

THE INDONESIA GOVERNMENT'S NEGOTIATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF SAUDI ARABIA IN PURSUIT OF INCREASING THE HAJJ QUOTA FOR 2025

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Abstract

This study analyzes the negotiation strategies and dynamics between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia concerning the proposed increase in Indonesia's Hajj quota for 2025. As background, the research is motivated by Indonesia's consistently high demand for Hajj pilgrimage—which exceeds the annual quota determined by the Saudi government—and the inconsistent outcomes of previous diplomatic efforts. While Indonesia successfully secured additional quotas in 2023 and 2024, similar success was not achieved for the 2025 Hajj season. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, collecting data through in-depth interviews, official documents, reports from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, and relevant media publications. Data analysis was conducted interactively using the Miles and Huberman model. The findings indicate that the negotiation dynamics for 2025 were shaped by three main factors. First, Saudi Arabia implemented a strict evaluation of infrastructural capacity, particularly in the Mina–Arafah area. Second, the changes in Indonesia's governmental structure following the 2024 election affected the continuity of technical diplomacy. Third, the stipulations outlined in the Hajj MoU for 1447 H/2026 AD emphasize that additional quota allocations can only be granted if Indonesia's technical and operational preparedness meets Saudi standards. From a theoretical perspective, using Oran R. Young's negotiation framework, these dynamics reveal a shift from interest-based negotiations (as seen in 2023–2024) to constraint-based negotiations in 2025. As a result, Indonesia was granted additional quota only for Hajj officers, not for regular pilgrims. The study concludes that the effectiveness of Hajj diplomacy is contingent upon institutional strength, continuity of technical-level negotiations, and adaptive strategic capacity in responding to evolving Saudi policies.

Keywords: *Negotiation, Hajj Diplomacy, Hajj Quota, Oran R. Young, Indonesia-Saudi Arabia*

INTRODUCTION

The Hajj pilgrimage is one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, involving millions of Muslims from various countries each year. As the country with the largest Muslim population globally, Indonesia consistently sends the highest number of Hajj pilgrims. In this context, the Hajj quota policy determined by the Government of Saudi Arabia becomes a crucial factor in defining how many Indonesian pilgrims may perform the pilgrimage annually. The quota is established based on the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) formula of one pilgrim per one thousand Muslim inhabitants in each member state. However, given the exceptionally high demand for Hajj in Indonesia and the limited quota available, the Indonesian government faces persistent challenges in meeting the expectations of its Muslim population. This situation positions Hajj diplomacy as an essential component of Indonesia's foreign policy, particularly in fostering bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia in the religious sector. Over the past several years, the dynamics of Indonesia–Saudi Arabia Hajj diplomacy have been notable. In 2023, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, initiated a series of intensive diplomatic efforts to secure additional Hajj quota. These efforts were driven by the post-pandemic context, in which Saudi Arabia began relaxing its previous restrictions while public demand for Hajj increased sharply. Through high-level diplomatic engagement and sustained political communication, Indonesia succeeded in obtaining an additional quota from Saudi Arabia—an outcome that reflected trust in Indonesia's capacity to manage the Hajj professionally and safely. This diplomatic success demonstrated the positive state of bilateral relations and highlighted Indonesia's effective negotiation capacity in religious affairs.

However, in 2025, new dynamics emerged that contrasted sharply with earlier achievements. The Saudi government unexpectedly reduced Indonesia's Hajj quota, citing internal considerations related to infrastructural capacity, cross-national pilgrim distribution, and the need for greater efficiency in Hajj operations. This decision had significant implications for Indonesia, given the millions of prospective pilgrims already in long waiting lists. The reduction became a critical point in Indonesia–Saudi Arabia Hajj diplomacy because it occurred after a period of notable diplomatic success. This shift raised a key gap in the diplomatic trajectory: while negotiations in 2023–2024 had successfully secured quota increases, similar efforts under the new administration in 2025 did not produce additional quota for Indonesian pilgrims. This phenomenon indicates inconsistency in the outcomes of Indonesia's Hajj diplomacy. On one hand, the diplomacy of 2023 yielded success through intensive communication, interministerial coordination, and strong institutional cooperation. On the other hand, these achievements did not continue when Saudi Arabia adjusted its Hajj policies in 2025. This gap may be understood as a negative

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deviation, in which positive diplomatic gains could not be sustained due to external factors beyond Indonesia's direct control. Saudi Arabia's unilateral policy change demonstrates that, despite Indonesia's proactive diplomacy, success remains contingent on the acceptance and political decisions of the counterpart state. This underscores the importance of developing adaptive, long-term negotiation strategies in managing the dynamics of bilateral religious cooperation. In response to the quota reduction, the Indonesian government did not remain passive. Through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Indonesian diplomatic mission in Riyadh, further negotiations were initiated to advocate for an increased quota for the same year. These efforts included ministerial-level communication, bilateral forums, and personal diplomatic engagement with officials from the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah. Indonesia also emphasized its commitment to strengthening national Hajj management systems to demonstrate eligibility for additional quotas. These steps illustrate how Indonesia's diplomatic approach shifted from formal communication to more active, pragmatic, and interest-based negotiation strategies.

Within this context, negotiation became the central instrument for restoring Indonesia's bargaining power with Saudi Arabia. The dynamics described above show that Indonesia's Hajj diplomacy is not merely a religious matter but also reflects foreign policy processes and the state's negotiating capacity in protecting national interests related to public religious services. The quota reduction in 2025 highlights the challenges of maintaining diplomatic achievements and demonstrates that bilateral cooperation in Hajj administration is highly dependent on Indonesia's ability to adjust to Saudi Arabia's evolving policy frameworks. Negotiation for an increased Hajj quota in 2025 is particularly vital given the substantial imbalance between Indonesia's number of prospective pilgrims and the quota allocated by Saudi Arabia. With waiting times in some regions extending for decades, the Indonesian government faces strong domestic pressure to advocate for additional quota to reduce the length of the queues. However, demographic arguments alone cannot justify an increase; Saudi Arabia requires that any quota adjustments align with infrastructural capacities, such as Mina-Arafah tent spaces, transportation availability, and safety standards. Indonesia presented its request for additional quota through formal platforms such as the Annual Hajj Meeting and ministerial-level communication, while technical channels—such as the Office of Hajj Affairs—were used to demonstrate operational preparedness. The Hajj MoU for 1447H–2026M clearly stipulates that any proposal for quota changes must be supported by accurate data, adequate personnel preparation, and compliance with Saudi regulations. This technical approach resulted in the approval of additional quota for Hajj officers, although an increase in pilgrim quota has not yet been granted due to the need for further technical verification.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Indonesian-Saudi Arabian Hajj Diplomacy

The Indonesian government's diplomacy with the Government of Saudi Arabia constitutes a central aspect of Hajj administration. Various forms of diplomacy are involved, ranging from bilateral and political diplomacy aimed at strengthening inter-state relations, to technical diplomacy embedded in Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) that regulate operational mechanisms, as well as religious diplomacy facilitated by close interactions between the religious authorities of both countries. Economic symbolism is also reflected in investment schemes and the management of Hajj services, all of which contribute to shaping Indonesia's bargaining position. From this perspective, it becomes evident that the core theme of this study concerns the strategies and quality of bilateral relations that significantly influence quota allocation and the smooth implementation of the Hajj each year.

Hajj Quota Negotiation Strategy

A considerable number of studies have addressed, either directly or indirectly, Indonesia's negotiation strategies in securing additional Hajj quota. In this process, multiple diplomatic instruments are utilized, including lobbying, high-level communication among officials, and inter-institutional coordination involving the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the President, the Indonesian Consulate General in Jeddah (KJRI), and the Hajj Financial Management Agency (BPKH). These findings highlight that quota negotiation is a crucial element of Hajj diplomacy, as the success of securing additional quota is highly dependent on Indonesia's capacity to design effective negotiation strategies and mobilize various actors in a synergistic manner.

The Dynamics of Hajj Policy After the Crisis (2013 Renovation, Covid 19-Pandemic, and Quota Recovery)

Many studies also emphasize issues related to the restoration of Hajj quotas following the COVID-19 pandemic, shifts in Saudi Arabian policies concerning safety and operational efficiency, the impact of the Grand Mosque (Masjid al-Haram) renovation, and Indonesia's adaptive responses to global quota fluctuations. These studies reveal that the determination of Hajj quotas is influenced not only by Indonesia's internal conditions but also by global dynamics and Saudi Arabia's internal policy changes. Consequently, the Indonesian government must remain adaptive and responsive in formulating effective Hajj diplomacy strategies.

The Role of Institutions in Hajj Diplomacy

The literature further underscores the strategic roles played by multiple institutional actors in Indonesia's Hajj diplomacy. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs act as the primary agents of bilateral negotiation, while the President and the House of Representatives (DPR) provide policy direction and political legitimacy. The Indonesian Consulate General in Jeddah (KJRI) serves as a diplomatic representative in Saudi Arabia, facilitating continuous coordination on the ground. Moreover, the involvement of religious organizations and ulama through multi-track diplomacy illustrates that Hajj diplomacy

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extends beyond formal state interactions, relying also on social and religious networks to build trust and influence. Meanwhile, BPKH plays a strategic role in economic diplomacy by managing Hajj funds professionally and creating opportunities for Indonesia to enhance its bargaining power through investment and service management. Collectively, the literature demonstrates that inter-agency coordination and synergy among actors constitute key determinants of successful Hajj diplomacy, particularly in designing negotiation strategies, ensuring policy implementation, and achieving optimal outcomes related to quota allocation and Hajj administration amid Saudi policy dynamics and global contexts.

Evaluation of Hajj Policy and Management

Several studies further argue that Hajj diplomacy should not be viewed solely within the framework of bilateral relations, but also through the lens of public policy and governance. These studies examine the effectiveness of Hajj policies, the implementation of technical systems such as the 4-3-5 Scheme, and the quality of services provided to pilgrims as indicators of successful Hajj management. Additionally, the fiscal implications for the national budget (APBN) highlight the connection between quota negotiations and government expenditure, while the integration of Hajj management systems through approaches such as Total Quality Management (TQM), digitalization, and the e-Hajj platform reflects efforts to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Thus, the literature demonstrates that Hajj diplomacy must be understood as an interconnected interaction between bilateral strategies and domestic governance frameworks aimed at achieving optimal outcomes for both pilgrims and the state.

Theoretical Framework

Concept of Negotiation – Oran R. Young

As articulated by Oran R. Young, negotiation must be understood as institutional bargaining, namely a form of bargaining that takes place within an institutional or regime-based framework defined by agreed-upon rules, norms, and procedures. In this context, states do not interact as isolated actors operating in a vacuum; rather, they function within institutional structures that regulate interactions and facilitate cooperation on the basis of formalized agreements. Based on data collected from official documents, Ministry of Religious Affairs reports, interviews with relevant officials, and media publications, this study finds that the negotiation process between the Indonesian and Saudi governments concerning the 2025 Hajj quota involved complex dynamics and strategic steps. Indonesia's interest lies in increasing its Hajj quota in proportion to the growing number of prospective pilgrims, which is projected to exceed 450,000 in 2025 according to the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Young further argues that the negotiation and implementation of agreements depend heavily on the capacity of institutions or regimes to maintain commitments and ensure the willingness of domestic and international actors to comply with established rules. This means that if both governments and relevant institutions—whether in Indonesia or Saudi Arabia—demonstrate readiness to comply with standards, procedures, and regulations, and maintain consistency in implementation, then the negotiation outcomes will not only succeed in a formal sense but also be effectively realized in practice. This perspective clarifies that expanding the Hajj quota is not the product of a single negotiation, but rather the result of a continuous institutional process.

Operationalization of Oran R. Young's Concept

The operationalization of Young's institutional bargaining framework involves several core indicators for analyzing a state's foreign policy:

1. Identification of Each State's Interests

The first stage of negotiation involves identifying and clarifying each party's national interests, priorities, capabilities, and limitations. In the context of Hajj diplomacy, Indonesia seeks to increase its Hajj quota, enhance service quality, and ensure the sustainability of public spending. In contrast, Saudi Arabia aims to regulate mosque capacity, ensure safety, and maintain the orderly implementation of the Hajj for all sending countries. Clear identification of interests allows both parties to understand each other's positions, locate shared interests, and determine acceptable compromise boundaries.

2. Establishment of Joint Rules and Procedures

Once interests are identified, the next step is constructing the rules and procedures that will govern negotiation and implementation. This includes agreed communication methods, decision-making processes, monitoring mechanisms, and the responsibilities of all parties. In the case of the Hajj quota, this is institutionalized through the Hajj MoU or Hajj Agreement, which outlines the rights and obligations of Indonesia and Saudi Arabia. These joint procedures ensure transparency, legal certainty, and consistency, thus reducing the risk of conflict or misunderstanding.

3. Formal and Informal Inter-State Negotiations to Achieve Regime Agreements

At this stage, both states engage in formal and informal bargaining to achieve mutually beneficial agreements. Formal negotiations include diplomatic meetings, high-level conferences, and bilateral agreements; informal negotiations involve unofficial communications among technical officials or diplomats to accelerate the resolution of complex issues. In the Hajj context, negotiations cover quota allocation, departure schedules, payment mechanisms, and technical service provisions—often requiring compromise and flexible adjustment to priorities.

4. Implementation and Enforcement of Joint Rules

After an agreement is reached, the focus shifts to implementation and monitoring to ensure that the agreed rules and procedures function effectively. Indonesia prepares its comprehensive Hajj management system—registration, training, transportation, and accommodation—while Saudi Arabia ensures that facilities, security, and capacity arrangements comply with the agreement. This stage requires inter-institutional coordination and clear compliance mechanisms to ensure that

negotiated outcomes are realized without obstacles.

5. Adaptation to Changing Conditions and Political Realities

Negotiated agreements are not static. Changes in domestic or international conditions, political dynamics, and institutional capacity may require adjustments. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic reduced Hajj quotas, the Grand Mosque renovation affected capacity, and regulatory reforms in Saudi Arabia reshaped operational procedures. Thus, adaptive mechanisms are essential to ensure the continued relevance and flexibility of the agreement. This highlights that negotiation is not merely about reaching a one-time agreement but about maintaining a dynamic and sustainable cooperation regime. Collectively, these five indicators—identification of interests, establishment of joint rules, formal and informal negotiation, implementation and enforcement, and adaptation to changing conditions—enable a comprehensive analysis of state decision-making. They demonstrate how international cooperation emerges from pluralistic national interests and how the interests and dynamics of both states are translated into effective and adaptive foreign policy.

Relevance of Oran R. Young's Concept to Indonesia's 2025 Hajj Quota Negotiation

Young's negotiation framework is highly relevant for understanding Indonesia's strategy in negotiating with Saudi Arabia regarding the 2025 Hajj quota because it conceptualizes negotiation as the creation of a regime—a structure of rules and institutions governing inter-state interaction. In this context, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia can be viewed as state actors with differing interests and capacities: Indonesia seeks to increase its pilgrim quota, while Saudi Arabia must maintain facility capacity, security, and operational efficiency.

The application of Young's mechanisms is clearly observable in Indonesian Hajj diplomacy.

- Identifying interests allows Indonesia to assess realistic quota ceilings and understand Saudi Arabia's priorities.
- The establishment of rules and procedures is institutionalized through technical agreements such as the Hajj MoU.
- Formal and informal negotiations enable flexible bargaining over quota numbers, schedules, and service mechanisms within the agreed procedural framework.
- Implementation and enforcement require coordination among ministries and institutions—such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, BPKH, and the Indonesian Consulate General in Jeddah—to ensure the entire Hajj management system operates according to the agreement.

Finally, adaptation becomes essential because Hajj quotas fluctuate due to global dynamics, infrastructure renovations, or shifts in Saudi policy. Young's framework highlights that negotiations must remain dynamic, enabling Indonesia to adjust its strategies, utilize multi-track diplomacy, and reassess agreements as conditions change. Thus, Oran R. Young's concept provides a comprehensive analytical framework for evaluating how Indonesia integrates national interests, institutional capacity, and negotiation flexibility in its efforts to increase the 2025 Hajj quota effectively and sustainably.

Main Argument

Researchers argue that Indonesia's negotiating capacity—exercised through the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—successfully secured an increase in the Hajj quota during 2023–2024. This outcome reflects the effectiveness of identifying shared interests, establishing technical rules, and conducting inter-state bargaining, as conceptualized in Oran R. Young's negotiation framework. However, in 2025, Saudi Arabia implemented policy adjustments that resulted in a reduction of Indonesia's Hajj quota, thereby presenting new challenges for implementing prior agreements and adapting joint institutional arrangements under shifting conditions. This situation reveals a gap in the literature concerning how states recalibrate negotiation strategies and adaptation mechanisms when confronted with unilateral policy changes by the counterpart state.

Within this context, Indonesia's diplomacy can be analyzed through Young's theoretical lens, which emphasizes that effective negotiation is not solely determined by formal bargaining processes, but also by institutional coordination, the strategic use of public diplomacy, and the capacity to adapt when the counterpart's conditions or interests shift. The 2025 quota adjustment requires Indonesia to re-identify the interests of both parties, propose alternative negotiation pathways, and maximize the use of pre-existing bilateral procedures and institutional frameworks to safeguard national interests. Thus, this study underscores that the success of Indonesia's Hajj diplomacy depends not only on the achievement of formal agreements, but also on adaptive negotiation capacity, multi-actor coordination, and the effective management of bilateral institutions in responding to Saudi Arabia's policy changes. The emerging scholarly gap—namely, the limited examination of long-term adaptation mechanisms and negotiation strategies under significant external shifts—provides an opportunity for this research to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of Hajj quota negotiations.

Synthesis and Research Gap

Based on the literature review, most studies highlight Indonesia's Hajj diplomacy with Saudi Arabia through various approaches within bilateral, political, technical (MoU and Hajj Agreement), religious, and economic forms of diplomacy. These studies predominantly emphasize institutional actors such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the President, the House of Representatives, the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia (KJRI) in Jeddah, as well as religious organizations and ulama involved in negotiating the Hajj quota. Previous research also underscores the importance of Saudi Arabia's internal policies, global dynamics, and Indonesia's adaptation to quota fluctuations, including planning strategies,

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logistical management, and the digitalization of the Hajj administration system. Nevertheless, much of the existing scholarship remains descriptive and focuses primarily on the outcomes of diplomacy—such as changes in Indonesia's Hajj quota—without providing an in-depth analysis of the negotiation processes themselves. Specifically, previous studies often overlook the strategic dimensions of negotiation, mechanisms of adaptation, and multi-actor interactions that occur in response to shifts in Saudi Arabia's policies. In other words, there is a lack of research systematically linking the Hajj quota negotiation process to international negotiation theories—such as Oran R. Young's conceptualization of "regime formation," which involves the identification of interests, rule-making, formal and informal bargaining, implementation of agreements, and adaptation to changing conditions. Drawing on this synthesis, the present study fills this gap by comprehensively examining Indonesia's negotiation with Saudi Arabia in the context of securing an additional Hajj quota for 2025. This research analyzes how interest identification, technical rule formation, bilateral negotiation, agreement implementation, and policy adaptation are strategically carried out, as well as how inter-actor coordination and the use of public diplomacy contribute to negotiation effectiveness. The study offers a systematic and applied understanding of the dynamics of Hajj quota negotiations—an area that has been insufficiently explored in the existing literature.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, aiming to understand a phenomenon in depth through naturalistic and holistic descriptions of conditions. This approach aligns with Sugiyono's perspective, which asserts that qualitative research focuses on understanding social realities from the viewpoints of actors and within their contextual settings. Given that the diplomacy and negotiation processes surrounding the Hajj quota involve policy dynamics, actor interactions, and strategic considerations that cannot be reduced to numerical data, this approach allows the researcher to examine negotiation processes and mechanisms comprehensively. The principles of naturalistic inquiry are applied to ensure that observed phenomena remain authentic, producing rich data capable of depicting the overall dynamics of Indonesia's 2025 Hajj diplomacy. In this study, the unit of analysis is the Government of Indonesia—specifically the Ministry of Religious Affairs as the actor with direct authority over Hajj administration and technical diplomacy with Saudi Arabia. The selection of this actor refers to Muhtar Mas'ood's concept of sub-state actors, emphasizing state institutions that hold specialized functions in foreign policy within specific sectors. The analytical level of this research is positioned at the state level, enabling the study to highlight Indonesia's strategies, policies, and diplomatic actions aimed at maintaining or increasing the Hajj quota for 2025. This approach also facilitates an understanding of how domestic policies are translated into bilateral relations between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia.

The social situation of the research encompasses the full range of interactions, strategies, and negotiations undertaken by Indonesia in securing and advocating for an increased Hajj quota for 2025. Each situation involves coordination among national institutions as well as diplomatic linkages with Saudi authorities. To obtain in-depth data, the researcher employs purposive sampling, selecting informants based on their competence and direct involvement in the studied processes, such as officials from the Jeddah Office of Hajj Affairs or Ministry of Religious Affairs personnel responsible for quota negotiations. This technique ensures that the data collected are relevant, detailed, contextual, and useful for analysis. Data collection is conducted through semi-structured in-depth interviews with relevant stakeholders, including officials from the Jeddah Office of Hajj Affairs, allowing the researcher to explore their experiences flexibly while maintaining focus. Additionally, documentation is carried out through the examination of official reports, meeting minutes, ministerial publications, and news articles related to the Hajj quota issue. These documents serve both as a means of verifying interview data and as historical records that strengthen the analysis.

Data analysis follows the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data are reduced by selecting, organizing, and structuring relevant information, then presented in narrative or matrix form, and conclusions are drawn gradually alongside the data collection process. This model is consistent with Sugiyono's view that qualitative data analysis is simultaneous and evolves according to field findings. Data validity is ensured through source and method triangulation, comparing interview data with official documents and media publications to maintain consistency. Member checking is also employed by asking informants to confirm the researcher's interpretations or summaries of their statements. Together, these methods enhance the credibility of the findings and minimize potential interpretive bias.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The negotiation between the Government of Indonesia and the Government of Saudi Arabia regarding the proposed increase of the Hajj quota for 2025 was conducted through formal bilateral diplomacy, specifically government-to-government mechanisms, supported by strategic communication between Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj and Umrah. The diplomatic process demonstrates that quota determination is not merely an administrative issue but rather the outcome of an interplay among political relations, Saudi Arabia's internal policy dynamics, the readiness of Hajj service management, and the infrastructural capacity of the Holy Sites. Indonesia's negotiation efforts focus on two primary objectives: first, maintaining the stability of the basic quota at a high level; and second, pursuing additional quota allocations—for regular pilgrims, special-arrangement pilgrims, and Hajj officers—supported by arguments related to Indonesia's large Muslim population, the long waiting period for prospective pilgrims, and the operational needs of pilgrimage services. Overall, this preliminary discussion indicates that Hajj diplomacy is a complex and multilayered process, heavily shaped by the dynamics of bilateral relations as well as Saudi Arabia's domestic policies. Consequently, negotiation outcomes do not always result in an increased quota; instead, they may lead to strengthened technical cooperation and deeper commitments to service improvement.

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A. Research Findings

The study finds that Indonesia's efforts to secure an increased Hajj quota for 2025 stem from the significant disparity between the high demand from prospective pilgrims and the quota allocated by Saudi authorities. Although Saudi Arabia assigned Indonesia a quota of 221,000 pilgrims for 1446 H/2025 M, the number of registered and waiting-list pilgrims far exceeds this allocation, generating political and administrative pressure on the Indonesian government to seek additional quota. Reports from the Ministry of Religious Affairs further indicate the rapid pace of payment completion and quota fulfillment; notably, more than 50% of the regular quota was filled during the payment phase, thereby reinforcing the argument that actual public demand surpasses the current quota capacity. In this context, the Hajj MoU for 1447 H–2026 M places data exchange, verification of operational readiness, and mechanisms of technical coordination as primary prerequisites for any quota revision. The MoU requires Indonesia to provide accurate pilgrim data through official channels such as the e-Hajj electronic system; ensure compliance with health requirements and Saudi regulations; and prepare an adequate number of qualified supporting officers. Collectively, these elements constitute the technical “currency” in negotiations for quota enhancement. In other words, the MoU functions not merely as an operational document, but as a procedural framework that determines when and how Saudi Arabia may consider granting additional quota based on evidence of Indonesia's readiness. Empirical findings from the study also confirm that technical lobbying successfully secured an adjustment on the side of Hajj personnel: the Indonesian government obtained an additional allocation of 2,210 officer slots, representing a concrete outcome of intensive communication and the submission of technical justifications to Saudi authorities.

B. Discussion of Findings Using Oran R. Young's Negotiation Concept

Based on Oran R. Young's negotiation framework, the success of a negotiation is strongly influenced by bargaining power, issue structure, and external context. All three factors were favorable to Indonesia during the 2023–2024 Hajj seasons. The Indonesian government was able to demonstrate strong technical readiness, maintain stable diplomatic relations, and engage with Saudi Arabia at a time when the Kingdom was expanding its post-pandemic capacity—conditions that rendered the issue structure positive-sum. These circumstances strengthened Indonesia's bargaining position and resulted in successful quota increases during both seasons. Provisions within the Hajj MoU concerning service delivery, data readiness, and compliance with safety standards further supported quota adjustments when Indonesia could substantiate its operational preparedness. In contrast, the study finds that significant changes in issue structure and contextual factors occurred in 2025. The Saudi government implemented a stricter capacity evaluation, particularly with regard to Mina and Arafat. Additional quota would only be considered if the existing infrastructure could accommodate the increase. Simultaneously, political transition and bureaucratic restructuring in Indonesia weakened the continuity of previously robust technical diplomacy. Within Young's conceptual framework, this situation reflects a shift from interest-based bargaining to constraint-based bargaining, in which Saudi Arabia's technical limitations became the dominant determinant. As a result, although negotiations continued, Indonesia succeeded only in securing additional quota for Hajj officers rather than for pilgrims—creating a clear gap between the successful outcomes of 2023–2024 and the constrained results of the 2025 negotiations.

CONCLUSION & RECOMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the success of Indonesia's Hajj quota negotiations is strongly shaped by the interplay of bargaining power, technical readiness, and external context, as articulated in Oran R. Young's theoretical framework. During the 2023–2024 period, these three factors aligned favorably, enabling Indonesia to secure additional quotas. However, in 2025, the issue structure shifted considerably: Saudi Arabia adopted a more stringent capacity evaluation, particularly concerning critical infrastructure, while political transition in Indonesia disrupted the continuity of previously stable technical diplomacy. Within Young's conceptual terms, this situation reflects a shift from interest-based bargaining to constraint-based bargaining, in which Saudi Arabia's structural and technical limitations became the predominant determining factors. Consequently, Indonesia secured only additional officer quota without any increase for pilgrims. This outcome underscores that the effectiveness of Indonesia's Hajj diplomacy is not solely dependent on formal negotiating processes but also on institutional adaptive capacity and the broader dynamics of Saudi policy—factors that lie beyond Indonesia's direct control.

Policy Recommendations

1. Developing Evidence-Based Negotiation Through Comprehensive Technical Data (Sugiyono, 2020).
2. Strengthening Multi-Track Diplomacy (Political, Tehcnical, and Religious Channels) (Sugiyono, 2020).
3. Proposing Strategic Collaboration as a form of Reciprocal Benefit (Sugiyono, 2020).
4. Ensuring Diplomatic Consistency Through a Permanent Hajj Negotiation Desk (Sugiyono, 2020).
5. Submitting a More Realistic Incremental Increase Scheme (Sugiyono, 2020).

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Further examining the differential influence of technical diplomacy and political diplomacy in Hajj quota negotiations (Sugiyono, 2020).
2. Assessing the effectiveness of the Hajj MoU 1447H–2026M as a legal and technical instrument in shaping Saudi Arabia's decision-making regarding quota allocation (Sugiyono, 2020).
3. Highlighting the impact of changes in the Indonesian government on the continuity of Hajj diplomacy (Sugiyono, 2020).

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4. Investigating Saudi Arabia's infrastructural capacity as an external variable determining quota expansion (Sugiyono, 2020).
5. Enhancing the analysis by incorporating a more diverse set of international negotiation theories (Sugiyono, 2020).

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