

Research Article

Building Policy Capacity in A Newly Established Hajj and Umrah Ministry: A Theory-to-Practice Review for Integrated Pilgrim Services

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Abstract Indonesia established the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah in 2025, creating an institutional transition in which transferred mandates and multilevel, cross-border service arrangements must be integrated while services continue. This article asks how the Wu–Ramesh–Howlett policy-capacity framework can inform that transition without presuming an existing capacity deficit. A Conceptual Review Article was conducted through a Theory-Focused Narrative Literature Review with a Theory-to-Practice orientation. Six final documented Scopus search runs, executed on 17 August 2026, yielded 298 records and 255 unique records after deduplication. Full text was sought for 58 sources; 11 unavailable records remained discovery-only, and 47 peer-reviewed journal articles were verified in full and synthesized. The review reconstructs policy capacity as analytical, operational, and political competences across individual, organizational, and systemic levels. Applications and criticisms show that capacity is configurational, demand-dependent, dynamic, and relational rather than a direct proxy for policy success. The synthesis translates the original nine-cell taxonomy into five domains: Evidence, Learning, and Service Intelligence; Mandate-to-Delivery Mobilization; Integrated Domestic and Cross-Border Orchestration; Legitimacy, Accountability, and Stakeholder Authorization; and Adaptive Readiness and Demand-Capacity Fit. The resulting framework offers conditional diagnostic questions and practice options for ministry management and parliamentary oversight. Its contribution is conceptual and translational, not a new or empirically validated theory, and it does not establish current ministry weaknesses or predict intervention effectiveness.

Keywords: Hajji Umrah Governance; Institutional Transition; Integrated Public Services; Parliamentary Oversight; Policy Capacity.

1. Introduction

Indonesia's institutional architecture for administering Hajj and Umrah changed materially in 2025. Presidential Regulation No. 92 of 2025 regulates the organization and functions of the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, which is responsible for the governmental subfunction of Hajj and Umrah within religious affairs. The regulation places the ministry under the President, transfers relevant functions from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the former Hajj Organizing Agency, and contains organizational and transitional provisions governing the new arrangement (Government of Indonesia, 2025, arts. 5, 6, 42, 61). In October 2025, the House of Representatives formally designated the ministry as a working partner of Commission VIII (House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia [DPR RI], 2025). These verified changes establish an institutional-transition phenomenon: mandates, organizations, personnel, relationships, and service responsibilities must be assembled within a new ministerial structure while pilgrim services continue.

The transition is administratively consequential because Hajj and Umrah are not delivered by a single organization acting in isolation. They combine registration and waiting-list administration, health eligibility and care, financial governance, guidance, consumer protection, accommodation, transport, emergency response, private-provider regulation, subnational implementation, and continuing interaction with Saudi institutions and service providers. Full-text Hajj and Umrah studies document the relevance of interorganizational health-policy implementation, decentralized health arrangements, financial and legal governance, guidance-group quality management, consumer protection, emergency teams,

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service data, and knowledge networks (Abd Rahman & Ahamat, 2019; Adawi et al., 2026; Alghamdi et al., 2026; Harahap et al., 2023; Ishom et al., 2024; Kolivand et al., 2025; Rustika et al., 2020; Setiawan, 2025; Zakiruddin, 2021, 2023; Zulkarnain et al., 2025). This evidence does not establish that the new ministry is deficient. It shows why institutional integration and deployable policy capability constitute legitimate questions for public administration.

Policy capacity offers a promising lens because it distinguishes the skills of policy actors from the organizational and system resources that allow those skills to be exercised. Wu, Ramesh, and Howlett (2015) organize policy capacity through three competence dimensions—analytical, operational, and political—and three capability levels—individual, organizational, and systemic. Their matrix is broader than conventional administrative-capacity accounts focused on staffing or budgets. It asks whether policy actors can diagnose problems, mobilize resources, coordinate implementation, judge feasibility, sustain authorization, and work through knowledge and institutional systems. This breadth makes the framework relevant to a newly established ministry whose policy work is simultaneously technical, managerial, political, multilevel, and cross-border.

Yet applying the framework directly creates three problems. First, the nine-cell taxonomy is analytically comprehensive but does not itself specify how cells should be organized around the recurring functions of integrated pilgrim services. Second, policy-capacity scholarship warns against treating policy success or failure as a proxy for capacity, because outcomes also depend on demand, political choice, institutional fit, implementation conditions, and expectations (Brenton et al., 2023). Third, systemic capacity is relational. A focal ministry depends on actors it does not command, and this problem is amplified when service delivery spans subnational governments, private providers, civic or religious organizations, and another sovereign jurisdiction (Elias de Oliveira et al., 2026; Zhang & Yu, 2021). A useful translation must therefore remain faithful to the original taxonomy while making demand, deployment, relationships, and boundaries explicit.

The literature is fragmented across theory development, organizational studies, crisis governance, policy integration, multilevel administration, and Hajj-sector research. Public-administration applications show that analytical competence requires organizational support and demand for advice; operational capability depends on role clarity, autonomy, coordination, and usable resources; and political capability concerns legitimacy, coalition building, and the management of resistance (Howlett, 2015; Newman et al., 2022; Pal & Clark, 2015; Tan, 2019; Tiernan, 2015). Integration studies add coherence, timeliness, accountability, and institutional architecture (Maggetti & Trein, 2022; Saguin & Howlett, 2022; Sarti, 2026; Vince et al., 2024). However, these strands have not been synthesized into a source-traceable framework for a new Hajj and Umrah ministry and its parliamentary oversight setting.

This article addresses that gap through three research questions: (RQ1) What constructs, dimensions, mechanisms, assumptions, levels, and boundary conditions constitute the Wu–Ramesh–Howlett policy-capacity framework? (RQ2) How has the framework been applied and criticized in public administration, particularly in institutional transition, integrated public services, and multilevel or cross-border coordination? (RQ3) How can the framework be translated into a context-sensitive capacity-building framework for integrated pilgrim services and related parliamentary oversight without presuming an existing capacity deficit?

The article makes a conceptual and translational contribution. It reconstructs the original framework, consolidates later applications and criticisms, and proposes five service-oriented domains: Evidence, Learning, and Service Intelligence; Mandate-to-Delivery Mobilization; Integrated Domestic and Cross-Border Orchestration; Legitimacy, Accountability, and Stakeholder Authorization; and Adaptive Readiness and Demand–Capacity Fit. These domains do not replace the original framework. They reorganize its cells and later refinements into an auditable diagnostic architecture for ministry practice and mechanism-sensitive parliamentary questioning.

2. METHODS

Research Design and Rationale

This study is a Conceptual Review Article using a Theory-Focused Narrative Literature Review with a Theory-to-Practice orientation. The design was selected because the purpose was to reconstruct and evaluate one focal framework, compare its applications and criticisms, and translate it into a context-sensitive administrative architecture. The study is not a field investigation, systematic review, meta-analysis, bibliometric analysis, or evaluation of current ministry performance. Qualitative-interpretive synthesis was appropriate because the evidence includes original conceptual work, theory elaborations, empirical applications using heterogeneous designs, and sector studies that illuminate contextual demands without directly testing the focal framework.

The review proceeded through four linked analytical operations. First, the focal theory was reconstructed by separating the original formulation from precursors, later developments, and critiques. Second, full-text applications were compared by context, unit and level of analysis, theory role, constructs used, method, findings, adaptations, limitations, and public-administration transferability. Third, contradictions and boundary conditions were synthesized, including circular outcome measures, demand-side omissions, institutional fragmentation, temporal erosion, contextual portability, and distributed control. Fourth, domains were formed only when an explicit chain connected the verified phenomenon, an original construct or mechanism, eligible full-text evidence, an interpretive transformation, a conditional practice option, and a stated boundary.

Literature Search and Corpus Construction

Scopus was the sole database used to identify journal articles. Eleven search executions were undertaken on 17 August 2026 in the Asia/Jakarta time zone. Five preliminary runs informed query refinement, while six retained documented streams formed the final candidate basis: theory architecture and development (SCH-001R), criticism and theory boundaries (SCH-002R), public-administration framework applications (SCH-003R), institutional transition and integration (SCH-004), Hajj/Umrah public-governance context (SCH-005R2), and cross-border or multilevel coordination (SCH-006). All searches used TITLE-ABS-KEY and were limited to English-language articles or reviews, without a year restriction. The exact rerunnable queries, result counts, filters, and selection flow are reserved for Supplementary Table S1.

The six retained streams returned 298 records in aggregate. Deduplication removed 43 duplicate occurrences, leaving 255 unique records for title and abstract screening. The role-specific search strategy was necessary because a single broad “policy capacity” query produced substantial overlap, whereas a capacity-constrained Hajj query produced no results. The final Hajj stream therefore retrieved governance, public-management, implementation, service-delivery, coordination, regulation, accountability, and organizational-capacity studies without requiring authors to use Wu–Ramesh–Howlett policy-capacity framework terminology. This separation preserved the distinction between evidence that develops or applies the focal framework and evidence that describes the administrative characteristics of pilgrim services.

Original or seminal sources were eligible for recovery through backward and forward citation chaining when bibliographic identity and full text were verified. This route was recorded separately and was not represented as an additional database search. It supported accurate attribution of the original framework and development lineage.

Eligibility and Source Verification

Eligible sources were peer-reviewed journal articles or reviews in English that contributed to at least one pre-specified role: theory origin and architecture; theory development; criticism or boundary analysis; public-administration application; institutional transition or policy integration; multilevel or cross-border governance; or Hajj and Umrah governance context. Relevance was assessed scientifically rather than by a numerical quota. Abstract-only records were discovery leads and could not be included, cited, counted as analytical evidence, or used to form domains.

Title and abstract screening excluded 197 records. Full text was sought for 58 candidates. Eleven could not be verified in full text and were retained only in a discovery log; 47 distinct eligible journal articles were read in full and included. Because substantive role-based eligibility had already been applied during title-and-abstract screening, the full-text stage primarily verified bibliographic identity, readability, evidence role, and permissible claim scope; no retrieved full text was excluded at that stage. Two duplicate uploads were represented once. Full-text verification checked bibliographic identity and the abstract, methods or design, results or argument, discussion, conclusion, and relevant reference context. The final corpus comprised 15 Hajj/Umrah governance-context studies, four institutional transition or integration studies, one multilevel or cross-border study, 15 public-administration applications, six theory-architecture or development sources, and six theory-criticism or boundary sources. Sector-context evidence was not allowed to establish a current ministry deficit, and empirical findings were used only within their documented context and methodological limits.

Qualitative-Interpretive Synthesis

Theory reconstruction recorded identity, origin, constructs, levels, mechanisms, assumptions, outcomes, boundaries, evolution, and critiques. Application synthesis recorded the country, sector, problem, level, theory role, constructs, method, main finding, adaptation, limitation, transferability, and evidence level for each substantively used study. Direct public-

administration evidence was separated from reasoned transfer based on Hajj-sector studies. This distinction was maintained in claim–evidence records and in the translation table.

Domain formation used constant comparison and explicit transformation labels. A domain could retain, combine, split, extend, or contextualize original framework content, but it could not be created from a contextual analogy alone. Five domains were retained after comparison with three-, four-, six- or seven-, and nine-domain alternatives. The three-domain alternative merely reproduced the theory's competence columns; nine domains replicated the original cells without translation; four made demand–capacity fit insufficiently visible; and six or seven fragmented strongly coupled mechanisms while overstating thin direct cross-border evidence. Contribution claims were audited by asking what came from original framework, what was synthesized from literature, what was proposed by the authors, and whether any theory construct, relation, mechanism, proposition, or boundary was changed. Because no such change was claimed, the approved contribution classification was conceptual and translational.

3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

Origins and Intellectual Context

Policy capacity became prominent as scholars sought to explain why governments with formal authority and resources varied in their ability to analyze problems, design interventions, implement choices, and maintain political support. Before the focal matrix was formalized, organizational research already treated policy capacity as a negotiated capability rather than a simple resource stock. Gleeson et al. (2011), studying a large Australian human-services agency, showed that developing organizational policy capacity creates continuing tensions with administrative routines and wider state demands. Williams (2012) demonstrated in Canadian financial regulation that expert knowledge could fail to generate learning when jurisdiction and information were fragmented. These studies anticipated the later proposition that individual competence requires organizational and system-level enabling conditions.

Wu et al. (2015) addressed conceptual fragmentation by defining policy capacity through the competences and capabilities important to policy functions. Their central innovation was a matrix crossing three skill dimensions with three resource levels. The framework did not propose a single capacity stock or universal performance equation. Instead, it offered a diagnostic vocabulary for locating strengths, vulnerabilities, and interdependence among actors, organizations, and policy systems. This architecture is particularly useful for institutional transition because it prevents organizational charts, staffing totals, or formal mandates from being treated as complete measures of capability.

Core Constructs, Mechanisms, and Relations

Analytical competence concerns the ability to diagnose problems, interpret evidence, evaluate options, communicate advice, and learn. At the individual level it includes research, appraisal, and communication skills. Organizational analytical capacity includes data, information architecture, research support, planning routines, and opportunities for evidence use. Systemic analytical capacity concerns the wider knowledge institutions and networks through which information is generated, challenged, mobilized, and shared. Howlett (2015) deepened this column by distinguishing the supply of analytical skill and organizational resources from the demand for analysis. Newman et al. (2022) similarly showed in West Java that conventional analytical activity depended on organizational support, infrastructure, and external knowledge networks, challenging simplistic cultural accounts of policy analysis.

Operational competence concerns the mobilization of authority, people, procedures, finance, and relationships to convert decisions into action. Individual operational capacity includes leadership, strategic management, negotiation, and conflict resolution. Organizational operational capacity comprises deployable staffing, budgets, workflows, implementation routines, and intra- or interagency coordination. Systemic operational capacity concerns rules, accountability, responsibility allocation, adjudication, and coordination across organizational boundaries. Tiernan (2015) emphasized the role of leadership, stewardship, and minister–official relationships, while Tan (2019) showed that bureaucratic autonomy supported health-financing implementation only when combined with resources and intergovernmental conditions.

Political competence is substantive rather than synonymous with public relations or partisan maneuvering. At the individual level, political acumen involves judging feasibility, understanding stakeholders, forming coalitions, communicating trade-offs, and managing losses or resistance. At the organizational level, it concerns mandate clarity, political support, trusted interorganizational relationships, and access to stakeholders. Systemic political capacity concerns legitimacy, public trust, authorizing support, and fiscal-political room for sustained action. Pal and Clark (2015) showed that deep reform requires coalition building,

mandates, loss management, and iterative adjustment; these capabilities cannot be replaced by technically sound analysis alone.

The matrix implies several interdependent pathways. Analytical capacity supports technical soundness and learning; operational capacity supports implementation and adaptation; and political capacity supports feasibility, legitimacy, and durable authorization. Organizational and systemic resources enable individual competence to become deployable action. Howlett and Ramesh (2016) extended this logic by linking different governance modes to different critical capacity requirements or “Achilles heels.” Hybrid arrangements may compensate for a shortage in one area, but they may also magnify a bottleneck. Capacity should therefore be assessed configurationally rather than through an additive total score.

Assumptions, Boundaries, and Theoretical Evolution

Five assumptions are central. First, policy capacity is multidimensional: no single indicator represents the construct. Second, it is multilevel: individual skill is embedded in organizational and systemic conditions. Third, capacity is potential rather than performance itself. Fourth, adequacy is contingent on task and context. Fifth, capacity can accumulate or erode over time. Walter et al. (2020) described how reduced deliberative space, weakened expert–practitioner links, declining trust, and politicization can erode accumulated capability during disruptive periods. Fleischer and Wanckel (2024) further identified creativity, public-service motivation, organizational innovation climate, and social-media stress as microfoundations operating within individual and organizational cells.

Brenton et al. (2023) articulate the most consequential theoretical criticism. Policy success or failure is frequently used to infer policy capacity, making the explanation circular: successful outcomes demonstrate capacity, which is then said to explain success. Their review highlights missing links among capacity supply, demand, administrative capital, political management, expectations, and outcomes. This criticism requires analysts to specify the policy task and demand before judging adequacy and to distinguish available capability, actual deployment, intervening mechanisms, decisions, and results.

Cross-national portability is another boundary. Saguin et al. (2018) found that policy work in the Philippines was strongly coordinative and that respondents were more comfortable with operational and political work than with rigorous analysis, while systemic political constraints remained important. Newman et al. (2022), however, found substantial conventional analytical activity in West Java. Together these studies support use of the framework as a sensitizing taxonomy while rejecting an essentialist division between “Western” and “Eastern” styles. Context shapes manifestations and enabling arrangements; it does not invalidate the core distinction among analytical, operational, and political capacity.

A final boundary concerns normative judgment and distributed control. The framework cannot decide whose goals, values, or distributional preferences define “adequate” capacity. Efficiency, safety, equity, affordability, religious obligation, transparency, and responsiveness may conflict. Moreover, systemic capacity resides in relationships among actors. No focal organization fully controls knowledge institutions, subnational governments, civil-society organizations, regulated providers, or foreign authorities. The framework can map dependencies and capability requirements, but it cannot convert distributed authority into unilateral organizational control.

Applications, Criticisms, And Boundaries

Applications Across Public and Workplace Contexts

Applications confirm that policy capacity is most informative when it explains how skills, resources, and relationships combine. In developing-country bureaucracies, Saguin et al. (2018) and Newman et al. (2022) reveal uneven but recognizable analytical, operational, and political work rather than a single national style. In Ethiopia, Angaw et al. (2026) show that public-administration education contributes unevenly to dimensions of individual capacity and cannot substitute for organizational opportunities to use acquired skills. Collins’s (2026) systematic review of Westminster traditions likewise moves beyond technocracy by emphasizing relational, political, experiential, and managerial capabilities alongside analysis.

Crisis applications provide a demanding test of configuration. Woo (2020) links Singapore’s COVID-19 response to long-term institutional investments and coordination. Wong (2022) shows how bureaucrats and civil society in Hong Kong supplied functions through political-nexus triads when formal state response was constrained. Mardiyanta and Wijaya’s (2023) review of Asian COVID-19 studies identifies recurring combinations of information, implementation, coordination, legitimacy, and learning. Bali and Ramesh (2021), examining Indian healthcare, warn that design, finance, and political support cannot

compensate for weak operational capability. These studies illuminate mechanisms, but crisis centralization and urgency should not be treated as the baseline for routine administration.

Policy-integration research further develops the organizational and systemic levels. Saguin and Howlett (2022) distinguish harmonization, coordination, mainstreaming, and institutionalization, each demanding different combinations of capacity. Maggetti and Trein (2022), comparing 35 national pandemic responses, show that integration involves coherence and timeliness, which can trade off, and that learning supports adjustment. Vince et al. (2024) identify process, program, and political dimensions supported by coordination, accountability, legitimacy, resources, and institutional architecture. Sarti (2026), comparing 18 departments in four European cities, finds that integrated planning combined with high organizational capacity can be sufficient for administrative coordination, with operational capacity especially consequential. Cross-sector partnership research likewise shows that state–nonprofit relationships are mutable rather than reducible to a fixed contractual form (Butcher & Dalton, 2014). The combined implication is that meetings or lead-agency labels are not adequate measures of integration.

Multilevel evidence reinforces this conclusion. Elias de Oliveira et al. (2026), studying regional environmental governance in Brazil, identify institutional design, binding collective objectives, and mobilization across governmental levels as prerequisites for joint action. Utami et al. (2026) similarly connect readiness for Indonesia's new capital development with vertical alignment, regional resources, and intergovernmental support. Zhang and Yu (2021), examining EU–China public-administration reform, show that international policy hubs and epistemic actors enabled transfer while local institutional adaptation shaped implementation. Cross-border administration therefore depends on translation and relational capacity, not the replication of a domestic model.

The Hajj and Umrah corpus identifies the contextual demands against which such capacities could be assessed. Rustika et al. (2020) evaluate Indonesian Hajj health-policy implementation; Ishom et al. (2024) connect health eligibility with decentralization; and Kolivand et al. (2025) show the administrative value of disaggregated hospitalization and mortality data. Adawi et al. (2026) examine the establishment of rapid-response teams in Saudi Arabia, while Alghamdi et al. (2026) analyze social networks and sustainable knowledge management in Hajj organizations. Together, these studies make evidence systems, coordination, trained personnel, protocols, and learning legitimate objects of inquiry without proving any current organizational shortfall.

Financial, regulatory, and legitimacy demands are equally visible. Zulkarnain et al. (2025) propose an integrated approach to Indonesian Hajj financial management; Zakiruddin (2021, 2023) and Zakiruddin et al. (2022) analyze regulatory development, institutional structure, and the normative basis of Hajj finance. Setiawan (2025) examines Ponzi schemes in Hajj and Umrah businesses, while Palangkey et al. (2021) and Abd Rahman and Ahamat (2019) address consumer protection in Indonesia and Malaysia. Fauzin et al. (2026) analyze media polemics over quota allocation, corruption, and transparency. Harahap et al. (2023) study quality management in pilgrim-guidance groups, and Huda and Haebe (2021) examine eligibility and waiting-list regulation. These studies justify attention to regulatory credibility, transparent reasoning, complaint handling, provider relations, and public authorization; they do not establish a direct causal test of Wu–Ramesh–Howlett policy-capacity framework.

Criticisms, Contradictory Evidence, and Limitations

The application literature exposes four recurring problems. The first is construct impurity. Measures often combine individual skills, organizational resources, demand for advice, deployment, and policy outcomes. Migone and Howlett (2023) respond by developing measures and metrics for analytical capacity, but even improved measurement of one column cannot represent the entire matrix. A defensible assessment must connect each indicator to a specified construct and avoid using staffing, budgets, training, digital systems, outputs, or results as interchangeable proxies.

The second problem is causal under-specification. Williams (2012) shows that expertise can coexist with fragmented learning arrangements. Gleeson et al. (2011) show that building policy capability can produce tension with administrative and political demands. Capano et al. (2025), using a conjunctural analysis of Italian regions, find that governmental effectiveness can arise through alternative combinations rather than a single capacity condition. Sarti (2026) likewise reports sufficiency configurations rather than a universal necessary factor. These findings support bottleneck and configurational reasoning, but they also limit claims that a particular intervention will necessarily improve performance.

Third, capacity is dynamic and phase-dependent. Institutional transition changes the location of authority, knowledge, personnel, and relationships. A capability that is adequate for organizational establishment may be insufficient for peak-season delivery, while crisis arrangements may be inefficient for routine operations. Capacity investment may also be

suppressed by role ambiguity, turnover, politicization, or technology-related stress (Fleischer & Wanckel, 2024; Tiernan, 2015; Walter et al., 2020). Static maturity scores obscure this temporal dimension.

Fourth, contextual analogy has limits. Local digital-service research in rural Indonesia highlights frontline judgment, trust, learning, and boundary spanning, but its service environment is not equivalent to international pilgrimage (Fiestiandani et al., 2026). Local government capacity is associated unevenly with decentralized service delivery and cannot be transferred wholesale to a national ministry (Setiawan et al., 2022). Cross-border policy transfer studies illuminate adaptation but not the specific legal and operational relations governing Indonesian and Saudi Hajj administration. These limitations require a framework that distinguishes direct evidence, contextual transfer, and questions requiring future field validation.

Theory-To-Practice Translation Framework

The five-domain framework translates the original matrix into recurring service functions while retaining its taxonomy. Each domain combines a phenomenon element, original constructs or mechanisms, eligible application evidence, an explicit interpretive transformation, conditional practice options, and boundaries. The translation begins with defined service demand and uses a non-deficit sequence: specify the task; map relevant capability; inspect enabling relations; examine deployment; interpret outcomes cautiously; and learn and reassess.

Table 1. Framework-to-Practice Translation Matrix

Phenomenon element	Framework construct or mechanism	Application evidence	Practice implication	Boundary or caution
Recurring evidence demands across health, finance, regulation, services, and emergencies	Analytical capacity at individual, organizational, and systemic levels; learning and cross-level enablement	Howlett (2015); Williams (2012); Newman et al. (2022); Migone and Howlett (2023); Alghamdi et al. (2026); Kolivand et al. (2025)	Develop common analytical questions, data stewardship, defined analytical roles, feedback routines, and knowledge partnerships.	A dashboard is not evidence use; data quality, demand, uptake, and cross-border rules must be examined.
Conversion of transferred mandate into ongoing delivery	Individual and organizational capacity; organizational political support; implementation pathway	Gleeson et al. (2011); Tiernan (2015); Tan (2019); Bali and Ramesh (2021); Angaw et al. (2026); Zakiruddin (2023)	Map mandates and responsibilities; distinguish available from deployable people and resources; align workflows and implementation feedback.	Does not presume incomplete transfer or weak staffing; adequacy depends on task and institutional phase.
Distributed domestic and international service dependencies	Organizational and systemic operational capacity; integration, cross-level enablement, and configurational fit	Saguin and Howlett (2022); Maggetti and Trein (2022); Vince et al. (2024); Elias de Oliveira et al. (2026); Sarti (2026); Adawi et al. (2026)	Map dependencies, joint outcomes, interfaces, timing, escalation, and adaptation; test coordinated scenarios with relevant partners.	A ministry cannot command all actors; direct cross-border PCF evidence is limited and bilateral conditions require verification.
Public authority, religious mandate, finance, providers, transparency, and trust	Political capacity across three levels; legitimacy and authorization pathway	Pal and Clark (2015); Tiernan (2015); Wong (2022); Fauzin et al. (2026); Setiawan (2025); Zakiruddin et al. (2022)	Use stakeholder mapping, transparent decision rationales, complaint/redress channels, regulatory coordination, and accountability reporting.	Controversy and complaint counts are not capacity measures; technical analysis cannot settle normative trade-offs.
Seasonal volume, health risk, waiting lists, emergencies, policy change, and expectations (cross-cutting)	Demand–supply fit; configuration; accumulation and erosion; all nine cells	Howlett and Ramesh (2016); Brenton et al. (2023); Walter et al. (2020); Capano et al. (2025); Sarti (2026); Huda and Haeba (2021)	Define scenarios and time horizons; conduct readiness and bottleneck reviews; capture after-action learning; periodically reassess the configuration.	No universal threshold, causal promise, or additive capacity score is supported.

Note. Application evidence is restricted to verified full-text sources. Hajj and Umrah studies ground contextual relevance but are not treated as direct tests of the focal framework



Note. Every domain retains an explicit mapping to the original analytical, operational, and political competences across individual, organizational, and systemic levels.

Figure 1. Policy-Capacity Translation Framework

Domain 1: Evidence, Learning, and Service Intelligence

This domain combines the analytical column into a recurrent service-intelligence cycle. The relevant question is not merely whether data or analysts exist, but whether recurring service questions are defined, evidence is valid and accessible, organizational leaders demand and use advice, information travels across relevant boundaries, and feedback changes decisions or routines. For pilgrim services, potential objects include health patterns, waiting-list administration, provider performance, service complaints, emergency events, financial risks, and implementation feedback. The appropriate practice options are therefore conditional: clarify analytical ownership, adopt data stewardship and verification arrangements, establish interfaces between analysts and operational units, and document how evidence affects decisions. The boundary is equally important: more data or a digital platform does not demonstrate analytical capacity unless interpretation, uptake, contestation, and learning are observable.

Domain 2: Mandate-to-Delivery Mobilization

This domain translates individual and organizational operational capacity into the institutional-transition chain that connects legal establishment to service execution. It separates five questions that are often conflated: What authority has been transferred? Which personnel, finance, information, and assets are available? Can they be deployed for the specified task? Are roles and routines sufficiently clear for coordinated execution? What feedback shows whether implementation is adapting? Conditional options include mandate and responsibility mapping, workforce and competence planning, resource-transfer verification, operating-procedure alignment, and implementation learning. The domain does not assume that any of these elements is absent. It provides a structure for demonstrating adequacy rather than inferring it from organizational establishment or reported outputs.

Domain 3: Integrated Domestic and Cross-Border Orchestration

Orchestration is retained as a distinct domain because integrated pilgrim services operate under distributed authority. Domestic actors control different policy instruments and service components; subnational governments and guidance organizations connect with pilgrims; private providers supply essential services; and Saudi institutions exercise sovereign authority within the host jurisdiction. The central diagnostic questions concern dependency, jointly defined outcomes, interface responsibilities, timing, escalation, accountability, and adaptation. Conditional options include dependency maps, time-bound coordination routines, shared outcome specifications, interface protocols, and scenario exercises. Coordination frequency alone is not evidence of integration. The cross-border component remains cautious because direct empirical applications of the focal framework are limited; bilateral legal and operational conditions require separate verification.

Domain 4: Legitimacy, Accountability, and Stakeholder Authorization

The political column becomes a domain of authorization and accountability. Pilgrim administration involves consequential distributional choices about quotas, waiting, costs, risk, protection, and service standards. It also regulates private or associational actors and handles expectations rooted in both citizenship and religious obligation. The domain asks whether decision makers understand stakeholders, explain trade-offs, maintain trusted

relationships, respond to grievances, coordinate enforcement, and sustain public and political authorization. Conditional options include stakeholder analysis, transparent decision rationales, complaint and redress channels, regulatory follow-through, and accountability reports that connect resources, risks, decisions, and public value. The domain must not use public controversy as proof of deficient political capacity; it instead requires evidence about institutions, behavior, responsiveness, and legitimacy.

Domain 5: Adaptive Readiness and Demand–Capacity Fit

The fifth domain is cross-cutting. It was retained rather than treated as a footnote because the principal criticism of capacity analysis is failure to define the demand against which adequacy is judged. Pilgrimage administration changes by season, volume, health conditions, emergency exposure, bilateral rules, implementation phase, and public expectations. A capability configuration that is adequate in one period may become a bottleneck in another. The domain therefore asks analysts to specify scenarios and time horizons, identify critical capacity combinations, distinguish emergency from routine arrangements, conduct after-action learning, and revisit assumptions. It prohibits a universal threshold or summed score. Its purpose is to keep the framework dynamic, configurational, and resistant to circular outcome inference.

Discussion

The synthesis answers the practical problem by changing the unit of translation rather than the content of the focal theory. The original framework is organized by competence and level; the proposed framework is organized by the recurring administrative functions through which those cells interact in integrated pilgrim services. This move preserves theoretical fidelity while avoiding two unhelpful extremes. A simple three-column translation would be too abstract for institutional practice, whereas nine separate domains would merely reproduce the matrix and invite checklist scoring. Five domains retain the complete taxonomy while making evidence, mobilization, orchestration, authorization, and adaptive fit analytically distinguishable.

The theoretical clarification is that policy capacity should be treated as contingent potential. The literature supports neither a direct linear relationship between capacity inputs and policy outcomes nor the assumption that every cell contributes equally in every setting. Analytical expertise may be blocked by fragmented learning arrangements; operational resources may remain nominal rather than deployable; political support may be broad but insufficiently connected to implementation; and a successful outcome may reflect favorable demand rather than robust capability. The non-deficit sequence operationalizes this clarification by separating demand, capability, enabling relations, deployment, and outcomes.

The conceptual synthesis brings together developments that are often discussed separately. Demand–supply fit from Brenton et al. (2023), governance-mode vulnerabilities from Howlett and Ramesh (2016), temporal erosion from Walter et al. (2020), microfoundations from Fleischer and Wanckel (2024), integration conditions from Saguin and Howlett (2022) and Vince et al. (2024), and configurational findings from Capano et al. (2025) and Sarti (2026) are positioned within one translation architecture. These additions are not presented as new constructs authored by this review. Their synthesis makes explicit how later scholarship constrains use of the original matrix.

The contextual interpretation is that a newly established Hajj and Umrah ministry operates at the intersection of institutional transition, integrated public services, and cross-border governance. Mandate transfer makes deployability and role clarity salient; the diversity of pilgrim services makes evidence and integration salient; regulation and distributional choice make legitimacy and accountability salient; and seasonal, health, emergency, and bilateral variation make adaptive fit salient. Hajj-sector studies confirm the relevance of these problem families, although they rarely apply the Wu–Ramesh–Howlett policy-capacity framework directly. Accordingly, the framework converts sector evidence into diagnostic questions rather than claims about present organizational weakness.

The practical translation has two audiences. For ministry leadership and public managers, the domains can structure capability reviews, improvement discussions, and evidence requests. For Commission VIII and parliamentary support staff, the same domains offer an oversight architecture that moves beyond expenditure and output review. This

translation is consistent with the view that parliamentary capability combines analytical, procedural, relational, and political competences embedded in institutional roles (Munoz-Del-Campo, 2025). Oversight can ask what demand is being addressed, which capability configuration is relevant, whether resources are deployable, how institutional interfaces function, how authorization and accountability are maintained, and what learning follows implementation. This approach respects the distinction between legislative scrutiny and executive management: Parliament can demand explanations and evidence without prescribing day-to-day operating choices.

Transferability is bounded. The domains may be useful in other newly established ministries or integrated public services, especially where authority is distributed and continuity must be maintained during institutional change. Nevertheless, the specific manifestations, critical bottlenecks, and appropriate indicators must be grounded in the legal mandate, policy task, administrative culture, service population, technology, and intergovernmental relationships of each setting. Cross-border services additionally require evidence about foreign law, bilateral arrangements, data access, provider markets, and sovereign authority.

Alternative theories may be necessary when the analytical question changes. Institutional theories may better explain path dependence and the legitimacy of organizational forms; collaborative-governance theories may offer finer-grained accounts of trust building and joint decision rules; principal-agent theory may illuminate delegation and information asymmetry in parliamentary oversight; and public-value theory may clarify competing value criteria. Wu–Ramesh–Howlett policy-capacity framework is most useful for diagnosing competencies, enabling resources, and their configuration. It should not be forced to explain every aspect of institutional change, collaboration, accountability, or religious-service governance.

Empirical inquiry is now required to validate and refine the translation. Future research could operationalize domain-specific indicators without collapsing constructs, compare capability configurations across institutional phases, examine domestic and Saudi interfaces, and test whether particular combinations are associated with learning, implementation reliability, legitimacy, or resilience. Longitudinal and comparative designs would be especially valuable because they can distinguish accumulated capability from temporary crisis mobilization and can assess how demand–capacity fit changes over time.

4. Conclusion

RQ1 is answered by reconstructing policy capacity as a three-by-three matrix of analytical, operational, and political competences across individual, organizational, and systemic levels. The framework operates through technical-soundness, implementation, legitimacy, cross-level enablement, configurational fit, demand–supply alignment, and learning or erosion. Its principal boundaries are multidimensionality, contingency, measurement impurity, normative judgment, temporal change, and distributed control.

RQ2 is answered by showing that public-administration applications use the framework to explain policy work, implementation, crisis response, integration, regional governance, analytical systems, and organizational development. These applications also expose circular outcome measures, missing demand-side mechanisms, context dependence, alternative sufficient configurations, and the inability of individual skill or formal resources to overcome fragmented institutional arrangements.

RQ3 is answered through a five-domain translation for integrated pilgrim services: Evidence, Learning, and Service Intelligence; Mandate-to-Delivery Mobilization; Integrated Domestic and Cross-Border Orchestration; Legitimacy, Accountability, and Stakeholder Authorization; and Adaptive Readiness and Demand–Capacity Fit. The domains support conditional practice options and parliamentary questions while retaining the original framework taxonomy and a non-deficit diagnostic sequence. The contribution is conceptual and translational: it neither proposes a new theory nor establishes current ministry deficits or universal effectiveness.

Limitations

The review is limited by the interpretive judgment inherent in a theory-focused narrative design, the use of Scopus as the sole journal database, English-language and document-type filters, and the availability of full text. Eleven potentially relevant records could not be verified in full and were excluded from the analytical corpus. The corpus contains comparatively thin direct evidence applying Wu–Ramesh–Howlett policy-capacity framework to cross-border public services and no field validation of the five-domain translation within the new ministry.

Hajj and Umrah studies were therefore used to establish contextual relevance and transfer conditions, not to diagnose current capacity. The framework's domains, indicators, relationships, and practical utility should be tested through longitudinal, comparative, and mixed-method research before being used as a formal assessment instrument.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary Tables S1–S3 accompany this article. Table S1 reports the six retained documented search runs, exact Scopus queries, filters, result counts, and reconciled selection flow. Table S2 lists the 47 included full-text journal articles and two official contextual sources. Table S3 reports the domain-derivation, practice-output, and boundary matrix.

Data Availability

No primary dataset was generated or analyzed. The documented search runs, reconciled screening flow, included full-text journal corpus, and domain-derivation matrix are provided in Supplementary_Tables_S1-S3.docx accompanying this article.

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