



# Mediating Elderly-Friendly Hajj: An Analysis of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Socialization Strategy in Indonesia, 2023–2024

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**Abstract:** The significant growth in the number of elderly Hajj pilgrims in Indonesia has prompted the need for inclusive policies that focus not only on technical aspects but also on the formation of fair and humane public perceptions of this vulnerable group. This study aims to describe the construction of the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program in the media of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs in 2023–2024, identify key messages, and analyze the context of media use in program socialization. The study uses a constructivist paradigm with a qualitative case study approach, through documentation of the official social media of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, in-depth interviews with officials and communication practitioners, and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The results show that the media constructs the elderly as active subjects with spiritual capacity and an important role in worship, emphasizing humanistic, inclusive, and humanitarian-value-based Hajj services. Media messages are effective, encouraging active participation, highlighting special facilities, physical and mental readiness, mentoring, health education, elderly-friendly worship, and the digitalisation of services. The use of media is participatory and empathetic, becoming a space for education, advocacy, and the formation of public opinion based on multi-platform technology. This study presents a social media construction-based policy communication model that integrates message values, digital technology, and inclusive public policy.

**Keywords:** elderly-friendly hajj; government social media; social construction; public policy socialization; public participation.

## 1. Introduction

The Hajj pilgrimage is a special and challenging pilgrimage in Islam because it simultaneously involves physical, mental, and spiritual aspects. Performing the Hajj demands strong endurance, patience, and composure in the face of crowds, long queues, and cultural differences with pilgrims from various countries. This challenge is greater for the elderly or those with physical limitations. Furthermore, the Hajj has a complex social dimension, as interactions between pilgrims from different languages, cultures, and customs can lead to misunderstandings. Therefore, social adaptability, tolerance, and managing multicultural experiences are key to achieving harmonious and meaningful worship (Kementerian Agama RI, 2023b). Successful Hajj pilgrimage depends heavily on the physical and mental preparedness of pilgrims. Physical readiness is necessary to face exhausting activities, such as long-distance walking, crowding, and extreme weather, while mental readiness is crucial for controlling emotions, being patient, and remaining devout in every pillar of the Hajj. The Hajj is also a social learning process, cultivating patience, tolerance, and solidarity, as well as a profound spiritual experience through transcendental communication with God. Optimal preparation includes understanding the rituals of Hajj and physical, mental, and emotional readiness. Hajj is not only a technical aspect, but also a means of developing spiritual awareness, sincerity, and total devotion to Allah SWT (McQuail, 2010).

According to Wahbah al-Zuhayli in his work *Al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuhu* (Al-Zuhayli, 2011), the Hajj pilgrimage is not just a physical activity, but requires mental readiness to face uncertain conditions, such as overcrowding, extreme weather changes, limited accommodation, and other obstacles. Pilgrims are required to have psychological resilience, adaptability, and emotional management and patience training to remain devout and sincere. In addition to mental readiness, physical health is also crucial because the Hajj involves a long journey and strenuous physical activities such as *aṣṭawāf*, *sa'ī*, and *wuquf* at Arafah. Health checks and a healthy lifestyle are essential requirements for optimal, safe, and meaningful worship (WHO, 2019). Based on data from the Integrated Hajj Computerization and Information System (SISKOHAT), the number of Indonesian Hajj pilgrims categorized as elderly shows a consistent increasing trend from year to year. In 2023 (Kementerian Agama RI, 2023b), it was recorded that more than 30% of Indonesia's total Hajj quota consisted of elderly pilgrims. This percentage not only reflects the demographic reality of prospective Hajj pilgrims in Indonesia, but also serves as an important indicator that requires special attention in the planning and implementation of Hajj services as a whole.

The increasing number of elderly Hajj pilgrims has prompted the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag RI) to improve the quality of services for this vulnerable group. Priority services are designed to address the physical limitations and health risks of the elderly, ensuring safe and solemn worship. The Ministry of Religious Affairs is promoting the urgency of these services through various media, reaching out to officials, companions, and the wider community to build collective awareness. Facilities include fast-track services, wheelchairs, medical assistance, and prayer guidance tailored to the abilities of the elderly. The Elderly-Friendly Hajj Program is a strategic priority, encompassing fast-track services at the airport, supporting facilities at the Grand Mosque, the Prophet's Mosque, and Arafah, as well as pre-departure health education on diet, chronic disease management, and physical and mental readiness. Outreach is conducted through social media, television, radio, and digital portals, while collaboration with the Ministry of Health ensures the availability of medical personnel, health posts, and medicines. Siskohat data shows an increasing trend in the number of elderly pilgrims, affirming the government's commitment to providing inclusive, safe, and humane Hajj services (Siskohat, 2020).

The increase in Indonesia's Hajj quota is accompanied by effective quota absorption, including for the growing number of elderly pilgrims. Siskohat data shows a significant upward trend, from 22,022 elderly pilgrims in 2014 to 67,199 in 2022–2023, approximately 30% of the total quota. The main factors are the long queue mechanism, increasing life expectancy, and the spiritual motivation of the elderly to perfect the pillars of Islam. This increase poses challenges related to health and services, as the elderly are vulnerable to chronic diseases and fatigue due to physical activity and extreme weather in the Holy Land. In response, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs developed an Elderly-Friendly Hajj policy, including fast-track services, wheelchairs, medical assistance, and pre-departure health checks. This strategy ensures safe, comfortable, and inclusive access to the Hajj, and reflects the government's commitment to humanitarian values, public service, and the protection of vulnerable groups during the Hajj (Al-Ghazali, 2010).

In implementing the elderly-friendly Hajj policy, healthcare facilities are strengthened with 24-hour medical services, dedicated ambulances, and healthcare workers accompanying pilgrims (As'ad, 2022). Improvements to Hajj accommodation and transportation address accessibility and mobility for the elderly, while guidance on worship is tailored to their abilities, including Islamic concessions such as wheelchairs, *ṭawāf* and *sa'ī*. This policy ensures physical and spiritual comfort. According to the WHO and Presidential Decree 88/2021, an elderly person is an individual aged 60 years and above (WHO, 2019). This aging process is characterized by a decline in physiological body functions, an increased risk of degenerative diseases, and changes in social interactions and economic productivity (Santrock, 2018). In Indonesia, the age limit for elderly people in the context of Hajj implementation has specific provisions set by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Based on Law Number 8 of 2019 concerning the Implementation of Hajj and Umrah, Article 14 states that elderly pilgrims aged 65 years and under are given priority in the Hajj departure quota (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). The age limit for elderly

people supports special attention to pilgrims who are health-vulnerable. Based on Article 3 of Law No. 8/2019, the Hajj aims to provide guidance, services, and protection. The Ministry of Religion implements this through the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program, prioritizing inclusive services for elderly pilgrims in all Hajj pilgrimage arrangements (Aziz, 2020).

The government, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, strives to provide facilities and infrastructure for the Hajj pilgrimage that meet the needs and rights of elderly pilgrims. This includes providing elderly-friendly accommodation, special assistance for pilgrims with physical and mental disabilities, and providing medical personnel on standby to provide healthcare services in the Holy Land (BPS, 2021). Furthermore, this program also focuses on the government's role in helping elderly pilgrims remain independent, healthy, active, and productive during the Hajj pilgrimage (Fauzi, 2021). Assistance for elderly pilgrims is provided by providing specialized health workers and companions tasked with ensuring elderly pilgrims have access to the services they need. Several policies implemented in the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program include providing special lanes for the elderly at embarkation points, highly accessible transportation, and guidance on Hajj rituals tailored to the physical condition of elderly pilgrims (Mujahid, 2022).

Efforts to improve services for elderly Hajj pilgrims aim to ensure they can perform their pilgrimage comfortably and devoutly. Based on Law No. 8 of 2019, the government is obligated to provide excellent service to all pilgrims, including those with physical disabilities. Therefore, implementing an elderly-friendly Hajj is both a moral obligation and a legal responsibility. Priority services for the elderly are the primary focus of Hajj supervision for the 2023–2024 period, encompassing several key aspects. First, the selection of PPIH and PHD officers takes into account their competence in serving the elderly. Second, the preparation of the BPIH must be efficient and transparent to support additional facilities for the elderly. Third, procurement of goods/services in Indonesia and Saudi Arabia ensures adequate facilities such as wheelchairs, rest areas, and healthcare services. Fourth, efficient consumption and accommodation services adapt to the healthcare needs of the elderly. Fifth, Presidential Regulations and KMA regulations ensure the sustainability of elderly-friendly services. Sixth, embarkation-disembarkation services provide special lanes, escorts, and medical services. Seventh, facilities at hotels, transportation, and places of worship in Saudi Arabia must be accessible. Eighth, financial accountability ensures transparency in the use of Hajj funds for the elderly (Kementerian Agama RI, 2023c).

Elderly-friendly Hajj services are designed to ensure the comfort, safety, and satisfaction of elderly pilgrims through various supporting facilities. These facilities include healthcare with on-call medical personnel, accessible transportation, and elderly-friendly accommodations, such as low-floor rooms and large-capacity elevators. Guidance on pilgrimages is tailored to the abilities of the elderly, catering services provide diet menus for those with diabetes or hypertension, and wheelchairs, special paths, and assistance during the pilgrimage are available. Service supervision is carried out through the assignment of special officers, compliance with Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Health service standards, provision of information through leaflets, video guides, and consultations, as well as simplified guidance on the rituals of Hajj. Challenges include health, safety, accessibility, facilities, services, assistance, and spiritual and psychological dimensions. The Hajj activities, which largely require physical endurance, the significant number of elderly pilgrims, limited staff, and Saudi Arabia's policy that does not differentiate services for the elderly, add to the complexity.

Research on mainstreaming elderly-friendly Hajj through media is crucial as the number of elderly pilgrims continues to increase; by 2023, more than 30% of Indonesian pilgrims will be over 60 years old. This study highlights the effectiveness of program socialization, public understanding, and the readiness of elderly and their families to participate in special services. Initial findings indicate that the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) is building a narrative of elderly-friendly Hajj through manasik guidelines, service SOPs, elderly-friendly transportation, and priority accommodation facilities. Media is used to disseminate information widely, reach elderly pilgrims and their families, and encourage their active participation. Mainstreaming elderly-friendly Hajj in the media demonstrates the Ministry of Religious Affairs' proactive efforts to provide inclusive, safe, and

comfortable services for elderly pilgrims. This study aims to analyze the use of media in socializing elderly-friendly Hajj, assess the effectiveness of communication strategies, and provide recommendations for improving services and public education.

## 2. Research Methods

This research uses a case study method to explore in depth the public communication of religious policies in a real-life context (Yin, 2018). The definition of a case study is relevant because the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program is examined in the context of digital media, mass communication, and pilgrim demographics in real-time and contemporary contexts. According to John W. Creswell, a case study is a qualitative approach that explores real phenomena within a limited system, using multiple data sources to gain in-depth and contextual understanding (Creswell, 2018). The case study method allows researchers to understand the decisions, policies, and communication practices of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs in promoting the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program. This study explores the forms of communication used, how the socialization strategies are implemented, and why mainstreaming inclusive values for the elderly is important. Case identification was carried out on the 2023 Elderly-Friendly Hajj program, with in-depth data collection through document analysis, online media observations, and interviews with relevant stakeholders. The research focuses on analyzing media use, the effectiveness of communication strategies, and the challenges of policy socialization. This method allows researchers to read program realities, identify media characteristics, generalize communication patterns, analyze various viewpoints, offer alternative interpretations, assist policy decision-making, form the basis for further research, explore the relationship between media and the understanding of the elderly, use a variety of data collection techniques, and provide in-depth contextual information.

This research utilized in-depth interviews with stakeholders, participant observation during the socialization of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' official digital media, and documentation of the Elderly-Friendly Hajj policy and guidelines. Data triangulation was applied to ensure the validity of the information. A case study approach enabled comprehensive exploration, linking communication strategy theory with field practice. Qualitative data included policies, regulations, technical guidelines, and an evaluation report on the implementation of the Elderly-Friendly Hajj service in 2023–2024. The research findings are expected to provide academic and practical contributions in refining the socialization strategy for the inclusive Hajj policy, while also increasing public understanding of elderly services during the Hajj pilgrimage. This research collected data on messages conveyed through media, including digital campaigns, print publications, television broadcasts, and social media, to raise public awareness of elderly services (Sugiyono, 2023).

Data collection techniques for this research included documentation studies, interviews, and observations to understand the mainstreaming of Elderly-Friendly Hajj. The documentation study examined written, visual, and digital documents, including regulations, technical guidelines, activity reports, and publications on the Ministry of Religious Affairs' official website and social media, to identify policy narratives, communication strategies, and media framing. In-depth interviews with officials from the Directorate General of Hajj and Hajj, internal media managers, and external media outlets aimed to explore media perceptions, strategies, challenges, and effectiveness. Direct and participatory observations were conducted during online and offline outreach events, webinars, and official discussions to capture the dynamics of interactions, message delivery, and audience responses (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). This combination of techniques supported data triangulation, increased the validity of the findings, and provided a comprehensive picture of the implementation and effectiveness of Elderly-Friendly Hajj outreach in the 2023–2024 period.

Data triangulation in qualitative research aims to increase the validity and reliability of findings by comparing information from various sources or methods. Source triangulation is conducted by comparing data from Ministry of Religious Affairs officials, mass media, testimonials from elderly pilgrims, and academic opinions to ensure the accuracy of information regarding the socialization of the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program. Method triangulation combines various data collection techniques,

such as in-depth interviews, direct observation, and analysis of official documents, so that research results are more accurate and comprehensive. If findings from various methods show similarities, the validity of the data is strengthened; if they differ, researchers can further explore the causes. Researcher triangulation involves more than one researcher to reduce subjectivity, with each researcher interpreting the data independently and comparing the results. This collaboration produces a richer and more objective analysis, as it encompasses perspectives on public communication, policy, and the psychological aspects of elderly pilgrims (Moleong, 2017). By applying these three types of triangulation, research can minimise bias, enhance reliability, and provide a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program's socialisation.

### **3. Research results and Discussion**

#### **3.1. Senior-Friendly Hajj Policy for 2023–2024**

Program The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia officially implemented the Elderly-Friendly Hajj Program in 2023, demonstrating the government's commitment to providing inclusive, equitable, and responsive Hajj services to the changing demographics of pilgrims. Prior attention to elderly pilgrims had been provided, but sporadically and informally. In previous Hajj operations, this support typically took the form of technical assistance such as assistance from Hajj officials, wheelchair access, or priority seating arrangements. While beneficial, these initiatives had not been integrated into a national policy with a unified legal framework and service standards. Entering 2023, the program began to be developed *de jure*, meaning it now has a clear legal framework and institutional legitimacy. This legal basis provides more focused guidelines for program implementation, including targeting, providing specialized facilities, and providing staff with appropriate training. With an organized operational structure, each unit involved in Hajj administration, both at the central and regional levels, has clear roles and responsibilities in supporting the implementation of elderly-friendly services.

Furthermore, this program also introduces a more standardized service mechanism. This standardization includes the provision of physical facilities, such as dedicated wheelchair ramps, adequate rest areas, and more intensive healthcare services. Furthermore, education and communication are also key areas of focus. Through extensive outreach, both in person and through digital media, the Ministry of Religious Affairs strives to build collective awareness about the importance of honoring elderly pilgrims and ensuring they receive adequate access to services. By focusing on the needs of vulnerable groups, particularly the elderly, this program is not merely a technical innovation but a paradigm shift in the implementation of the Hajj pilgrimage. Elderly-Friendly Hajj reflects public service reform that places humanity, justice, and inclusivity as fundamental principles. The program's success is expected to not only improve the quality of the pilgrimage experience for elderly pilgrims but also serve as a model for rights-based services that can be applied to other religious services.

Entering the 2024 Hajj season, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has made Elderly-Friendly Hajj one of the top national priorities in implementing the Hajj. Various service improvements have been made through the implementation of nine main strategies, including: special training for elderly-friendly staff, provision of wheelchairs for pilgrims' mobility, and placement of tents close to main facilities to facilitate access and medical services. This began with the development of Elderly-Friendly Hajj Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for both worship and travel. This step marks a significant milestone in the reform of Hajj services, particularly in addressing the challenges of the increasing number of elderly pilgrims from year to year. The development of these SOPs demonstrates the government's commitment to providing Hajj services that are not only friendly but also adaptive and inclusive to vulnerable groups, particularly elderly pilgrims. The presence of these SOPs marks a crucial step in ensuring that every Hajj process runs according to humane and professional service standards. With clear guidelines, all parties involved, from field officers and medical teams to transportation and accommodation managers, share the same benchmark in providing the best service for elderly pilgrims.

The SOP includes comprehensive guidance for each stage of the Hajj pilgrimage. In the initial stage, the Hajj rituals, the SOP provides guidance on appropriate delivery methods for the elderly, including the use of simple language, easy-to-read printed materials, and simulations of worship practices that take into account the physical limitations of pilgrims. Furthermore, during the departure process from Indonesia, the SOP regulates priority service mechanisms such as dedicated check-in lanes, wheelchair facilities, and escorts at the airport to facilitate pilgrims' mobility. During air travel, the SOP contains specific provisions regarding seating assignments, the provision of onboard health facilities, and emergency procedures for health problems. Meanwhile, in Saudi Arabia, the SOP regulates procedures for strategically placing accommodations close to worship sites and equipped with elderly-friendly facilities such as elevators, ramps, and safe restrooms. Mobility during the pilgrimage, including during the wukuf (standing still in Arafah), overnight stays in Muzdalifah, and the throwing of the pebbles in Mina, is also regulated in detail to minimize the risk of fatigue and accidents.

The approach used is humanistic and oriented towards meeting the physical and psychological needs of elderly pilgrims, such as easy access, special assistance, provision of medical facilities, and the involvement of officers with nursing and psychosocial competencies. This program is a concrete manifestation of the state's presence in ensuring the comfort, security, and continuity of the Hajj pilgrimage for all citizens, without age discrimination. In 2023, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia took a strategic step by establishing a priority quota policy for the elderly at 10% of the total national Hajj quota. This policy is given to pilgrims who have been registered for at least five years, as a form of affirmation for elderly pilgrims who have long awaited departure. This policy is a response to the accumulation of elderly pilgrims due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as an effort to provide justice and protection to vulnerable groups. However, the high number of elderly pilgrims departing presents its own challenges, especially because this policy is not accompanied by the presence of family companions, in order to maintain the departure quota.

The number of elderly Hajj pilgrims departing in 2023 reached a significant figure, reaching 62,879, or approximately 30 percent of Indonesia's total Hajj quota. This figure is not merely a statistic, but rather a historic high, marking the highest number ever for the Hajj in Indonesia. This surge marks a significant turning point in the direction of national Hajj policy and services. This phenomenon reflects a demographic shift that cannot be ignored: an increasing number of Indonesians are only able to perform the Hajj pilgrimage later in life due to long waiting periods, economic factors, and quota limitations. This situation has serious consequences for Hajj implementation, as the elderly have different needs than younger pilgrims, both physically, psychologically, and medically. The elderly tend to require additional facilities, special assistance, and intensive healthcare to safely and comfortably perform the entire Hajj pilgrimage. This fact also serves as a strong signal for the government, particularly the Ministry of Religious Affairs, to make systemic adjustments in the design of Hajj services to be more responsive to the needs of this vulnerable group.

Therefore, this data underscores the urgency of establishing the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program as part of public policy reforms in the field of Hajj pilgrimage management. This program is not merely a service innovation, but a strategic response to the socio-religious dynamics occurring in Indonesian society. Going forward, if this demographic trend continues to increase, Hajj implementation will increasingly depend on the effectiveness of inclusive policies oriented towards fulfilling the rights of elderly pilgrims. This situation presents a strategic momentum for the Ministry of Religious Affairs to develop Hajj services based on the needs of the elderly, which are not merely technical and administrative, but also address the humanitarian aspects and social functioning of elderly pilgrims. Services provided include a preventative health approach, disability-friendly accommodations, accessible transportation, and psychosocial support throughout the pilgrimage process.

This program also encourages cross-sector synergy between the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Health, airlines, and service providers in Saudi Arabia. This momentum is expected to foster a more inclusive, equitable Hajj service system that respects the dignity of elderly pilgrims as citizens and special guests of God. The Elderly-Friendly Hajj Program aims to provide comprehensive

services tailored to the physical condition of elderly pilgrims. This program emphasizes the comfort, safety, and smoothness of the pilgrimage for seniors through various operational policies. Special Hajj rituals for seniors are conducted using simple methods, materials tailored to physical abilities, and visual media and hands-on practice for easier understanding. They also provide health tips and strategies for dealing with pilgrimages with physical limitations. Hajj dormitories are designed to be elderly-friendly, with wheelchair ramps, grab bars in restrooms, and golf carts to facilitate mobility and reduce the risk of accidents. Departure Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) prioritize seniors on planes and buses and arrange for them to disembark last to prevent fatigue.

For seniors unable to perform the rituals fully, there are wukuf safaris, badal stonar jamrah (throwing of the devil), and badal tawaf ifadah (circumambulation of the ifadah). Special wheelchair cards are provided to facilitate identification and prioritize service by staff. Consumption of special porridge is provided for easy digestion and nutrition. Warning stickers are placed in hotels as a reminder to use facilities carefully. A tanazul awal mechanism is provided for seniors who require emergency repatriation so they can return home safely without disrupting the progress of other pilgrims. All of these policies reflect a holistic approach that prioritizes seniors in organizing the Hajj pilgrimage. With this policy, the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program is not just a slogan, but is realized in the form of concrete services that reflect the values of inclusivity, empathy, and professionalism in organizing the Hajj pilgrimage. Although the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program was officially implemented in 2023 and demonstrates the government's serious commitment to improving the quality of services for elderly pilgrims, the reality on the ground shows that its implementation is not fully optimal. One fundamental problem that remains a barrier is the lack of comprehensive health screening before departure.

Health screening is truly one of the most crucial components in risk management for the Hajj pilgrimage, particularly for the elderly who are physically vulnerable, potentially suffering from chronic diseases, and have limited immune systems. Without comprehensive health screenings, officials will have difficulty assessing the condition of pilgrims, determining their need for assistance, and preparing medical facilities appropriate to their risk level. The absence of these screening procedures has significant implications for both pilgrim safety and service effectiveness. Elderly pilgrims with comorbidities such as hypertension, diabetes, or heart disease are at risk of experiencing serious health problems during the pilgrimage, which is carried out amidst extreme weather, dense crowds, and a high activity level. These conditions not only threaten individual safety but also increase the workload of medical personnel and disrupt the overall smooth running of Hajj services.

The success of the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program depends heavily on the integration of health aspects from pre-departure through the pilgrimage itself. Systematic screening allows the government to develop a risk profile for pilgrims, provide appropriate health education, and prepare interventions, such as scheduling pilgrimages, using the wukuf safari facility, or providing medical assistance. During the 2023 Hajj, the death toll among elderly pilgrims reached more than 800, the highest in a decade, due to departures without adequate health checks. Many elderly pilgrims who were not medically fit were still sent off, leaving them vulnerable to fatigue, dehydration, and complications. This incident serves as a lesson that affirmative action policies must be accompanied by a prepared service system and strict oversight. In response, the Ministry of Religious Affairs implemented the istiḥajj screening in 2024. Health as a mandatory condition for paying the cost of the Hajj, is in line with the principles of Islamic law which emphasize that the Hajj is only obligatory for those who have the physical and financial ability, so that the safety and comfort of elderly pilgrims are more guaranteed.

In this policy, prospective pilgrims cannot pay the Hajj Cost (ONH) before being declared to have met the specified standards. Health by the competent medical authority, such as the Ministry of Health or a designated health care facility. The assessment istiḥajj screening is conducted through a comprehensive health checkup, including a physical examination, medical history, and psychological evaluation. The primary goal of this policy is to ensure that only pilgrims who are truly physically and mentally prepared are sent to the Holy Land. This measure is expected to reduce the risk of serious medical incidents, reduce mortality, and improve the quality of the Hajj experience. Furthermore, this

policy is part of a preventative measure to ensure that pilgrims with chronic illnesses can receive treatment before departure or have their departure rescheduled until their condition permits.

Implementation of the terms and conditions of the health policy marks a paradigm shift in the Hajj administration in Indonesia, from an administrative approach to one based on safety and the sustainability of worship. This policy not only addresses the emergency situation of the 2023 Hajj but also represents a long-term strategic step to establish a Hajj organization that is elderly-friendly, safe, and in accordance with the principles of Maqasid Sharia, particularly regarding safeguarding the soul (*hifz al-nafs*). To strengthen oversight, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, is conducting re-screening at embarkation points before departure. This examination includes blood pressure, sugar levels, respiratory status, and other vital signs to ensure flight eligibility, particularly for the elderly and pilgrims with comorbidities. Prospective pilgrims with unstable health conditions can have their departure postponed for the sake of individual safety and the smooth operation of the Hajj. This step demonstrates the government's proactive approach to minimizing medical risks, improving service standards towards zero accidents, and responding to changes in pilgrims' health conditions.

### 3.2. Social and Media Approaches in Program Strengthening

In addition to physical and technical policies, a social approach is also a primary focus in strengthening the Elderly-Friendly Hajj Program. The Ministry of Religious Affairs recognizes that the program's success depends not only on the provision of adequate facilities or regulations, but also on a paradigm shift in serving pilgrims, particularly the elderly. Therefore, in addition to improving administrative and medical aspects, the Ministry of Religious Affairs is instilling values of empathy, concern, and respect for elderly pilgrims throughout the entire Hajj process. Through various outreach forums, officer training, and pilgrim development activities, a strong message is being conveyed that the elderly are not merely objects of service, but rather subjects possessing dignity, experience, and a noble position within the extended Muslim family. They are a generation that has made significant contributions to religion and the nation, and therefore deserve to be served with compassion, patience, and respect.

In training Hajj officers, for example, the Ministry of Religious Affairs emphasizes the importance of soft skills in service based on humanitarian and Islamic values, such as how to communicate with the elderly, techniques for providing physical assistance, and strategies for creating a sense of security and comfort. This approach is reinforced with material that refers to the principles of maqashid sharia, namely protecting the soul (*hifz al-nafs*) and maintaining honor (*hifz al-'ird*), which form the moral basis of elderly-friendly Hajj services. The narrative of inclusivity in the Elderly-Friendly Hajj Program is campaigned through mass and digital media to encourage public support for harmonious services for elderly pilgrims. This program is not merely a technical policy, but a social movement that emphasizes brotherhood, care, and respect for the elderly, so that the Hajj reflects the spirit of Islam as rahmatan lil 'alamin. Mrs. Amnia Salma emphasizes, "Consider the elderly as our own parents," which forms the basis of an inclusive social approach, fostering a collective awareness that serving the elderly is part of worship itself. This approach encourages Hajj officials, medical personnel, and fellow pilgrims to be proactive, providing attention, assistance, and respectful treatment, from priority queues and mobility assistance to empathetic communication. This collective awareness creates a humane, warm, and family-based Hajj atmosphere, so that the elderly are respected as an honored member of the congregation. The Elderly-Friendly Hajj Policy is an affirmative and humanistic implementation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, addressing the surge in the number of elderly pilgrims while guaranteeing their rights and dignity to safely and comfortably perform the fifth pillar of Islam. The integration of religious values, the principles of maqashid sharia, and modern public service standards places safety (*hifz al-nafs*) and human dignity (*hifz al-'ird*) as priorities, making Elderly-Friendly Hajj a new paradigm of Hajj services that are inclusive, responsive, and based on universal humanitarian values. Starting from the recognition of the demographic reality of Indonesian Hajj pilgrims who are now dominated by the elderly group, the Ministry of Religious Affairs took a strategic step by

compiling Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that regulate every stage of service, from Hajj rituals to repatriation to the homeland. This SOP is followed by the provision of elderly-friendly facilities at various service points, such as special wheelchair paths, handrails in toilets, and the provision of internal transportation in the form of golf carts in the Hajj dormitories and areas of the Grand Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque.

Hajj service reform is further strengthened through the *istiqomah* policy. Health insurance is a requirement for paying Hajj fees, and re-screening at embarkation points to ensure the physical and mental fitness of pilgrims before departure. This policy is designed to ensure the safety, comfort, and accessibility of elderly pilgrims, while reducing the risk of medical incidents and deaths, which were previously a serious concern. This approach is also supported by a social narrative and media utilization that emphasizes empathy, respect, and mutual cooperation in Hajj services. Through media campaigns, officer training, and public education, a collective awareness is being built that elderly pilgrims are not merely objects of service, but rather a noble part of the Muslim community deserving of compassion and respect. Thus, the Elderly-Friendly Hajj Program demonstrates the integration of regulatory-based affirmative action policies, adaptive technical innovation, and humanistic communication strategies, making it a model of inclusive public service in accordance with humanitarian values and Islamic teachings. As Amnia Salma emphasized, elderly pilgrims should be treated like their own parents. The synergy between policy, service, and social awareness makes this program a serious effort to realize a more inclusive, humane, and dignified Hajj for all pilgrims without exception.

### 3.3. Elderly-Friendly Hajj Construction in the Media

As the number of elderly Indonesian Hajj pilgrims increases, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs initiated the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program in response to the need for inclusive services. Data from 2023 showed more than 60,000 elderly pilgrims, making them a top priority. This program was systematically developed through a media-based public communication ecosystem, both conventional media such as radio and television, and digital media such as Instagram, YouTube, and the Smart Hajj app. Messages were delivered using an educational approach, using elderly-friendly visual content, using contrasting colors, and involving religious leaders and local communities. The media narrative emphasized three core values: ease (*at-taysir*), security (*al-amn*), and assistance (*al-murāfaqah*), which were embodied in technical services, assistance, and attention to the needs of the elderly. This approach emphasized that service is not merely administrative, but a form of moral and spiritual respect in accordance with Islamic teachings. The visualization of elderly pilgrims accompanied by officers in digital media emphasized the values of empathy, patience, and respect, making Elderly-Friendly Hajj a transformation of humane and civilized religious services (Kementerian Agama RI, 2023a).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs, through the Directorate General of Hajj and Umrah (PHU), is developing an Elderly-Friendly Hajj media platform using a visual and narrative approach. Orange and white colors are used for visibility, while brochures, banners, and the Smart Hajj app present both technical information and valuable messages, such as being gentle and maintaining the dignity of the elderly. Religious leaders and religious organizations play a role in disseminating this narrative to local communities. Digital and print media are used to increase literacy, build collective awareness, and strengthen the rights of the elderly. Informal channels such as KBIHU (Community Health Groups), religious study groups, and WhatsApp groups support the delivery of messages. This communication strategy builds social meaning, instills empathy, solidarity, and respect for the elderly, making the media an agent of social change that strengthens humane, inclusive, and value-based Hajj services.

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The Ministry of Religious Affairs, through the Directorate General of Hajj and Umrah (PHU), developed a media strategy for Elderly-Friendly Hajj using a visual and narrative approach. Orange and white were chosen for high visibility, while brochures, banners, and the Smart Hajj app conveyed technical information as well as values of empathy and respect for the elderly. Religious leaders and religious organizations helped disseminate this narrative to local communities. Digital and print media increased literacy, fostered collective awareness, and strengthened the rights of the elderly. Informal channels such as KBIHU (Islamic study groups), religious study groups, and WhatsApp groups reinforced the message. This strategy built social meaning, instilled empathy and solidarity, and made the media an agent of social change that strengthened humane, inclusive, and value-based Hajj services (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

In the context of the Elderly-Friendly Hajj, the media serves not only as a conveyor of information but also as an instrument for shaping social meaning regarding public policy. Referring to Berger and Luckmann, social reality is formed through interaction and communication, including media, which is then institutionalized as a shared truth. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, through YouTube, Instagram, and its website, builds a collective perception that the elderly are active and dignified subjects in the Hajj pilgrimage (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Congregation testimonials, coverage of the Hajj rituals, and visualization of special services demonstrate that facilities for the elderly are an implementation of social justice, in line with McCombs and Shaw's agenda-setting theory. This strategy legitimizes the policy and builds emotional and ideological public support. Publicity becomes a crucial instrument for shaping image, legitimacy, and acceptance, with communication channels tailored to reach the younger generation as companions for the elderly through digital media, as well as the elderly through print and television, so that policy messages are conveyed broadly and effectively (McQuail, 2011).

### **3.4. Key Messages of the Elderly-Friendly Hajj Program in the Media**

Program The Elderly-Friendly Hajj Program, run by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI), emphasizes the provision of inclusive and humane services for elderly Hajj pilgrims. The program's main message is framed around four key ideas: first, the importance of respect and compassion for the elderly during the pilgrimage; second, elderly-friendly Hajj services are an implementation of Islamic and humanitarian values; third, special facilities for the elderly are a form of positive affirmation, not discrimination; and fourth, the role of companions and Hajj officers is key to supporting the comfort and safety of elderly pilgrims. This message is disseminated through various media, from television, radio, print, to digital and social media, tailored to audience characteristics. Mass and digital media are used as strategic tools to reach different groups. Conventional media such as television and radio are more effective for elderly people who are less familiar with digital platforms, while online media, news portals, and social media target the younger generation, families, and companions of pilgrims. Content presented includes educational videos, infographics, articles, and coverage of elderly Hajj rituals. The narrative that is constructed emphasizes that special facilities for the elderly, such as priority lanes, wheelchairs, and intensive assistance, are not merely administrative technicalities, but also a concrete manifestation of respect for their dignity.

Socialization through media also promotes health awareness and physical preparedness for the elderly before departure. Messages include recommendations for health checks, a healthy diet, light exercise, and an understanding of pilgrimage procedures tailored to their physical condition. Family and staff support is complemented by specialized training to understand the physical and psychological needs of the elderly, provide appropriate guidance, and respond to emergency situations. Companions are also tasked with coordinating services with the medical team and officials in the Holy Land to ensure optimal care. Conventional and digital media are combined simultaneously

to reach a broad audience. National television and radio are the primary channels for the elderly, while social media and the official Ministry of Religious Affairs YouTube channel target companions and the younger generation. Furthermore, local communities such as the Hajj Community Learning Group (KBIHU), religious study groups, and Hajj alumni associations serve as effective informal communication channels, utilizing WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram groups to disseminate educational materials, health tips, and information about Hajj rituals.

Key challenges in outreach include limited digital literacy among the elderly, limited internet access in remote areas, and the spread of hoaxes. Mitigation strategies include educating companions, collaborating with religious leaders, and distributing easily accessible digital materials. Strict publication SOPs are implemented to ensure message consistency, from planning and content production, validation, publication, and evaluating media effectiveness. The Elderly-Friendly Hajj Program utilizes media as a strategic instrument to build public understanding, participation, and trust in inclusive Hajj services. Through a multiplatform approach and audience segmentation, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has effectively conveyed key messages related to facilities, health, assistance, and the rukhsah (pilgrimage) for the elderly. The combination of formal and informal media ensures widespread information dissemination, shapes a humanitarian narrative, and enhances the preparedness and comfort of elderly Hajj pilgrims.

Within the framework of medium theory developed by Marshall McLuhan, media is not merely a channel for conveying information but also shapes how society understands and responds to messages. McLuhan emphasized that "the medium is the message," meaning that the characteristics of each medium influence the recipient's experience and interpretation of the message's content. In the context of promoting the Elderly-Friendly Hajj Program, the use of both digital and conventional media must take into account the unique characteristics of each medium. Social media allows for direct interaction, participatory dialogue, and rapid message dissemination among the younger generation, who often act as companions for elderly pilgrims. Conversely, television, radio, and print media are effective in reaching a broad audience, including elderly pilgrims who are less familiar with digital technology. Publicity theory emphasizes how publicizing a policy through the media can build a positive image, legitimacy, and public acceptance. Publicity goes beyond conveying information to shaping public narratives and perceptions. In the Elderly-Friendly Hajj Program, the policy was introduced through various media platforms with communication strategies tailored to audience characteristics. Press releases, media conferences, television coverage, and social media campaigns were used to highlight the government's concern for elderly pilgrims, strengthen the program's legitimacy, and encourage public participation.

By integrating McLuhan's theory and publicity theory, the success of the Elderly-Friendly Hajj socialization program is determined not only by the policy's substance, but also by how the message is disseminated, through which media, and how the public forms perceptions. The right communication strategy is crucial for the effectiveness of message delivery and the level of public acceptance of the program. Key messages conveyed through the media include easy access and priority services, assistance by Hajj officials, health education, elderly-friendly worship procedures, and the use of digital technology. Ease of access includes Fast Track services at the airport, special transportation, strategic accommodations, and priority health services. Assistance by Hajj officials ensures that elderly pilgrims receive mobility assistance, support for worship, and psychosocial care. Health education emphasizes physical exercise, medical consultations, and the use of health aids before and during the Hajj. Worship procedures are adapted to the physical limitations of elderly pilgrims, accompanied by tutorials, infographics, and guidance from senior Hajj guides.

Furthermore, technology is a key element in the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program, including the Smart Hajj application for real-time guidance and information, tracking pilgrims' locations using electronic bracelets or QR codes, and telemedicine services for online health consultations. Outreach through digital and electronic media enhances the efficiency, safety, and comfort of elderly pilgrims. A 2023 Ministry of Religious Affairs survey showed that 85% of respondents were satisfied with priority services, confirming the effectiveness of the communication strategy. However, challenges remain,

such as limited digital access for the elderly, low digital literacy, and the risk of spreading hoaxes. Therefore, improving digital literacy and inclusive information distribution are crucial steps to perfect this program. Overall, the construction of the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program in the Ministry of Religious Affairs' media in 2023–2024 emphasizes a narrative of convenience, security, and support, with a publication strategy tailored to audience characteristics to increase public understanding and participation.

### 3.5. The Context of Media Use in Socializing the Elderly-Friendly Hajj Program

The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) is using a strategic multi-platform media approach to promote the Elderly-Friendly Hajj Program. The campaign is conducted through its official website, Hajj portal, YouTube channel, radio broadcasts, print media, and social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. This strategy is tailored to the diversity of audiences, including generational differences and media literacy levels, ensuring the message reaches both elderly pilgrims and their companions. The Elderly-Friendly Hajj Program was initiated in response to the increasing number of elderly pilgrims, which by 2023 will reach approximately 30% of the total Indonesian pilgrims. The health and mobility challenges faced by the elderly make disseminating information about Hajj facilities, policies, and preparations crucial. The media approach is not only aimed directly at the elderly but also at families and companions who are more familiar with information technology, given the low media literacy among the elderly and the risk of spreading misinformation. The communication strategy emphasizes simple visualizations, empathetic narratives, and easy-to-understand language, while also relying on the role of communities and families in conveying information.

In the mass media, the Ministry of Religious Affairs collaborated with national and local television stations, including TVRI and Metro TV, to host an educational program on the Elderly-Friendly Hajj. The material presented covered adaptive worship procedures for the elderly, wheelchair use, tips for maintaining stamina, accommodation facilities near worship sites, specialized health services, and intensive support from Hajj officials. The program also emphasized health protocols while in the Holy Land. Radio broadcasts, via RRI and local radio stations in regional languages, were used to reach elderly prospective pilgrims who were more familiar with conventional media. The presentation in regional languages enhanced understanding, while interactive sessions allowed for questions and answers with experts, Hajj officials, or health workers. This approach also strengthened family and community involvement in supporting elderly pilgrims.

In the digital realm, the official website of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Hajj portal ([haji.kemenag.go.id](http://haji.kemenag.go.id)) serve as primary sources of information. The content presented includes guidance on worship, physical and mental preparation, health facilities, and health protocols, available in the form of articles, infographics, e-books, and interactive brochures. These digital platforms enable fast and transparent access to information, support education and support for elderly pilgrims and their families, enabling them to perform the Hajj more safely, comfortably, and in accordance with their physical needs. The Ministry of Religious Affairs' use of multi-platform media reflects an adaptive and inclusive communication strategy. By combining conventional and digital media, the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program can be effectively socialized, increase public understanding, and ensure humane Hajj services for elderly pilgrims (Suryana, 2023).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) uses social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok to promote the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program in an interactive and accessible manner. Content includes educational videos on senior worship procedures, health tips, government facilities, and testimonials from elderly pilgrims. Live streaming sessions with health experts and Hajj guides allow for direct Q&A sessions, provide personalized information, and reduce anxiety among prospective pilgrims. The success of these TikTok videos is evident in the hundreds of thousands of views they have received. The use of social media strengthens the physical and mental readiness of elderly pilgrims and engages family and community members in supporting their worship (Rahman, 2024). In addition to digital media, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) has published

an Elderly-Friendly Hajj Guidebook, which has been distributed to regional offices throughout Indonesia. This book provides comprehensive guidance for elderly pilgrims, covering worship procedures adapted to physical limitations, concessions for the pillars of Hajj, wheelchair use, wukuf procedures, and ease of stoning the devil. The book also includes tips on health, fitness, diet, and physical exercise before departure. Packed with illustrations, infographics, and inspirational stories, the book is available in both print and digital versions, allowing families to accompany them. Wide distribution ensures that elderly pilgrims are prepared to perform the Hajj pilgrimage comfortably and safely (Amin, 2023).

The effectiveness of promoting Elderly-Friendly Hajj is evident in the use of media tailored to the audience's characteristics. Social and digital media such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Hajj portals, and mobile apps effectively reach the younger generation who act as companions for elderly pilgrims, enabling rapid information dissemination, direct interaction with experts, and access to pilgrimage guides and Hajj facilities. Educational videos, infographics, and online Q&A sessions enhance the understanding and preparedness of companions in supporting the elderly. Meanwhile, conventional media remains important for elderly pilgrims, including guidebooks, leaflets, brochures, and national and local radio broadcasts in regional languages. Print and radio media provide easy-to-understand information, accompanied by simple illustrations and guides. This combination of digital and traditional strategies ensures effective and inclusive information dissemination, so that all pilgrims, whether tech-savvy or more comfortable with conventional media, can perform the Hajj comfortably, safely, and orderly (Wahyudi, 2023). The results of the 2024 Ministry of Religion survey showed that 45% of elderly congregants chose radio/TV, 30% relied on social media, and 25% utilized a combination of digital and print media (Kementerian Agama RI, 2023b).

Although the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program has been promoted through various media, several challenges still need to be addressed to ensure effective and inclusive information dissemination. First, the digital divide is a major obstacle, as many elderly pilgrims lack technological devices or skills, making it difficult to access digital information. While younger generations can assist, printed materials or in-person training are needed to reach pilgrims more effectively. Second, information literacy remains low; the spread of inaccurate information on social media can lead to confusion regarding Hajj procedures and policies. Therefore, strengthening information literacy through educational campaigns and official sources such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs portal is crucial. Third, language accessibility is a challenge, as content often uses standard Indonesian, which is difficult for pilgrims accustomed to regional languages to understand. Solutions include language adaptation, local audio/video materials, and collaboration with regional radio stations. These strategies are crucial for establishing a social reality that seniors have equal rights to comfortable, safe, and inclusive Hajj services (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Therefore, the communication strategies implemented play a role in fostering a collective understanding of the urgency of this program.

In the context of promoting the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program, the choice of communication media is crucial for the effectiveness of information delivery, in line with Marshall McLuhan's idea that the medium is the message. The Ministry of Religious Affairs uses a multiplatform approach, including print media, television, radio, social media, an official website, and digital applications, to reach all audiences, especially elderly pilgrims and their families. Print media such as guidebooks, brochures, and Hajj magazines provide detailed information on elderly-friendly services and procedures. Electronic media, including television and radio, reach a wide audience, even in remote areas. Digital and social media enable the dissemination of interactive information, including educational videos, infographics, testimonials, and online Q&A sessions. Mobile applications such as Smart Hajj and online webinars facilitate real-time access to information. This approach bridges the digital divide, improves information literacy, and ensures that every elderly pilgrim receives safe, convenient, and inclusive guidance. This multiplatform strategy demonstrates the Ministry of Religious Affairs' adaptation to developments in communication technology and the needs of diverse audiences (Kementerian Agama RI, 2024).

An evaluation of the effectiveness of media use in promoting the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program shows that a multiplatform communication strategy significantly impacts the understanding and preparedness of elderly pilgrims and their companions or families. This approach combines print, electronic, digital, and app-based media to deliver information widely and tailor it to the preferences of diverse audiences. Print media remains highly relevant, especially for elderly pilgrims who are less familiar with digital technology. Hajj guidebooks, brochures, and magazines provide detailed information on special services, health procedures, and pilgrimage procedures tailored to the needs of the elderly. Print media allows pilgrims to read the material repeatedly without relying on electronic devices, is easy to carry during travel, and provides a sense of comfort for those more accustomed to conventional learning methods. Hajj magazines such as *Haji Kita* also feature stories from elderly pilgrims, health tips, and interviews with medical personnel, serving as a source of information and inspiration for Hajj preparation.

Electronic media such as television and radio play a crucial role in reaching a wider audience, including families and younger generations accompanying the elderly. Television utilizes talk shows and interviews with speakers from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Hajj medical personnel, discussing services, procedures, and health tips. Radio, particularly in remote areas, provides educational audio broadcasts discussing the technical aspects of the Hajj pilgrimage for seniors, easing access to information for those without digital access. These electronic media also strengthen support from families and companions, who act as intermediaries in understanding information and assisting elderly pilgrims in their pilgrimage practices. The use of digital and social media, including the official Ministry of Religious Affairs website and Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook accounts, allows for interactive, real-time information dissemination, easily accessible from various devices. Content in the form of infographics, video tutorials, pilgrim testimonials, and online Q&A sessions increases audience engagement. App-based innovations such as Smart Hajj facilitate access to pilgrimage guides, departure schedules, Hajj facility locations, and easy-to-understand audio and video guides. Webinars and online sessions are also effective tools for education, discussion, and direct consultation with resource persons.

Supporting factors for the socialization included the institutional commitment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, support from religious leaders and local communities such as the Islamic Community Empowerment Group (KBIHU), religious study groups (Majelis Taklim), and Hajj alumni, who strengthened personal and trusted communication networks. Visual materials were tailored to the needs of the elderly, using simple designs, high contrast, and eye-friendly colors, so that messages were optimally received. However, significant challenges remain, including low digital literacy, physical and cognitive limitations of the elderly, the potential for the spread of hoaxes, unequal access in remote areas, and limited educational time before Hajj departure. To address these challenges, the Ministry of Religious Affairs implemented strategies such as training staff, strengthening social media and interactive platforms, producing educational video content, and developing elderly-friendly applications and webinars. This adaptive and inclusive public communication strategy made the media not only an information tool but also a social medium that fostered collective awareness about the importance of dignified worship services for elderly pilgrims. The multiplatform approach ensured that each audience group received the information they needed, enabling the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program to be implemented effectively, safely, comfortably, and inclusively, while also increasing the readiness and confidence of elderly pilgrims in performing the Hajj.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study examines how the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag RI) mainstreamed the Elderly-Friendly Hajj program through the media during the 2023–2024 period. The research focused on the construction of messages in the media, the substance of key messages, and the context in which media was used to promote the program. Based on the findings, several important conclusions can be drawn. First, the media's construction of the elderly emphasizes their role as active spiritual subjects worthy of respect, not simply as a vulnerable group. Official Kemenag digital media,

such as Instagram @kemenag\_ri, YouTube, and the ministry's website, portray the elderly as independent, wise, and instrumental in the Hajj pilgrimage. These positive visualizations and narratives reinforce public understanding that the elderly are an integral part of the Hajj community and should be served with dignity. Second, key messages conveyed through various media channels emphasize the physical and mental readiness of elderly pilgrims, the importance of social and emotional support from family and companions, and the rights of the elderly to receive humane, safe, and Islamic-compliant pilgrimage services. Educational messages also include information about special facilities such as fast-track access, healthcare services, and senior manasik training. The presentation was delivered using an empathetic narrative and visual approach to build emotional closeness and public understanding of the needs of the elderly. Third, media was used in a participatory and strategic manner as a space for education, advocacy, and public opinion formation. The digital approach enabled two-way communication between the government, prospective pilgrims, and families, so that the outreach not only conveyed information but also encouraged changes in attitudes and public awareness regarding protection for elderly pilgrims. Mainstreaming Elderly-Friendly Hajj through the media demonstrated a paradigm shift in the Ministry of Religious Affairs' service from administrative to humanistic and inclusive. Media functioned not only as a means of information, but also as an instrument of social construction, public education, and policy transformation based on empathy, justice, and respect for the rights of the elderly.

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