

## Masjid Al-Falah Seoul as a Mosque-Based Social Safety Net for Muslim Diaspora Communities in South Korea

<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Farhan Abdurrahman, <sup>2</sup>Ahmad Faiz Khudlari Thoha, <sup>3</sup>Mauludi

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Fakultas Ilmu Dakwah dan Komunikasi Islam, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Dakwah dan Komunikasi Islam (STIDKI) Ar-Rahmah Surabaya, Indonesia

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### Abstract

This study examines how Masjid Al-Falah Seoul functions as a mosque-based social safety net for Muslim diaspora communities in South Korea. Using a qualitative single-case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, site observation, and document review involving eight informants, including mosque leaders, administrators, and congregants. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis guided by Social Capital Theory. The findings show that the mosque provides informal social protection through free Friday meals (Geumbab), temporary accommodation, housing deposit support (Bojeunggeum), emergency assistance, financial support, and convert mentoring. These services address material, emotional, educational, social, and spiritual vulnerabilities while strengthening trust, reciprocity, volunteerism, communal solidarity, and institutional partnerships. This study contributes to diaspora welfare and religious social service literature by showing how mosque-based social capital supports community resilience beyond formal welfare structures.

**Keywords:** mosque-based social services; muslim diaspora communities; social safety net; south korea.

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana Masjid Al-Falah Seoul berfungsi sebagai jaring pengaman sosial berbasis masjid bagi komunitas diaspora Muslim di Korea Selatan. Dengan desain studi kasus kualitatif tunggal, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi lokasi, dan telaah dokumen dengan delapan informan, termasuk pimpinan masjid, pengurus, dan jamaah. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik yang dipandu oleh Teori Modal Sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa masjid menyediakan perlindungan sosial informal melalui makan Jumat gratis (Geumbab), akomodasi sementara, dukungan deposito perumahan (Bojeunggeum), bantuan darurat, dukungan finansial, dan pendampingan muallaf. Layanan ini menjawab kerentanan material, emosional, pendidikan, sosial, dan spiritual sekaligus memperkuat kepercayaan, resiprositas, kerelawanan, solidaritas komunal, dan kemitraan kelembagaan. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa modal sosial berbasis masjid mendukung ketahanan komunitas di luar struktur kesejahteraan formal.*

**Kata kunci:** layanan sosial berbasis masjid; komunitas diaspora muslim; jaring pengaman sosial; korea selatan.

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\*Corresponding Author:

abdurrahmanf911@gmail.com

## Introduction

Mosques have historically functioned not only as places of worship, but also as centers of education, social interaction, charity, and communal solidarity within Muslim societies (Ahmed & McGee, 2024; Karimullah, 2023). In classical Islamic civilization, the mosque served as a multifunctional institution where religious, educational, social, and communal activities intersected in everyday life. In contemporary contexts, many mosques continue to expand their social roles by providing various forms of community-based support, including food assistance, educational programs, counseling, emergency relief, and social welfare services (Ahmed & McGee, 2024; Ali et al., 2022). These practices reflect Islamic values of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance), solidarity, and collective responsibility, particularly in supporting vulnerable members of society (Karimullah, 2023).

The social role of mosques becomes increasingly important within Muslim diaspora communities living in non-Muslim majority countries. Muslim migrants, international students, foreign workers, converts, and temporary visitors often experience multiple forms of vulnerability, including language barriers, cultural adaptation difficulties, unstable employment, social isolation, limited access to halal food, and limited access to formal welfare systems. In such contexts, mosques may function as informal social safety nets by providing culturally familiar spaces, trusted social networks, and practical assistance for community members. Unlike formal social safety nets provided by the state, mosque-based social safety nets operate through religious solidarity, volunteerism, donations, trust, and reciprocal support among congregants.

In South Korea, the growth of Muslim diaspora communities has increased the significance of mosques and informal prayer spaces as centers of both religious and social life (Putri et al., 2022; Srimulyani, 2021). As religious minorities in a non-Muslim majority society, Muslim migrants often face structural and social challenges related to religious practice, halal food access, limited mosque facilities, cultural adaptation, employment conditions, and limited institutional recognition (Musafak, 2024; Putri et al., 2022; Srimulyani, 2021). Under these circumstances, informal support systems within mosque communities become highly important.

One mosque actively involved in community-based social support is Masjid Al-Falah Seoul, an Indonesian mosque located in Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul, South Korea. Beyond functioning as a place of worship, the mosque has developed various social service programs for diaspora Muslims, including Geumbab (free Friday meals), temporary accommodation, emergency assistance, Boeung housing deposit support, and convert mentoring programs through the Centre of Islamic Studies South Korea (CISS). These programs function as practical forms of informal social protection addressing economic, emotional, spiritual, and social needs among Muslim diaspora communities.

Previous studies have examined related issues, including mosque-based social services, Muslim diaspora experiences in South Korea, and economic empowerment through Masjid Al-Falah Seoul. Ali et al. (2022) highlight the role of mosques in providing emotional and social support. Srimulyani (2021) discusses religious minority experiences and cultural adaptation. Shin et al. (2022) examine digital capital among Indonesian Muslim diaspora communities in South Korea. Musafak (2024) specifically examined Masjid Al-Falah Seoul as a site of mosque-based economic empowerment through micro, small, and medium

enterprises. However, these studies have not sufficiently explained how a diaspora mosque practically operates as an informal welfare institution through everyday practices of trust, volunteerism, reciprocity, and communal solidarity.

This study addresses these gaps by examining how Masjid Al-Falah Seoul functions as a mosque-based social safety net for Muslim diaspora communities in South Korea. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on Masjid Al-Falah Seoul as a living informal welfare institution supported by bonding, bridging, and linking social capital. This study is important for three reasons. First, it contributes to the discussion on mosque-based social services by highlighting diaspora mosques as informal welfare institutions. Second, it enriches the application of Social Capital Theory by explaining how trust, reciprocity, volunteerism, and institutional partnerships sustain mosque-based welfare. Third, it provides empirical insights into Muslim diaspora welfare in South Korea, a context that remains underexplored within studies of Islamic social institutions and migrant welfare.

Based on these considerations, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) How does Masjid Al-Falah Seoul function as a mosque-based social safety net for Muslim diaspora communities in South Korea? (2) What forms of social services are provided by the mosque to support diaspora Muslims? (3) How do bonding, bridging, and linking social capital sustain mosque-based welfare practices within the diaspora community?

## **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

### **Mosque-Based Social Services and Faith-Based Welfare in Diaspora Contexts**

Mosques in Muslim diaspora communities have been widely recognized as multifunctional institutions that extend beyond ritual worship to include religious education, social interaction, charity, counseling, and community-based welfare services (Abideen & Abbas, 2021; Ali et al., 2022; Karimullah, 2023). In non-Muslim majority contexts, mosques may function as faith-based social infrastructures that provide culturally familiar spaces, religious guidance, and practical support for migrants and minority communities (Ali et al., 2022; Nicholson, 2018).

Previous studies show that religious institutions and mosque communities can play a significant role in supporting vulnerable Muslim populations. Ali et al. (2022) demonstrate that mosque communities provide emotional and social support for Muslims facing mental health challenges. Srimulyani (2021) explains that Indonesian Muslims in South Korea live as a religious minority and must negotiate identity, integration, and religious practice. Shin et al. (2022) show that Indonesian Muslim diaspora communities use digital capital and online communities for social support. Musafak (2024) specifically examines Masjid Al-Falah Seoul as a site of mosque-based economic empowerment through MSMEs.

Collectively, these studies leave room for further examination of how a diaspora mosque operates as an informal social safety net through everyday welfare practices. Existing studies tend to focus on emotional support, religious identity, or economic empowerment, while the practical mechanisms of mosque-based welfare in East Asian diaspora contexts remain underexplored. The present study therefore positions Masjid Al-Falah Seoul as a living mosque-based social safety net sustained by trust, volunteerism, reciprocity, and communal solidarity.

**Table 1. Previous Studies and Research Gap**

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Research Gap</b>
Ali et al. (2022)	Mosque communities and emotional support	Muslim community in the United States	Does not focus on diaspora mosque-based social safety nets
Srimulyani (2021)	Indonesian Muslim diaspora as religious minority	South Korea	Does not examine mosque-based welfare mechanisms
Shin et al. (2022)	Digital capital and online social support	Indonesian Muslim diaspora in South Korea	Focuses on online support, not mosque-based services
Musafak (2024)	Mosque-based MSME empowerment	Masjid Al-Falah Seoul	Focuses on economic empowerment, not social safety net functions
Present Study	Mosque-based social safety net and social capital	Masjid Al-Falah Seoul, South Korea	Explains how bonding, bridging, and linking social capital sustain informal welfare

### **Social Safety Net in Diaspora Contexts**

A social safety net generally refers to protective mechanisms designed to help individuals or groups cope with economic hardship, social vulnerability, and unexpected crises. In formal welfare systems, social safety nets are provided by the state through public assistance, subsidies, health protection, unemployment support, and housing assistance (World Bank, 2018). However, in diaspora contexts, access to formal welfare may be limited by language barriers, legal status, employment insecurity, cultural unfamiliarity, and weak institutional recognition, leading migrant communities to rely on informal safety nets developed through family ties, ethnic networks, and religious communities (Merino, 2019; Nicholson, 2018).

In this study, the concept of a mosque-based social safety net refers to informal and community-based forms of protection provided through mosque networks to support diaspora Muslims in times of need. Such protection operates not through bureaucratic welfare procedures, but through religious solidarity, trust, volunteerism, donations, and reciprocal assistance among congregants. These forms of support are particularly important for Muslim diaspora communities living in non-Muslim majority societies, where formal welfare systems may not fully address their religious, cultural, emotional, and social needs (Ali et al., 2022; Nicholson, 2018).

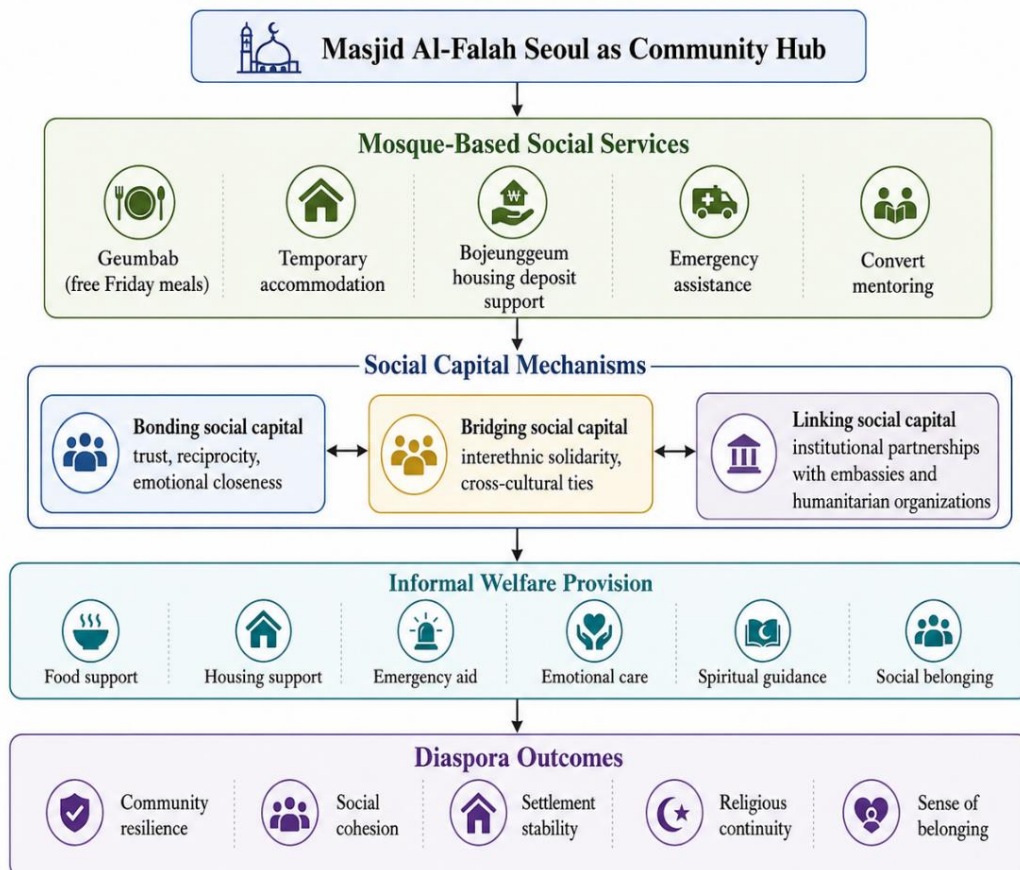
Therefore, Masjid Al-Falah Seoul can be understood as a mosque-based social safety net because it provides practical and symbolic forms of protection for Muslim diaspora communities in South Korea through programs including Geumbab, temporary accommodation, Bojeunggeum housing deposit support, emergency assistance including

financial support, and convert mentoring. This conceptualization allows the study to examine the mosque as an informal welfare actor that strengthens diaspora resilience through everyday practices of care, solidarity, and social capital (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015).

### Social Capital Theory: Bonding, Bridging, and Linking

This study employs Social Capital Theory as the main analytical framework. Social capital refers to networks, norms, trust, and reciprocal relationships that enable individuals and groups to coordinate action and mobilize resources for mutual benefit (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Putnam, 2000). Three forms of social capital are particularly relevant. First, bonding social capital refers to strong ties among people who share close social identities, values, or community membership, appearing within a mosque community through emotional closeness, religious solidarity, and trust among congregants. Second, bridging social capital refers to social connections across different groups, ethnicities, and nationalities, important in diaspora mosque settings where Muslim communities are composed of diverse groups including migrant workers, students, expatriates, and local converts. Third, linking social capital refers to relationships between community actors and external institutions that have broader resources, authority, or formal capacity (Claridge, 2018).

In this study, bonding, bridging, and linking social capital are treated as interrelated mechanisms that sustain mosque-based social safety nets. Bonding social capital creates trust and emotional security within the congregation; bridging social capital expands solidarity across diverse Muslim diaspora groups; and linking social capital connects the mosque to wider institutional support. Together, these three forms of social capital help explain how Masjid Al-Falah Seoul functions as an informal welfare actor that provides material, emotional, social, and spiritual protection for Muslim diaspora communities in South Korea.



The framework shows how mosque-based social services are sustained through bonding, bridging, and linking social capital, generating informal welfare provision and strengthening diaspora resilience, social cohesion, settlement stability, religious continuity, and a sense of belonging.

### **Informal Welfare Systems and Diaspora Resilience**

Informal welfare systems are community-based mechanisms of social protection that operate outside formal state welfare structures. In diaspora contexts, such systems are particularly important because migrant populations face barriers to accessing formal welfare, including language limitations, legal status constraints, employment insecurity, cultural unfamiliarity, and limited institutional recognition. Religious institutions, including mosques, frequently help fill this gap by offering flexible and culturally responsive forms of assistance ranging from material aid to emotional support, spiritual guidance, and social belonging (Ali et al., 2022; Merino, 2019).

Diaspora resilience refers to the capacity of migrant communities to adapt, maintain well-being, and sustain collective life in the face of structural and social challenges. In Muslim diaspora communities, mosques can contribute to resilience by providing religious continuity, social recognition, emotional security, and practical assistance. In this study, informal welfare and diaspora resilience are understood as closely connected: mosque-based welfare practices at Masjid Al-Falah Seoul contribute to the formation of a supportive community environment where diaspora Muslims can seek help, build relationships, and maintain a sense of belonging (Merino, 2019).

### **Method**

This study employs a qualitative approach using a single case study design to explore how Masjid Al-Falah Seoul functions as a mosque-based social safety net for Muslim diaspora communities in South Korea. A case study design was selected because it allows for an in-depth examination of social services and welfare practices in their real-life context, particularly suitable for exploring how informal welfare systems are implemented and sustained within a specific community setting (Yin, 2018).

The research was conducted at Masjid Al-Falah Seoul, an Indonesian mosque in Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul, South Korea. Masjid Al-Falah was selected due to its active role in providing a wide range of community-based social services for diaspora Muslims, including Geumbab (free Friday meals), Bojeunggeum (housing deposit assistance), temporary accommodation, and convert mentoring programs through the Center of Islamic Studies South Korea (CISS).

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, a non-random technique appropriate for selecting participants with specific knowledge, direct involvement, or lived experience relevant to the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A total of eight informants were interviewed, consisting of one mosque chairman, four mosque administrators, and three mosque congregants. The mosque chairman provided insights into organizational management and strategic direction. Administrators were selected for their direct involvement in coordinating social service programs. The three congregants were selected as beneficiaries who had direct experience receiving or participating in mosque-

based social services. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached, and informants' accounts were triangulated with site observation and document review.

Data were collected through three methods. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom between March and May 2025, with a follow-up interview in 2026, each lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes, audio-recorded with participant consent, and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Second, a site observation was conducted at Masjid Al-Falah Seoul in March 2025, during which the researcher attended Friday prayers, witnessed the distribution of Geumbab, observed community interactions, and documented temporary accommodation facilities and Saturday communal activities. Third, a document review of internal reports, program flyers, community publications, and digital communications provided supplementary information and triangulation of interview findings.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the six-phase framework of Braun and Clarke (2019): (1) familiarization with data; (2) initial coding of key patterns; (3) theme development through clustering of codes; (4) theme review and refinement; (5) theme naming and definition; and (6) interpretation of findings in relation to Social Capital Theory and the relevant literature.

To ensure the trustworthiness of findings, this study applied four criteria proposed by Enworo (2023). Credibility was established through data triangulation and member checking with key informants. Transferability was supported through thick description of the research context. Dependability was maintained through an audit trail documenting all methodological decisions. Confirmability was ensured by grounding interpretations directly in participant data and maintaining reflexive awareness of the researcher's position as an external observer.

This study adhered to ethical guidelines for qualitative research. Prior to interviews, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Informants were assured that participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. All informants were anonymized using coded identifiers (I1 through I8), and all data were handled with confidentiality and presented accurately to reflect participants' experiences.

## Results and Discussion

The results of the thematic analysis are summarized in Table 2. The table presents five main themes that emerged from the interview data, site observation, and document review: diaspora vulnerability, mosque-based welfare practices, social capital and volunteerism, community anchoring, and spiritual support. These themes show how Masjid Al-Falah Seoul functions as an informal social safety net for Muslim diaspora communities in South Korea.

**Table 2. Summary of Main Themes and Findings**

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Data Source	Analytical Meaning
Diaspora vulnerability	Language barriers, loneliness, cultural adaptation, employment disruption, legal uncertainty, academic pressure, financial hardship	I6, I8; interview data	Diaspora Muslims need trusted communal spaces to cope with multiple overlapping vulnerabilities.
Mosque-based welfare practices	Geumbab, emergency assistance, financial	I3, I7, I8; interviews and	Mosque services operate as flexible informal protection

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Data Source	Analytical Meaning
	support, temporary accommodation, Bojeunggeum, convert mentoring	site observation	mechanisms responding to practical, financial, emotional, and spiritual needs.
Social capital and volunteerism	Trust-based coordination, unpaid volunteers, donations, reciprocity, emotional closeness, family-like solidarity	I4, I6, I8; interviews and observation	Bonding social capital sustains welfare practices through trust, mutual care, volunteerism, and shared religious responsibility.
Community anchoring	Kampung Al-Falah, families settling near the mosque, second-home experience, cross-cultural brotherhood	I7, I8; field observation and interviews	The mosque shapes long-term settlement, social belonging, and community formation among diaspora Muslims.
Spiritual support and religious continuity	Service as worship, sincerity, Qur'anic learning, religious guidance, psychological support, spiritual companionship	I4, I8; interview data	Spiritual motivation strengthens volunteer commitment, emotional resilience, and sustainability of welfare practices.

Each theme is discussed in detail in the following sections to explain how mosque-based services, social capital, and communal solidarity operate in practice.

### **Diaspora Vulnerability and the Need for Community Support**

The findings show that Muslim diaspora communities in South Korea experience various forms of vulnerability during their adaptation process. These vulnerabilities are not limited to economic hardship, but also include language barriers, cultural differences, unstable employment, loneliness, limited access to halal food, and the absence of close family support. For many diaspora Muslims, living in a non-Muslim majority society creates a situation in which every day needs are closely connected to religious, emotional, and social challenges.

One congregant described the emotional difficulty of early adaptation:

*“Masa awal sangat berat, bahasa belum lancar, dan keluarga jauh. Saya merasa bingung mau bercerita kepada siapa.” (I6)*

*[“The early period was very difficult; I was not yet fluent in the language, and my family was far away. I felt confused about who to turn to.”]*

This statement indicates that diaspora vulnerability is not merely a matter of material deprivation, but also involves emotional uncertainty and social isolation. The vulnerability became more serious when informants experienced employment disruption:

*“Ketika pekerjaan saya berhenti, tabungan habis, dan saya mulai merasa tidak punya tempat bergantung.” (I6)*

*[“When my job stopped, my savings ran out, and I began to feel that I had no place to rely on.”]*

The experience of another congregant confirms that diaspora vulnerability may involve overlapping pressures. One informant, a full-time student who had lived in Korea for almost two and a half years, described a severe crisis when he faced the possibility of deportation and struggled to pay university tuition fees:

*“One of the worst moments was when I faced serious immigration uncertainty and almost had to leave Korea. I was under so much pressure. Every night before bed, I would cry.” (I8)*

These findings indicate that diaspora vulnerability includes legal uncertainty, academic pressure, emotional distress, and social isolation, supporting previous studies arguing that religious communities often become important informal support systems for migrant populations when formal welfare access is limited (Ali et al., 2022; Merino, 2019). Being greeted, listened to, and treated like family within the mosque helped reduce feelings of loneliness and strengthened congregants’ sense of belonging:

*“Masjid seperti pulang ke rumah sendiri.” (I6)*

*[“The mosque feels like coming home.”]*

This finding reflects the role of bonding social capital in creating emotional safety within the congregation. Shared religious identity, repeated interaction, and mutual care generate trust among community members, which can function as a psychological buffer against isolation and uncertainty in diaspora life (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Putnam, 2000).

### **Mosque-Based Social Services as Informal Social Protection**

The findings reveal that Masjid Al-Falah Seoul provides several mosque-based social services that function as informal social protection mechanisms for Muslim diaspora communities. These services include Geumbab (free Friday meals), temporary accommodation, Bojeunggeum housing deposit support, emergency assistance, financial support, and convert mentoring programs. Rather than operating as formal welfare programs with bureaucratic procedures, these services are organized through trust, voluntary participation, donations, religious solidarity, and communal responsibility (Ali et al., 2022; Nicholson, 2018).

Among these programs, Geumbab emerged as one of the mosque’s most visible welfare practices. Informants explained that the program responds to the practical difficulty of accessing halal food after Friday prayers, especially for workers, students, and migrants with limited time and resources. However, its significance goes beyond food provision. One mosque administrator explained:

*“Geumbab bukan hanya soal makanan, tapi tempat berkumpul yang mempererat ukhuwah di antara jamaah.” (I3)*

*[“Geumbab is not merely about food; it is a gathering space that strengthens brotherhood among congregants.”]*

Temporary accommodation provides an important form of informal protection for diaspora Muslims facing housing difficulties or job loss. Bojeunggeum housing deposit support further assists congregants who need financial help to secure housing near the

mosque area. One congregant stated:

*“Bantuan deposit rumah sangat membantu, saya bisa tinggal lebih lama di sini tanpa rasa khawatir tentang tempat tinggal.” (I7)*

*[“The housing deposit assistance was very helpful; I was able to stay here longer without worrying about accommodation.”]*

Emergency assistance further illustrates the mosque’s role as an accessible informal safety net. The experience of I8, a full-time student facing legal uncertainty and financial crisis, illustrates how this assistance operates in a flexible and context-sensitive manner:

*“Masjid Al-Falah actually helped me cover my tuition fees when I was really struggling. That meant so much to me.” (I8)*

This statement expands the meaning of mosque-based emergency assistance beyond conventional material aid. The mosque’s support helped protect the informant’s educational continuity and psychological stability. In addition, Masjid Al-Falah Seoul provides convert mentoring programs through CISS, offering Islamic education, spiritual guidance, emotional support, and social companionship for Korean converts and new Muslims.

### **Social Capital, Volunteerism, and Communal Solidarity**

The sustainability of mosque-based social services at Masjid Al-Falah Seoul is strongly supported by social capital within the diaspora community. Trust, volunteerism, reciprocity, religious commitment, and communal solidarity form the main foundation of the mosque’s welfare practices, allowing the mosque to provide assistance without depending entirely on formal welfare structures (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Putnam, 2000). Many programs are carried out through unpaid participation from congregants who contribute their time, energy, skills, and financial resources. One mosque administrator stated:

*“Keberhasilan program seperti Geumbab ini berkat kontribusi jamaah yang berinfak dan relawan yang bekerja tanpa pamrih.” (I4)*

*[“The success of programs like Geumbab is due to the contributions of congregants who donate and volunteers who work selflessly.”]*

Shared religious identity and emotional closeness encourage congregants to participate in welfare activities as a form of mutual care and worship. One congregant described the closeness of community relations:

*“Hubungan antar jamaah sangat dekat — meskipun banyak yang baru kenal, terasa seperti keluarga.” (I6)*

*[“Relationships among congregants are very close — even those who have just met feel like family.”]*

The experience of I8 further illustrates this finding. He described Masjid Al-Falah Seoul as a trusted emotional space where he could share personal struggles and build meaningful relationships:

*“Whenever I need to talk, share something, or just vent, I can do it freely there. They always motivate and encourage me. It feels like a second family. I can say that without any doubt — these people are my family.” (I8)*

Beyond bonding social capital, Masjid Al-Falah Seoul also demonstrates bridging social capital, connecting Indonesian Muslims, Korean converts, and Muslims from other national backgrounds through religious activities and social programs. I8 noted that since joining the mosque he had made brothers from “America, Belgium, London, Algeria — from all over the world.” Linking social capital is also visible in the mosque’s relationships with external institutions and humanitarian networks, which strengthen its ability to respond to needs beyond internal congregational resources (Claridge, 2018).

### **The Mosque as a Living Social Safety Net and Community Anchor**

The findings suggest that Masjid Al-Falah Seoul functions not merely as a place of worship, but as a living social safety net embedded in the everyday experiences of Muslim diaspora communities. The mosque provides material assistance, emotional security, spiritual guidance, social belonging, and communal identity. Several informants described the mosque as a “second home” where they felt accepted and emotionally supported:

*“Masjid ini menjadi rumah kedua saya.” (I7)*

*[“This mosque has become my second home.”]*

The experience of I8 reinforces this finding. After experiencing legal uncertainty, academic pressure, and financial hardship, he found stability through the mosque community and described it in deeply symbolic terms:

*“Masjid Al-Falah is like a garden — a piece of paradise on earth. It’s a beautiful place, the people are incredibly kind-hearted, the activities are fun and full of togetherness, and you can even stay there. It’s not just a mosque. It’s a home.” (I8)*

Another informant emphasized that the mosque helped transform feelings of loneliness into meaningful communal attachment:

*“Sebelumnya sering merasa sendiri, sekarang punya banyak teman dan orang yang bisa diajak berbagi cerita.” (I6)*

*[“I used to feel lonely frequently; now I have many friends and people with whom I can share my experiences.”]*

Beyond immediate welfare functions, the mosque also contributes to community anchoring through the development of Kampung Al-Falah, where Muslim families and congregants intentionally settle near the mosque to strengthen religious life and social interaction. This phenomenon shows that the mosque shapes not only short-term assistance, but also longer-term patterns of settlement and community formation, consistent with the view that community-based support networks strengthen resilience during periods of vulnerability (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Merino, 2019).

## **Conclusion**

This study examined how Masjid Al-Falah Seoul functions as a mosque-based social safety net for Muslim diaspora communities in South Korea. The findings show that the mosque provides informal social protection through several programs, including Geumbab (free Friday meals), temporary accommodation, emergency and financial assistance, Bojeunggeum housing deposit support, and convert mentoring. These services address not only material needs, but also emotional, educational, social, psychological, and spiritual vulnerabilities experienced by diaspora Muslims in a non-Muslim majority context.

The study further demonstrates that these mosque-based welfare practices are sustained by interrelated forms of social capital. Bonding social capital appears through trust, emotional closeness, reciprocity, donations, and volunteerism within the congregation. Bridging social capital is reflected in solidarity among Muslims from different national and cultural backgrounds. Linking social capital is shown through the mosque's relationships with external institutions and humanitarian networks.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the application of Social Capital Theory by showing how bonding, bridging, and linking social capital operate together to sustain informal welfare practices in a diaspora mosque setting. Empirically, it provides insight into Muslim diaspora welfare in South Korea, a context that remains underexplored within studies of Islamic social institutions and migrant welfare. By conceptualizing Masjid Al-Falah Seoul as a living mosque-based social safety net, this study highlights the role of religious institutions as informal welfare actors that strengthen community resilience, social cohesion, and collective belonging beyond formal welfare structures.

## **Practical Implications**

The findings offer several practical implications. For mosque managers, the experience of Masjid Al-Falah Seoul shows the importance of developing structured yet flexible community-based welfare programs through strengthened volunteer coordination, transparent donation management, and systematic documentation of congregant needs. For Islamic organizations, mosques should be viewed not only as religious spaces, but also as community welfare centers requiring support in training volunteers, developing social service guidelines, and facilitating fundraising networks. For policymakers and public institutions, diaspora mosques can serve as important community-based partners in supporting migrant welfare and social integration. For Indonesian diaspora institutions, close cooperation with mosque communities can support emergency assistance, religious education, migrant adaptation, and social integration.

## **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

This study has several limitations. First, the study involved eight informants and findings cannot be generalized to all Muslim diaspora communities or mosque-based welfare practices in South Korea. Second, the focus only on Masjid Al-Falah Seoul means the findings may not represent other diaspora mosques with different organizational structures, resources, or institutional partnerships. Third, data collection through Zoom interviews, site observation, and document review means longer ethnographic fieldwork could provide deeper insights into the everyday dynamics of mosque-based welfare. Future studies could

develop broader comparative research across diaspora mosques in South Korea or other non-Muslim majority societies, and longitudinal research could examine the long-term impact of mosque-based support on migrant well-being, social integration, religious identity, and community resilience.

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