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# Framing Analysis of Hajj Departure Cancellation Policy During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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#### ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has raised concerns due of its impact on different aspects of society, particularly religious life. Apart from the very high risk of international pilgrims returning home with the COVID-19 virus, the growing number of cases in Saudi Arabia will add to the already overburdened health-care system in Mecca and Medina. The aim of the research is to examine at how the Haji Departure Cancellation Policy was portrayed during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method with the purpose of presenting reported cases in a systematic, honest, and accurate manner. The research data was obtained from various reports that appeared on the online news portal, including CNBC Indonesia, Kompas.com, VoA Indonesia. The study's results indicate that the framing analysis on the three online media websites CNBC Indonesia, Kompas.com, and VoA Indonesia resulted in the construction of the reality of the haji cancellation policy by defining the problem, namely the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused the Saudi Arabian government to not yet invite Indonesian pilgrims and open hajj services in 1442 H/2021 M. Most importantly, the Indonesian government is attempting to protect its citizens from the spread of Covid-19

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#### INTRODUCTION

Covid-19, or Corona Virus Disease 19, originally appeared in the Wuhan area of China. The SARS-CoV-2 virus, which can cause respiratory problems, is the cause of Covid-19. The rapid spread of COVID-19 throughout the world has prompted the World Health Organization (WHO) to categorize COVID-19 as a global pandemic since March 11, 2020. (Prajarto, 2021). This virus has spread to hundreds of countries in the world, including Indonesia, because of its rapid transmission. Anyone can get Covid-19, whether babies, children, adults, to the elderly. The patients had a median age of 59 years, with the elderly and those with comorbidities experiencing increased morbidity and mortality.(Sofyan, 2021)

The emergence of the Covid-19 outbreak has sparked fear, as it deals with various parts of life in anticipation of this virus. The call for social distancing, physical distancing, Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSSB), and the #at home appeal are one of the ways the government is trying to combat Covid-19. By referring to other countries that have been contaminated with Covid-19, this policy is a first step. In January 2020, China, for example, imposed a complete quarantine or lockdown. Because the lockdown policy was considered efficient in preventing the spread of Covid-19, it was adopted by around 15 countries, including Italy, Spain, France, Ireland, Belgium, Malaysia, the Philippines, and others.(Boer et al., 2020)

Base on research (Christin et al., 2021) selective behavior can be defined as the ability to carefully sort and select COVID-19 material in the media. This action is considered capable of preventing or anticipating hoax news or fake news in the community. During March and April 2020, there were 50 fake news related to COVID-19. The implementation of worship, including the 2020 Hajj, is one of the derivative impacts of Covid-19. On June 22, 2020 (local time), the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia officially announced that the Hajj will continue to be carried out with strict restrictions, starting from the number of pilgrims, age, health conditions, and pilgrims only for those who have been in Saudi Arabia to certain period of time.(Ningsih & Prastya, 2020)

Furthermore, (Ningsih & Prastya, 2020) explained that massive Hajj framing opens media opportunities to increase reader engagement. The increase in the number of reader interest in the end is able to increase the number of incoming ads. However, it is very unfortunate because sometimes the media even uploads things that are not important, such as reporting on the clothes worn by pilgrims when they return to their hometowns. This of course excludes more mainstream news such as the sensibility of the Hajj service.

Although the media is not an important reference in the search for information about Hajj. However, it should be understood that the media are also capable of making the crisis worse because of the news that tends to influence public perceptions of the Covid-19 crisis. In reality, the spread of information, disinformation, and hoaxes on Covid-19 is moving as fast as the spread of the Covid-19 virus. (Y. N. Prajarto, 2021)

Referring to previous research conducted by (Jokhdar et al., 2021) the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has been aware of the risks associated with Hajj since the country's first case of COVID-19 was detected on March 2, 2020. The government's high level of awareness and preparedness resulted from the lessons learned during the previous period. pandemics, such as the H1N1 pandemic in 2009. The Ministry of Health's Center for Global Mass Medicine (GCMGM) is the WHO Collaborating Center for Mass Encounters and demonstrates the ability of countries to develop detection, management and prevention scenarios for infectious disease outbreaks through years of research.

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The series of cancellations and restrictions on hajj pilgrims eventually led to fear and speculation about hajj in 2020. The prediction model carried out by the Ministry of Health predicts a significant progression in the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19. In addition to the extremely high risk of international pilgrims returning to their homes with COVID-19, the increasing number of cases in Saudi Arabia will place an additional burden on the health care system that already stretches across Mecca and Medina. Given the high risk associated with this disease. (Alzahrani et al., 2020) Based on the urgency and relevance of the research, this study aims to analyze the Framing of the Cancellation of Hajj Departure Policy During the COVID-19 Pandemic

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

Hajj

Hajj is one of the pillars of Islam that attracts millions of pilgrims every year. The pilgrimage has witnessed a rapid spike in the number of pilgrims performing Hajj over the years. Over the past few years, more than 3 million pilgrims from more than 180 countries traveled to Makkah, Saudi Arabia, for the holy pilgrimage of Muslims. Based on data from the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah of Saudi Arabia, the 2019 Hajj pilgrimage was recorded at more than 7 million pilgrims. Over the past ten years, the number of pilgrims has skyrocketed with a remarkable growth of more than 1.7 million pilgrims. Hajj rituals are usually associated with overcrowding, which is a major risk factor in the spread of infectious diseases, leading to the exchange of pathogens between countries. The COVID-19 pandemic that is currently surging around the world poses formidable challenges to a safe and successful Hajj journey due to its implications for public health. (Goni et al., 2021)

## Framing Analysis

Framing analysis helps understand how the media structure reality (events, actors, groups, etc.) (Eriyanto, 2002). Of course, framing is done through the construction process. Construction is done to present social reality. One way to see reality is to look at the media's expertise in emphasizing the news. How the media highlight certain aspects of events in the text. From here we can also see if there are news sections that are easily omitted or missed.

In simple terms, framing analysis can be described as an analysis to find out how the media frame reality (events, actors, groups, or others). Framing goes through the entire construction process. Social reality is explained and constructed in framing analysis, and has a certain meaning. Events can be understood in many ways. All of these elements are not only components of journalistic technology, but also show how events are interpreted and presented. The first step in framing analysis is to examine how the media construct reality. Journalists and the media play an active role in shaping reality. More specifically, how does media framing occur within a given structure?, so the focus is not on whether the media report negatively or positively, but how media framing develops.(Leliana et al., 2021).

This study utilizes the analysis of the framing model by Robert N. Entman. Entman's model focuses on the process of selecting from various realities, so that some events occur more than others. Entman also includes placing news in a unique context so that some parties get more allocations than others. According to Entman, there are four ways to frame news, namely:

- 1. Define problems, the framing phase is used to highlight how reporters understand events when problems arise
- 2. Diagnose causes, estimate the source of the problem, what caused the incident? What is considered the cause of the problem? Who is considered the cause of the problem?
- 3. Make a moral judgment or make an ethical decision, the framing element used to justify the argument in the definition of the question posed

Treatment recommendation, to assess which solution is chosen to solve the problem. The solution really depends on how the event is perceived and who is identified as the source of the problem. (Leliana et al., 2021)

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study is a qualitative descriptive study, which aims to describe reported cases in a systematic, honest and accurate manner. The data used is downloaded from several news media that appear on online portals, including CNBC Indonesia, Kompas.com, VoA Indonesia. The unit of analysis in this study is the text contained in the news regarding the Policy for Cancellation of Hajj Departures During the COVID-19 Pandemic in several online media.

#### RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Law Number 8 of 2019 concerning the Implementation of Hajj and Umrah is a product of the legislation of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI) as a manifestation of the state's presence in managing Muslims in Indonesia before, during, and after performing the pilgrimage. Two main things are used as the purpose of the law as referred to in Article 3, namely, first, to provide guidance, service, and protection for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims so that they can perform their worship in accordance with the demands of the Shari'a. ah, and secondly, realizing independence and resilience in the organization of hajj and umrah. These two goals apply during normal and abnormal times, such as during the Corona Virus Diseases (Covid-19) pandemic, because the state focuses on protecting the community with various policies that favor the community. (Aziz, 2021).

In this study, the authors analyze news from four online media, namely CNBC Indonesia, Kompas.com, VoA Indonesia. The news to be analyzed is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Sample of News Related to the Cancellation of Hajj Departure Policy During the Covid-19 Pandemic

No	Tittle	Media
1	Simak! Penjelasan Lengkap Menag Soal	(CNBC Indonesia,
	Pembatalan Haji 2021	2021)
2	6 Fakta Pembatalan Haji 2021: Alasan,	(Kompas.com, 2021)
	Dana Haji, hingga Nasib Antrean Jemaah	
3	Masih Pandemi, Pemerintah Batal	(Voa Indonesia, 2021)
	Berangkatkan Jemaah Haji Tahun Ini	

Source: Reseacher, 2022

The object of research in this study is related to the Policy for Cancellation of Hajj Departures During the COVID-19 Pandemic. The analysis of news framing is done by looking at the title of the news, the photos presented, the sources and the content of the news contained in it.

#### Framing Analisys CNBC Indonesia

News Tittle: "Listen! Full Explanation of the Minister of Religion Regarding the Cancellation of Hajj 2021" at media CNBC Indonesia



Figure 1. Minister of Religion Yaqut Cholil Qoumas

Minister of Religion Yaqut Cholil Qoumas explanation regarding the cancellation of the 2021 Hajj pilgrimage was published by CNBC Indonesia media on June 3, 2021. The photo that appeared on the news was when Minister of Religion Yaqut Cholil Qoumas was doing a press release at the Ministry of Religion building. Kompas.com perceives that the Indonesian government through the Ministry of Religion has decided not to send hajj pilgrims in 2021. The analysis of CNBC Indonesia's news framing is as follows.

Define the problem in this report, namely: The Government of the Republic of Indonesia has decided not to send pilgrims in the year 1442 H/2021 AD. As the information given by the Minister of Religion when conducting a press release, "We, the government through the Ministry of Religion, issued the Decree of the Minister of Religion Number 660 of 2021 regarding Cancellation of Departure of Hajj Pilgrims on Departure for Hajj 1442 H/2021 AD."

Diagnosing the cause, the source of the problem in this news is the Covid-19 pandemic which has an impact both locally and globally. This is why the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has not invited the Government of Indonesia to discuss and sign a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the preparation for the Hajj pilgrimage 1442H/2021M. In addition, another reason is because the Government of Saudi Arabia has not opened Hajj services in 1442 H/2021 AD, and the Indonesian government needs sufficient time to prepare services for Hajj pilgrims. This is what gave rise to the media construction that the Hajj will not be performed in 2021.

Make Moral Judgment, with the cancellation of this hajj, the government certainly prioritizes the safety of the hajj pilgrims so they don't get infected and transmit the corona virus both from Indonesia and from Saudi Arabia.

Treatment Recommendations, in order to fulfill the technical aspects of preparation and carry out the policies of the Saudi Arabian authorities, as stated by the Eighth Committee of the Indonesian House of Representatives in its working session on June 2, 2021 for the fifth session of 2020/2021, stating to respect the government's decision regarding the implementation of the Hajj 1442 H/2021 M.

After doing some analysis on the news, based on the findings of four framing elements in CNBC Indonesia media, it can be concluded that this media constructs the reality of the policy of canceling the Hajj pilgrimage in 2022 by defining the problem, namely the Covid-19 pandemic which has caused the Saudi Arabian government to not invite Indonesian pilgrims. and opened the hajj service in 1442 H/2021 AD. The moral value emphasized by CNBC Indonesia is that the Indonesian government is more concerned with the safety of its citizens, so the decision to cancel the hajj was taken.

According to (Eriyanto, 2008) Media is not a platform that can be used freely; rather, it is a subject whose function is to establish complete facts with their own perspectives, biases and points of view. In this case, CNBC Indonesia media provides a platform for the government, especially the Ministry of Religion, to inform government policy decisions so that the public knows the real situation. Furthermore, in packaging the news, he emphasized the importance of

public understanding of Saudi Arabia's decision not to allow access for Indonesian pilgrims.

Framing Analysis Kompas.com

Tittle: "6 Hajj Cancellation Facts 2021: Reasons, Hajj Funds, and the Fate of the Pilgrimage Line"



Figure 2. Minister of Religion Yaqut Cholil Qoumas Delivering His Presentation while Attending a Working Meeting with Commission VIII DPR

Figure 2 is the second report on the Facts of the Cancellation of Hajj 2021 starting from the reasons, Hajj funds, to the fate of the congregation queue which was published on Kompas.com media on June 4, 2021. It is still the same as the news on CNBC Indonesia, framing the news in Kompas. This com also displays a photo when Minister of Religion Yaqut Cholil Qoumas delivered his presentation while attending a working meeting with Commission VIII of the DPR. The framing analysis carried out is as follows:

Define the problem in this news, namely through the Indonesian Ministry of Religion (Kemenag) the government said that the implementation of the Hajj 1442 Hijri / 2021 AD was canceled. "Determining the cancellation of the departure of hajj pilgrims during the hajj pilgrimage in 1442 Hijri or 2021 AD for Indonesian citizens who use the Indonesian hajj quota and other hajj quotas," Yaqut said in a press conference published online on Thursday (3/6/2021).

To diagnose the cause, there are three causes that are highlighted as a source of problems in the online media Kompas.com, including the factors of health, safety, and security of the pilgrims who are threatened by the Covid-19 pandemic which has hit almost every country in the world, including Indonesia and Saudi Arabia. first reason. The second consideration is that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has not invited the Indonesian government to discuss and sign a memorandum of understanding on the preparation for the 2021 hajj, and Saudi Arabia has not opened the hajj service this year even though the Indonesian government needs time to prepare for the hajj service.

Make Moral Judgment, the decision of the Minister of Religion regarding the cancellation of the Hajj was taken because this policy was not only carried out by the Government of Saudi Arabia against Indonesia but other countries in the world. "Not only for Indonesia, none of the countries in the world have received a quota and there has been no official announcement from Saudi Arabia for this year's Hajj, whether domestic or international," said the Consul for Hajj

and Umrah, the Indonesian Consulate General in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Endang Jumali.

Treatment Recommendations, the solution displayed in the framing of the news is that the government is responsible for canceling the pilgrimage of pilgrims from Indonesia by providing two options, namely returning the pilgrims' money or the pilgrims can wait for the 2022 batch. "So the congregation's money is safe, the Hajj funds are safe. So can be taken back or can remain at the BPKH for us to calculate later if there is a departure for the pilgrimage," Yaqut said during a press conference.

From the results of the analysis on the news, as well as the researcher's analysis of the four elements of framing in the Kompas.com media, it can be concluded that the Kompas.com media emphasizes the six facts causing the cancellation of the 2021 Hajj pilgrimage.

Framing Analisys VoA Indonesia

Tittle: "Still a Pandemic, Government Cancels Departure of Hajj Pilgrims This Year"



Figure 3. Muslims Praying Around the Kaaba

In contrast to the two reports that have been discussed previously, if observed, Figure 3 used by VoA Indonesia shows the condition of the Kaaba which is deserted by the Muslim congregation. This condition certainly helps the public to visualize the situation in Saudi Arabia during the Covid-19 pandemic which limits or even does not open access for other countries in the world to carry out the pilgrimage.

Define the problem in the VoA Indonesia news is that the Indonesian government chose not to send pilgrims this year because the COVID-19 outbreak is still worrying and can endanger the safety of the congregation. "Because it is still a pandemic and for the safety of the congregation, the government has decided that this year it will not send back Indonesian Hajj pilgrims," said Minister of Religion Yaqut Cholil Qoumas when giving a press statement.

While the diagnosis cause in this report is the Ministry of Religion explained that the cases per day in Saudi Arabia reached 1,251 and Indonesia 4,824 as of June 1, 2021. The same applies to neighboring ASEAN countries, such as Malaysia, which accounted for more than 7,000 daily cases as of June 1. Singapore has taken the decision not to send pilgrims, even though it only counts

18 cases a day. This is the main reason the Saudi government has not invited Indonesian pilgrims to perform the pilgrimage.

Make Moral Judgment in this news, namely the effect of the implementation of health protocols that are strictly carried out by the Saudis due to the pandemic crisis, is the government's main consideration for implementing the policy of canceling the departure of pilgrims.

Treatment Recommendations, related to the recommendations emphasized in the framing of the news, Amirsyah Tambunan, Secretary General of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) advised all prospective Indonesian pilgrims that the most important thing was the government's efforts to ensure the safety of the souls of prospective pilgrims. Prospective pilgrims are expected to be patient and steadfast for the policies that have been taken by the government.

From the four framing analyzes on VoA Indonesia's online media, this media packs news from different sides. Judging from the news title, it is evident that VoA Indonesia is focused on the COVID-19 pandemic which has delayed the departure of the Hajj pilgrimage in 2021.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION Conclusions

Based on several online news analyzes and framing analysis findings, it is clear that the role of the media is not only limited to communicating information or generating ideas. Thus, it can be concluded that the framing analysis on the three online media CNBC Indonesia, Kompas.com, and VoA Indonesia resulted in the construction of the reality of the hajj cancellation policy through defining the problem, namely the Covid-19 pandemic which caused the Saudi Arabian government to not yet invite Indonesian pilgrims and open hajj services. in 1442 H/2021 AD. And most importantly, the Indonesian government wants to protect its citizens from the spread of Covid-19.

The results of the previous discussion show how the media creates meaning in each piece of news. In the sense that the media criticizes in many ways, the media have the capacity to shape the point of view of all government policies. The conclusion of this study is that the media can assist the government by not only conveying controversial messages but also positive news content, thus enabling them to complement each other and assist the government in communicating the reasons for the cancellation of the pilgrimage.

#### Recommendations

This study focuses on framing news related to the cancellation of the hajj pilgrimage due to COVID-19 which is disseminated through the internet. Therefore, it is still possible to examine the subject of this research further by using various forms of mass media as the object of research. Researchers hope that further studies can build on previous findings by adding findings that can complement the analysis of online media framing.

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