



# Legitimizing and Critical Media Frames Shape Discourse on 2023 Hajj Cost Policy

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**Abstract.** General Background: Media framing plays a significant role in shaping public discourse, particularly in contexts where policy decisions intersect with religious, political, and social dimensions. Specific Background: The Indonesian government's 2023 Hajj cost policy triggered widespread debate in digital media, reflecting competing narratives regarding its justification and implications. Knowledge Gap: However, limited studies have examined how digital media framing constructs public meaning in religious policy debates using systematic analytical frameworks. Aims: This study aims to analyze how digital media framed the 2023 Hajj cost policy and how legitimizing and critical frames contributed to public interpretation. Results: Using a qualitative descriptive approach and Robert N. Entman's framing model, the study analyzes news articles from two leading national online media outlets published between February 15 and 19, 2023. The findings reveal contrasting frames: one outlet presents the policy as a necessary compromise aligned with constitutional responsibility and social stability, while the other emphasizes concerns related to budget efficiency, transparency, and the need for structural reform in Hajj fund management. These differences demonstrate that digital media act as active agents in constructing policy narratives and shaping public discourse. Novelty: This study applies Entman's framing model to a religious public policy issue within Indonesia's digital media environment, highlighting dual framing patterns. Implications: The findings underscore the importance of adaptive government communication strategies and strengthened media literacy to address competing narratives in a plural and digitally mediated public sphere.

**Keywords:** Media framing; Hajj cost policy; Digital media discourse; Religious public policy; Entman framing model

## 1 Introduction

In recent decades, the Hajj has evolved beyond a spiritual obligation into a complex socio-economic and political phenomenon. As one of Islam's five pillars, it holds profound significance for Indonesia; the world's largest Muslim-majority nation. Each year, hundreds of thousands of Indonesian pilgrims travel to the holy land, making the Hajj among the government's largest public service programs. Yet, its organization

remains challenged by administrative and fiscal transparency, particularly concerning fund management and cost determination.

A major turning point in public discourse occurred with the government's 2023 proposal to raise Hajj fees to Rp69 million per pilgrim, a sharp rise from about Rp39 million the previous year (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2023). The proposal sparked intense debate involving state actors, religious leaders, civil society groups, and the media. The issue transcended nominal figures to touch on justice, economic capacity, the principle of *istitha'ah*, and transparency in managing funds under the Hajj Financial Management Agency (BPKH).

This controversy mirrors a broader global pattern in which Hajj financing has become a sensitive issue for many Muslim countries. In Malaysia, the Tabung Haji Institution faced fiscal strain as subsidies failed to match rising demand, revealing tension between state policy and Muslim expectations [1]. Similarly, Indonesia's partially subsidized cost structure through BPKH's benefit value sparked debate extending beyond technocratic concerns into ideological, moral, and political domains. The imbalance between departure quotas and an expanding waiting list further heightened social pressure on national Hajj policy.

Within this context, the media plays a central role in shaping public understanding. Through narrative construction, media outlets do not merely report events but define social reality. Coverage of the 2023 Hajj cost increase exemplifies how sensitive issues are produced and mediated through specific frames. Two major outlets; *Republika* and *Kompas*, offer a compelling comparison due to their contrasting ideological orientations and audience bases. *Republika*, often associated with urban Muslim readership, emphasizes moral and spiritual dimensions, while *Kompas*, historically rooted in Catholic tradition but now secular, tends to analyze religion through public policy, bureaucratic, and fiscal lenses.

Framing analysis is thus relevant to uncover how these outlets shape differing narratives on the same issue. According to Entman [2], framing is the process of selecting and emphasizing aspects of reality to construct public understanding of problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and solution suggestion. It explains not only what is reported, but how and why stories are organized to promote specific interpretations. Through source selection, diction, and structure, framing subtly guides audience perception.

Previous studies on media framing of religion in Indonesia generally focus on conflict, intolerance, or identity politics [3] [4]. While valuable, few have explored framing in religious policy contexts directly affecting spiritual life, such as the Hajj. This study fills that gap by examining how media framing, particularly regarding Hajj costs, constructs meaning and shapes public perception of government policy.

Hariyanto and Nurjanah [5] found that *Republika* tends to frame Islamic and sharia issues through symbolic and moral narratives tied to religious authority, while *Kompas* emphasizes regulation and fiscal accountability. Similarly, Alfiandri [6] noted that Indonesian online media adapt framing strategies according to audience segmentation and editorial orientation. These insights suggest that differing editorial ideologies likely manifest in distinct framings of the 2023 Hajj cost increase.

This study adopts the social constructivist view that reality is socially produced through symbolic interaction and communication [7]. The media act as externalizing agents that shape collective knowledge and meaning. Hence, public understanding of the Hajj cost increase stems not from direct experience but from mediated narratives. Examining how *Republika* and *Kompas* construct this issue reveals how media transform policy debates into moral and ideological discourses.

Accordingly, this research critically analyzes how *Republika* and *Kompas* frame the 2023 Hajj cost increase using Robert N. Entman's model; problem definition, causal diagnosis, moral judgment, and treatment recommendation. It identifies framing differences, actor representation, and narrative strategies across both outlets, contributing theoretically to mass communication scholarship and practically to religious media literacy.

In Indonesia's democratic landscape, the media function as a "fourth pillar," shaping collective opinion and influencing policy interpretation. Understanding media framing is vital not only to grasp content but also to uncover underlying intentions and ideological positioning. Framing theory posits that the media actively construct reality through interpretive packages rather than neutrally mirroring it [2].

Institutionally, *Republika* caters to religious urban Muslim communities and highlights Islamic narratives [8], while *Kompas*, as a pluralist nationalist outlet, prioritizes rational and data-driven reporting. These orientations influence source selection and story structure. Consequently, *Republika* amplifies voices of clerics and pilgrims, while *Kompas* frames the issue through macro-structural and technocratic reasoning. Such contrasts offer fertile ground for examining divergent narrative constructions.

Media framing can significantly shape audience perceptions of religious issues. Aziz [9](2021) found that conservative outlets framed the pandemic-era Hajj cancellation as state failure to fulfill spiritual duties, while nationalist media depicted it as prudent public health policy illustrating framing's ideological dimension. However, few studies explicitly compare two leading Indonesian media using Entman's full analytical framework. This research addresses that gap by offering a critical comparative reading of Hajj policy discourse.

Beyond representation, framing also influences what Lücking [10] calls the "public moral economy," where citizens assess state actions not only economically but through moral and religious lenses. Thus, framing contributes to shaping collective ethical evaluations of state performance in sacred matters.

Methodologically, this study analyzes news published between February 15 and 19, 2023, when the proposed fee increase dominated public discussion, sourced from *Republika.co.id* and *Kompas.com* via purposive keyword sampling. Using Entman's four-element framing framework, qualitative interpretation identifies patterns in narrative construction. This approach emphasizes interpretation and contextual meaning consistent with the constructivist paradigm [7].

In this view, media act as producers of meaning rather than passive transmitters [11]. Frames serve as interpretive packages guiding audience understanding. By comparing framing devices across the two outlets, this study examines how public perception of government policy is constructed, legitimized, or contested through narrative choices.

The issue of Hajj costs resonates deeply with collective trust in state religious institutions and moral accountability. Samsudin [12] observed that religiously segmented media employ stronger emotional and moral frames, amplifying public responses to policy issues. Depending on narrative emphasis, media can either fuel skepticism toward institutions or promote acceptance of state rationality [13].

In Indonesia's socio-political context, where religion and identity politics intertwine, such framing can serve as instruments of politicization or normalization. This research thus examines whether *Republika* and *Kompas*' framing reflects ideological alignments with their editorial orientations. Often, framing operates implicitly through word choice, information sequencing, or headline emphasis. By applying Entman's framework, this study uncovers these subtle mechanisms of meaning-making.

Anchored in communication ethnography, this study acknowledges that media discourse is inseparable from cultural and religious contexts [14]. It situates the Hajj cost debate within Indonesia's moral and historical landscape, where religious policies often generate high public resonance [15].

Through interpretive qualitative analysis, this research contributes to advancing media framing theory and strengthening critical media literacy in the digital age. Understanding how religion-based narratives are constructed helps mitigate disinformation and polarization arising from ideological framing. For policymakers, journalists, and religious institutions such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and BPKH, these insights can inform more inclusive public communication strategies.

Ultimately, journalism's ethical responsibility lies in balancing accuracy, fairness, and sensitivity in reporting faith-related issues. By comparing *Republika* and *Kompas*, this study offers an in-depth picture of how media ideology, audience segmentation, and framing intersect to shape national discourse on Hajj policy. Strengthening awareness of these dynamics is crucial for fostering informed, critical, and socially cohesive communication in Indonesia's democratic society.

## 2 Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to interpret how the media construct meanings around the 2023 Hajj cost increase. This approach captures the complexity of ideology and narrative embedded in religious media discourse, where symbolic and moral dimensions dominate. A qualitative design is particularly suited to communication phenomena that cannot be quantified but must be understood through in-depth interpretation [9] [5].

The research adopts the social constructivist paradigm proposed by Berger and Luckmann [7], which views social reality as constructed through communication. Within this paradigm, the media act as active agents that shape public understanding and perception of policy issues rather than merely transmitting information. Hence, analyzing media representation of the Hajj cost increase becomes essential to revealing how social meanings are produced.

The study applies Robert N. Entman's [2] four-element framing model as its analytical framework:

- Define problems – identifying how the issue is presented as a problem,
- Diagnose causes – determining who or what is blamed,
- Make moral judgments – assessing the ethical stance applied, and
- Suggest remedies – highlighting explicit or implicit policy recommendations.

The unit of analysis comprises online news articles from *Republika.co.id* and *Kompas.com* published between February 15–19, 2023, coinciding with the peak of public debate over the Ministry of Religious Affairs’ proposed increase in the Hajj Implementation Fee (BPIH). Only articles directly addressing the 2023 Hajj cost issue were included.

Data were collected through online documentation using a purposive sampling technique based on keywords “Hajj cost 2023,” “BPIH increase,” and “Hajj cost proposal.” Articles were accessed via search engines and the official media websites. Each news text was treated as a complete analytical unit, while paragraphs were coded as units of meaning to map framing elements.

Data analysis was conducted manually through iterative reading to identify textual segments corresponding to Entman’s four framing categories. The coded data were organized into thematic tables to compare framing tendencies between the two outlets. Differences and similarities were analyzed to uncover ideological orientations, audience segmentation, and narrative strategies reflected in each medium [6] [8].

This research is comparative, examining two media with distinct ideological orientations, and exploratory, seeking implicit meanings within the news narratives. The interpretive framework positions the media as ideological institutions with power to construct the social meaning of reality.

To ensure data validity, theoretical triangulation was applied by referencing literature on media framing in religious policy communication. Additionally, peer debriefing with fellow researchers was conducted to evaluate coding consistency and interpretation accuracy.

**2.1 Framing Analysis Technique according to Robert Entman**

**Table 1.** Framing Categories Based on Entman’s Model

Define Problem (Problem Definition)	How is an event/issue seen? As what? Or as what problem?
Diagnose Causes (Estimating the problem or source of the problem)	What is the event seen as caused by? What is considered to be the cause of a problem? Who (actor) is considered to be the cause of the problem?
Make Moral Judgement	What moral values are presented to explain the problem? What moral values are used to legitimize or delegitimize an action?
Treatment Recommendati-	What solutions are offered to overcome the problem/issue?

on (emphasize problem solving)	What paths are offered and should be taken to overcome the problem?
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### 3 Results And Discussion

#### 3.1 Framing Analysis of Republika.co.id News Coverage

After the determination of the Hajj Pilgrimage Cost (BPIH) for 2023, on February 15, 2023, by the Government together with the Indonesian Parliament, Republika.co.id published some news coverage. The framing analysis that researchers obtained is as follows:

Republika.co.id predominantly framed the 2023 Hajj cost increase as a necessary and moderate policy compromise, emphasizing fiscal sustainability, religious responsibility, and the government's commitment to ensuring equitable access for pilgrims. From the news, researchers observed the news construction built by Republika.co.id, following Entman's framing analysis method as follows:

##### Define Problem

Republika.co.id views the price increase of the Hajj cost as a middle way effort. This is in the news entitled "The Determination of Hajj Costs in 2023 is Considered a Middle Way," which aired on Wednesday (February 15, 2023 at 08:36 p.m). Quoting a statement from the statement of an Indonesian Hajj and Umrah Observer, Ade Marfuddin. Ade views that the determination of Bipih and BPIH 2023 is the result of joint efforts to find a middle ground. The principle does not burden prospective pilgrims, so they can leave without any financing problems.

According to Ade, the determination of Bipih and BPIH must consider rational and factual elements.

"But I have always been consistent from the beginning, Bipih and BPIH must consider rational and factual elements," Ade told Republika, Wednesday (15/2/2023).

Ade explained, rational and factual conditions, there are indeed changes in value, price, fluctuations, and money exchange rates. This must be accepted by anyone because the facts are like that.

According to him, if you continue to tinker with the value of benefits to reduce the Bipih borne by prospective pilgrims. Then it will be irrational and unbalanced.

He emphasized that the question will arise, where is the *istithaah* of Hajj if it continues to rely on the beneficial value of Hajj funds in an excessive manner. Later the value of benefits will continue to be depleted. In fact, there must be aspects of sustainability and justice, this is what all parties must consider.

##### Diagnose Causes (Estimating the problem or source of the problem)

Republika.co.id views that the increase in Bipih is a natural thing. This emerged from the news entitled "Bipih 2023 Rises Rp 10 million Considered Reasonable" which aired on Friday (February 17, 2023 at 06:25 p.m). In the news, Republika quoted the statement of the Chairman of the National Commission for Hajj and Umrah, Mustolih Siradj, emphasizing that the increase in the cost of Hajj is inevitable, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The increase in the cost of Hajj is inevitable from year to year, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic hit almost the entire world which caused an economic crisis," Mustolih said when contacted by *Republika*, Thursday (16/2).

With this view, *Republika.co.id* views that the increase in the cost of the Hajj is unavoidable. This is due to the economic crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic that hit the world. Thus, causing an increase in prices. This is presented in several statements in the same news:

At the same time, according to Mustolih, the organization of the Hajj pilgrimage will depend on various situations. For example, he said, the exchange rate of the United States dollar and the Saudi Arabian riyal. In addition, the organization of the Hajj will also depend on Saudi Arabia's policies with the increase in commodity sector taxes.

Another statement was strengthened from the General Secretary of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership Prof. Abdul Mu'ti as follows:

General Secretary of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership Prof. Abdul Mu'ti accepted the determination of the bipih of Rp 49.8 million that had been agreed upon in the DPR, Senayan, Jakarta, Thursday (15/2/2023). According to him, the figure is still fairly reasonable.

"The hajj cost of Rp 49.8 million is a reasonable price. The cost has also been approved by the DPR, which together with the government has tried to conduct careful studies and calculations," Prof. Mu'ti said when confirmed by *Republika*, Thursday (16/2/2023).

With this cost, the Professor of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta hopes that pilgrims who perform the pilgrimage can get the best service, carry out worship comfortably, safely, smoothly, and get a mabrur hajj.

"The government also needs to plan the cost of Hajj comprehensively and submit it openly to the public for input. Although, if the cost is determined, it is not easy, especially from the transportation and accommodation components whose amount is greatly influenced by the rupiah exchange rate," said Prof. Mu'ti.

Another statement also emerged from the Chairman of the Islamic Association (PERSIS) KH Jeje Zaenudin, as follows:

Chairman of the Islamic Association (PERSIS) KH Jeje Zaenudin said that the increase in the cost of Hajj this year was almost in accordance with the figures previously proposed by Persis. "Even if the cost must increase, the maximum is sought in the range of Rp 49.4 million," Kiai Jeje told *Republika* on Thursday (16/2/2023).

He also accepted the amount of Hajj costs that had been agreed upon by the government and the DPR RI. However, he admitted, the figure of Rp. 49.8 million was not small. According to him, this value is relatively more acceptable because it reflects on last year's increase in Bipih which reached Rp. 39.8 million.

"And usually, pilgrims who already know that in one year they will be called to go on Hajj, they try to prepare the repayment fee and the cost for provisions. It could be that the cost for provisions is prioritized for the repayment of the bipih fee," he said.

The pilgrims only need to focus on the implementation of worship perfectly and maximally. "We are grateful that the government is accommodating various community proposals," he said.

### **Make Moral Judgement (provide moral decisions)**

As a follow-up to the inevitable increase in the cost of Hajj, the consequence of organizing the Hajj pilgrimage must be based on the principles of justice and sustainability. This fair and sustainable Moral Judgement was stated by *Republika.co.id* in the news entitled "BKPH Sebut Pemerintah Berkomitmen Biaya Haji Berkeadilan dan Berkelanjutan" ("BKPH Says Government Committed to Fair and Sustainable Hajj Costs") which aired on Saturday (February 18, 2023 at 06:35 a.m).

Member of the Executive Board of the Hajj Financial Management Agency (BPKH) Amri Yusuf said the government and Commission VIII of the Indonesian Parliament had a commitment that the 2023 hajj costs must be equitable and sustainable.

Therefore, according to him, the composition of this year's BPIH, which is worth Rp 90 million, is determined with details of Bipih of Rp 49.8 million (55.3 percent) and from the value of benefits of Rp 40.2 million (44.7 percent).

So, friends in the DPR and the government have a commitment in 2023 to the concept of BPIH or Bipih which is fair and sustainable, including to fulfill the principle of *istitha'ah*, starting with a composition of 55-45 for this year," Amri said after being a speaker in a discussion entitled "BPIH is Fair and Sustainable" at the PP Muhammadiyah Building, Menteng, Central Jakarta, Friday (17/2/2023).

### **Treatment Recommendation (emphasizing problem solving)**

To solve this problem, the services of pilgrims must be optimized. This is highlighted in the news entitled "Biaya Bipih Jamaah Haji Meningkatkan, Wapres Ingatkan Pelayanan Lebih Optimal" ("Hajj Pilgrims' Bipih Costs Increase, Vice President Reminds Optimal Services") which aired on Sunday (February 19, 2023 at 04:52 p.m).

Vice President Ma'ruf Amin asked that the organization and service of the 2023 hajj pilgrims be prepared optimally. This is because the quota for Indonesian Hajj pilgrims in 2023 has returned to normal as many as 221,000 people and more than 61,000 of them are elderly pilgrims.

"I think the service must be optimized, this service concerns health problems, concerns the problem of Hajj guidance, concerns the problem of lodging, the problem of places that are not too far away, then also the catering," Kiai Ma'ruf said in a press statement after attending the *Muhasabah* and *Istigasah* Prayers for the Safety of the Nation in commemoration of the *Isra Mi'raj* of the Prophet Muhammad SAW at the *Cianjur Great Mosque*, Sunday (19/02/2023).

Kiai Ma'ruf asked that good services be maintained and even improved. Meanwhile, those that are still lacking should be evaluated.

Especially with the increase in the cost of pilgrimage travel (Bipih) for pilgrims this year amounting to IDR 49.8 million or 55.3 percent of the cost of organizing the pilgrimage (BPIH).

### **Framing Analysis of Kompas.com News**

In contrast, *Kompas.com* adopted a more critical framing by highlighting budget inconsistency, fund sustainability, and the need for long-term structural reform in Hajj fund management. From the news, we can see the framing raised by *Kompas.com* on the issue of the hajj cost increase.

### **Define Problem**

Kompas.com presents a note related to the price increase of the Hajj cost with the title "Post-Hajj Cost (Still) Rising Note" written by Irvan Maulana, Director of the Center of Economic and Social Innovation Studies (CESIS) and aired on February 16, 2023. According to Irvan, although it should be appreciated, there are several notes from this decision, including:

Kompas.com frames the 2023 Hajj cost increase as a politically nuanced and structurally problematic policy decision. The outlet highlights the inconsistency of the government's initial proposal to raise Hajj costs to Rp 69 million, questioning the rationale behind projecting a crisis narrative about Hajj fund sustainability when the final cost was later reduced to Rp 49.8 million. This shift is interpreted as evidence of weak budget planning and inadequate risk management in Hajj fund governance, particularly in the fluctuating calculation of key components such as masyair costs. Furthermore, Kompas emphasizes the declining value of annual benefits managed by BPKH, arguing that sustainability should be pursued through optimizing investment returns rather than transferring the financial burden to pilgrims. Taken together, Kompas constructs the issue as a combination of political signaling, budgetary inconsistency, and suboptimal management of Hajj funds, which undermines long-term fiscal sustainability and public trust.

### **Diagnose Causes (Estimating the problem or source of the problem)**

In its reporting, Kompas.com's news framing sees that the increase in the cost of Hajj is something that cannot be avoided due to the economic crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic which has caused several prices for the needs of organizing the Hajj pilgrimage such as accommodation, transportation and consumption to increase. This can be seen in the news "Chairman of the National Hajj Commission: Hajj Cost Increase is Unavoidable" which aired on Friday (February 17, 2023 at 02.00 p.m).

Responding to this, Chairman of the National Commission for Hajj and Umrah Mustolih Siradj said that the increase in the cost of Hajj is inevitable from year to year. Moreover, after the Covid-19 pandemic hit almost all over the world which caused an economic crisis.

According to Mustolih, at the same time the organization of the Hajj pilgrimage will largely depend on the situation and many things. Such as the cost of Hajj, which mostly uses the US dollar and Saudi Arabian currency so that the exchange rate will be very influential. Then, Saudi Arabia's policy regarding the increase in commodity sector taxes. Liberalization of the implementation of the Saudi Arabian Hajj in the Hajj sector. This gives greater space so that using a business to business or business to customer pattern will also hoist prices.

In addition, airplane costs have risen due to the increase in fuel prices and services at embarkation and debarkation airports, as well as the global crisis and other factors. Therefore, it is certain that the cost of Hajj will continue to rise every year and has been particularly pronounced in the past two years.

in the past two years.

However, the interesting thing that Kompas.com highlights is related to the value of benefits that will run out if it continues to be used. This can be seen in the news entitled "Prolonged Debate Over 2023 Hajj Costs, Ministry of Religious Affairs Warns

BPKH Funds May Be Depleted Within Five Years” which aired on Thursday (February 16, 2023 at 12:18 p.m).

Based on the Ministry of Religious Affairs' calculations on the results of the agreement on the nominal BPIH which became Rp 90.05 million and Bipih which fell to Rp 49.8 million, the balance of the beneficial value taken for this year reached Rp 2 trillion.

Meanwhile, the BPKH balance itself has been taken about Rp 2 trillion for the 2022 hajj departure considering that the increase in masyair fees last year was announced a week before the first batch of Indonesian pilgrims departed.

Finally, because of this incident, BPKH deposited the value of benefits up to 59 percent to the current year's Hajj pilgrims last year. Meanwhile, the balance owned by BPKH from the results of management in 2020 and 2021 when there was no Hajj pilgrimage reached IDR 15 trillion.

This means that if the IDR 2 trillion deficit scheme runs every year, the balance will run out in the next 5 years. In fact, there are around 5 million waiting pilgrims who are entitled to the beneficial value of their initial deposit.

Therefore, Yaqut reminded that the sustainability of BPKH's benefit value needs to be a common concern. Although currently the percentage of the value of benefits distributed by BPKH is not ideal, he hopes that the value will be more proportional in the coming years.

This shows that the increase in the cost of Hajj is not only due to price increases due to the economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, but also to maintain the value of benefits so that it can be sustainable for future pilgrims to enjoy.

### **Make Moral Judgement.**

The moral value raised by Kompas.com in this issue is that this decision is a wise and prudent thing, as conveyed by the Deputy Chairman of MUI in the news entitled “Hajj Cost Set at Rp 49.8 Million: MUI Deputy Chair Praises the Decision but Raises Concerns” which aired on Friday (February 17, 2023 at 01:52 p.m).

The decision of the DPR and the government which has decided that the BPIH will decrease to IDR 90,050,637.26 and the Bipih paid by pilgrims will be IDR 49,812,700 or 55.3 percent of the total BPIH is a wise and prudent decision," Anwar told Kompas.com, Friday (17/2/2023). Even so, Anwar said, the provision of value benefits to the current year's pilgrims needs to be considered.

With the lowered Bipih, the benefit value provided by the Hajj Financial Management Agency (BPKH) for pilgrims in 2023 amounted to Rp 40,237,937 or 44.7 percent, far greater than the original proposal of around Rp 29.7 million or 30 percent.

According to him, the government will have difficulties if the value of BPKH benefits is distributed more than 30 percent each year.

The moral value that Kompas.com wants to convey is that this wise decision must be accompanied by attention to Hajj pilgrims in obtaining the value of benefits.

### **Treatment Recommendation**

Several things were revealed by Kompas.com to overcome the increase in the cost of Hajj in the future, namely by managing Hajj funds to increase the value of benefits that can be enjoyed by pilgrims. This is contained in “Post-Decision Reflections on the Persistently Rising Hajj Costs.”

After the increase in the cost of Hajj for the dependents of pilgrims, which reached IDR 10 million per pilgrim, the government through BPKH should maximize investment to gain value benefits for the long-term sustainability of Hajj. There are many proposals related to direct investment in Saudi Arabia with investment returns for the sustainability of the Hajj pilgrimage in the future. The sustainability of Hajj funds needs to be directed to increase the portion of the value of benefits in BPIH, not to increase the portion of costs borne by pilgrims.

This statement is also reinforced by a statement from the Deputy Chairman of MUI Anwar Abbas in “Hajj Cost Set at Rp 49.8 Million: MUI Deputy Chair Praises the Decision but Raises Concerns”

On the other hand, said Anwar, there are the rights of waiting pilgrims who need to be given the value of benefits as well. Furthermore, Anwar assessed, there needs to be a compatibility of programs carried out between related ministries / institutions, considering that the dimensions of Hajj involve matters of worship and business.

He wants the management and worship issues to be taken care of by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, while business issues such as aircraft services, accommodation, transportation, and others are taken care of by a special agency. Meanwhile, BPKH manages the Hajj deposit funds.

"The business management agency (takes care of) those related to BPIH such as taking care of planes, means of transportation, hotels, accommodation, consumption and others. This is all done for the benefit of the congregation," Anwar explained.

With this treatment, Kompas.com wants to convey that there is a need for more investative management of Hajj funds so that the value of benefits can be enjoyed by pilgrims because it is the right of waiting pilgrims.

**Table 2.** Comparative Framing of Republika and Kompas

Unit of Analysis	Republika.co.id	Kompas.com
Define Problem (Defining Problem)	<b>How is an event/issue seen? As what? Or as what problem?</b>	
	Republika.co.id views that the increase in Hajj fees is natural and cannot be avoided. This is due to the economic crisis due to Covid-19 pandemic that hit the world. With	Kompas.com views The increase in hajj fees is not only due to the increase in prices due to the economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, this cost increase also caused by the need to maintain the value of benefits so that it can be sustainable

Unit of Analysis	Republika.co.id	Kompas.com
	thus, causing an increase in prices.	for future pilgrims to enjoy.
<p><b>Diagnose Causes (Estimating the problem Or source of the problem)</b></p>	<p><b>What is perceived to be the cause of the problem? Who (actors) are considered to be the cause of the problem?</b></p>	
	<p>Republika.co.id views that the increase in Hajj fees is natural and cannot be avoided. This is due to the economic crisis due to Covid-19 pandemic that hit the world. With thus, causing an increase in prices.</p>	<p>Kompas.com views The increase in hajj fees is not only due to the increase in prices due to the economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, this cost increase also caused by the need to maintain the value of benefits so that it can be sustainable for future pilgrims to enjoy.</p>
<p><b>Make Moral Judgment (giving a moral judgment )</b></p>	<p><b>What moral values are presented to explain the problem? What moral values are used to legitimize or delegitimize an action?</b></p>	
	<p>As a follow-up to the unavoidable increase in the cost of Hajj, then Consequently, the organization of the Hajj pilgrimage must be based on the principles of fairness and sustainability. sustainable. The principles of justice and sustainability become a Moral Judgement that</p>	<p>The moral value that Kompas.com wants to conveyed by Kompas.com is that this decision is considered wise. Considered wise must be accompanied by attention to the hajj pilgrims in obtaining benefit value.</p>

Unit of Analysis	Republika.co.id	Kompas.com
	becomes the framing Republika.co.id.	
<b>Treatment Recommendation (emphasizing problem solving)</b>	<b>What solutions are offered to overcome the problem/issue? What paths are offered and must be taken to overcome the problem?</b>	
	To overcome the resolution of this problem, then the congregation service must be optimized.	As a solution to Addressing the issue of the increase in the amount of Hajj fees, it is necessary to manage Hajj funds that are more investitive so that the value of benefits can be enjoyed by Hajj pilgrims because it is the right of waiting pilgrims.

The findings of this study demonstrate that media framing plays a decisive role in shaping public perceptions of government policy, particularly in the context of religious public issues such as the 2023 Hajj cost increase. Framing does not merely function as a mechanism for information delivery but operates as an ideological process that filters and organizes reality based on editorial values and socio-political interests [16]. In this sense, the media act not as neutral mirrors of reality, but as active agents that construct social meaning. Republika frames the Hajj cost policy through a religious and ummah-oriented narrative, positioning subsidies as a manifestation of state responsibility toward Muslims in fulfilling a fundamental religious obligation. This moral-spiritual framing aligns with findings that religiously affiliated media tend to emphasize symbolic and ethical dimensions of public policy rather than administrative calculations [17].

In contrast, Kompas adopts a more technocratic framing grounded in public policy rationality. Its coverage emphasizes fiscal efficiency, accountability in fund management, and long-term sustainability, shifting the discourse from spiritual symbolism to bureaucratic and governance-oriented reasoning [18]. While Republika foregrounds emotional proximity and religious diction to reinforce the state’s moral duty to the ummah, Kompas prioritizes data-driven arguments and systemic evaluation by highlighting the risks of unsustainable subsidies. These divergent framings generate two dominant narratives: a “moral responsibility” narrative that stresses religious justice and collective rights, and a “managerial reform” narrative that underscores institutional accountability and policy efficiency. As Ramadlan [19] notes, such

framing differences significantly influence how audiences interpret policy intentions and moral direction.

The implications of these contrasting frames extend beyond media discourse to the broader negotiation of policy legitimacy between the state and society. *Republika*'s symbolic framing has the potential to mobilize emotional and identity-based responses, generating moral and political pressure on the government to uphold its religious obligations. Conversely, *Kompas*' analytical framing encourages public reflection on structural reform and fiscal prudence, fostering a more deliberative policy discourse [20]. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening public media literacy to help audiences distinguish between information and interpretation, as well as the need for adaptive government communication strategies that can engage diverse framing patterns. Ultimately, media framing of the Hajj cost issue illustrates how journalism intersects with public trust, legitimacy, and democratic accountability in Indonesia's plural public sphere.

### 3 Conclusion

This research demonstrates that media framing of public policy particularly the Hajj cost increase is not merely a technical journalistic process, but an ideological and strategic act that shapes public opinion. Through Robert N. Entman's framing model, this study illustrates how *Republika* and *Kompas* construct contrasting narratives on the same issue, each influencing reader differently.

*Republika.co.id* tends to frame the Hajj cost increase as a rational and responsible policy compromise. It depicts the government as striving to maintain fiscal balance while protecting the welfare of pilgrims. By highlighting deliberations between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Parliament, this framing builds the impression of a collaborative and legitimate process. The coverage emphasizes moral values such as solidarity, stability, and patience, framing the policy as an inevitable consequence of post-pandemic economic recovery. Through this narrative, *Republika* fosters acceptance and trust among Muslim audiences.

In contrast, *Kompas.com* adopts a more critical and technocratic stance. Its reporting underscores issues of accountability, fund management, and fiscal prudence. The media portrays the policy not as a moral necessity but as part of a larger structural problem requiring systemic reform and transparency. This narrative reflects *Kompas*' role as a rational critic in a democratic society one that encourages citizens to evaluate public policy through analytical reasoning rather than emotional or spiritual appeal. The differences between the two outlets confirm that the media are not neutral conveyors of facts, but ideological actors that construct, reproduce, or contest dominant meanings within society.

The findings of this study carry several important implications. The contrasting framing between religious-oriented and secular-nationalist media mirrors the ideological diversity of Indonesia's public sphere. Such pluralism enriches democratic discourse, enabling citizens to assess government policies through both moral and rational frameworks. When one media outlet frames policy in the spirit of spirituality and solidarity, while another demands transparency and efficiency, the resulting discourse becomes more dynamic, critical, and participatory. However, this diversity

also entails potential risks when framing becomes excessive, either sensational or overly neutral. Exaggerated headlines about “drastic increases” may provoke emotional responses detached from economic context, while overly restrained reporting risks alienating audiences who feel affected by the policy. Therefore, media institutions must exercise ethical responsibility by balancing empathy, accuracy, and analytical depth, especially in covering issues that intersect with faith and public sentiment.

For the government and related institutions, the study emphasizes the need for proactive and dialogical communication strategies. Policy narratives should anticipate how the media might frame them, ensuring that information is transparent, data-driven, and easily verifiable. Collaborative engagement with journalists, expert sources, and the public can strengthen trust and minimize misinterpretation. Likewise, scholars and communication researchers are encouraged to expand framing studies beyond controversial religious issues to broader policy domains such as education, health, and welfare. Longitudinal and multi-platform analyses would help map how framing influences public understanding over time in the digital environment.

In conclusion, this study reaffirms that in the era of digital acceleration, the power of media framing in shaping public policy discourse is more significant than ever. Awareness of framing dynamics among media, policymakers, and the public is essential to preserve democratic integrity, public trust, and social cohesion. Only through transparent, inclusive, and dialogic communication can policies like the Hajj cost adjustment be perceived not as a burden, but as an outcome of a fair, accountable, and participatory process of collective decision-making.

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