

The Subscription Based Trading (Muhammadiyah Perspective)

Ardhansyah Dwiki Rizaldi¹, Rifqi Azka Muhammad²

¹ Faculty of Islamic Studies, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia

² Faculty of Dirasat Ulya, Department of Usul al-Fiqh, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt
o200249020@student.ums.ac.id
rifqiazkam422@gmail.com

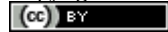
Submission Track:

Received: 30-April-2025

Final Revision: 30-Mei-2025

Available Online: 1-Juli-2025

Copyright © 2025 Authors



Abstract. The objective of this study is to examine the islamic legal aspects of buying and selling subscribers from the perspective of Muhammadiyah *fatwa manhaj* (methodology). The phenomenon of buying and selling subscribers has become widespread with the development of digital platforms such as YouTube, where subscribers have become one of the main requirements for monetization. This practice raises legal questions, particularly regarding its validity in Islam. Using qualitative approach by combining content analysis, literature review and interview with subscriber service provider, this study examines the practice of buying and selling subscribers based on Islamic principles such as honesty (*as-sidq*), justice (*al-'adālah*), and public interest (*al-maslahah*). The analysis reveals that this practice contains elements of deception, fraud, injustice, and *gharar* (uncertainty), which are contrary to Islamic business ethics. Therefore, by applying the Muhammadiyah *fatwa* methodology, such as the three-leveled approach to norms in Islamic law (*al-qiyām al-asāsiyyah*, *al-uṣūl al-kulliyyah*, and *al-aḥkām al-far'īyyah*), it can be concluded that the buying and selling of subscribers is not permitted in Islam. This study is expected to provide practical guidance for Muslim content creators to prioritize ethical growth strategies and for policymakers to regulate digital transactions in alignment with *Shari'a* principles, thereby fostering transparency and fairness in online platforms.

Keywords: Islamic business ethics, Muhammadiyah, subscribers.

1 Introduction

The current digital age has had a significant impact on various aspects of life, including communication, information and entertainment [1]. One manifestation of this technological evolution is the emergence of various social media platforms that offer

different features and benefits to their users. Among the social media platforms is YouTube, a service provided by Google that allows its users to upload videos that can be accessed for free by other users around the world [2]. YouTube has emerged as one of the most prevalent social media platforms in Indonesia, with a utilization rate of 88%, followed by WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. According to recent statistics, the number of social media users in Indonesia has experienced a substantial increase, with a growth of 160 million recorded in January 2020 alone. This figure represents a notable rise from the previous count of 12 million recorded between April 2019 and January 2020. YouTube remains the top choice for users as a place to share and host the world's creativity [3]. A recent study conducted in 2021 found that YouTube ranks as the most popular social media platform in Indonesia, outperforming other platforms in terms of functionality and utility. Based on research conducted by the marketing agency "We Are Social" and the social media management company "Hootsuite," YouTube emerges as the social media platform with the highest monthly usage frequency [4]. In the field of education, the choice of using YouTube as a learning medium is one of the most popular options in the field of information communication technology. Youtube videos are very suitable to be used as learning media in this digital age because they are close to students' daily lives and it is very easy to access and retrieve the needed information. In addition, the current generation is more comfortable watching videos than reading [5]

In addition to providing entertainment and education, YouTube's monetization capabilities can help content creators make a living. Through the YouTube Partner Program and integration with Google AdSense, content creators can earn money from their creative work without having to rely on traditional monetization methods [6]. This feature enables content creators to generate income from advertisements displayed on their videos. However, to access this monetization option, YouTube imposes certain criteria, such as a minimum of 1,000 subscribers and 4,000 watch hours within the past 12 months [7].

These requirements have been designed to incentivize channel owners to rapidly increase their subscriber count and watch time. While there are many ways to achieve this, a YouTube channel must focus on key strategies such as creating attractive thumbnails and a strong channel logo to enhance branding, organizing videos into playlists to retain viewers, and using a compelling trailer to attract first-time visitors. Consistently producing high-quality content with appealing visuals, clear audio, and appropriate music is essential, as is scheduling videos regularly to maintain viewer interest [8]. These requirements encourage channel owners to quickly increase the number of subscribers and watch hours. In an effort to achieve these goals, it is not uncommon for them to use various strategies that are not always ethical, including buying subscribers through services that are widely available on various e-commerce platforms. The practice of buying and selling subscribers has become widespread in the community, although most of them are unaware of its legal status from an Islamic perspective.

This study seeks to conduct an exhaustive analysis of the practice of buying and selling subscribers using the Muhammadiyah *fatwa* methodology approach. By using this method, this research will formulate the view of *shari'a* law on this phenomenon so that it can provide guidance for Muslims in responding to technological developments in the digital age.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Subscriber and the Practice of Selling it

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, a subscriber is defined as an individual who pays a fee, typically on an annual basis, to receive periodic issues of a magazine or newspaper. The term may also be used to denote an individual who provides financial support to an organization, such as a charitable foundation, or a person who pays for the receipt of a service, such as cable television [9]. According to that definition, it can be concluded that a subscriber is an individual who voluntarily subscribes to content with the objective of receiving updates from that content through regular financial contributions, thereby reflecting a commitment to supporting or accessing what is offered. This definition highlights the idea that people choose to subscribe to something, usually to stay updated on content they're interested in. The original definition of a subscription focuses on financial transactions.

The definition of a subscriber in the context of Internet-scale publish/subscribe systems involves receiving only information that has been precisely requested through subscriptions [10]. While the term "subscriber" is frequently linked to YouTube, it more broadly refers to an individual who has registered to receive a service, product, or updates on a regular basis, often through the medium of regular payments. This encompasses subscriptions to magazines, streaming platforms, and online memberships. Subscribers typically enter into contractual agreements that obligate them to make regular payments, whether on a weekly, monthly, or yearly basis. This agreement is often contingent upon the subscriber's continued access to the content or services in question. In exchange for their commitment, subscribers are entitled to receive certain benefits, including exclusive features or content. Furthermore, a subscriber is defined as an individual who elects to follow or maintain current awareness of content from a particular user, page, or channel. By subscribing, users ensure that they receive notifications or alerts whenever new content is posted, such as videos, articles, or updates. This phenomenon is prevalent on various digital platforms, including YouTube, email newsletters, and social media, where individuals subscribe to remain updated on content from creators that aligns with their interests [11].

In today's digital era, the YouTube platform has experienced rapid development and has become one of the most widely used media not only in Indonesia, but also around the world [3]. Along with this evolution, the term subscriber has become increasingly associated with YouTube. This is because YouTube directly uses the term

subscriber to refer to any account or user who has subscribed to a channel. Thus, when people subscribe to a channel, it automatically enrolls them as subscribers, ensuring they are notified whenever new content is published [12].

The subscribe feature is mutually beneficial for both the channel owner and the viewer. This feature enables viewers to maintain current awareness of their preferred channels without the need for manual searching through the search bar [12]. For content creators and channel owners, subscribers are of significant importance. They serve two primary functions: first, they increase the number of viewers for the videos uploaded on the platform; and second, they are a prerequisite for monetization on YouTube. As previously stated, a prerequisite for an account to be monetized—that is, to generate revenue from uploaded videos—is to attain at least 1,000 subscribers and accumulating 4,000 watch hours within the last 12 months [7] (see Fig. 1).

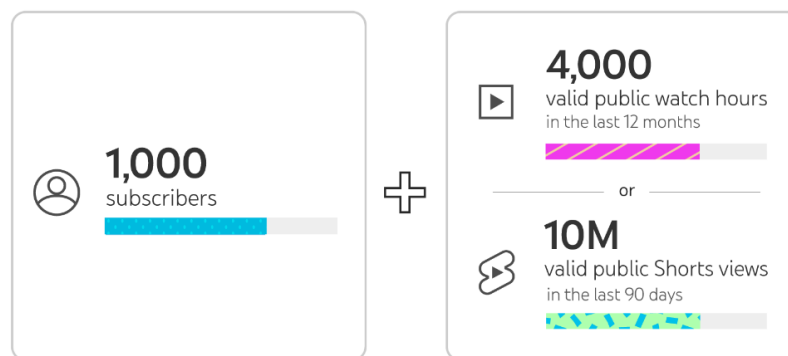


Fig. 1. Youtube Partner Program Eligibility

This fact has encouraged content creators, especially those just starting out, to compete for subscribers. This phenomenon has also created a business opportunity in the form of subscriber buying and selling services offered to YouTube channel owners. This practice is now common on e-commerce platforms such as Tokopedia and Shopee (see Fig. 2). These service providers offer a wide variety of packages and prices, ranging from affordable ones for small subscriber additions to those worth millions of rupiah for large additions.

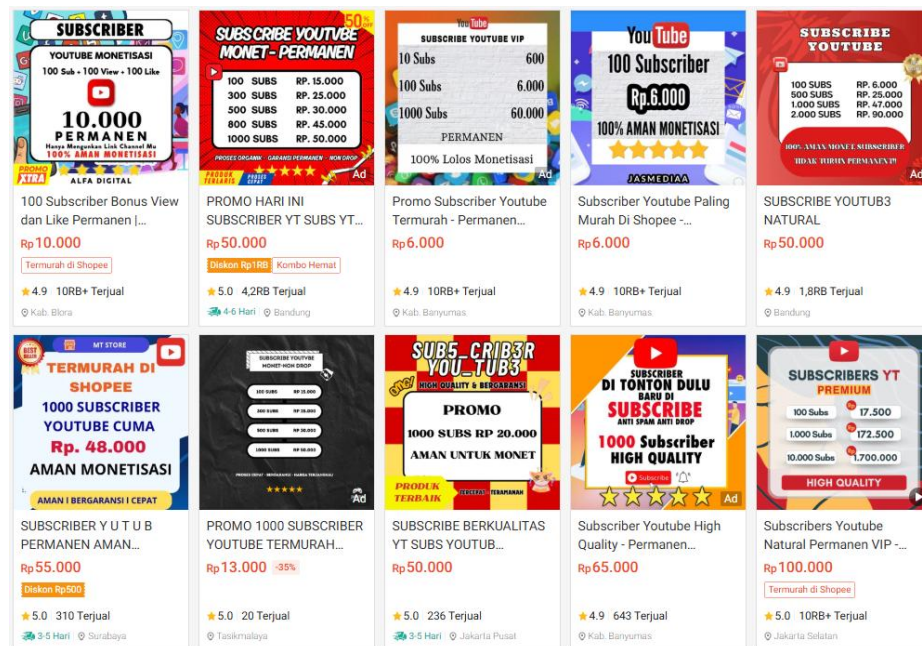


Fig. 2. Subscriber Selling Service Offered on Shopee

In addition to buying and selling subscribers, similar services are offered such as buying and selling followers, likes, and viewers [13]. By using these services, channel owners can instantly increase their subscriber base without having to do any promotional work or improve the quality of their content. They simply pay a set amount of money to get a quick boost in subscribers, with the primary goal of meeting YouTube's monetization requirements to earn revenue from their channel.

Therefore, seeing this phenomenon, it is important for us as Muslims to understand how the law of subscriber buying and selling practices in the view of Islam. Moreover, as one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia [14] and is a religious organization with the largest Muslim community in Indonesia [15], it is necessary to observe how Muhammadiyah analyzes a contemporary issue in formulating the law to produce *fatwa* products based on the principles of its methodology approaches that have been established.

2.2 Muhammadiyah's Approaches to Determine *Shari'a* Law

In the *Tarjih* decision in Jakarta in 2000, it was stated that the approach in Muhammadiyah's *ijtihad* uses the *bayani*, *burhani*, and *'irfani* approaches [16]. The *bayani* approach is based on the interpretation of religious texts (Qur'an and Sunah) with other texts, which in the tradition of *tafsir* is known as *tafsir bi al-ma'tsur* (interpretation based on authentic sources). This approach emphasizes the importance of consistency between the wording and the law it contains, especially in matters of worship [17].

Meanwhile, the *burhani* approach emphasizes rational and logical reasoning based on an analysis of the socio-historical context and argumentative evidence [18]. The *burhani* approach is widely used in modern issues, such as determining the beginning of the lunar month using astronomy. Muhammadiyah combines the text with scholarship to understand new contexts while maintaining the integrity of the text's meaning [19]. Meanwhile, the *'irfani* approach emphasizes inner experience and intuition in understanding divine meaning [18]. This approach has been controversial because of its subjective and connection to the inner self (*batiniah*) [17].

The *ijtihad* method with the *bayani*, *burhani*, and *'irfani* approaches is used by Muhammadiyah to address various issues in society. The *bayani* approach refers directly to the text of the Qur'an and Sunah, *burhani* uses science as a tool of analysis, while *'irfani* emphasizes sensitivity and inner intuition through purification of the soul [20]. Muhammadiyah believes that the three approaches must complement each other and be intertwined in a circular spiral, so that the process of *istinbath* is not based on a single method, but rather on a functional and integrative combination, with the aim of making the resulting Islamic law more comprehensive, accurate, and contextualized in accordance with the development of the times and the needs of the community [18].

In its implementation, Muhammadiyah's *fatwa* method, which combines the *bayani*, *burhani*, and *'irfani* approaches, can be applied in formulating laws related to the practice of buying and selling subscribers. The *bayani* approach is used to review relevant Qur'anic texts and hadiths related to the principles of buying and selling, such as honesty, justice, and the prohibition of *gharar* (uncertainty). The *burhani* approach then analyzes the subscription system, taking into account modern economic aspects, technology, and applicable positive law, such as how digital contracts work or how to ensure transparency in transactions. Finally, the *'irfani* approach helps to explore the moral and spiritual significance of the transaction, such as the intention to provide greater benefits to customers and to avoid harmful practices.

2.3 Previously Relevant Fatwa

In regard to the subject of income derived from the YouTube platform, it is possible for content creators to generate revenue through the Google AdSense program by enrolling in the YouTube Partner Program [21]. AdSense is an advertising program from Google that compensates website and blog owners who display advertisements on their sites. The display of these advertisements is determined by two factors: the subject matter of the content and the demographic characteristics of the visitors to the site. Payment is facilitated through the Pay Per Click (PPC) model, wherein advertisers incur a cost each time an advertisement is selected by a user [22], [23].

In this context, the Muhammadiyah Tarjih and Tajdid Council has issued a *fatwa* regarding the legality of using Google AdSense in the magazine *Suara Muhammadiyah*, No. 16, 2021. The *fatwa* states that the implementation of AdSense is permissible (*mubah*), provided that the owner of the channel or website can guarantee that

advertisements containing elements that are deemed haram or negative elements such as pornography, violence, gambling, or other content contrary to Islamic law. However, if the administrator is unable to manage and monitor the advertisement content in a manner that prevents harm, the principle of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* (preventing harm) becomes applicable, thereby rendering the income impermissible [24]. YouTube has outlined its policies on its website, explaining that it provides channel owners with the ability to review each advertisement and decide whether to allow it to be displayed. They exercise editorial control over advertisements that may appear on the site or in the content of channel owners, and they offer several options to review and block advertisements [25]. If this feature can be proven to be effective and used in an optimal manner, then the income generated from the advertisements displayed will not contain any prohibited elements and will be permissible to receive.

Therefore, further discussion is necessary regarding the legality of buying and selling subscribers, as this practice is increasingly common to meet one of YouTube's monetization requirements, namely reaching 1,000 subscribers [7]. A high number of subscribers has been shown to attract more viewers, which ultimately increases a creator's income. Consequently, a more comprehensive legal examination is necessary to evaluate the validity of this practice from an Islamic perspective, particularly through the lens of the Muhammadiyah *fatwa* methodology approach.

3 Methodology

This research takes a qualitative approach by combining content analysis and literature review methods to examine the law of subscriber buying and selling from the perspective of Muhammadiyah *fatwa* methodology. Primary data sources include the official *fatwa* of Muhammadiyah Tarjih and Tajdid Council, Qur'anic and Hadith texts, and YouTube's policies, such as those regarding fake engagement and its partner program eligibility. Meanwhile, secondary data consists of dictionaries, scholarly journals, and supporting articles relevant to the research topic.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with one key informant, a subscriber service provider with four years of practical experience (2019-2023) in the business. The informant was selected using purposive sampling technique, targeting individuals with direct, hands-on knowledge of subscriber trading mechanisms and market practices. Data analysis was conducted based on three levels of Islamic legal norms according to Muhammadiyah: fundamental values (*al-qiyām al-asāsiyyah*), universal principles (*al-uṣūl al-kullīyyah*), and practical provisions (*al-aḥkām al-far'īyyah*). The results of the analysis are presented descriptively to provide a comprehensive understanding of the validity of subscriber buying and selling practices from an Islamic perspective and the Muhammadiyah *fatwa* methodology.

4 Result and Discussion

4.1 A Discourse on the Subscriber Buying and Selling Mechanism.

The practice of buying and selling subscribers is a new phenomenon that has emerged with the development of digital technology. The term "subscriber" and the practice of buying and selling it were not known at the time of the Prophets or in later times, and gained recognition with the advent of the Internet, particularly following the establishment of YouTube in 2005 by three former PayPal employees: Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim [26]. Therefore, as a contemporary term and practice, it is necessary to explore how the mechanism of this practice takes place, including the ordering process to the technicalities of adding subscribers instantly.

The literature that specifically discusses the mechanism of buying and selling subscribers in detail is very limited. Most of the research that has been done discusses the buying and selling of Instagram followers, which were initially developed in various online stores [27]. Therefore, this research takes an empirical approach through direct interviews with the actors of the service industry. This is in accordance with the principle of Muhammadiyah *fatwa* methodology that when discussing a problem, especially contemporary problems, one of the steps taken for later consideration in the formulation of law is to ask the problem to those who understand and are experts in their fields, as in the formulation of the *fatwa* on cigarettes inviting health experts, demographers and sociologists [28].

The present study involved an informant with four years of experience in selling subscriber and follower services. The interview was conducted via the WhatsApp application in the form of text messages and voice notes on April 9, 2025, at 12:33 PM, addressing several questions regarding the security of the service against the risk of account blocking by YouTube, the source of accounts used to inject subscribers, and the potential decrease in the number of subscribers after purchase. The following is a transcript of the interview, accompanied by its results:

Table 1. Transcript of the interview with subscribers' seller.

Question	Answer
1 What services have you offered and how long have you been doing them?	I sell Instagram followers and YouTube subscribers, for 4 years from 2019 to 2023.
2 I would like to ask about buying and selling subscribers. Where do the subscribers come from? Are they active accounts?	They can be active or inactive, depending on the request. If they are active accounts, they are fictional accounts created by the service provider, so they have access to those accounts, including watching videos, liking, and commenting. However, if they are inactive accounts, they are bot subscribers created once and then run by the system. In inactive accounts, the service provider does not have access to activities because they are entirely automated

	programs designed solely to increase the number of subscribers.
3 Regarding active accounts, how can service providers run so many accounts actively, including giving likes and comments?	Generally, service providers use a coding system via the web, so that these accounts are automatically programmed to give likes and comments on the channels of users who have been injected with subscribers.
4 Does YouTube allow the practice of buying and selling subscribers like this? If not, what can be done to avoid detection by YouTube?	Of course, YouTube does not allow this and will block accounts found to be injecting subscribers. Therefore, the injection is typically done gradually or not all at once to appear organic and avoid detection.
5 Is there a possibility that subscribers will decrease after injection?	Yes, because the system used may have bugs, which are errors or defects in the software that cause the program or system to not function as expected. Subscriber decreases often occur due to these bugs.
6 Many subscriber sellers guarantee that subscribers will not decrease. Does that mean it's not true?	It is possible that bugs are not currently appearing because the system they use is advanced and up-to-date. However, the more advanced the system, the more sophisticated the bugs can become. Therefore, there is still a possibility that subscribers may decrease in the future.

The result of the interview reveals several facts that should be considered in the formulation of laws, including the following:

In practice, two types of accounts are used to inject subscribers: active accounts and passive accounts. Active accounts are considered fictitious accounts that are controlled by service providers to perform interactions such as watching videos, liking, and commenting. In contrast, passive accounts are subscriber bots that only serve to increase the number of subscribers without any other activity. Secondly, it is important to note that YouTube does not tolerate the practice of purchasing subscribers. Accounts that are discovered to be engaging in this type of activity may be subject to a block. Consequently, service providers generally implement a gradual subscription injection strategy to ensure the appearance of organic growth and evade detection. Thirdly, despite the claims of certain vendors that the quantity of subscribers will remain constant, a reduction in subscriber numbers is still a possibility. This is due to the potential for loss of subscribers in the event of system errors or the presence of bugs.

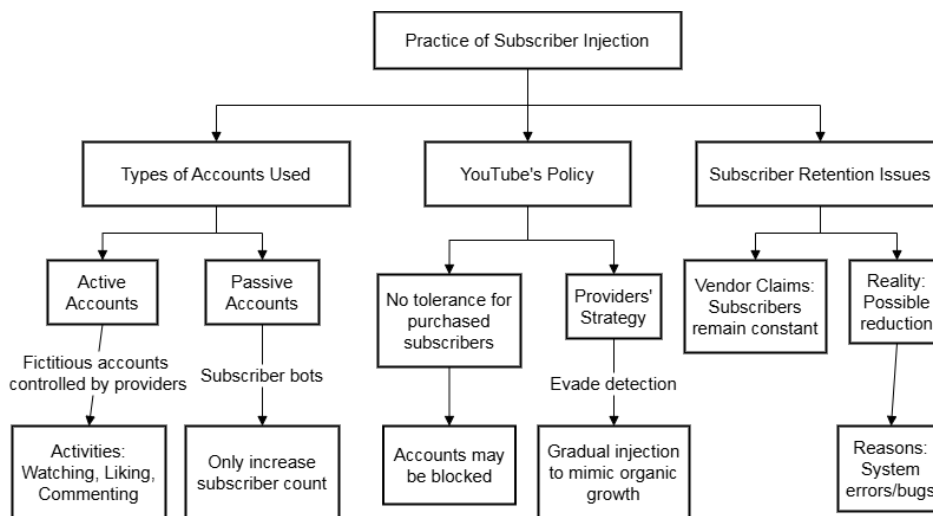


Fig. 3. Practice of Subscriber Injection on YouTube

4.2 The Process of Formulating *Fatwa*

Buying and selling subscribers is one of the forms of business or transactions, therefore, returning to the original law in *mu'amalah* activities, namely, all *mu'amalah* activities are permissible as long as there is no evidence to explain the prohibition. This is based on a *fiqh* rule as follows:

الأصل في الأشياء الإباحة حتى يدل الدليل على التحريم.

Meaning: “The basic principle in everything is that it is permissible until there is evidence to show that it is forbidden.” [29]

In accordance with the above-mentioned *fiqh* principle, the prevailing ruling in *mu'amalah* is that all actions are permissible unless there is an explicit or implicit prohibition in the Qur'an and Sunah.

It is noteworthy that Islamic teachings encompass a framework for business ethics, as articulated in the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih* (Collection of Tarjih Decisions) Volume 3, specifically in the section addressing the 26th National Tarjih Conference in Padang in 2003. As delineated in the Islamic business ethics, the criteria for business activities include the prohibitions of lies, fraud or deception, *gharar* (speculation), and oppression [30]. With regard to the technical procedures (methods) of Muhammadiyah *fatwa* council in the formulation of law, one such method is the use of hierarchical assumptions. That is to say, the Islamic legal norms are structured hierarchically. At the highest level are the foundational values (*al-qiyām al-asāsiyyah*), which include tawhid, justice, public interest, and ethics. These principles are derived from the Qur'an and Sunah as well as the realities of life. These fundamental principles form the basis for universal principles (*al-uṣūl al-kulliyyah*), which are the result of deduction or abstraction from the fundamental principles and primary sources. These principles

subsequently serve as the foundation for the establishment of practical provisions (*al-aḥkām al-far'īyyah*), which represent the codified rules of *Shari'a* that are applicable to particular legal cases [19].

By seeing and observing how the practice of buying and selling subscribers is carried out, then analyzed through a three-leveled approach to norms in Islamic law (*al-qiyām al-asāsiyyah*, *al-uṣūl al-kullīyyah*, and *al-aḥkām al-far'īyyah*), it will produce several practical legal provisions that will be the defining indicators of legal formulation; namely, the prohibition of lying and cheating, the prohibition of injustice, and the prohibition of *gharar* (uncertainty).

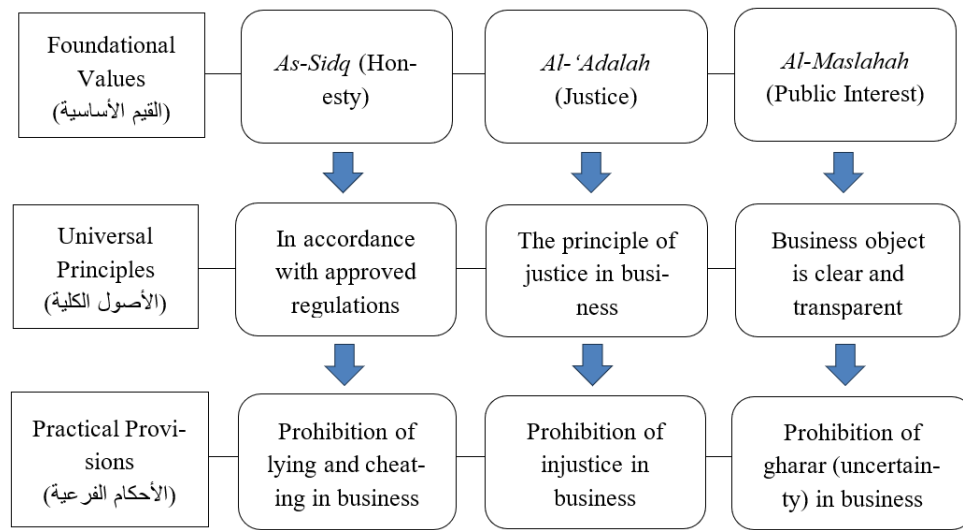


Fig. 4. The process of using the three-leveled approach to norms in Islamic law.

4.3 The Practice of Buying and Selling Subscribers Contains Lies and Fraudulent.

In Islamic teachings, honesty is a very basic principle in any transaction, including buying and selling. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of honesty in Surah Al-Muthaffifin verses 1-3:

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ (1) الَّذِينَ إِذَا اكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ (2) وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ (3)

Meaning: "(1) Woe to those who cheat (in measuring and weighing)! (2) (Those) who, when they receive a measure from others, ask to be measured. (3) And when they measure or weigh (for others), they deduct."

This is also in line with the Hadith which prohibits all forms of cheating:

مَنْ غَشَّنَا فَلَيْسَ مِنَّا

Meaning: "Whoever deceives us is not one of us." (Hadith narrated by Muslim no. 101) [31]

Based on these verses and hadiths, it is clear that any form of lies and fraud in transactions is prohibited in Islam. When combined with the practice of buying and selling subscribers, there is an element of lying involved. As explained earlier, the subscribers that are purchased do not come from real accounts that voluntarily and knowingly subscribe to a channel. Instead, these accounts are intentionally created by the seller for business purposes only (see Fig 3). Therefore, the subscriber that appears on the buyer's channel is actually a fake subscriber because it does not meet the actual definition of subscriber, which is someone who chooses to follow or stay updated with content from a specific user, page, or channel [11]. In this context, it is evident that YouTube users are being exposed to deception and misinformation.

It has been demonstrated that, in addition to the use of falsehood, this practice also involves the perpetration of fraud. YouTube, a video content platform, strictly prohibits the manipulation of subscribers. This phenomenon is delineated in YouTube's Fake Engagement Policy, which stipulates that YouTube does not allow for the artificial increase of views, likes, comments, or other metrics through the use of automatic systems or the serving of videos to unsuspecting viewers. Furthermore, content that is exclusively designed to motivate viewers to engage (e.g., views, likes, comments, etc.) is strictly forbidden. Consequently, content and channels that do not adhere to this policy may face termination and removal from YouTube [32].

To circumvent the policy, subscriber sellers usually get around it by gradually injecting subscribers so that they are not detected by the system (see Fig 3). This strategy is clearly intended to deceive the system and keep the buyer's account from being threatened with suspension by Youtube. There is no justification for this action, as Youtube's policy is certainly not without reason; they are undoubtedly based on principles of fairness and the greater good. When someone decides to become a content creator on a platform such as Youtube and agrees to its policies, he is obligated to abide by the agreement as long as it does not conflict with the Islamic principles—that is, it does not legalize the haram or forbid the halal. This is in accordance with the prophetic tradition recorded in the Hadith:

وَالْمُسْلِمُونَ عَلَى شُرُوطِهِمْ إِلَّا شَرْطًا حَرَّمَ حَلَالًا أَوْ أَحَلَّ حَرَامًا

Meaning: “*And the Muslims should fulfill the conditions that they have agreed upon, except those that forbid something halal (lawful) or make lawful something haram (unlawful)*” (Hadith narrated by Tirmidhi no. 1352, he said the hadith is Hasan Sahih). [33]

As such, the practice of buying and selling subscribers is not only contrary to the principle of honesty in Islam, but also violates business ethics and agreements made when using the YouTube platform.

4.4 The Practice of Buying and Selling Subscribers is a Form of Injustice.

Muslims are obligated to uphold the principle of justice in all their activities, including commercial transactions. There should be no one who engages in the

oppression of others, nor should it be subject to such injustice or oppression. As explained in Surah Al-Maidah verse 8:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاَنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ۚ اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

Meaning: “O you who believe, be those who always establish (the truth) for the sake of Allah, bearing witness with justice. And let not your hatred of any people lead you to be unjust. Be just, for justice is nearer to piety. And fear Allah, surely Allah knows best what you do.”

When it comes to the practice of buying and selling subscribers, there is an element of oppression and unfairness that negatively impacts other players in the content business. Channel owners who buy fake subscribers have indirectly tyrannized other creators who are trying to honestly and consistently improve the quality of their content to attract subscribers naturally. This creates an uneven playing field. The unfairness is seen when someone who is not serious about creating content, even committing fraud, actually gains popularity and higher income compared to those who work hard and honestly.

From this description, it can be concluded that the practice of buying and selling subscribers not only violates ethics, but also contradicts the principles of justice in Islam. It creates space for some people to oppress others.

4.5 Buying and Selling Subscribers Has Elements of *Gharar* and Manipulation

Islam places significant emphasis on the consideration of *maslahah* (public interest) in all forms of transactions. In contrast, Islam prohibits various forms of *mu'amalah* (transactions) that contain *mafsadah* (harm), including the prohibition of consuming something that belongs to others in an unlawful manner. One such form of these transactions is the presence of *gharar* (uncertainty). Consequently, Islam stipulates that all transactions must be executed with clarity (*wudhuh*) and transparency, ensuring that no information is withheld or ambiguity exists to potentially compromise the interests of any party involved. The prohibition against *gharar* is emphasized in several hadiths, including the hadith from Abu Hurairah *radhiyallahu 'anhu*:

نَهَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ بَيْعِ الْخَصَاةِ وَعَنْ بَيْعِ الْغَرَرِ

Meaning: “The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, forbade the sale of *al-hashah* (by throwing stones) and the sale of *gharar*.” (Hadith narrated by Muslim no. 1513). [31]

The practice of buying and selling subscribers, if we observe the process, can cause *gharar*. This is because one of the principles of the buying and selling contract is the transfer of ownership [34]. Meanwhile, when buying a subscriber, the buyer still does not have full access to the subscriber he has bought. It may even be that the ownership status is unclear because it is a bot or an inactive account operated by the system. From the recognition of those who have sold subscribers, it is also known that there is a possibility of a decrease in the number of subscribers after the transaction. This is because the system used to inject subscribers may still have technical glitches or bugs,

so it does not perform its proper function (see Fig 3). This situation certainly shows that the transaction does not fulfill the principle of *maslahah* (public interest) and instead contains *gharar*.

Furthermore, this practice also contains elements of demand manipulation, which can be categorized as *bai' najasy*; a form of buying and selling that is prohibited in Islam. As the hadith of Ibn 'Umar *radhiyallahu 'anhuma* states:

نَهَى النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنِ النَّجْشِ

Meaning: “*The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade najasy.*” (Hadith narrated by Bukhari no. 2142) [35]

In this particular context, the term najasy is defined by Wahbah az-Zuhaili in his book *al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuhu* as follows:

وهو أن يزيد الرجل في السلعة، وليس له حاجة بها، إلا ليغلي ثمنها وينفع صاحبها

Meaning: “*Najasy is when someone bids on the price of an item, even though they do not need it, but only to make its price expensive and provide a benefit to the owner of the item.*” [36]

Upon closer inspection, the buying and selling of subscribers follows a similar pattern. Channel owners deliberately buy fake subscribers to make others believe that the channel has a large following and is worth watching. This phenomenon has the potential to influence viewers and encourage them to access the content, which ultimately benefits the channel owner unfairly.

5 Conclusion

Based on the analysis presented, by applying the Muhammadiyah *fatwa* methodology, it concludes that the practice of buying and selling subscribers involves elements of lies, fraud, injustice, and *gharar* (uncertainty), as well as manipulation. Consequently, this practice is deemed impermissible within the framework of Islam. These elements clearly contradict the principles of honesty (*sidq*), justice (*al-'adalah*), and public interest (*maslahah*) as articulated in Islamic business ethics and *mu'amalah*. Consequently, the practice of buying and selling subscribers is prohibited, and social media users, particularly those on YouTube, are strongly encouraged to avoid from such activities and instead prioritize enhancing the quality of their content to ensure that it is beneficial, educational, and consistent with Islamic values. It is hoped that Muslims will always uphold honesty and justice in all transactions and economic activities, and avoid any practices that may harm themselves or others. Furthermore, it is important for policymakers to establish regulations for digital transactions that are consistent with *Shari'a* principles and promote transparency and fairness across online platforms. *Wallahu a'lam bish-shawab*.

References

- [1] D. C. A. Ginting, S. G. Rezeki, A. A. Siregar, and Nurbaiti, "Analisis Pengaruh Jejaring Sosial Terhadap Interaksi Sosial di Era Digital," *PPIMAN: Pusat Publikasi Ilmu Manajemen*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 22–29, Jan. 2024, Accessed: Apr. 30, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://ejournal-nipamof.id/index.php/PPIMAN/article/view/280>
- [2] J. N. A. Rohman and J. Husna, "Situs Youtube Sebagai Media Pemenuhan Kebutuhan Informasi: Sebuah Survei Terhadap Mahasiswa Program Studi Ilmu Perpustakaan Universitas Diponegoro Angkatan 2013-2015," *Jurnal Ilmu Perpustakaan*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 171–180, 2017, Accessed: Apr. 22, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://ejournal3.undip.ac.id/index.php/jip/article/view/23037>
- [3] H. Junawan and N. Laugu, "Eksistensi Media Sosial, Youtube, Instagram dan Whatsapp Ditengah Pandemi Covid-19 Dikalangan Masyarakat Virtual Indonesia," *Baitul Ulum: Jurnal Ilmu Perpustakaan dan Informasi*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 41–57, 2020, doi: <https://doi.org/10.30631/baitululum.v4i1.46>.
- [4] S. Maulinda and S. Riyanto, "The Influence Of Youtube Influencer (Youtuber) On A Brand Promoted Through Social Media (Youtube)," *Manajemen Agribisnis: Jurnal Agribisnis*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 79–86, Jan. 2022, Accessed: Apr. 30, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://ejournal.uniska-kediri.ac.id/index.php/agribisnis/article/view/1708>
- [5] D. Ramadhina and I. Rohman, "Problematika Guru dalam Penggunaan Video Youtube sebagai Media Pembelajaran di Sekolah Dasar," *Mimbar Ilmu*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 117–123, Apr. 2022, doi: <https://doi.org/10.23887/mi.v27i1.45598>.
- [6] M. R. Amu and N. Isima, "Menjembatani Teknologi dan Syariah: Tinjauan Hukum Islam atas Monetisasi YouTube AdSense," *Al-'Aqdu: Journal of Islamic Economics Law*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 54–72, 2024, Accessed: Apr. 30, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://journal.iain-manado.ac.id/index.php/JI/article/view/3190>
- [7] Youtube, "YouTube Partner Program overview & eligibility." Accessed: Apr. 22, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/72851?hl=en>
- [8] D. A. Lupşa-Tătaru and R. Lixăndroiu, "YouTube Channels, Subscribers, Uploads and Views: A Multidimensional Analysis of the First 1700 Channels from July 2022," *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, vol. 14, no. 20, Oct. 2022.
- [9] A. S. Hornby and S. Wehmeier, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 7th Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- [10] I. Burcea, M. Petrovic, and H.-A. Jacobsen, "I know what you mean: semantic issues in Internet-scale publish/subscribe systems," 2003, doi: <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.cs/0311047>.
- [11] LanGeek Dictionary, "Definition of Subscriber." Accessed: Apr. 22, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://dictionary.langeek.co/en-ID/word/180029>
- [12] M. S. Irshad, A. Anand, and M. Bisht, "Modelling popularity dynamics based on YouTube viewers and subscribers," *International Journal of Mathematical,*

- Engineering and Management Sciences*, vol. 4, no. 6, pp. 1508–1521, 2019, doi: <https://dx.doi.org/10.33889/IJMEMS.2019.4.6-119>.
- [13] S. U. Putri and S. S. Salsabila, “Analisis Transaksi Akad Salam dalam Jual Beli Followers, Likes dan Viewers (Studi Kasus Pengguna Instagram Wilayah Makassar),” *AL-KHIYAR: Jurnal Bidang Muamalah dan Ekonomi Islam*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 124–140, Oct. 2022, doi: <https://doi.org/10.36701/al-khiyar.v2i2.646>.
 - [14] R. Lorinda, “Muhammadiyah dan Moderatisme Islam Indonesia,” *Jurnal Studi Islam dan Kemuhammadiyahan (JASIKA)*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 81–94, Sep. 2022, doi: <https://doi.org/10.18196/jasika.v2i2.43>.
 - [15] T. I. Annisa, “Peran Ormas Islam Indonesia Muhammadiyah dalam Membantu Krisis Kemanusiaan Lokal Hingga Global,” *Jurnal J-MendiKKom (Jurnal Manajemen, Pendidikan dan Ilmu Komputer)*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 44–52, 2024, Accessed: Apr. 30, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://jmendikkom.org/index.php/journal/article/view/104/7>
 - [16] M. N. Zuhdi and I. Abror, *Tafsir At-Tanwir Muhammadiyah: Teks, Konteks dan Integrasi Ilmu Pengetahuan*. Bantul: BILDUNG, 2021.
 - [17] G. M. Shadiq, F. Azhari, and F. Hamdi, “Telaah Metodologi Istimbath dan Corak Hukum Islam Lembaga-Lembaga Fatwa di Indonesia (LBMNU, Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah Dan Komisi Fatwa MUI),” *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Jurisprudence Economic and Legal Theory*, no. 2, pp. 684–699, Jun. 2024, doi: <https://doi.org/10.62976/ijjel.v2i2.546>.
 - [18] A. F. Abbas, “Integrasi Pendekatan Bayani, Burhani, dan ‘Irfani dalam Ijtihad Muhammadiyah,” *Ahkam*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 51–58, Jan. 2012, doi: <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v12i1.979>.
 - [19] S. Anwar, *Manhaj Tarjih Muhammadiyah*. Yogyakarta: Panitia Musyawarah Nasional Tarjih Muhammadiyah XXX, 2018.
 - [20] Y. T. A. Fikri, I. A. Gopar, E. Faatinisa, and M. F. A. Dachlan, “Mengenal Metode Istimbath Hukum Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah,” *FASTABIQ: JURNAL STUDI ISLAM*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 94–103, Nov. 2022, doi: <https://doi.org/10.47281/fas.v3i2.120>.
 - [21] J. A. Setiawan, “Bekerja Sebagai Konten Kreator Youtube Menurut Pandangan Islam,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Islam*, vol. 9, no. 3, p. 4128, Nov. 2023, doi: <https://doi.org/10.29040/jiei.v9i3.9874>.
 - [22] D. Saputri, “Advertising Pay Per Click (PPP) sengan Google Adsense Perspektif Hukum Islam,” *YUDISIA: Jurnal Pemikiran Hukum dan Hukum Islam*, vol. 9, 2018, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/yudisia.v9i2.4767>.
 - [23] Youtube, “How AdSense works,” Google Adsense Help. Accessed: Apr. 23, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://support.google.com/adsense/answer/6242051?hl=en>
 - [24] PP Muhammadiyah, *Suara Muhammadiyah*, 16th ed. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Suara Muhammadiyah, 2021.
 - [25] Youtube, “AdSense guide to allow and block ads on your site,” Google Ad-sense Help. Accessed: Apr. 23, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://support.google.com/adsense/answer/180609>

- [26] J. P. Suharsono and D. Nurahman, "Pemanfaatan Youtube Sebagai Media Peningkatan Pelayanan Dan Informasi," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2024, doi: <https://doi.org/10.37329/ganaya.v7i1.3157>.
- [27] M. Kasim, S. Sirajuddin, and Tita Ratna Irmawati, "Hukum Jual Beli Followers di Media Sosial Instagram dalam Perspektif Perbandingan Mazhab," *BUSTANUL FUQAHA: Jurnal Bidang Hukum Islam*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 283–301, Aug. 2023, doi: <https://doi.org/10.36701/bustanul.v4i2.1016>.
- [28] A. R. Auton, "Fatwa Haram Merokok Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah," *Jurnal Agama dan Hak Azazi Manusia*, vol. 1, no. 2, May 2012, doi: <https://doi.org/10.14421/inright.v1i2.1222>.
- [29] Jalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī, *Al-Asybah wa an-Nazā'ir fī Qawā'id wa Furū' Fiqh asy-Syāfi'iyyah*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1983.
- [30] Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid PP Muhammadiyah, *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih Muhammadiyah*, vol. 3. Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2018.
- [31] Imām Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*. Riyadh: Dar al-Mughni, 1998.
- [32] Youtube, "Fake engagement policy," Youtube Help. Accessed: Apr. 23, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/3399767?hl=en>
- [33] al-Tirmidzi, *Sunan al-Tirmidzi*. Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li an-Nasyr wa at-Tawzi'.
- [34] al-Khaṭīb al-Syarbīnī, *Mughni al-Muḥtāj ilā Ma'rifat Ma'ānī Alfāz al-Minhāj*. Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1997.
- [35] al-Imam al-Bukhari, *Shahih al-Bukhari*. Damaskus: Dar Ibn Katsir, 2002.
- [36] Wahbah al-Zuhaili, *Al-Fiqh Al-Islami wa Adillatuhu*. Damaskus: Dar al-Fikr, 1985.