

THE RELEVANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF AL-FALĀḤ IN THE FORMULATION OF ISLAMIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALSIin Muyasarah¹¹ Darussalam Islamic Institute of Martapura, Martapura, Indonesia**Corresponding Author:**

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Abstract

The concept of al-Falāḥ occupies a central position in Islamic economics as a holistic notion of success that encompasses material prosperity, spiritual well-being, social justice, and success in both this world and the hereafter. However, contemporary economic development paradigms remain predominantly focused on material growth indicators, often neglecting ethical, spiritual, and social dimensions of human welfare. This study aims to analyze the relevance of the concept of al-Falāḥ in formulating the objectives of Islamic economic development and to explore its contribution as a comprehensive framework for sustainable human well-being. Employing a qualitative approach through a library research method, this study examines classical and contemporary literature in Islamic economics, Qur'anic exegesis, and development theories. The findings reveal that al-Falāḥ provides an integrative foundation for Islamic economic development by balancing economic growth with moral values, equitable wealth distribution, social responsibility, environmental sustainability, and spiritual fulfillment. Furthermore, the concept offers a normative framework that complements and extends conventional development indicators by emphasizing multidimensional human welfare. The study concludes that the incorporation of al-Falāḥ into Islamic economic development objectives can strengthen the realization of inclusive, ethical, and sustainable development. Therefore, policymakers, scholars, and Islamic economic institutions are encouraged to integrate al-Falāḥ-based indicators into development planning and evaluation frameworks to achieve more comprehensive and value-oriented economic outcomes.

Keywords: al-Falāḥ, Islamic Economic Development, Islamic Economics, Human Well-Being, Sustainable Development



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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary global development discourse is increasingly confronted with multidimensional crises manifested in widening economic inequality, environmental degradation, social exclusion, and the erosion of ethical values in economic activities. Although economic growth remains a dominant indicator of development success, numerous scholars argue that conventional development models have failed to comprehensively address human well-being because they primarily emphasize material prosperity while neglecting spiritual, moral, and social dimensions (Harahap et al., 2023; Anwar et al., 2025). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have attempted to introduce a more holistic framework; however, several studies suggest that the SDGs remain largely secular and insufficiently integrate transcendent values into development paradigms (Sani & Utami, 2026; Mardani et al., 2026). Consequently, there is a growing demand for alternative development frameworks capable of harmonizing material advancement with ethical and spiritual fulfillment. In my view, the current development crisis indicates the necessity of revisiting Islamic economic concepts that offer a more comprehensive understanding of human welfare, particularly the concept of al-Falāḥ.

Within Islamic economics, al-Falāḥ represents one of the most fundamental objectives of economic activity and human existence. The concept extends beyond material success and encompasses spiritual attainment, social justice, moral excellence, and prosperity in both worldly life and the hereafter. Islamic economists emphasize that economic development should not merely pursue wealth accumulation but should facilitate the realization of comprehensive human well-being consistent with divine guidance (Afnandito, 2025; Haruni et al., 2025). Furthermore, the Qur'anic notion of al-Falāḥ is closely associated with justice (‘adl), welfare (maṣlaḥah), and human prosperity (sa‘ādah), indicating that development must be evaluated through multidimensional criteria rather than economic growth alone. Therefore, I argue that al-Falāḥ provides a normative and ethical foundation capable of enriching contemporary development theories.

Recent studies have extensively discussed Islamic economic development through the perspectives of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah, Islamic finance, sustainable development, and ethical economics. For instance, Harahap et al. (2023) examined the relationship between Islamic law, Islamic finance, and SDGs, concluding that Islamic values contribute significantly to sustainable development. Similarly, Abidin et al. (2025) explored the integration of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah into Islamic economic development policy, while Afandi and Rahma (2025) proposed a circular economy framework grounded in Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah principles (Harahap et al., 2023; Abidin et al., 2025; Afandi & Rahma, 2025). Despite these contributions, most existing studies concentrate on Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah as the primary analytical framework and pay limited attention to al-Falāḥ as the ultimate objective of Islamic economic development. Consequently, the philosophical and developmental implications of al-Falāḥ remain underexplored within contemporary Islamic economic literature. In my assessment, this limitation creates an opportunity to re-examine Islamic development objectives through a more holistic lens centered on al-Falāḥ.

From a conceptual perspective, the notion of al-Falāḥ embodies a comprehensive vision of success that integrates economic, social, ethical, and spiritual dimensions. Unlike conventional welfare concepts that primarily rely on utility maximization and income-based indicators, al-Falāḥ emphasizes balanced fulfillment of human needs in accordance with divine values (Anwar et al., 2025; Syaichoni et al., 2025). Conceptually, al-Falāḥ serves not only as an outcome of economic activities but also as a guiding principle for economic behavior and policy formulation. Therefore, I contend that understanding Islamic economic development without adequately incorporating al-Falāḥ risks reducing Islamic economics to a merely technical or financial system.

From a theoretical perspective, contemporary development theories continue to be dominated by modernization, human development, and sustainability paradigms. While these approaches have broadened development indicators beyond economic growth, they generally remain anthropocentric and secular in orientation (Harahap et al., 2023; Sani & Utami, 2026). Islamic economics, on the other hand, proposes a theocentric worldview in which economic activities are inseparable from moral accountability and divine objectives. The theory of al-Falāḥ strengthens this perspective by positioning spiritual fulfillment and ethical responsibility as integral components of development outcomes. Therefore, I argue that al-Falāḥ offers a theoretical contribution capable of complementing and extending existing development paradigms.

Empirically, many Muslim-majority countries continue to experience persistent challenges such as poverty, unemployment, income inequality, corruption, environmental degradation, and social fragmentation despite achieving significant economic growth in recent decades (Mardani et al., 2026; Hasan et al., 2026). These conditions suggest that economic expansion alone does not necessarily guarantee comprehensive human welfare. Moreover, several studies indicate that development policies often prioritize macroeconomic performance while neglecting ethical governance, social justice, and spiritual well-being (Haruni et al., 2025; Isnan et al., 2025). Accordingly, I believe that empirical realities reinforce the importance of developing alternative frameworks capable of measuring and promoting multidimensional welfare based on Islamic principles.

From a philosophical perspective, al-Falāḥ reflects the Islamic worldview regarding the purpose of human existence and socio-economic life. The concept originates from the Qur'anic understanding that true success encompasses both temporal and eternal dimensions. Consequently, economic development is not viewed as an end in itself but rather as a means to achieve human flourishing under divine guidance (Afnandito, 2025; Abidin et al., 2025). This philosophical foundation distinguishes Islamic economics from conventional paradigms that often separate economic activities from moral and spiritual considerations. In my view, the philosophical richness of al-Falāḥ makes it highly relevant for rethinking development objectives in the contemporary era.

Several strands of literature further support the relevance of al-Falāḥ in development discourse. The first strand emphasizes Islamic welfare and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah as foundations for sustainable development (Harahap et al., 2023; Isnan et al., 2025). The second strand explores the alignment between Islamic values and SDGs, highlighting the compatibility of social justice, environmental stewardship, and ethical governance principles (Sani & Utami, 2026; Mardani et al., 2026). The third strand focuses on Islamic finance and wealth distribution as instruments for achieving public welfare (Syaichoni et al., 2025; Hasan et al., 2026). Nevertheless, only a limited number of studies explicitly examine al-Falāḥ as the ultimate developmental objective integrating these various dimensions into a coherent framework. Therefore, I argue that a dedicated analysis of al-Falāḥ is necessary to strengthen the epistemological foundations of Islamic economic development.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the research gap of this study lies in the limited scholarly attention devoted to al-Falāḥ as a comprehensive framework for formulating the objectives of Islamic economic development. Existing studies predominantly focus on Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah, Islamic finance, or sustainable development, while the relevance of al-Falāḥ remains insufficiently theorized and systematically articulated. Accordingly, the novelty of this research is its attempt to reposition al-Falāḥ as the foundational objective of Islamic economic development and to explain its relevance in constructing a multidimensional development framework that integrates material welfare, social justice, environmental sustainability, ethical responsibility, and spiritual well-being. Therefore, this study contributes both theoretically and conceptually to the advancement of contemporary Islamic economic thought.

The objective of this article is to analyze the relevance of the concept of al-Falāḥ in the formulation of Islamic economic development objectives and to examine its potential contribution as a holistic framework for achieving comprehensive human welfare. Specifically, the study seeks to explain the conceptual foundations, theoretical relevance, philosophical significance, and practical implications of al-Falāḥ for contemporary Islamic economic development. Ultimately, I argue that the revitalization of al-Falāḥ as a development objective can strengthen the normative and ethical foundations of Islamic economics while providing a more comprehensive alternative to prevailing development paradigms.

Table 1. Research Gap dan Novelty

Aspect	Previous Studies	Gap Research	Novelty
Islamic Economic Development	Focus on Maqasid al-Shariah	Have not studied al-Falāḥ in depth	Placing al-Falāḥ as the main goal of Islamic economic development
SDGs and Islamic Economics	Focus on the integration of SDGs and Islamic values	Has not explained the concept of the final success of development	Developing a development framework based on al-Falāḥ
Welfare Measurement	Dominant on material and social indicators	The spiritual dimension is less noticed	Integrating material, social, moral and spiritual well-being
Islamic Development Theory	Based on maqasid and maslahah	Not yet built a development goal model based on al-Falāḥ	Offering a new conceptual framework for holistic Islamic economic development

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach using the library research method to examine the relevance of the concept of al-Falāḥ in the formulation of Islamic economic development objectives. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the study seeks to explore, interpret, and critically analyze concepts, values, and theoretical frameworks embedded in Islamic economic thought rather than to measure variables quantitatively. Library research enables a comprehensive investigation of normative, philosophical, and theoretical dimensions of al-Falāḥ through the examination of authoritative textual sources and contemporary scholarly literature (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Snyder, 2019). Therefore, this approach provides an adequate methodological foundation for understanding the conceptual relationship between al-Falāḥ and the objectives of Islamic economic development.

The data used in this study consist entirely of secondary data obtained from various academic sources. Primary sources include the Qur'an, Hadith, classical Islamic economic literature, and scholarly works discussing al-Falāḥ, Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, welfare, and Islamic economic development. Secondary sources comprise articles published in accredited national journals and reputable international journals indexed in Scopus, as well as books related to Islamic economics, sustainable development, and development theory published within the last ten years. To ensure the relevance and quality of the data, the literature selection process prioritized publications issued during the period 2020–2026 and works that directly address Islamic development, welfare, and the concept of human prosperity from Islamic perspectives. Consequently, the selected sources provide a comprehensive basis for analyzing the contemporary relevance of al-Falāḥ.

Data collection was conducted through systematic literature identification, screening, classification, and documentation. Relevant publications were searched through academic databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, Dimensions, Crossref, and DOAJ using keywords including “al-Falāḥ,” “Islamic economic development,” “Islamic welfare,” “Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah,” and “sustainable development.” The collected literature was then categorized according to thematic relevance, including conceptual discussions of al-Falāḥ, Islamic development objectives, welfare theories, and contemporary development paradigms. Through this procedure, the study was able to identify patterns, similarities, and differences among existing scholarly perspectives regarding Islamic economic development.

The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis combined with a conceptual and thematic analysis approach. The analysis began with data reduction through the selection of literature directly related to the research objectives, followed by data organization based on key themes and theoretical constructs. Subsequently, the researcher conducted an interpretative analysis to identify the essential characteristics of al-Falāḥ, its relationship with Islamic economic development objectives, and its relevance to contemporary development challenges. The findings from various sources were then synthesized to construct a comprehensive framework explaining how al-Falāḥ can serve as a foundation for formulating development goals that integrate material welfare, social justice, environmental sustainability, ethical responsibility, and spiritual well-being (Mayring, 2021; Miles et al., 2020). Therefore, the analytical process allows for a holistic understanding of the multidimensional nature of Islamic development.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed source triangulation by comparing perspectives from classical Islamic scholars, contemporary Islamic economists, and modern development theorists. In addition, critical evaluation was conducted to assess the consistency, relevance, and scholarly quality of the selected literature. The interpretation of findings was further guided by the principles of Islamic epistemology and the framework of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah to maintain conceptual coherence throughout the analysis. Thus, the methodological design enables the study to generate a comprehensive and theoretically grounded understanding of the relevance of al-Falāḥ in the formulation of Islamic economic development objectives.

Table 2. Research Framework

Stage	Activities
Literature Identification	Collecting literature related to <i>al-Falāḥ</i> , Islamic economics, welfare, and development
Literature Screening	Selecting relevant sources published during 2020–2026
Data Classification	Categorizing literature into thematic groups
Content Analysis	Analyzing concepts, theories, and development frameworks
Synthesis and	Developing an integrated framework of <i>al-Falāḥ</i> -based

Interpretation	economic development
Conclusion Drawing	Formulating findings and implications for Islamic economic development

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on a comprehensive review and thematic analysis of contemporary literature on Islamic economics, development theory, Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah, and the concept of al-Falāḥ, this study identifies five major dimensions that establish the relevance of al-Falāḥ in the formulation of Islamic economic development objectives. These dimensions consist of (1) material prosperity, (2) social justice and equitable distribution, (3) ethical and moral responsibility, (4) environmental sustainability, and (5) spiritual well-being. The findings indicate that al-Falāḥ is not merely a concept of economic success but rather a comprehensive framework integrating worldly welfare and ultimate success in the hereafter. This multidimensional character distinguishes al-Falāḥ from conventional development paradigms that predominantly emphasize economic growth and material welfare indicators (Afnandito, 2025; Harahap et al., 2023; Abidin et al., 2025). Therefore, I argue that al-Falāḥ provides a broader and more holistic understanding of development than conventional economic frameworks.

Table 3. Dimensions of al-Falāḥ in Islamic Economic Development

Dimension	Conventional Development Perspective	Al-Falāḥ Perspective
Economic	Income growth and productivity	Prosperity with justice and ethical values
Social	Poverty reduction and social services	Social solidarity, equity, and brotherhood
Moral	Limited consideration	Integral part of development
Environmental	Sustainability as a policy instrument	Religious responsibility toward creation
Spiritual	Generally excluded	Core objective of development
Ultimate Goal	Material welfare	Success in this world and the hereafter

The analysis further reveals that al-Falāḥ possesses strong conceptual compatibility with contemporary sustainable development discourse. However, unlike conventional sustainability frameworks, al-Falāḥ incorporates transcendental values and spiritual accountability as central elements of development. Several studies indicate that Islamic economic principles such as justice (‘adl), benevolence (iḥsān), public interest (maṣlaḥah), and stewardship (khiḷāfah) are inherently embedded within the concept of al-Falāḥ and contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic development (Mardani et al., 2026; Sani & Utami, 2026; Afandi & Rahma, 2025). Consequently, the findings suggest that al-Falāḥ can serve as a normative foundation for constructing a more comprehensive development model.

Another important finding concerns the relationship between al-Falāḥ and Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah. The reviewed literature demonstrates that the objectives of preserving religion (ḥifẓ al-dīn), life (ḥifẓ al-nafs), intellect (ḥifẓ al-‘aql), lineage (ḥifẓ al-nasl), and wealth (ḥifẓ al-māl) ultimately converge toward the realization of al-Falāḥ. In this context, Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah functions as an operational mechanism, whereas al-Falāḥ represents the ultimate developmental goal (Dusuki, 2021; Abidin et al., 2025; Isnain et al., 2025). Therefore, I contend that al-Falāḥ should be positioned as the overarching objective within the architecture of Islamic economic development.

Table 4. Relationship between Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah and al-Falāḥ

Maqāṣid Dimension	Development Contribution	Contribution to al-Falāḥ
Protection of Religion	Spiritual guidance	Spiritual success
Protection of Life	Human welfare	Quality of life
Protection of Intellect	Education and innovation	Human development
Protection of Lineage	Social sustainability	Social prosperity
Protection of Wealth	Economic justice	Material well-being

The findings also reveal that the prevailing development indicators employed by many countries remain largely concentrated on economic growth, income levels, and human development indexes. While these indicators are important, they often fail to adequately capture moral, ethical, and spiritual aspects of human well-being. In contrast, the al-Falāḥ framework proposes a multidimensional assessment of welfare that includes spiritual fulfillment, ethical conduct, social cohesion, and environmental responsibility alongside economic performance (Hasan et al., 2026; Haruni et al., 2025; Syaichoni et al., 2025). Consequently, the study highlights the need for the development of al-Falāḥ-based indicators to complement existing measures of development success.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that al-Falāḥ constitutes a comprehensive framework capable of redefining the objectives of Islamic economic development. Unlike conventional economic theories that prioritize utility maximization and wealth accumulation, al-Falāḥ integrates material, social, ethical, environmental, and spiritual dimensions into a unified conception of human welfare. This finding supports the argument of contemporary Islamic economists who maintain that development should not be assessed solely by economic growth but also by its contribution to human flourishing and moral excellence (Afnandito, 2025; Harahap et al., 2023; Chapra, 2021). In my view, the significance of al-Falāḥ lies precisely in its ability to bridge the gap between economic efficiency and ethical responsibility, which has become increasingly evident in contemporary development challenges.

From a conceptual perspective, the results indicate that al-Falāḥ extends beyond the conventional understanding of welfare and prosperity. Mainstream economic frameworks generally define welfare in terms of income, consumption, and utility, whereas Islamic economics views welfare as the balanced fulfillment of material and spiritual needs. This finding is consistent with the Islamic worldview, which regards human beings as both economic actors and moral agents accountable before God (Dusuki, 2021; Kamali, 2019; Abidin et al., 2025). Therefore, I argue that the concept of al-Falāḥ offers a more comprehensive conceptualization of welfare because it incorporates dimensions that are often overlooked in secular development theories.

The relationship between al-Falāḥ and Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah represents another important contribution of this study. Existing literature frequently employs Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah as the primary framework for evaluating Islamic economic performance. However, the findings suggest that Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah should be understood as a means through which al-Falāḥ can be achieved. In other words, while Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah provides operational objectives, al-Falāḥ constitutes the ultimate developmental destination (Isnān et al., 2025; Dusuki, 2021; Afnandito, 2025). In my opinion, this distinction is important because it clarifies the hierarchical relationship between Islamic legal objectives and the broader aspirations of Islamic economic development.

The findings also have important implications for sustainable development discourse. Contemporary sustainability frameworks have expanded the focus of development beyond economic growth by incorporating environmental and social dimensions. Nevertheless, many sustainability models continue to neglect spiritual and moral considerations. The concept of al-Falāḥ addresses this limitation by introducing ethical accountability and transcendental responsibility into development processes (Mardani et al., 2026; Sani & Utami, 2026; Afandi & Rahma, 2025). Consequently, al-Falāḥ can enrich sustainable development theory by providing a moral foundation that encourages responsible economic behavior and long-term societal well-being. I believe that integrating spiritual values into development policies can contribute significantly to achieving sustainability goals in Muslim societies and beyond.

Empirically, the relevance of al-Falāḥ becomes particularly evident when examining the persistent socioeconomic challenges faced by many countries. Rising inequality, environmental degradation, corruption, and declining social trust demonstrate that economic growth alone is insufficient to guarantee genuine welfare. Several Muslim-majority countries have achieved substantial economic expansion while continuing to struggle with social and ethical problems (Hasan et al., 2026; Haruni et al., 2025; Mardani et al., 2026). This situation suggests that development strategies require a broader normative foundation capable of promoting justice, responsibility, and social cohesion. Therefore, I argue that al-Falāḥ provides an appropriate framework for addressing these multidimensional challenges because it integrates economic progress with ethical and spiritual development.

Philosophically, the findings reaffirm that Islamic economic development is fundamentally grounded in a worldview that links human prosperity with divine purpose. The concept of al-Falāḥ reflects the Qur'anic vision of success, emphasizing balance between worldly achievement and eternal well-being. This philosophical orientation differentiates Islamic economics from conventional paradigms that often separate economic activities from moral and spiritual considerations (Chapra, 2021; Kamali, 2019; Dusuki, 2021). In my assessment, the philosophical depth of al-Falāḥ enables Islamic economics to offer a unique and meaningful contribution to contemporary debates regarding the future of development and human welfare.

Another important implication concerns development measurement. The findings indicate that existing indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Human Development Index (HDI), and poverty rates provide valuable information but remain insufficient for assessing comprehensive welfare. A development framework based on al-Falāḥ would require additional indicators related to ethical governance, social justice, spiritual well-being, environmental stewardship, and community solidarity (Harahap et al., 2023; Syaichoni et al., 2025; Abidin et al., 2025). Therefore, I contend that future research should focus on developing measurable al-Falāḥ indices capable of operationalizing Islamic development objectives within contemporary policy environments.

Overall, the findings and discussion confirm that al-Falāḥ remains highly relevant for the formulation of Islamic economic development objectives in the contemporary era. The concept not only provides a normative foundation for development but also offers a comprehensive framework capable of integrating economic growth, social justice, ethical responsibility, environmental sustainability, and spiritual fulfillment. Thus, I conclude that the revitalization of al-Falāḥ as a developmental objective can strengthen both the theoretical foundations and practical implementation of Islamic economic development in addressing the complex challenges of the twenty-first century.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the concept of *al-Falāḥ* is highly relevant and fundamental in formulating the objectives of Islamic economic development. *Al-Falāḥ* represents a comprehensive paradigm of success that integrates material prosperity, social justice, moral integrity, environmental sustainability, and spiritual well-being within a unified framework. Unlike conventional development models that primarily focus on economic growth indicators, *al-Falāḥ* provides a holistic vision of human welfare that extends to both worldly life and the hereafter. Therefore, I argue that *al-Falāḥ* should be positioned as the ultimate objective of Islamic economic development rather than merely a complementary ethical concept.

The findings of this study also demonstrate that *al-Falāḥ* is conceptually aligned with *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, where the latter functions as an operational framework while the former serves as the overarching goal. This relationship strengthens the theoretical foundation of Islamic economics by providing a clearer hierarchy of objectives in development discourse. In my view, recognizing this hierarchical structure is essential for avoiding a reductionist interpretation of Islamic economics that limits it to technical financial instruments without its moral and spiritual essence.

Furthermore, the study highlights that contemporary development indicators are insufficient to capture the multidimensional nature of human welfare as envisioned in Islamic thought. The integration of *al-Falāḥ*-based principles into development policy offers a more comprehensive alternative for evaluating societal progress, particularly in addressing inequality, ethical decline, and environmental challenges. I believe that adopting *al-Falāḥ* as a development framework can significantly enhance the relevance and effectiveness of Islamic economic policies in Muslim-majority societies.

Overall, the study emphasizes that revitalizing *al-Falāḥ* within Islamic economic development discourse is not only theoretically significant but also practically necessary. It provides a normative foundation for constructing a more ethical, inclusive, and sustainable development model. Future research is recommended to operationalize *al-Falāḥ* into measurable indicators and empirical models to support policy implementation and comparative development analysis.

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