

---

# Mosque-Based MSME Empowerment: A Case Study of Al-Falah Mosque, Seoul

Moh. Musafak<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia  
mhsafa28@gmail.com

Received: June 9, 2024

Revised: October 07, 2024

Accepted: October 15, 2024

## Abstract

Realizing an independent economy is part of the concept of sharia economics, which is carried out by using funds managed by the mosque to cover its own expenses. The concept of an independent mosque is not only a beneficial driver for empowering people's economies but also aims to maximize the mosque's potential by developing positive programs for the surrounding community. Some mosque administrators believe that the number of worshippers is the most important factor influencing the mosque's economy and economic empowerment. Using the Al-Falah Seoul Mosque as the research object, this study intends to describe the success of a model of mosque economic empowerment through MSMEs, despite the mosque's limited number of worshippers. As a field study, this research employs a qualitative approach supplemented by two data-gathering tools: observation and interviews. The results demonstrate the enormous potential of the economic empowerment initiatives undertaken by the management of the Al-Falah Seoul Mosque. Although this mosque faces significant obstacles due to the limited number of worshippers, it effectively manages donations from the management, the congregation, and its sympathizers in various initiatives to strengthen the mosque's economy. These initiatives include both consumptive and productive programs, such as the Geumbab program (free blessed Friday meals), sponsorship of Da'wah, Bojeunggeum (deposit loans for homes), the establishment of cooperatives, and the Halal Mart MSME. The Halal Mart was founded as part of the mosque's efforts to meet Muslims' daily requirements while also actively promoting the development of South Korea's halal business.

**Keywords:** Model, Economic Empowerment, Mosque-Based Empowerment, MSME.

---

## 1. Introduction

Economic empowerment through mosque-based initiatives is increasingly critical for Muslim communities globally, particularly in non-Muslim-majority countries. Islam emphasizes both spiritual fulfillment and socio-economic well-being, positioning mosques as institutions capable of fostering both. Historically, mosques have served not only as places of worship but also as centers for community development and economic support. In non-Muslim-majority countries like South Korea, mosques play a unique role in providing empowerment opportunities to marginalized Muslim populations. These mosques, such as Al-Falah in Seoul, act as lifelines, offering both spiritual guidance and economic support, especially where Muslim communities face societal and financial obstacles. Given the global rise of Muslim migrants, mosque-based economic initiatives provide an opportunity for enhancing community resilience and local economic growth.

The Al-Falah Mosque in Seoul exemplifies this, supporting the local Muslim community through MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises). South Korea's small Muslim population, primarily consisting of migrants, faces challenges such as financial instability and limited access to religious infrastructure. Mosques like Al-Falah have had to develop innovative strategies for survival. This study highlights the unique economic empowerment strategies employed by the Al-Falah Mosque, specifically through MSMEs, and how they contribute to the mosque's operations and the welfare of its community. This case offers valuable insights into how mosques in minority Muslim contexts can adapt to overcome operational challenges, shedding light on broader mosque-based empowerment efforts in non-Muslim-majority nations.

In contrast to Indonesian mosques, which often focus primarily on religious activities, Singaporean mosques adopt a more holistic approach by integrating socio-economic functions. Managed under the *Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura* (MUIS), Singaporean mosques offer not only spiritual services but also social welfare programs, educational initiatives, and entrepreneurship development. This strategic financial management positions Singaporean mosques as dynamic centers for both religious and economic empowerment. Although Indonesian mosques remain central to community worship, their potential for socio-economic empowerment is underutilized. The Singaporean model demonstrates how a balanced religious and economic role can foster sustainable community growth, providing lessons that are particularly relevant for non-Muslim-majority contexts like South Korea, where mosques face greater financial pressures due to smaller congregations and fewer resources.

While Singaporean mosques benefit from a stable, state-supported financial structure, mosques in non-Muslim-majority countries such as South Korea must navigate distinct financial and cultural challenges. Mosques like Al-Falah in Seoul, unlike their counterparts in Muslim-majority or state-supported contexts, rely on innovative financial strategies such as micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to sustain their operations. These strategies not only help cover operational costs but also empower the local Muslim diaspora, most of whom are migrants. Research by Faisal et al., (2023) indicates that mosque-based MSMEs provide a sustainable income source while addressing the socio-economic needs of congregants, particularly in regions lacking traditional financial support structures. The Al-Falah Mosque's approach demonstrates how mosques in minority contexts can adapt to become both spiritual and economic centers, showcasing

---

resilience in the face of adversity.

The Pew Research Center reports that the Muslim population is the fastest-growing religious group globally and is expected to increase from 1.8 billion in 2015 to nearly 3 billion by 2060 (Lipka and Hackett, 2017). Muslims often migrate for various reasons, including political conflict, work, study, or intermarriage. In South Korea, where Muslims comprise about 0.4% of the total population of 51 million, the Muslim community faces significant challenges, including difficulties in accessing halal food, a scarcity of places of worship, and the impact of Islamophobia, which arises from negative portrayals of Islam related to terrorism and other incidents (Shah, 2017).

One of the administrators of the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) stated that, according to their data, the proportion of Muslims in South Korea is currently 0.4%, which amounts to around 235,000 people out of a total population of 51 million. This Muslim population is made up of 200,000 migrants and 35,000 native Korean citizens. In terms of the religious population, the majority of South Koreans currently profess no religion (51%), followed by Protestantism at 20%, Buddhism at 17%, Catholicism at 11%, and others, including Islam and traditional religions, at 2% (Yoon, 2024). Muslims from Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia make up the majority of Muslim migrants in South Korea. By the end of 2023, the Indonesian Muslim diaspora, most of whom are migrant workers, had contributed to the South Korean Muslim population, which is approximately 40,000 people. This Muslim immigrant community has significantly contributed to the growth of Islam, particularly through the construction of a number of mosques and Islamic centers in various cities in South Korea. According to the head of the Indonesian Muslim Community (KMI), the Indonesian Muslim diaspora has built 57 mosques in different regions of South Korea.

Historically, mosques have played a vital role in the development of Islamic civilization, functioning as more than just places for ritual activities such as communal prayer and Quran reading. They have served as crucial socio-religious centers that facilitate community cohesion and the advancement of Islamic society (Ahmad Yani, 2007; M. Amin, Utami, and Alon, 2020). The establishment of the Nabawi Mosque in Medina by the Prophet Muhammad is a prime example of this dual role. It not only served as a place of worship but also emerged as an economic center and a social hub for the community. This mosque facilitated educational activities, offered social services, and even functioned as a gathering point for various community events, thereby reinforcing the importance of mosques in the social fabric of the Muslim community (Moroni et al., 2019).

However, in modern times, the relevance and multifaceted roles of mosques have diminished. They are often perceived narrowly as mere sites for ritual worship, open only for prayers five times a day, with little emphasis on their broader potential for community engagement and development (M. Muthoifin, 2024; Effendi and Arifi, 2023). This limited view neglects the mosque's capacity to act as a dynamic center for social interaction, economic empowerment, and educational initiatives. Many Muslims may overlook the mosque's potential to serve as a catalyst for community development, a resource for social services, and a platform for addressing contemporary social issues. Therefore, a significant paradigm shift is necessary, one that redefines mosques from being solely places of worship to becoming proactive, dynamic centers for social and economic empowerment (K. M. Amin, 2021). This shift would involve embracing a holistic approach to mosque management, encouraging active participation from the community, and fos-

---

tering an environment where various socio-economic programs can flourish.

Muslim intellectual Jasser Auda reinterprets the traditional Maqashid Al-Syariah theory outlined by Imam As-Syatibi, particularly the fifth point, *hifdz al-mal* (protection of wealth), by focusing on social welfare, economic development, and social well-being (Sistem, 2017). Successful mosque development requires active community involvement and consideration of local needs and aspirations. Community development through the utilization of the mosque's financial cycle is vital for maximizing and empowering its role (Alauddin et al., 2024; Rhealdi, Muthoifin, and Rizka, 2023). In this context, the economic empowerment of mosques has emerged as a leading initiative within the broader development of Islamic economics, both domestically and internationally. This includes efforts by the Indonesian Muslim community and mosque administrators in South Korea, particularly at the Al-Falah Mosque in Seoul.

The Al-Falah Mosque in Seoul is not only known for its unique status as the first Indonesian mosque in the Seoul metropolis and its proximity to the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, but also for the significant challenges it faces. The primary challenge is that the limited size of its congregation is disproportionate to the operating costs that must be met. Despite these difficulties, the Al-Falah Mosque plays an important role, particularly for the Indonesian Muslim diaspora in South Korea and for Muslims in the country more broadly. The mosque, which operates out of a rented building, is used not only for prayer services but also for a variety of other activities, such as relationship-building, religious events, and as a training center providing the community with skills in areas like photography, Quran teaching, public speaking, hydroponics, and graphic design. These positive activities align with the role and function of the mosque during the time of the Prophet, where the mosque was not solely focused on *Mahdhah* (ritual) worship but also served as a center for *Ghairu Mahdhah* (social) worship (al-Faruq, 2010).

The management at Al-Falah Mosque believes that establishing a cooperative can significantly enhance the mosque's economic strength while also providing social benefits to its community. By forming a cooperative, the mosque integrates both economic and social elements, aiming not only to generate profit but also to strengthen community bonds (Hendrojogi, 2004). This dual role aligns with the broader vision of the mosque as both a religious and social hub. Through profits generated by cooperative activities and MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises), the mosque is able to fund various essential programs that serve both religious and social functions. One such initiative is the "Geumbab" program, which offers free meals after Friday prayers, fostering stronger community ties while ensuring congregants benefit from the mosque's support. Additionally, the "Bojeunggeum" initiative provides rental deposit loans for housing, addressing a critical need among Muslim migrants, particularly those from Indonesia, who often face financial difficulties when securing housing in South Korea. These initiatives not only support the socio-economic well-being of the community but also illustrate the mosque's commitment to empowering its members by offering tangible solutions to everyday challenges (Mustofa, 2024).

While previous studies on mosque-based economic empowerment have primarily focused on Muslim-majority countries, where donations from *zakat* and sharia-based cooperatives are more substantial and reliable, this study explores the unique context of a mosque in a non-Muslim-majority environment. The challenges faced by the Al-Falah Mosque differ significantly due to its limited congregation size and less stable financial

---

contributions. Unlike mosques in Muslim-majority regions, where extensive networks of donors exist, mosques like Al-Falah must find innovative ways to sustain themselves (Faisal et al., 2023). By adopting MSME-based initiatives such as Halal Mart, the mosque is able to shift away from relying solely on traditional donations. Instead, it employs business models that align with Islamic principles while addressing the financial constraints specific to minority Muslim communities (Karsid and M., 2014).

This study also distinguishes itself by focusing on the unique obstacles faced by mosque managers in a non-Muslim-majority country. The challenges are multifaceted, involving not only financial constraints but also the broader social environment in which the mosque operates. In this way, the study contributes to the literature by offering a framework for mosque-based economic empowerment in minority Muslim contexts, where traditional donation-based models are insufficient. The experience of the Al-Falah Mosque in establishing MSMEs demonstrates how mosques can adopt market-based solutions to cover operational expenses while fostering socio-economic growth within their communities. This research highlights the importance of utilizing sharia economic principles, such as *musyarakah* (profit-sharing), to develop sustainable models that serve both the religious and social needs of the mosque (Adinugroho, Herlambang, and Putra, 2023; Iwan and Herdiana, 2018).

The background of this study emphasizes the distinct challenges faced by mosques like Al-Falah in non-Muslim-majority countries, where smaller congregations and limited external funding demand more innovative approaches. Al-Falah Mosque has had to evolve from a purely donation-based model to one that incorporates productive economic activities, such as MSMEs, to sustain its operations. This shift has allowed the mosque not only to continue functioning but also to contribute to the socio-economic well-being of its community members, particularly the Indonesian Muslim diaspora in South Korea. Programs like Halal Mart serve as examples of how a mosque can transform into a center for social empowerment, providing necessary goods and services to the community while reinforcing the mosque's role as a hub for both religious and economic activities (Nizar and Qosim, 2020).

## **2. Methods**

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach to examine the economic empowerment model of the Al-Falah Mosque in Seoul through MSMEs. Both primary and secondary data were utilized to develop a comprehensive understanding of the mosque's empowerment activities.

### **2.1. Population and Sampling Method**

The population consisted of mosque administrators, MSME participants, and local Muslim community members benefiting from the mosque's initiatives. Purposive sampling was employed to select key informants, ensuring that participants were actively involved in the mosque's management and economic activities.

---

## 2.2. Data Collection

Primary data were collected through observations and semi-structured interviews. Observations focused on mosque activities and MSME operations, while interviews were conducted with mosque managers and MSME participants to explore their strategies for economic empowerment. The data collection process lasted six months, from January to June 2023.

## 2.3. Narrative Literature Review

To complement the case study, a narrative literature review was conducted, focusing on studies published between 2010 and 2024. The review examined mosque-based MSMEs and economic empowerment models in minority Muslim contexts. Academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and ProQuest were used to search for relevant studies, utilizing keywords like "mosque-based MSMEs" and "economic empowerment."

## 2.4. Data Source

The table below summarizes key data sources identified in the literature review, highlighting relevant studies on mosque-based economic empowerment.

**Table 1.** Data Sources

| Author(s)         | Title of Study   | Year | Data Source                | Key Finding/ Focus Area  |
|-------------------|--|------|----------------------------|--|
| Faisal et al.     | Model Pemberdayaan UMKM Berbasis Masjid                    | 2023 | Journal of Islamic Studies | Sharia-based economic empowerment models in mosque cooperatives. |
| Karsid et al.     | Mosque Economic Empowerment Model for Urban Communities    | 2014 | ProQuest                   | Role of mosques in fostering community entrepreneurship.         |
| Adinugroho et al. | Socio-economic Empowerment through Mosque-Based Activities | 2023 | Google Scholar             | Strengthening socio-economic networks in mosque communities      |
| Iwan & Herdiana   | Optimizing Community Empowerment Through Mosque Programs   | 2018 | Scopus                     | Multi-dimensional empowerment activities in mosque settings      |

## 2.5. Analysis Plan

Thematic analysis was employed to examine data from interviews and observations, identifying patterns related to economic empowerment, mosque management, and community involvement. Findings from the literature review provided context for the case study.

## 2.6. Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on the Al-Falah Mosque in South Korea, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other contexts, particularly in Muslim-majority regions. The reliance on self-reported data introduces potential bias; however, this was mitigated through direct observations.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Apart from halal food, the biggest challenge for Muslims in non-Muslim-majority countries is the difficulty of finding places of worship (mosques), as these are available only to a limited extent. However, the establishment of a Muslim community can positively impact the provision or establishment of places of worship. This minority Muslim community usually works together in each area where they live to create brotherhood, unity, and cooperation in coordinating religious and social activities. The Indonesian Muslim community in South Korea is raising funds collectively to build a mosque as a place of worship and an empowerment center. According to a report by the Indonesian Muslim Community (KMI), by the end of 2023, there will be about 57 mosques built by Indonesian Muslim migrants in South Korea, spread across various cities in Ginseng Land.

The history of South Korea's first mosque, Itaewon Mosque, built in 1976, cannot be separated from the role of President Park Chung-hee. To strengthen relations with Middle Eastern countries and provide a place of worship for the Muslim population in Korea, the majority of whom were migrant workers from Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa, President Park offered land for the construction of a mosque. Middle Eastern countries responded by providing the necessary funds for the construction (Dong-Jin and Jae, 2012). The Seoul Central Mosque, also known as the Itaewon Mosque, is managed by the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF). As a Muslim institution, the KMF plays an important role in overseeing the Korean Muslim Student Association and the Korean Islamic Cultural Institute. On an organizational level, the KMF serves as a good example for the Muslim communities in Korea regarding the economic empowerment of the people. This can be seen in the KMF's efforts to bring in Muslim scholars from abroad (including Indonesia) to serve as leaders and imams of mosques in several areas of South Korea. Several Indonesian mosques in Korea also receive imam quotas sent by the KMF from Indonesia.

In contrast to the state of mosques in Indonesia or other Muslim-majority countries, most mosques in South Korea are rented buildings. Currently, however, 7 out of 57 mosques have permanent status, with the buildings owned by the mosques themselves. The Indonesian mosques that currently have owned buildings are: Al-Barokah Gimhae Mosque, Sirotol Mustaqim Ansan Mosque, Darussalam Baran Mosque, Al-Huda Gumi Mosque, Ammar Bin Yaser Iksan Mosque, Sayyidina Bilal Changwon Mosque, and Baitul Makmur Daegu Mosque. The challenges faced by the administrators and congregations of Indonesian mosques in South Korea are significant, especially given the monthly or annual rent they must pay, coupled with a relatively small number of congregants. This situation starkly contrasts with that of mosques in Indonesia, which rely on income from zakat, infak, and alms from the surrounding community—resources that are relatively large and stable.

GBR (41) stated that the establishment of the Al-Falah Mosque cannot be separated from the existence of the Indonesian Muslim diaspora community, specifically the Indonesian Muslim Family Association (IKMI). It was the IKMI that originally proposed the establishment of the Al-Falah Mosque. Together, they raised funds to rent a building and carried out a series of renovations to use it as a place for ablutions, redesigning the interior to resemble that of a mosque. IKMI has produced many great leaders who have initiated the establishment of other Indonesian mosques in South Korea, allowing

---

this mosque to continue developing in the following years. Additionally, IKMI has become a forum for preachers to give religious lectures in various communities and mosques across South Korea. Many other figures in the Muslim community, such as those from the Indonesian Muslim Community (KMI) and several mosques in South Korea, also come from IKMI.

Al-Falah Mosque was originally established as a center for preaching and a gathering place for the Indonesian Muslim diaspora living in South Korea. However, over the past decade, many members of the Indonesian Muslim diaspora have spread to various regions due to the increasing number of mosques in those areas. At least they have been able to find a mosque in their city. This is certainly a positive development and a source of pride for all Muslims living in this non-Muslim-majority country. Al-Falah Mosque, which is around 25 years old, has moved locations three times because the building is still being rented. It was initially located in the Guro area (near Guro Station), then moved to the Yongdeungpo area, and is now situated in the Singgil area. Al-Falah Singgil Mosque is located in the capital city of Seoul, very close to the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia. It is known that several officials from the Indonesian Embassy and their families live near Al-Falah Mosque. This, of course, benefits both parties: the mosque and the families of embassy officials as worshippers. Al-Falah Mosque also frequently collaborates with the Indonesian Embassy in Seoul to organize religious events, such as Eid prayers for Indonesian citizens and silaturahmi events organized by the Muslim community, which are attended by representatives of the Indonesian Embassy.

The biggest challenge for Al-Falah Mosque is the small number of worshippers, which amounts to around 20 people. They usually come to the mosque on Fridays for prayers and participate in various mosque activities on weekends and holidays. The mosque's running costs often rely solely on the collective monthly contributions of administrators, worshippers, trustees, and external sympathizers to cover the cost of renting the building and other basic needs. This situation differs from other mosques that have more worshippers, making it easier to raise funds through zakat, infak, and sedekah. Mosque administrators need effective ideas and strategies to generate revenue and maximize its use to keep the mosque's activities running, pay the building's rental costs, maintain welfare, and ensure that the mosque functions optimally as an Islamic center and a medium for rahmatan lil'alamin, positively impacting the socio-economic community around it, especially for the Muslim diaspora living in South Korea.

Since its relocation to the Singgil area, various steps have been taken to expand the mosque and improve its economic situation. In 2007, the leadership agreed to establish a Shariah-based mosque cooperative with funds donated by several mosque administrators and IKMI to meet the basic needs of the local Indonesian community. This cooperative functions like a simple grocery store that provides basic necessities such as snacks, instant noodles, sugar, spices, and more to the people of Indonesia. The implementation of a business with basic Shariah principles has two dimensions: the vertical dimension (*hablun-min-Allah*), which reflects an attitude of closeness to Allah, and the horizontal dimension (*hablun-min-annaas*), which pertains to the relationship between business actors, customers, and the surrounding community (Bahri, 2018).

Despite the many obstacles facing the management of Al-Falah Mosque, it continues to seek the best solutions to overcome financial problems and cover the mosque's costs. Slowly but surely, the idea of economic empowerment by the mosque manage-

---





**Figure 1.** Al-Falah Mosque Seoul and the Indonesian Muslim diaspora in South Korea

ment, using the concept of a productive economy, is showing positive results and is socio-economically beneficial for the congregation and the Muslim diaspora in South Korea. The management of Al-Falah Mosque has successfully implemented several strategies to strengthen the mosque's economy in both the consumptive and productive sectors, including the following:

### 3.1. Consumptive Economic Empowerment

Empowerment of the consumptive economy is a distribution of the sharia economy aimed at addressing short-term problems. Although the benefits may be less significant, the empowerment of the consumptive economy must still be pursued for certain considerations and reasons, as it is part of the socio-religious goals of the mosque. The following is an example of the empowerment of the consumptive economy at Al-Falah Mosque in Seoul.

#### 3.1.1. Geumbab Program/ Free Lunch Sharing After Friday Prayer

Geumbab, or the free lunch program after Friday prayers, is an initiative of Al-Falah Mosque aimed at strengthening the bonds of brotherhood and friendship among the

Indonesian Muslim diaspora. Although the number of mosques in South Korea is increasing, it is still relatively small compared to the area inhabited by Muslims in the ginseng country. This means that not all members of the Indonesian Muslim diaspora or Muslims in general have homes and workplaces close to mosques. Every Friday, hundreds of worshippers gather at several prominent mosques, including the Itaewon Seoul Central Mosque, Sirotol Mustaqim Ansan, and Al-Barokah Gimhae. However, according to UHW (30), the number of regular Friday worshippers at Al-Falah Mosque in Seoul is only around thirty people, consisting of Indonesian Muslims and foreign Muslims. Through the Geumbab program, it is hoped that worshippers will be encouraged to come more often with friends and family, thereby enriching the community at Al-Falah Mosque. This consumptive economic empowerment program has been welcomed by all administrators and worshippers of Al-Falah Mosque. Familiarity and unity among Indonesian Muslims have been increasingly fostered by the benefits of this blessed Friday program.

### **3.1.2. Ramadan Iktikaf and Suhoor Program**

Ramadan provides an opportunity for the Indonesian Muslim diaspora in South Korea to experience a different fasting atmosphere compared to that of their home country. The length of the fasting period from Imsak until breaking the fast is determined by the season. For example, if Ramadan falls during the summer, the fasting period in South Korea may last up to 16 hours. However, if it falls in spring, winter, or autumn, the duration shortens depending on the movement of the sun. The i'tikaf program is regularly held at Al-Falah Mosque during the last ten days of Ramadan. This activity is attended by members of the Indonesian Muslim diaspora, who stay overnight at the mosque and share sahur together, provided by Al-Falah Mosque. During this Ramadan activity, the mosque also routinely offers takjil for breaking the fast, as well as snacks to accompany the i'tikaf. It is hoped that these Ramadan activities can help make Al-Falah Mosque a place to relieve the longing for the atmosphere of Ramadan in their hometown, which is not easy to find in South Korea.

### **3.1.3. Bojeunggeum Program/ Residential Deposit Fund Loans.**

The Indonesian Muslim diaspora in South Korea has diverse backgrounds. Some have migrated to South Korea with their families for temporary residence. Professional workers, students, consulate/embassy officials, and families from mixed marriages are the most common Indonesian citizens who bring their families with them. Those from mixed marriage backgrounds are less likely to face housing issues because one partner is a Korean citizen. Similarly, consulate/embassy staff are typically provided with dormitory accommodations by the embassy. Meanwhile, workers and students usually receive dormitory or residential facilities from their employers or the campuses where they study until their work contracts or study periods are completed. However, these arrangements are sometimes for single occupancy, or they may allow family members, but the space may be insufficient for family living. As a result, the only option for individuals who bring their families is to rent a house or apartment that is suitable for their needs.

In this case, the owner of the house or apartment will typically ask for a down payment as collateral. For newcomers, this can be an unexpected financial burden. To

---

address this issue, Al-Falah Mosque has implemented a consumptive economic empowerment program that provides assistance in the form of a loan for a rental guarantee, known in Korean as "Bojeunggeum," for Indonesian Muslims who wish to live near the mosque. Through this scheme, it is hoped that more Indonesian Muslims will reside close to the mosque, thereby increasing the number of permanent worshipers at Al-Falah Mosque. Regarding this loan transaction, there are differing opinions in muamalah fiqh. Some scholars argue that the interest generated from productive debt transactions is permissible based on business profit-sharing. However, since this loan assistance is in the form of debt for consumptive purposes, it is generally considered impermissible. Therefore, mosque administrators and borrowers sign a debt letter and trust each other. If a borrower encounters difficulties in repaying the loan within the specified time frame, a family meeting will be held, and the administrator will try to understand the issues faced by the borrower.

#### **3.1.4. Dakwah Sponsorship Program.**

According to GBR (41), Al-Falah Mosque provides Islamic study activities on weekends and national holidays in South Korea as a means of contributing to the empowerment of the consumptive economy. These study activities are initiated and held in groups or in collaboration with Indonesian Muslim communities, such as the Indonesian Muslim Family Association (IKMI), Human Initiative Korea (HI-Korea), Indonesian Muslim Students in Korea (IMUSKA), Indonesian Muslim Women's House (Rumaisa), and others. To disseminate information, these study activities, in the context of Islamic preaching, are usually announced through various social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp groups among Muslim communities in South Korea. Religious studies are typically conducted both online and offline. Preaching can take place through various methods and media, one of which is social media (Eko Sumadi, 2016). UHW (30) further adds that to enhance the value of religious studies, Al-Falah Mosque, in collaboration with other communities, also hosts a special study program every Ramadan or at certain moments, bringing in preachers who live in South Korea and internationally, such as from Indonesia.

### **3.2. Productive Economic Empowerment**

Mosques are public assets that are managed independently; therefore, their financial resources heavily rely on economic endeavors and the involvement of the surrounding community. This situation demonstrates the importance of social capital, particularly in terms of community engagement and accountability for mosque revitalization. According to Muhammad M. Alwi (2015), social capital is a form of community participation in problem-solving that is motivated by trust and supported by social structures. The development of the mosque cooperative and Halal Mart MSMEs signifies the culmination of productive economic empowerment at Al-Falah Mosque in Seoul. Reforming mosque management to be more productive and professional is critical for community empowerment (Kurniawan, 2014).

---



**Figure 2.** An IKMI seminar event with the Indonesian Muslim diaspora at Al-Falah Mosque, Seoul.

### 3.2.1. Al-Falah Mosque Cooperative

The economic empowerment of Al-Falah Mosque at a productive level was marked by the founding of a mosque cooperative in 2007. The establishment of this cooperative was initiated by the mosque management and supported by the IKMI management. It was agreed to establish the cooperative with initial capital from the contributions of all leaders to be used for various types of goods needed by the cooperative. In the fiqh of Muamalah, this is called *syirkah*. According to Shaikh Sayyid Sabiq, *syirkah* is a contract that occurs between Arab people who are united in capital and profit. In Islamic economics, we know *musyarakah*, a cooperative agreement between two or more parties who develop a business according to their capabilities and provide each other with funds (Tanjung and Nawawi, 2022).

The Al-Falah Mosque Cooperative is also commonly referred to by the congregation as Warung Al-Falah, where the goods being bought and sold include Indonesian snacks such as instant noodles, chips, and other typical Indonesian treats. Additionally, the stall provides cooking spices and telephone SIM cards from Indonesian providers. This cooperative occupies space at the entrance to the mosque, which is equipped with displays of goods arranged in a way that makes it easier for the congrega-

tion to shop. GBR (41) stated that there are at least two important factors that influence customers' (congregation) desire to shop at mosque cooperatives. First, the congregation realizes that the profits from the sale of this cooperative will be used solely for the benefit of the mosque. Second, it is believed that the cooperative will provide shopping satisfaction to the congregation because it sells typical Indonesian items and snacks that are difficult to find in public markets or minimarkets in South Korea. As a result, the majority of the congregation enjoys shopping while also donating to the mosque.

GBR (41) further explained that as the project progressed, the cooperative members who had contributed as initial investors agreed to divest themselves of their membership in the cooperative and donate all capital contributions as cooperative assets, the ownership and use of which were entirely for the mosque. However, expectations do not always match reality. Due to the small number of regular congregation members, which ultimately affects the turnover of the cooperative, it is not surprising that this cooperative or mosque stand could only survive for 1.5 years. According to GBR (41), during this period, the management believed that this mosque cooperative had no significant impact on the economy of the mosque but was merely a place where members and a small number of congregants could shop. The financial cycle only circulated there and could not be expanded further.

In 2020, the Al-Falah Mosque returned to the Singgil region, a location near the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia. At this new location, the management felt that they were gradually getting a better grip on the mosque, as dozens of families of Indonesian embassy employees in Seoul lived nearby, and several members of the Indonesian Muslim diaspora who had lived in Korea for a long time moved to the Singgil mosque area due to job changes. The mosque's management views this as a beneficial outcome of the mosque's relocation. Observing how the mosque is improving, even if it is not significant, gives the mosque administration hope that they can enhance the idea of empowering the mosque's economy.

### **3.2.2. Halal Mart MSME**

GBR (41), who has been appointed as the mosque administrator, has initiated the establishment of MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) in the mosque. It is hoped that these MSMEs will make the economy more efficient and productive, thereby reaping maximum benefits. The management views MSMEs as a significant opportunity for mosques to set up online stores that can serve a larger portion of the Indonesian Muslim diaspora in various locations across South Korea. IKMI Mart, an online store selling spices, instant noodles, snacks, and meat, has been founded. Based on mutual discussions and agreements, the name of the online store (MSME mosque) has been changed from IKMI Mart to Halal Mart, aligning with the mission of expanding the halal sector in this Muslim minority country.

The name Halal Mart has been adopted as the new name for mosque MSMEs so that it is more easily accepted by all elements of the Muslim community in South Korea, which has a variety of different organizational backgrounds. This change gives the impression of flexibility and aims to avoid being seen as limited to IKMI sympathizers. The brand is expected to become part of the mosque's outreach efforts to actively contribute to the development of the halal business, particularly in South Korea's food cluster. Currently, halal beef and chicken are the most popular goods at Halal Mart among South

---

Korean Muslims. Halal Mart produces beef through repackaging; it purchases halal beef from a major importer in South Korea, who imports the meat from halal beef supplier countries such as Australia, Brazil, and Denmark. To ensure that the meat products uphold halal standards, Halal Mart has secured halal certification from the halal certification body in the meat supplier's country of origin. Furthermore, Halal Mart meat products have repackaging status. Halal Mart has also ensured that all product items, warehouse facilities, cutting equipment, and packaging processes have been assessed and certified halal by South Korea's halal certification body, the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF).

GBR (41) is aware that there are several challenges currently facing Halal Mart, including a lack of a dedicated warehouse, no full-time staff for service personnel, and limited funds for development capital. Regarding warehouse facilities, even though their status is still joint (merged) with other parties' warehouses, Halal Mart has ensured that the warehouse meets halal standard requirements and is free from haram contamination. It has also undergone an assessment process by the Korea Muslim Federation. In terms of human resources, Halal Mart personnel are currently divided into two groups: online employees from Indonesia and offline employees in South Korea. Both online and offline employees work part-time. Due to capital limitations, Halal Mart must exercise caution when spending company funds, as some profits are utilized to support the Al-Falah Mosque.

Employees who work online and are based in Indonesia are responsible for various tasks, including creating social media content, building brand awareness through posts, establishing connections with the Indonesian diaspora in South Korea, and facilitating buying and selling transactions of Halal Mart items. Meanwhile, offline personnel in South Korea handle the preparation and packaging of goods, shipping via courier services, payment transactions (remittances), and maintaining administrative records of business activities.

The collaboration between the online and offline staff allows Halal Mart MSME's commercial activities to run smoothly. However, as the firm grows, there is an expectation for improvements in human resources, particularly through the hiring of permanent personnel who can focus full-time on managing these business activities to enhance professional value and increase customer satisfaction.

Halal Mart's management currently has a structure consisting of a director, a finance director, marketing staff, and part-time employees both offline and online. The management hopes to recruit staff with business visas next year who can take full responsibility for the day-to-day operations of Halal Mart MSMEs and manage their own warehouse. This recruitment of full-time staff aims to alleviate the burden on the current management and directors, who have routine jobs as workers and students in South Korea. However, obtaining a business visa for foreigners in South Korea requires a substantial deposit, as set by the Immigration Bureau of this country. This, of course, necessitates significant financial and administrative preparation.

According to UHW (30), in addition to promoting the consumptive and productive economy, Al-Falah Mosque also offers various social activities of both general and religious nature to strengthen brotherhood among Indonesian Muslims in South Korea. These include futsal on weekends, classes for reading and reciting the Qur'an (Qoro'a) held after every Fajr prayer, and study sessions on Sunday mornings following the Fajr prayer. Usually, on Saturday evenings, some members of the Indonesian Muslim diaspora stay at

---

the mosque after participating in futsal to attend these joint study sessions. Additionally, there is a program to teach children about the Qur'an, conducted in collaboration with the Rumah Muslimah Indonesia (Rumaisa) community. In this activity, mothers from the Indonesian Muslim diaspora invite their children to learn about the Qur'an and build a strong religious foundation. Other important activities include seminars on specific topics such as health seminars, discussions on visa transfer procedures, religious seminars, and more.

#### 4. Conclusions

The model of economic empowerment of the mosque, implemented by the management of Al-Falah Mosque in Seoul through cooperative or MSME mechanisms, aligns with the fifth maqashid of Shariah, namely *hifdzul mal*. This principle emphasizes that the funds generated by the mosque should be empowered not only at the level of consumptive use but also in the form of productive business. Referring to the *muamalah fiqh* in Islamic economics, the establishment of Al-Falah Mosque Halal Mart MSME is based on a *musyarakah* framework, where the business operates on the principle of partnership among two or more parties. However, while the *musyarakah* system typically includes an element of profit sharing among the capital owners as per the agreement, the business activities of Al-Falah Mosque Halal Mart differ in that the capital owners are set to receive profits from the business but have agreed that these profits will be fully utilized for the benefit and development of the mosque. This illustrates that the *muamalah* law in Islamic economics can be adapted according to real-world circumstances, as long as it does not harm the parties involved in the partnership. In the case of the Halal Mart MSME, the investors voluntarily directed their profits to benefit the mosque, thus contributing to the welfare of the community. Given that productive economic empowerment is making significant progress, the author suggests that the head of Halal Mart consider opening up capital and inviting mosque congregants or other interested parties to join this Sharia-compliant profit-sharing business as an incentive tool. It is hoped that with this *musyarakah* principle, Halal Mart will evolve into a more professionally managed Sharia business while continuing to be a cornerstone of the mosque economy.

#### 5. Acknowledgment

The author would like to thank the informants who were involved in and contributed to the completion of this article, specifically the manager/administrator and the imam of the Al-Falah Seoul Mosque. The author would also like to express gratitude to the anonymous reviewers and editors of the Journal of Islamic Civilization for their valuable input.

#### References

- Adinugroho, M., T. Herlambang, and R. S. Putra (2023). "Model Pemberdayaan Ekonomi dan Sosial Masyarakat Berbasis Masjid Kampus Surabaya ( Studi Kasus Pada Masjid Kampus UNAIR , ITS dan UNESA )". In: *Jurnal* 9.02, pp. 2843–2853.
-

- Ahmad Yani, S. (2007). *Panduan mengelola masjid: sebagai pusat kegiatan umat*. Pustaka Intermedia.
- Alauddin, M. B. et al. (2024). "The Concept of Ta'awun and Sharia Mutual Cooperation in Prosperity and the Establishment of Darus Salam Mosque". In: *Jurnal* 1.3, pp. 241–254.
- Amin, K.H. Ma'ruf (2021). *Masjid Menjadi Pusat Peradaban dan Pemberdayaan Umat Islam*. URL: <https://www.wapresri.go.id/masjid-menjadi-pusat-peradaban-dan-pemberdayaan-umat-islam/>.
- Amin, M., L. D. Utami, and F. Alon (2020). *Masjid Friendly: Mosque Based Economic Empowerment*.
- Bahri (2018). "Kewirausahaan Islam: Penerapan Konsep Berwirausaha dan Bertransaksi Syariah dengan Metode Dimensi Vertikal (Hablumminallah) dan Dimensi Horizontal (Hablumminannas)". In: *Moro, Jurnal Ekonomi Syariah Dan Bisnis* 1.2, pp. 67–87. DOI: 10.31949/mr.v1i2.1103.
- Dong-Jin, Jang and Choi Won Jae (2012). "Muslims in Korea: The Dilemma of Inclusion". In: *Korea Journal*. URL: <https://accesson.kr/kj/assets/pdf/8296/journal-52-2-160.pdf>.
- Effendi, Satria and Mahmid Arifi (2023). "Islamic Study: Cultural Aspects (Historic Mosques)". In: *Profetika Jurnal Studi Islam* 24. URL: <https://journals2.ums.ac.id/index.php/profetika/article/view/1688>.
- Faisal, A. et al. (2023). "Model Pemberdayaan UMKM Berbasis Masjid". In: *Iqtisaduna* 9, pp. 44–57. DOI: 10.24252/iqtisaduna.v9i1.36054.
- al-Faruq, Asadullah (2010). *Mengelola dan Memakmurkan Masjid*. Pustaka Arafah.
- Hendrojogi (2004). *Koperasi: Asas-asas, Teori, dan Praktik*. Rajawali Press.
- Iwan, A. and D. Herdiana (Apr. 2018). "Optimalisasi Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Berbasis Masjid". In: *Ida JHS* 12, pp. 82–98. DOI: 10.15575/idadjhs.v12i1.2.
- Karsid, R. and Universitas M. (2014). "Mosque Economic Empowerment Model for Urban Poor Community". In: pp. 80–93.
- Kurniawan, S. (Sept. 2014). "Masjid dalam lintasan sejarah umat islam". In: *Jurnal* 4, pp. 169–184.
- Lipka, Michael and Conrad Hackett (2017). *Why Muslims are the world's fastest-growing religious group*. URL: <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2017/04/06/why-muslims-are-the-worlds-fastest-growing-religious-group/>.
- Moroni, Stefano et al. (2019). "Immigrants, Mosques, and Religious Pluralism". In: *The New Companion to Urban Design*. Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9780203731932-11.
- Mustofa, I. (2024). "Nalar Filosofis Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) dalam Tata Kelola Filantropi Islam Berbasis Masjid di Surabaya". In: *Jurnal* 11.
- Muthoifin, M. (2024). *Community economic empowerment through mosque management to improve people's welfare*.
- Nizar, M. and N. Qosim (2020). "Mosque Based Economic Empowerment Model to Overcome Poverty in Indonesia". In: DOI: 10.4108/eai.21-9-2019.2293968.
- Rhealdi, Adnanda Yudha, Muthoifin, and Rizka (2023). "Masjid sebagai sarana pemberdayaan ekonomi umat". In: *Entrepreneurship Bisnis Manajemen Akuntansi (E-BISMA)* 4.1, pp. 1–11. DOI: 10.37631/ebisma.v4i1.886.
-



- Sistem, P. (2017). “Maqasid al-Syari’ah dalam Pandangan Jasser Auda: Sebuah Upaya Rekonstruksi Hukum Islam Melalui Pendekatan Sistem”. In: *Jurnal X.1*, pp. 120–134.
- Tanjung, R. I. and Z. M. Nawawi (2022). “Analisis Pemahaman Prinsip-Prinsip Pengelolaan Koperasi Syari’ah pada Pengurus dan Anggota Koperasi Masjid di Kota Medan”. In: *El-Mujtama: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 2.3, pp. 312–321. DOI: 10.47467/elmujtama.v2i3.147.
- Yoon, L. (2024). *Population distribution South Korea 2023, by religion*. URL: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/996013/south-korea-population-distribution-by-religion/>.
-