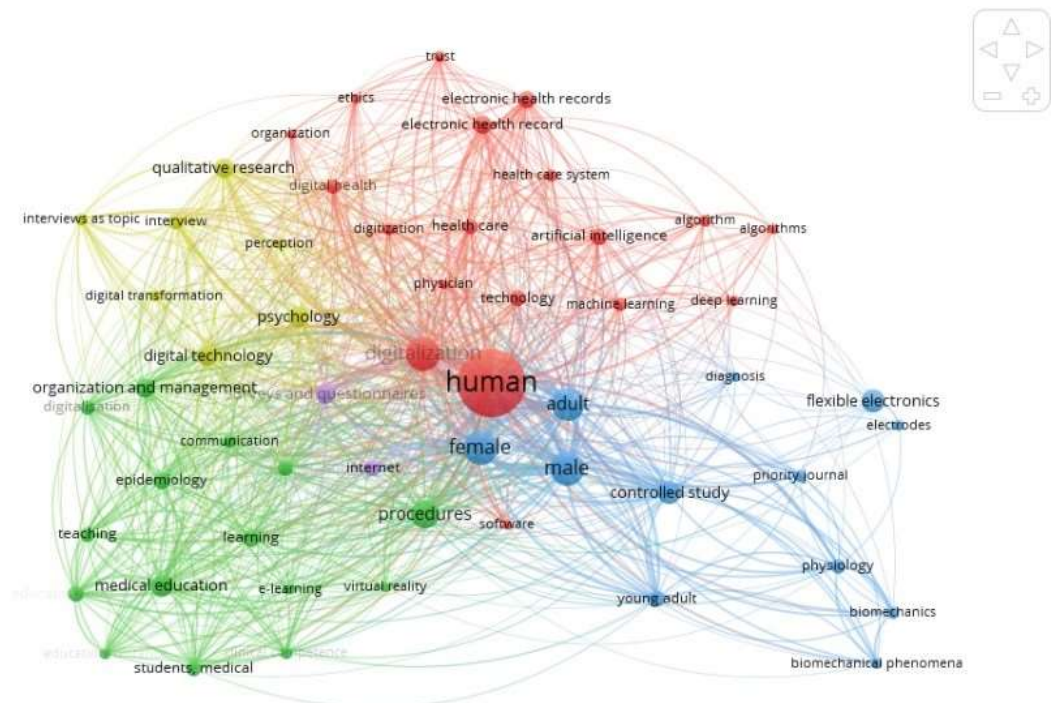


Figure 3. Network Visualization

The co-occurrence visualization shown in the figure illustrates the thematic structure of the research, which is divided into four main clusters. The term "human" is the most central, indicating that most studies focus on the relationship between humans and digital technology. This node is directly connected to keywords such as "digitalization," "technology," "adult," "female," and "male," demonstrating that human characteristics are a crucial variable in digitalization research.

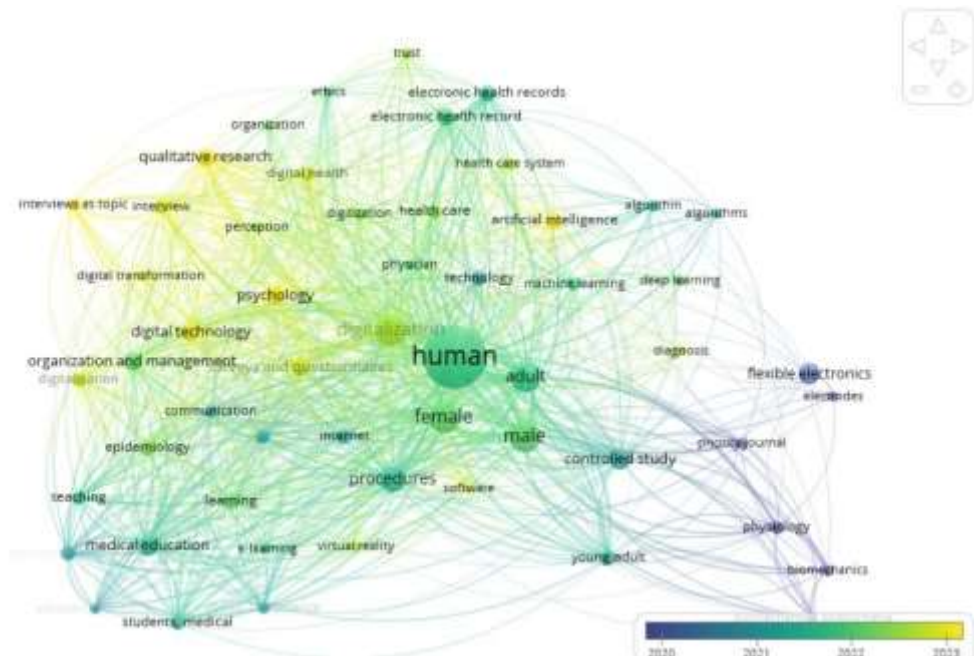
The red cluster depicts the theme of technology-based healthcare transformation, characterized by keywords such as "digital health," "artificial intelligence," "machine learning," "electronic health records," and "ethics." This cluster indicates that research focuses heavily on the integration of smart technologies into modern healthcare systems and their associated ethical implications.

The blue cluster indicates a focus on technical and experimental studies, including "biomechanics," "flexible electronics," "controlled studies," and "physiology." This theme emphasizes the development of digital devices and physiological measurements in the context of medical research and applied technology.

The green cluster represents the realm of digital education and learning. Keywords such as "medical education," "e-learning," "digital technology," "learning," and "communication" emphasize that digitalization is also driving significant transformations in the learning process, particularly in the medical field.

The yellow cluster depicts social approaches and qualitative research, marked by the keywords "qualitative research," "interviews," "perception," and "organization and management." This cluster highlights how psychology, user perception, and organizational dynamics play a role in the digitalization process.

Overall, the map illustrates that digitalization research is multidisciplinary, connecting technology, people, education, healthcare, and social approaches. The interconnectedness among the clusters demonstrates that the development of digital technology cannot be separated from the context of users, systems, and the broader social environment.



Picture 4. Overlay Visualization

The overlay visualization on the co-occurrence map shows that the keyword "human" has the highest level of connectivity and serves as the central theme in the research network. Strong associations with terms such as "adult," "female," "male," "procedures," and "technology" confirm that the primary focus of the research is on human interaction and the application of digital technology in various contexts.

The green color dominates most of the nodes. For example, the keywords "digitalization," "digital technology," "healthcare," and "psychology" illustrate the increased research intensity during the 2021–2022 period. This indicates a surge in publications related to the integration of digital technology into healthcare, education, and user behavior during that period.

Themes shown in yellow, such as "qualitative research," "interviews," "perception," and "digital health," indicate the latest research trends, which increasingly focus on qualitative approaches, user experience, and the evaluation of digital health systems.

On the other hand, nodes shown in purplish blue, such as "flexible electronics," "biomechanics," "physiology," and "controlled study," indicate themes that emerged earlier, around 2020. These topics are related to experimental research and hardware technology, which formed the initial foundation for the development of digital research.

Overall, this map demonstrates a shift in research focus from technical and experimental themes to a more human-centered and systemic approach. The color transition in the overlay visualization highlights the dynamic development of the field, with recent research increasingly emphasizing behavioral understanding, the evaluation of digital technologies, and the transformation of healthcare and education services.

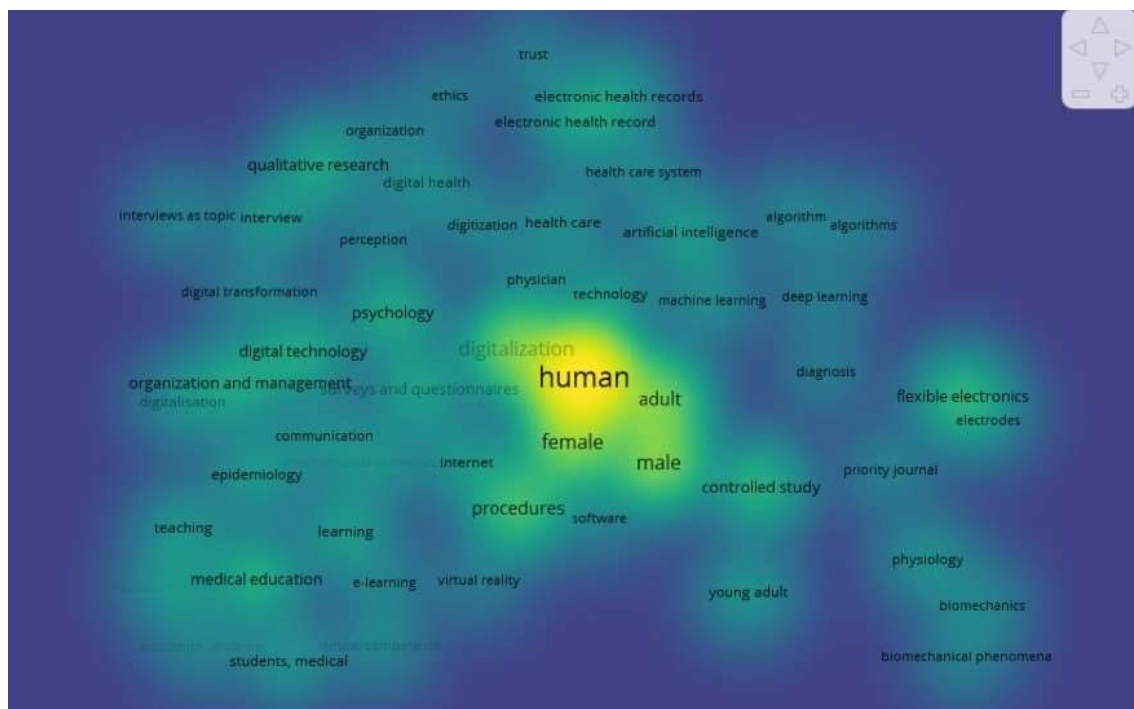


Figure 5. Density Visualization

The density visualization on the co-occurrence map shows that the keyword "human" has the highest density, making it the primary focus of interest in the research network. The dominant yellow color surrounding this keyword indicates that the theme

of human involvement in the digitalization process is the most frequently discussed research focus.

Keywords such as "adult," "female," "male," "procedures," and "technology" are located in high-density areas (light green), indicating that topics related to human characteristics and the application of digital technology contribute significantly to the existing body of publications.

Meanwhile, keywords such as "psychology," "digital technology," "qualitative research," "healthcare," and "machine learning" are found in medium-density areas, indicating that these themes remain relevant but are not as dominant as the core keywords.

Lower-density areas (bluish green), represented by keywords such as "flexible electronics," "biomechanics," and "physiology," depict topics that are still present in the research network but with lower publication intensity.

Overall, this density pattern suggests that research on digitalization focuses primarily on human aspects, technological processes in healthcare contexts, and the methodological support required for their implementation. Technical and experimental topics emerge as complementary areas, while human-centered themes remain the mainstream in the literature.

2. Discussion

This study uses a bibliometric approach to analyze research developments on flexing and digitalization. This bibliometric method was chosen because it provides a comprehensive overview of scientific publication trends, intellectual structure, and the direction of research development in this field through publication and citation analysis. The research dataset was obtained through a literature screening process using the scientific database available in Scopus. By applying keyword flexing and digitalization, A total of 4,741 related publications were obtained. After filtering based on inclusion and exclusion criteria such as scientific article type, topic relevance, publication period

2015–2025, and metadata availability, 891 keywords remained, and 343 articles were eligible for further analysis.

Based on the search results, one of the relevant studies that discusses the phenomenon *flexing* on social media is a work (Anis Amrina Hafan, 2023) entitled "*Analysis of the Flexing Phenomenon on Social Media Among Generation Z.*" The study shows that exposure to flexing content triggers increased consumer desires, especially among students and college students, through social comparison, lifestyle incentives, and the psychological influence of digital culture.

Bibliometric visualization identifies four main objectives, namely:

1. **Flexing and consumer lifestyle**

Flexing phenomenon has become part of lifestyle expression in the digital era, particularly on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok. *Flexing* generally refers to the act of flaunting wealth, luxury goods, or life achievements with the aim of gaining attention, popularity, or social recognition from others. In the contemporary social context, this behavior is not only a form of *self-branding* but also influences individual values and consumption patterns. Several studies have shown that the practice of *flexing* is closely related to consumer culture because both foster an orientation towards luxury goods, status, and social image.

Flexing content can create social pressure to purchase -luxury goods that are not actually needed, thus reinforcing consumer behavior among social media users. As a result, consumption is no longer seen as fulfilling needs, but as a symbol of status and personal identity in digital social life (Bamazruk et al., 2025). Psychologically, individuals who are frequently exposed to *flexing content* can experience pressure to conform to their self-image through impulsive buying and overconsumption. This has an impact not only on spending patterns but also on the mental well-being of users, who

sometimes feel dissatisfied or inferior if they are unable to display a lifestyle equivalent to what they see online.

According to research (Husna et al., 2024) entitled *The Effect of Exposure to Flexing Content on Instagram and TikTok on Consumptive Lifestyles through Upward Social Comparison*, it shows that exposure to flexing content on visual platforms such as Instagram and TikTok significantly increases the tendency for a consumptive lifestyle through the mechanism of *upward social comparison*. Individuals who frequently compare themselves to other figures on social media tend to have a greater urge to purchase branded goods to increase self-confidence and social status.

According to research (Putu et al., 2025), entitled *"The Influence of Flexing Behavior on Impulsive Consumption and the Consumptive Lifestyle of Young Adults,"* it was found that flexing acts as a trigger for impulsive consumption, especially in the young adult age group. This research confirms that consumption is no longer oriented towards rational needs, but rather towards symbolic needs to maintain self-image in the digital space. A consumptive lifestyle is perceived as a way to demonstrate success and social existence.

2. Personal branding and digital identity

In today's digital era, *personal branding* has become a crucial aspect of an individual's social and professional life. *Personal branding* is the conscious process of building a consistent and strategic self-image through various digital platforms to differentiate oneself from others and shape public perception of one's identity. Social media platforms such as Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, and personal blogs serve as primary platforms where individuals showcase their unique values, skills, and character to a broad audience (C. Susanti & Paramita, 2023).

In the context of *digital identity*, *personal branding* not only creates an image or reputation but also represents one's identity in cyberspace. Digital identity emerges from the collection of content shared online, reflecting a person's values, interests, and

preferences, while also impacting how audiences perceive and evaluate them in the digital realm. Proper digital identity management helps individuals build credibility and public trust, which positively impacts career opportunities, professional networks, and the formation of social relationships (Sakir et al., 2025).

According to research (Khedher, 2014) entitled "Personal Branding as a Self-Differentiation Strategy in Forming a Digital Identity on Social Media," it reveals that personal branding in the digital era is closely related to self-differentiation efforts. Digital identity is built through a combination of competencies, personal values, and self-visualization on social media. This study confirms that personal branding functions not only as a promotional tool but also as a mechanism for forming a social identity in the digital space.

According to research (Marwick, 2015) entitled Self-Branding and the Formation of Performative Digital Identity in Social Media Culture, in his study of social media culture, it emphasizes that digital identity is formed through self-branding practices oriented towards visibility and social recognition. This research shows that individuals often adjust their digital identity to the norms and expectations of online audiences, thus creating a performative identity.

3. Digital literacy and ethics

In today's digital era, digital literacy is a crucial competency for every individual to use technology effectively, critically, and responsibly. Digital literacy encompasses not only the technical ability to operate digital devices, but also the ability to analyze, evaluate, and utilize information wisely. Digitally literate individuals are able to distinguish valid and relevant information from misleading or hoaxes. With this ability, digital literacy plays a crucial role in improving the quality of decision-making in the digital environment (Fitriana, 2025).

Similarly, digital ethics is a set of norms and principles that govern individual behavior when using technology and interacting in cyberspace. Digital ethics encompasses responsible use of social media, personal data security, and polite media

behavior that respects the rights of others. Implementing good digital ethics helps prevent negative practices such as cyberbullying, the spread of hoaxes, and privacy violations, thus creating a safe and civilized digital environment (Multidisciplinary, 2025).

According to research by Manuela & Perdani (2023), "The Influence of Digital Literacy on the Ethical Behavior of Social Media Users," digital literacy significantly influences the ethical behavior of social media users. Individuals with a high level of digital literacy are better able to control their online behavior, respect the privacy of others, and comply with applicable social and legal norms in the digital space.

According to research by Livingstone & Mascheroni (2018), entitled "Digital Literacy and the Risk of Digital Ethics Violations in the Younger Generation," the study examines digital literacy and ethics among the younger generation. The study results indicate that low digital literacy contributes to an increased risk of digital ethics violations, such as the spread of hoaxes, hate speech, and privacy violations. This research emphasizes the importance of digital literacy education integrated with ethical values.

4. Social psychology perspectives on validation needs

In social psychology, *the need for validation* is understood as an individual's drive to obtain recognition, approval, or positive feedback from others in a social context. This need arises because humans are social creatures whose behavior, thoughts, and emotions are deeply influenced by interactions with others and the social norms in their environment. Social psychology studies how social situations, group norms, and interpersonal relationships shape an individual's behavior and self-perception, including the tendency to seek validation from others (e.g., through opinion confirmation, social approval, or appreciation) in an effort to maintain self-esteem and belongingness (Hillman et al., 2023).

In the digital age, the phenomenon of social validation is increasingly evident through interactions on social media, where "likes," comments, and interactions serve as

very concrete metrics of validation. Positive feedback from online audiences is often used as an indicator of social recognition or status, prompting individuals to adjust their behavior or self-expression to maintain a socially acceptable image. This process not only influences self-esteem but also influences how individuals present themselves, choose the content they share, and engage in constant social comparison (Ballara & Ed, 2023).

Empirical studies show that moderate validation seeking can support healthy social functioning (e.g., strengthening emotional connections within relationships). However, high levels of validation needs, especially when dependent on external feedback, are correlated with several psychological vulnerabilities, such as low self-esteem, social anxiety, and even dependence on such feedback. This suggests that beyond its adaptive aspects, validation seeking can also have maladaptive consequences if an individual is unable to regulate this need internally (Media, 2025).

According to research (Zulfianti et al., 2023) Titled "The Influence of Positive Social Media Feedback on Self- -Esteem in College Students Who Use Instagram," this study examines the influence of positive feedback in the form of likes on social media on college students' self-esteem. The results demonstrate a relationship between received social feedback and self-esteem levels, while also providing an empirical overview of how seeking external validation influences self-concept in the context of social psychology.

According to (Ananda et al., 2024) With the title The Influence of Social Validation Needs on Student Interaction Activities and Self-Identity Formation in Online and Offline Contexts, this study emphasizes that the need for social validation encourages more active social interactions and forms self-identity among students, both offline and online. Overall, from a social psychology perspective, the need for validation is not simply "wanting to be liked," but is a complex process related to the formation of social identity, emotional connections within groups, and the dynamics of social pressure and norms in society. This understanding can be a strong foundation for

research and interventions aimed at helping individuals balance the need for social approval and the development of healthy self-esteem.

D. Conclusion

This research shows that the phenomenon of flexing in the digital era is part of a social change triggered by the development of information technology and the widespread use of social media. Flexing emerges as a form of self-representation oriented toward image, status, and social validation. The increasing number of social media users in Indonesia strengthens the space for this behavior, both as a personal branding strategy and as an expression of a consumerist lifestyle.

A literature review shows that flexing is closely linked to various aspects, including user psychology, consumer behavior, digital identity formation, and the social pressures experienced by the younger generation. Previous studies have focused on its motives and impacts, but have not provided a comprehensive overview of the scientific developments related to flexing.

Through a bibliometric approach, this study provides a more systematic scientific mapping of trends, research clusters, collaborative networks, and dominant topics in flexing studies. The analysis reveals four main clusters: flexing and lifestyle, flexing and personal branding, flexing and digital literacy, and flexing from a religious and social ethics perspective. Furthermore, several *research gaps were identified*, such as the lack of studies on long-term psychological impacts, cultural differences, and social media regulation.

The VOSviewer visualizations (network, overlay, and density) further emphasize that human themes, particularly human interaction with digital technology, are at the center of research related to digitalization. Research on flexing is embedded within a broader research ecosystem on digital transformation, social media culture, and user behavior dynamics.

Overall, this research contributes in the form of a comprehensive mapping of the development and direction of flexing research, while emphasizing the importance of understanding this phenomenon in the context of an ever-evolving digital culture.

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