Qur'anic and Prophetic Guidelines on Eating: A Conceptual Framework for Healthy and Blessed Living

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ABSTRACT

Eating extends beyond the fulfilment of physiological needs; in Islam it is closely associated with religious obligation, self-discipline, health preservation, moral development, and gratitude to Allah SWT. Although the principles of halal and tayyib are well established, the integration of Qur'anic and Prophetic eating guidance with contemporary nutritional and behavioural perspectives into a coherent framework for everyday practice requires further conceptual development. This article aims to identify the fundamental eating principles found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, to examine how they can be integrated with contemporary nutritional considerations and responsible eating behaviour, and to propose a framework that guides healthy, ethical, and spiritually meaningful eating. An integrative conceptual research design was adopted, using purposively selected Qur'anic verses, traceable Prophetic traditions and relevant academic literature. The analysis applied thematic coding, conceptual grouping and construct differentiation to derive the five dimensions, followed by theoretical mapping to the Theory of Planned Behavior. The analysis produced a five-dimensional framework comprising lawful and wholesome food selection, balanced consumption and moderation, Prophetic eating practices, ethical and spiritual consciousness, and consistent and responsible eating behaviour. These dimensions are conceptually linked to physical well-being, psychological and intellectual functioning, moral and social development, and spiritual well-being. The framework distinguishes religious permissibility from nutritional adequacy and does not treat foods mentioned in Islamic sources as substitutes for evidence-informed dietary guidance. As a conceptual proposition, it has not been empirically validated. The article concludes that Islamic dietary guidance offers an integrated ethical orientation towards consumption and provides a foundation for future empirical research, Islamic health education, and practical dietary guidance for Muslim individuals and communities, particularly adolescents.

Keywords: Qur'anic guidance; Prophetic eating practices; Halalan Tayyiban; Islamic dietary ethics; conceptual framework

INTRODUCTION

Eating keeps us alive, but it is rarely just about survival. What people eat, how often they eat and how they feel about food are shaped by culture, family habits, social setting, income and, for many people, faith. For Muslims, religion speaks directly to this part of life: Islam says something not only about what may be eaten but also about the manner and spirit in which food is taken. The Qur'an returns several times to the command to eat what is lawful and good. Surah al-Baqarah (2:168) calls on people to eat from what is lawful and wholesome on the earth and warns against following Satan's footsteps, and Surah al-Ma'idah (5:88) tells believers to eat what Allah has provided as lawful and good and to be mindful of Him. Read together, the verses make eating a matter of religious responsibility, not simply personal taste.

The Sunnah fills in the practical detail. Prophet Muhammad SAW taught his companions to begin a meal in Allah's name, to eat with the right hand, to take from the part of the dish nearest to them, and to avoid eating to excess. These instructions tie food to gratitude, self-restraint and good conduct towards others, and they remind the eater that food is a trust for which he or she is answerable to Allah.

Modern thinking about healthy eating asks different questions. Is the diet varied? Does the energy intake suit the person? Does it supply enough nutrients? Is the food safe? How can the risk of diet-related disease be lowered? These aims sit comfortably with the Islamic concern for preserving life and avoiding harm, but the two sets of questions are not the same. A food can be lawful without being a good choice in unlimited amounts, and a food that is nutritionally sound is not automatically lawful. Halalan Tayyiban holds both sets of concerns together. It joins religious permissibility to wholesomeness, cleanliness, safety and benefit. Alzeer et al. (2018) discuss halal and tayyib together in the context of food safety, and Harun (2015) built a dietary planning model on the same principle. Both works show that Islamic dietary principles can be turned into systematic guidance for everyday eating. This matters most for adolescents. The teenage years bring rapid physical, cognitive and social change, and nutritional needs are high because the body is still growing (Norris et al., 2022). Habits formed at this age often carry into adulthood, while food choices are pulled in different directions by family, school, friends and social media. Local data suggest the pull is not always towards healthier food. The National Health and Morbidity Survey 2022 of secondary school students aged 13 to 17 reported that about one in three were overweight or obese, about four in five did not eat enough fruit and vegetables, and one in three drank carbonated soft drinks every day (Institute for Public Health, 2023). Islamic dietary education for young people therefore has to deal with the values behind every day eating as well as with the choice of food.

A word of caution is needed about moral and intellectual development. Adequate nutrition supports healthy growth and normal cognitive function, but the evidence does not show that particular foods produce good character or higher intelligence. Character is shaped by religious teaching, parenting, relationships, experience and the wider environment, and diet is at most one small part of that picture. This article develops a conceptual framework entitled Qur'anic and Prophetic Guidelines on Eating: A Conceptual Framework for Healthy and Blessed Living. It brings Islamic dietary principles together with current thinking on health and behaviour, and it keeps religious guidance and empirical health claims apart.

Three questions guide the discussion:

- What fundamental principles of eating can be derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad SAW?
- How can these principles be integrated with contemporary nutritional considerations and responsible eating behaviour?
- How can an integrated framework guide healthy, ethical, and spiritually meaningful eating practices?
- In answering them, the article aims to give Islamic dietary education, community health work and later empirical studies a clearer conceptual starting point.

METHODOLOGY

This article adopts an integrative conceptual design rather than a systematic review or an empirical study. Its purpose is to construct and theoretically clarify a framework by interpreting Islamic primary sources alongside selected scholarly literature on Halalan Tayyiban, nutrition, adolescent development and dietary behaviour. No participant data were collected, and no effect estimates were calculated.

The Qur'an was treated as the primary normative source. Verses were selected purposively where their explicit subject matter concerns lawful and wholesome provision, moderation, gratitude, avoidance of waste, or the protection of life. The principal passages examined were al-Baqarah (2:168, 2:172), al-Ma'idah (5:88), al-A'raf (7:31), and al-Isra' (17:26–27). These passages were read thematically rather than as isolated dietary prescriptions. The Sunnah corpus was selected for reports directly addressing the commencement of meals, eating manners, moderation, and the value of health.

Hadith inclusion was limited to narrations traceable to identifiable canonical collections and directly relevant to the eating-related themes. The report of 'Umar ibn Abi Salamah on saying Allah's name, eating with the right hand and eating from what is nearest was checked against Sahih al-Bukhari (no. 5376) and Sahih Muslim

(no. 2022a); the moderation report was checked against Jami‘ al-Tirmidhi (no. 2380); and the report on health and free time was checked against Sahih al-Bukhari (no. 6412). The two reports in the Sahihayn are treated as authentic (sahih). Al-Tirmidhi explicitly graded the stomach report hasan sahih; the widely used Darussalam edition/database also grades it sahih. Hadith numbering may vary across editions, so collection, book/chapter and report number are supplied for traceability.

Academic literature was selected purposively using four inclusion criteria: (1) direct conceptual relevance to Halalan Tayyiban or Islamic dietary planning; (2) recognised theoretical relevance to dietary behaviour, particularly the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB); (3) relevance to nutritional adequacy, food safety or adolescent nutrition; and (4) sufficient bibliographic information to identify and verify the publication. Sources were excluded where they made unsupported therapeutic claims about foods, treated religious mention as proof of biomedical efficacy, or did not contribute directly to the framework’s constructs. The literature base is selective and conceptually oriented; it is not presented as an exhaustive database search or a PRISMA systematic review.

The analysis involved four linked procedures. First, the selected Qur’anic verses and hadith reports were coded according to their principal normative content (permissibility and wholesomeness; restraint; gratitude and remembrance; manners; and care for health). Second, overlapping codes were compared and grouped into broader conceptual domains. Third, each proposed domain was tested for conceptual distinctiveness by asking whether it primarily concerned (a) the status and suitability of food, (b) the quantity and pattern of consumption, (c) observable Sunnah practices during eating, (d) the values and intentions that give eating ethical or spiritual meaning, or (e) the translation of knowledge and values into sustained behaviour. Fourth, the domains were compared with TPB constructs to identify explanatory links without treating the five dimensions as interchangeable with TPB. The resulting five dimensions are therefore an author-developed synthesis, not a taxonomy explicitly stated as such in any single verse, hadith or prior model.

To improve analytical transparency, the framework distinguishes source-derived normative principles from contemporary operational interpretations. For example, the Qur’anic command not to be excessive is a normative principle; dietary diversity, nutrient adequacy and food-safety checks are contemporary operational considerations used to apply the broader idea of tayyib. These applications should not be mistaken for the exclusive or exhaustive meaning of the Qur’anic term.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The conceptual analysis is presented in four parts: the Qur’anic foundations of eating practices (Section 3.1), the Prophetic guidelines on eating (Section 3.2), the integration of Islamic principles with contemporary nutritional and behavioural knowledge (Section 3.3), and the proposed conceptual framework (Section 3.4).

Qur’anic Foundations of Eating Practices

The Principle of Halal and Tayyib

Halal and tayyib are the starting point of Islamic dietary guidance.

Halal refers to what Islamic law permits. Tayyib carries the sense of goodness, wholesomeness and suitability in context. The two ideas work together when a food is being judged.

Surah al-Baqarah (2:168) states:

“O humanity! Eat from what is lawful and good on the earth.”

The verse sets a general rule for all people. Taste, convenience, price and popularity are not enough to judge a food; its lawfulness and its quality matter too.

For a Muslim consumer, halal means checking the relevant legal requirements, including which substances are prohibited and what conditions apply to preparation. Depending on the food, that may involve looking at

ingredients, processing methods, the risk of contamination and how reliable the information about its origin is.

Tayyib turns attention to quality and suitability. In everyday terms it covers cleanliness, food safety, nutritional adequacy and avoiding eating patterns that cause harm.

Tayyib cannot be reduced to one nutritional measure, and no single scientific definition covers it. Interpreting it takes account of Islamic scholarship, the nature of the food, the circumstances in which it is eaten and what is known about health and safety.

Taken together, Halalan Tayyiban asks Muslims to consider whether a food is permitted and whether it is good for people.

Moderation and the Avoidance of Excess

Moderation is the second principle.

Surah al-A'raf (7:31) states:

"Eat and drink, but do not be excessive. Indeed, He does not like those who commit excess."

The verse links consumption directly with restraint. Eating and drinking are allowed and necessary, but excess is not.

In practice, moderation means paying attention to how much and how often one eats in relation to what one actually needs. It also means not letting appetite, emotion or social pressure alone decide what ends up on the plate.

Moderation is not a licence to eat too little. Needs differ with age, activity, health and other circumstances, and moderation has to leave room for adequate nourishment.

The principle also casts a moral light on present-day habits. Regular overeating, heavy reliance on energy-dense food and indifference to nutritional needs all work against healthy eating. How far any given behaviour harms health is a question for nutritional evidence, though, not something that can be read off religious texts.

For this reason the Qur'anic call for moderation supports balanced eating, self-regulation and the avoidance of waste.

Gratitude and Conscious Consumption

Gratitude is the spiritual side of eating.

Surah al-Baqarah (2:172) tells believers to eat the good things Allah has provided and to give thanks to Him, linking the enjoyment of food to the recognition that it is a provision.

Gratitude can be expressed by remembering Allah before eating, acknowledging the blessing, not wasting food, and appreciating the work of the people who grow, prepare and supply it.

These habits encourage awareness at the table. Food stops being something one is simply entitled to and becomes something received with responsibility. They may also help people appreciate having enough and think of others who have less.

In dietary education, gratitude could be taught as a value that invites reflection, mindful eating and careful use of resources. Whether it actually changes psychological or behavioural outcomes is a question for empirical work.

Food as a Trust and a Means of Preserving Life

Islamic dietary principles can also be read through the preservation of human life.

The Qur'an encourages lawful and wholesome provisions and forbids what is harmful or impermissible. This fits the wider objectives of Islamic law, in particular the preservation of life (hifz al-nafs).

On this view the body is a trust that has to be looked after, and eating should nourish it, not wear it down through long neglect of its needs.

Preserving life does not mean that every illness comes from poor eating or that discipline can prevent every disease. Genetics, environment, access to healthcare, income and other behaviours all play a part in health.

Even so, the principle gives a sound ethical reason to care about nutrition, food safety and responsible consumption in daily Muslim life.

Prophetic Guidelines on Eating

The Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad SAW adds practical guidance to the Qur'anic principles of lawful food, moderation, gratitude and responsible conduct.

Beginning with the Name of Allah

The Prophet's teaching encourages Muslims to remember Allah at the start of a meal.

Saying Allah's name before eating gives an ordinary routine spiritual meaning. It makes the meal an occasion for gratitude and a reminder of one's relationship with the Creator.

It can also slow a person down, prompting a more deliberate and appreciative approach to food.

In schools, the practice can be built into daily routines so that students see religious values at work in ordinary activities and not only in formal worship.

Eating with Proper Manners

A report narrated by 'Umar ibn Abi Salamah records that the Prophet SAW instructed him to mention Allah's name, eat with his right hand and eat from the part of the dish nearest to him. It is recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari (no. 5376, Book of Food, chapter on mentioning Allah's name and eating with the right hand) and Sahih Muslim (no. 2022a, Book of Drinks, chapter on the etiquette of eating and drinking). The report is muttafaq 'alayh and is therefore classified as sahih.

The narration is often cited in discussions of Islamic table manners. It shows how the Sunnah attaches discipline, consideration and proper conduct to the act of eating.

Such manners can build personal responsibility and social awareness. Good table manners, for example, make shared meals in the family or community more respectful.

They are best understood as religious and ethical guidance. Their worth does not rest on any claim that each manner has a measurable physical or cognitive benefit.

Moderation in Food Consumption

The Prophetic teaching reinforces the Qur'anic call for moderation.

A report from al-Miqdam ibn Ma'dikarib states that a person should take only what is sufficient to sustain strength and, where more is required, allocate portions of the stomach to food, drink and breathing. It is recorded in Jami' al-Tirmidhi (no. 2380, Chapters on Zuhd, chapter on the dislike of excessive eating). Al-

Tirmidhi himself described the report as hasan sahih; the Darussalam grading also lists it as sahih. The narration is used here as ethical guidance on restraint, not as a clinical prescription for fixed meal proportions.

The hadith presents moderation as a principle of responsible eating. It discourages habitual excess and asks the eater to notice what the body actually needs.

Today it can inform conversations about portion awareness and avoiding habitual overeating. It is not, however, a clinical formula for planning meals, since appropriate portions and nutrient needs vary from person to person.

The wider lesson is that need and responsibility, not unrestricted appetite, should guide eating.

Recognising Health as a Blessing

The Prophet SAW said that two blessings which many people fail to appreciate are health and free time. The report, narrated by Ibn ‘Abbas, is recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari (no. 6412, Book of Heart-Softening Reports, chapter on health and leisure) and is sahih. Although the narration is not specifically about food, it supports the broader ethical orientation of preserving and appreciating health; it should not be represented as a direct dietary instruction.

The hadith urges people to value and protect their health before it is lost. It is not only about food, but its message applies to dietary responsibility.

Staying healthy takes steady attention to everyday habits: eating, physical activity, rest and other forms of self-care. Dietary education can draw on the hadith to present healthy eating as one part of a broader duty to look after oneself.

Looking after health is not a guarantee against illness. It is an effort of care for the body, made with the understanding that health is not wholly within one’s control.

Distinguishing Prophetic Foods from Prophetic Eating Practices

Foods mentioned in Islamic sources need to be separated from the wider eating practices the Prophet SAW taught.

In many Muslim communities, makanan sunnah usually refers to specific foods named in the Qur’an or hadith, such as dates, honey and olives.

Prophetic eating, though, is more than a list of foods. It includes choosing lawful food, eating in moderation, showing gratitude, keeping good manners and avoiding excess. That a food is mentioned in a religious text does not make it nutritionally better than every other food or right for every medical condition. Specific health claims about such foods need scientific evidence. A fuller picture of Prophetic eating therefore joins the foods named in Islamic sources to the ethical principles governing how food is obtained, chosen, eaten and appreciated.

Integrating Islamic Principles with Contemporary Nutritional Knowledge

Combining Islamic dietary guidance with nutritional science requires clarity about what each contributes.

Islamic sources give normative guidance on permissible consumption, moral responsibility, moderation and spiritual awareness. Nutritional science studies what food contains, what the body needs, how dietary patterns work and how diet relates to health outcomes.

The two complement each other, but they are not interchangeable.

Nutritional Balance and Dietary Diversity

A healthy diet supplies enough energy and the right amounts of essential nutrients, and the exact requirements differ from person to person.

In Malaysia, the Ministry of Health issues national dietary guidance to support healthier eating. It can help turn the general aim of tayyib into practical food choices.

The Malaysian Dietary Guidelines (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2020) and related food-based recommendations can guide decisions on dietary variety, fruit and vegetables, protein sources, whole grains, water intake, and cutting back on foods high in sugar, salt and unhealthy fats.

This matters particularly for adolescents, whose diets have to support growth and development (Norris et al., 2022). An Islamic dietary framework should avoid equating healthy eating with eating only traditional or religiously associated foods. What counts is a varied diet that meets nutritional needs, and the right foods depend on the individual.

Food Safety and Responsible Selection

Food safety is another practical side of tayyib.

Lawful food can still be unfit to eat if it is contaminated, badly stored or prepared in unsafe conditions. Misleading information about ingredients or preparation can also make it harder to judge whether a food is permissible and suitable.

Choosing food responsibly therefore means paying attention to ingredients, preparation, storage, hygiene and the reliability of product information.

For Muslim consumers these checks are part of applying Halalan Tayyiban in practice, and they link Islamic dietary education to established food safety practice.

Behavioural Regulation and the Theory of Planned Behavior

Knowing the principles of healthy eating does not by itself change what people do.

Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991, 2015) is a useful lens here. It holds that attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control shape behavioural intentions, and it has been applied extensively to food choice; a systematic review and meta-analysis of its use with dietary patterns is available (McDermott et al., 2015; Riebl et al., 2015).

For this article, TPB is used as an explanatory model of how a person may translate beliefs into a specific eating intention and behaviour. It is not the source of the Islamic norms themselves. The three antecedent constructs and their application are set out below:

- **Attitudes:** a person's judgement of healthy and religiously appropriate eating, including beliefs about how important and how beneficial it is.
- **Subjective norms:** the influence of family members, teachers, peers, religious communities and other important groups on how a person eats.
- **Perceived behavioural control:** how far a person feels able to choose and keep up appropriate eating habits despite limits such as cost, availability, time or little nutritional knowledge.

Islamic values can speak to each of these. Seeing eating as a responsibility before Allah may shape a person's attitude, and family and school environments can reinforce shared expectations about food.

Religious commitment does not automatically produce matching eating behaviour, though. People face practical limits that stop them from acting on what they know or intend. The Theory of Planned Behavior is

therefore a promising framework for future research on how Islamic dietary knowledge becomes everyday practice.

A Proposed Conceptual Framework for Healthy and Blessed Living

From the discussion so far, this article proposes a conceptual framework with five interconnected dimensions of Islamic eating practice.

The framework draws on the Qur'anic principles of halal, tayyib, moderation and gratitude; Prophetic guidance on manners and responsible consumption; and current thinking on nutrition, behavioural regulation and well-being.

Dimension One: Lawful and Wholesome Food Selection

The first dimension is choosing food that meets Islamic legal requirements and is fit to eat.

Its main components are:

- Compliance with Islamic requirements governing lawful and prohibited food.
- Attention to the ingredients and sources of food.
- Consideration of cleanliness, food safety, and appropriate preparation.
- Assessment of nutritional suitability and individual dietary requirements.
- Avoidance of food that is harmful or unsuitable in the relevant circumstances.

Everything else in the framework builds on this step, because responsible eating starts with choosing suitable food.

Halalan Tayyiban supplies the religious and ethical orientation, while nutritional and food safety knowledge help put it into practice.

Dimension Two: Balanced Consumption and Moderation

The second-dimension concerns how much, how varied and in what pattern food is eaten.

Its main components are:

- Meeting individual nutritional requirements.
- Maintaining dietary diversity.
- Practising moderation in food and drink consumption.
- Avoiding habitual overeating and unnecessary food waste.
- Adjusting food choices to age, activity, health status, and other relevant circumstances.

Here the Qur'anic prohibition of excess meets modern nutritional principles.

Moderation does not mean blanket restriction. It means eating enough to support health without unnecessary excess.

Dimension Three: Prophetic Eating Practices

The third dimension covers the practical manners of eating in the Sunnah.

Its main components are:

- Remembering Allah before eating.
- Observing appropriate eating manners.
- Eating with awareness and consideration for others.

- Practising moderation in consumption.
- Expressing gratitude for food and provision.

This dimension brings religious practice into everyday routine.

The point is not to copy each gesture mechanically but to keep daily conduct consistent with religious values.

Dimension Four: Ethical and Spiritual Consciousness

The fourth dimension concerns the values that shape a person's relationship with food.

Its main components are:

- Gratitude for Allah's provision.
- Recognition of the body as an entrusted responsibility.
- Awareness of the ethical implications of food consumption.
- Consideration for others and avoidance of unnecessary waste.
- Development of self-discipline and responsible decision-making.

It takes dietary practice beyond the physical act of eating.

Meals become a chance to practise gratitude, responsibility and ethical awareness, which fits the Islamic idea of a balanced life where bodily needs sit alongside spiritual and moral duties.

Dimension Five: Consistent and Responsible Eating Behaviour

The fifth dimension is about turning knowledge and values into lasting habits.

Its main components are:

- Understanding the principles of Islamic dietary guidance.
- Developing positive attitudes towards healthy and permissible food.
- Receiving appropriate support from families and educational institutions.
- Exercising personal agency in food selection.
- Maintaining dietary practices despite everyday social and environmental pressures.

This dimension acknowledges that eating behaviour depends on more than what a person knows.

Family routines, school food environments, affordability, peer influence and social media all affect what people choose. Dietary education works best when it builds individual awareness and a supportive environment together.

The Relationship Between the Five Dimensions and Well-Being

The five dimensions are meant as parts of one whole, not as separate steps.

Choosing lawful and wholesome food lays the base for responsible eating. Balance and moderation keep intake adequate. Prophetic practices bring religious guidance into daily routine, and ethical and spiritual awareness supplies the values behind them. Consistent behaviour is where all of this meets real life.

Conceptually, the dimensions are linked to four areas of well-being:

- **Physical well-being.** Suitable food, nutritional adequacy, moderation and food safety may support health and lower some diet-related risks.

- **Psychological and intellectual functioning.** Adequate nutrition matters for normal physical and cognitive function. The framework does not claim, however, that following particular Prophetic eating practices raises intelligence or guarantees any psychological outcome.
- **Moral and social development.** Gratitude, self-discipline, consideration for others and responsible consumption give people chances to practise values that matter in daily conduct. How far they shape moral development needs empirical study.
- **Spiritual well-being.** Remembering Allah, keeping religious dietary requirements, giving thanks and intending to fulfil religious duties place eating within a wider life of Islamic devotion.

Healthy and blessed living, in this framework, is an orientation towards food that joins religious responsibility, health, personal conduct and spiritual awareness.

Figure 1 presents the proposed conceptual framework. It shows the normative and knowledge foundations, the five interconnected dimensions of eating practice, the factors that shape consistent eating behaviour, and the proposed areas of well-being associated with healthy and blessed living.

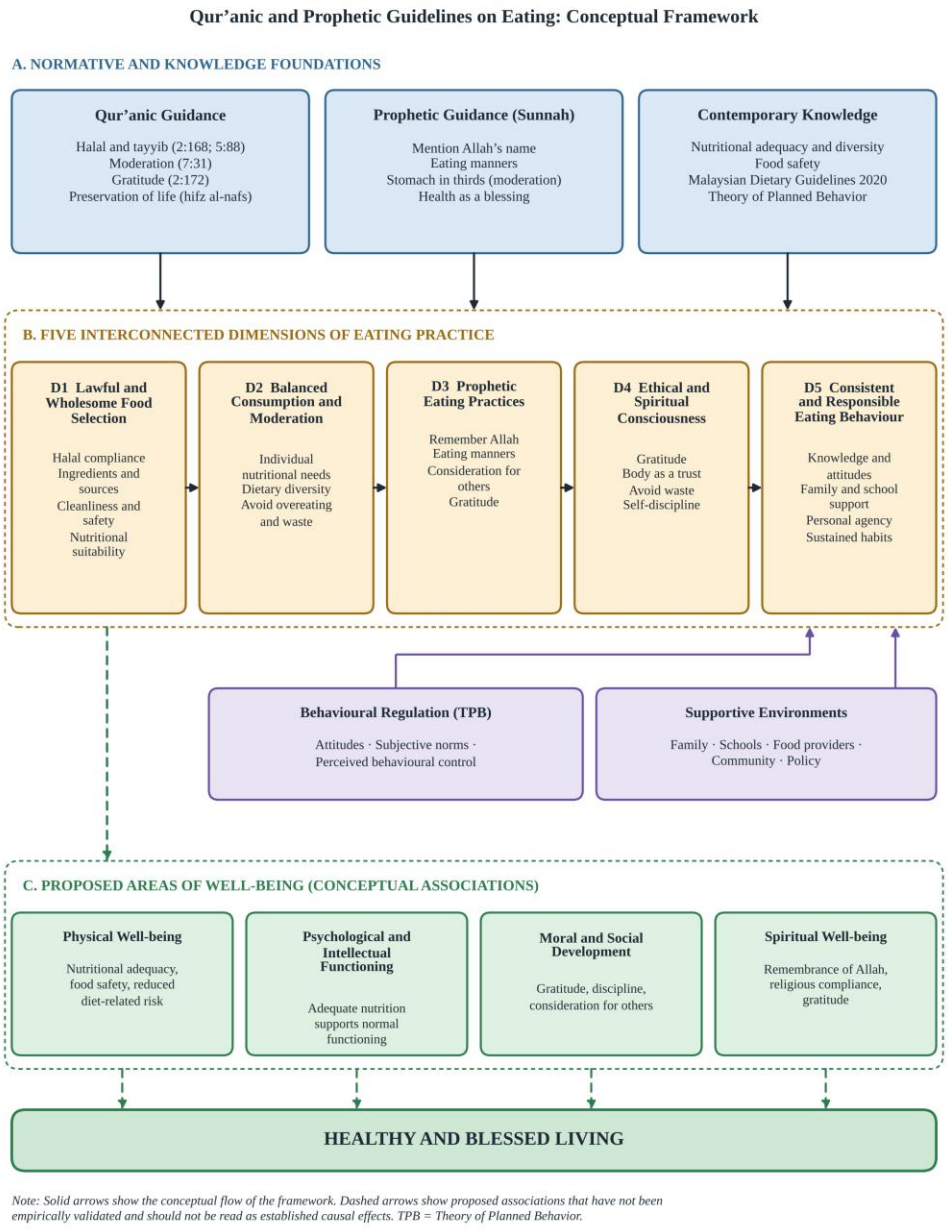


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Qur'anic and Prophetic Guidelines on Eating for Healthy and Blessed Living

Summary of the Proposed Framework

Table 1 summarises the five dimensions of the framework, their core principles, practical applications, and proposed areas of contribution.

Table 1: Summary of the Proposed Conceptual Framework for Healthy and Blessed Living

Dimension	Core principles	Practical application	Proposed area of contribution
1. Lawful and wholesome food selection	Halal and tayyib	Selecting permissible, safe, clean, and suitable food	Responsible food selection and dietary safety
2. Balanced consumption and moderation	Nutritional adequacy and avoidance of excess	Maintaining dietary diversity and appropriate intake	Physical well-being and healthy dietary habits
3. Prophetic eating practices	Remembrance of Allah, eating manners, and gratitude	Applying the Sunnah in everyday eating routines	Religious practice and personal discipline
4. Ethical and spiritual consciousness	Gratitude, responsibility, and consideration for others	Avoiding waste and recognising food as a blessing	Spiritual awareness and ethical conduct
5. Consistent and responsible eating behaviour	Knowledge, attitudes, social influence, and self-regulation	Maintaining appropriate eating practices in daily life	Behavioural consistency and responsible decision-making

Source: Authors' conceptual synthesis based on the Qur'an, Prophetic traditions, and the literature discussed in this article.

The framework is meant to guide further theoretical refinement and empirical testing. The areas of contribution listed above are proposals, not established causal effects.

Operational Definitions, Indicators and Testable Propositions

The five dimensions are conceptual domains and should be measured separately rather than combined into a single undifferentiated score. The indicators below are candidate measures for future instrument development. They are not validated scales, and religious knowledge, self-reported practice, observed dietary behaviour and health outcomes should be assessed using different methods where possible.

Dimension and definition	Primary Islamic source basis	Boundary from related constructs	Candidate measurable indicators
D1. Lawful and wholesome food selection: evaluating whether food is Islamically permissible and suitable in quality, safety and personal nutritional context.	Qur'an 2:168; 5:88. The term tayyib is interpreted contextually; food safety and nutrient adequacy are operational applications, not a complete lexical definition.	Distinct from general healthy-food preference: D1 includes religious permissibility and ingredient/provenance scrutiny, alongside suitability and safety. It does not measure the amount eaten.	Halal-status checking; ingredient/source verification; attention to cross-contamination and safe handling; use of nutrition/food-safety information; reported frequency of choosing suitable foods.
D2. Balanced consumption and	Qur'an 7:31; 2:195 (avoidance of self-harm,	Distinct from D1 because it concerns	Dietary diversity; adherence to age- and

moderation: regulating quantity, variety and dietary pattern in ways that avoid excess while meeting individual needs.	interpreted cautiously); Jami‘ al-Tirmidhi 2380 (restraint).	intake and pattern rather than permissibility/status of a food. It is not a weight-control or restrictive-eating construct.	context-appropriate dietary guidance; frequency of excessive intake; food-waste practices; self-reported portion awareness, interpreted with validated dietary assessment.
D3. Prophetic eating practices: observable meal-related practices explicitly supported by authenticated Sunnah reports.	Sahih al-Bukhari 5376; Sahih Muslim 2022a (basmalah, right hand, eating from what is near); Jami‘ al-Tirmidhi 2380 (moderation).	Distinct from D4: D3 records enactment of specified practices, whereas D4 captures the underlying ethical/spiritual orientation and meanings attributed to them. It is not a health-efficacy scale.	Frequency of saying basmalah; self-reported observance of eating with the right hand; observance of shared-meal etiquette; frequency of expressing thanks after meals. Items should be phrased neutrally and allow context-sensitive responses.
D4. Ethical and spiritual consciousness: the values and intentions through which eating is understood as gratitude, stewardship, restraint and consideration for others.	Qur’an 2:172 (gratitude); 17:26–27 (avoidance of waste); 2:168 and 5:88 (lawful provision); Sahih al-Bukhari 6412 (value of health, as a broader ethical inference).	Distinct from D3 because it concerns internalised meanings and value orientation rather than the performance of specific manners. It is also distinct from TPB attitude: spiritual consciousness is a normative/value construct and may contribute to, but is not identical with, behavioural evaluation.	Agreement with statements on gratitude for provision; perceived responsibility to avoid waste; perceived bodily stewardship; consideration for others in shared food settings; reflective accounts of religious meaning. Use a separate spiritual/ethical scale.
D5. Consistent and responsible eating behaviour: the enactment and maintenance of appropriate eating practices over time within real social and material conditions.	Qur’anic principles above, especially 7:31 and 2:172; TPB provides a behavioural explanation, not a scriptural source.	Distinct from intention: D5 concerns reported or observed behaviour and maintenance, while TPB intention is a proximal motivational predictor. D5 is also broader than one isolated food choice.	Frequency and consistency of target behaviours over a defined period; dietary records or repeated 24-hour recalls; reported barriers and facilitators; intention measured separately from behaviour.

Theoretical Mapping to the Theory of Planned Behaviour

The five dimensions are not five additional TPB constructs. Rather, they specify the Islamic dietary content to which TPB variables may be applied. In the TPB, attitude refers to an individual’s favourable or unfavourable evaluation of performing a defined behaviour; subjective norm refers to perceived social pressure; perceived behavioural control (PBC) refers to perceived ease or difficulty, including facilitating and

inhibiting conditions. These constructs predict intention, while intention and PBC are associated with behaviour (Ajzen, 1991, 2015). The mapping below is therefore a proposed analytical alignment, not an assertion that the Qur'an or Sunnah directly formulates TPB.

TPB construct	**Potential links with the five dimensions**	**Illustrative operationalisation in this framework**
Attitude	Primarily D1, D2 and D4; D3 may contribute when practices are evaluated positively.	Evaluation of choosing halal and wholesome food, eating moderately, and practising gratitude-centred eating (e.g., beneficial–harmful, worthwhile–not worthwhile).
Subjective norm	Primarily D3 and D4, supported by D5's social context.	Perceived expectations of family, peers, teachers and religious community regarding halal selection, moderation, table manners and avoidance of waste.
Perceived behavioural control	Primarily D1, D2 and D5; practical access conditions are central.	Perceived ability to identify halal information, access suitable food, manage portions and sustain practices despite cost, availability, time and school/home food environments.
Behavioural intention	A proximal predictor of D5, not a separate Islamic dimension.	Stated intention to choose halal and wholesome food, avoid excess and maintain selected Prophetic eating practices over a specified period.
Behaviour	Observed or self-reported enactment across D1–D3 and sustained patterns in D5.	Frequency of specific food-selection and eating practices, assessed over a defined period and, where feasible, triangulated with food records or observation.

On this basis, the following propositions are offered for subsequent empirical testing:

P1. More favourable attitudes towards halal, wholesome and moderate eating are positively associated with intention to practise the corresponding eating behaviours.

P2. Stronger perceived social expectations from family, peers, educational institutions and religious communities are positively associated with intention to observe responsible Islamic eating practices.

P3. Greater perceived behavioural control, including access to reliable halal information and affordable suitable food, is positively associated with intention and self-reported enactment of the target practices.

P4. Behavioural intention is positively associated with subsequent enactment of the specified eating practices, while perceived behavioural control may also contribute directly to behaviour.

P5. Ethical and spiritual consciousness is positively associated with attitudes towards gratitude, moderation and avoidance of waste; whether this association predicts actual dietary behaviour beyond TPB variables requires empirical examination.

These propositions should be tested using behaviour-specific measures and a clearly defined time frame. Cross-sectional self-report data can examine associations but cannot establish causality. A longitudinal design, repeated dietary assessment and suitable control variables (e.g., age, household resources, food availability and relevant health circumstances) would provide a stronger test. The framework does not assume that spiritual commitment necessarily overcomes structural barriers.

DISCUSSION

Beyond Dietary Compliance: An Integrated Understanding of Eating

The main contribution of the framework is that it treats eating as a many-sided practice.

Islamic dietary guidance is often discussed mostly as a matter of telling permitted food from prohibited food. That distinction is basic, but it does not cover everything Islam says about consumption.

The Qur'an speaks of food selection, moderation, gratitude and avoiding excess, and the Sunnah shows how these can be lived day to day.

The framework gathers these strands and keeps three things apart: whether a food is permissible, whether it is nutritionally suitable, and how it is eaten.

The separation matters because religious compliance and nutritional quality are related but different. A permissible food can still be eaten to excess, and a nutritionally balanced meal still has to meet the Islamic requirements for a Muslim.

Holding the two together gives Islamic dietary education a fuller conceptual base.

Reconsidering the Relationship Between Eating and Moral Development

The link between eating and moral development needs careful handling.

Islamic scholarship has long valued lawful and wholesome consumption as part of a responsible religious life. Religious teaching of this kind is not, however, empirical proof that particular foods determine character.

Moral development is complex and depends on upbringing, religious education, relationships, personal experience and environment. Eating habits can be one part of that setting, particularly when mealtimes are used to teach gratitude, discipline and consideration for others.

Family meals, for instance, are a chance to practise manners, share food, say thanks and show respect to others. These can be studied as educational and social experiences without suggesting that what is in the meal produces virtue.

Keeping the two apart makes the framework more defensible, since the ethical value of Islamic eating practices is not made to depend on claims that need separate evidence.

Integrating Spiritual Values and Behavioural Explanations

The framework connects religious values with behavioural explanations, but the two operate at different analytical levels. Qur'anic and Prophetic sources provide normative criteria for what constitutes responsible eating; TPB explains the motivational and perceived-control processes through which a person may intend to perform a defined behaviour. The framework therefore uses TPB as an explanatory lens rather than as a theological foundation.

The Theory of Planned Behavior is a reasonable place to begin when asking how attitudes, social expectations and perceived control affect food choices (Ajzen, 1991, 2015). In Muslim communities religious belief may feed into these processes, but it works alongside cost, availability, convenience and social influence.

A Muslim teenager may understand why healthy, permissible food matters and still have little say over what is served at home or in the school canteen. Someone may intend to avoid overeating and still be pulled the other way by friends or by what is on offer.

Examples like this show why dietary education cannot rest only on passing on religious knowledge. It has to take account of the situations in which food choices are made.

Parents, teachers, school administrators, food providers and policymakers all have a part in making appropriate choices easy and practical.

Implications for Adolescent Development

The framework applies to Muslims generally, but it is particularly relevant to dietary education for adolescents. Adolescence is a time of forming identity, gaining independence and meeting more social influences. Peers, convenience, advertising, online trends and shifting preferences all shape what young people eat. An integrated Islamic framework could give adolescents a few questions to ask about their food choices:

- Is the food permissible according to Islamic requirements?
- Is it wholesome, safe, and suitable for my nutritional needs?
- Am I consuming an appropriate quantity?
- Does my eating behaviour reflect gratitude, moderation, and responsibility?
- Can I maintain this practice within my everyday circumstances?

These questions turn broad religious principles into practical decisions without reducing dietary education to a fixed list of permitted foods. Schools could use the framework in classroom discussions, family activities, school meal planning and exercises in reading food labels and nutritional information. Any programme should suit the age group and respect individual nutritional needs. It should not push unnecessary restriction, create fear of food, or stigmatise people for their eating habits or health conditions.

Implications for Healthy and Blessed Living

Blessed living gives the framework its spiritual direction. Here blessing is a religious and spiritual idea linked to gratitude, obedience to Allah and responsible use of His provisions. It is not a measurable biomedical outcome and does not promise that anyone who follows these practices will stay free of illness. Healthy living, for its part, means looking after physical and psychological well-being through suitable eating and other behaviours. The two ideas meet in a shared emphasis on responsibility, moderation and awareness of human needs. Together they make eating both a health practice and a way of expressing religious and ethical commitment.

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Theoretical Contribution

The main theoretical contribution is the organisation of Qur'anic and Prophetic eating guidance into five interconnected dimensions. Existing discussions of Islamic dietary practice tend to concentrate on the permissibility of ingredients, on particular foods named in religious sources, on nutrition, or on individual manners. The framework brings these concerns into one structure. Its five dimensions are food selection, balanced consumption, Prophetic eating practices, ethical and spiritual consciousness, and sustained dietary behaviour. This structure offers a way to study how normative Islamic principles can be turned into individual practice and educational programmes. The framework also points to a place where Islamic ethical reasoning and behavioural theory can meet. The Theory of Planned Behavior may explain some behavioural processes, while the Qur'an and Sunnah supply the principles that give eating its meaning and purpose.

This link is still theoretical and needs further development and testing.

Practical Contribution

The framework could be put to use in several settings.

Islamic education. Teachers can use the five dimensions to design activities that bring together Qur'anic guidance, Prophetic manners, nutrition, gratitude and responsible consumption.

Family education. Parents and caregivers can use shared meals to reinforce gratitude, moderation and consideration for others.

School food environments. Schools can draw on the framework when planning food-related activities and reviewing the safety, suitability and nutritional quality of the meals they provide.

Community health programmes. Islamic institutions and community organisations can combine religious dietary principles with evidence-based health education, taking care to avoid unsupported claims about the medicinal effects of particular foods.

Research and policy. Researchers and policymakers can use the framework as a starting point for educational indicators, assessment instruments and programmes that address both religious compliance and healthy eating.

Each of these uses needs to be adapted to local conditions and supported by nutritional, educational and Islamic scholarly expertise.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study has several limitations. First, the framework is conceptual and has not been validated empirically. Its dimensions and proposed relationships are a basis for further investigation, not an established explanatory model. Second, interpreting and applying Islamic dietary principles calls for engagement with recognised Islamic scholarship. Future work should look at Qur'anic exegesis, the authenticity and interpretation of the traditions, and how general ethical principles relate to specific legal rulings. Third, combining religious guidance with nutritional recommendations means keeping up with current scientific evidence. Claims about the benefits of specific foods, eating schedules or dietary practices need proper research and cannot be inferred from their mention in the Qur'an or Sunnah. Fourth, the framework does not show that Islamic eating practices directly improve intelligence, moral character or psychological well-being. Many factors influence these outcomes, and testing them requires suitable research designs and measures. Future studies could operationalise the five dimensions through qualitative interviews, expert consultation, questionnaire development and quantitative validation. They could examine how religious knowledge, dietary attitudes, family influence, perceived behavioural control and food availability relate to what people actually eat.

Studies with Muslim adolescents would be especially useful. They could test whether the framework is understandable and culturally suitable for young people, identify barriers to using it, and assess whether educational programmes built on it improve dietary knowledge and behaviour. Longitudinal studies could later follow the relationship between sustained dietary practices and chosen health, behavioural or educational outcomes while controlling for confounding factors. Future work should also keep indicators of religious practice, nutritional quality, psychological functioning and moral development separate. Doing so would improve measurement validity and avoid crediting complex outcomes to food alone.

CONCLUSION

The Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad SAW treat eating as a practice that carries religious responsibility, care for health, ethical conduct and spiritual awareness.

Halalan Tayyiban stresses choosing lawful and wholesome food. Qur'anic guidance on moderation and gratitude points towards responsible consumption, and Prophetic traditions add practical guidance on manners and avoiding excess. From these principles the article proposes a framework of five dimensions: lawful and wholesome food selection, balanced consumption and moderation, Prophetic eating practices, ethical and spiritual consciousness, and consistent and responsible eating behaviour. The dimensions are treated as complementary parts of healthy and blessed living. The framework links Islamic dietary principles with current nutritional and behavioural thinking without assuming that religious compliance alone guarantees any health, intellectual or moral outcome. It also underlines the need for supportive environments. Families, schools, food providers and community organisations can help turn religious values into lasting eating habits by pairing Islamic education with sound nutritional knowledge and practical support. In the end, Islamic dietary guidance is more than a list of what may be eaten. It gives an ethical outlook on consumption, gratitude, moderation and care for the body. Combined with evidence-based nutritional guidance, the framework offers a base for future research and for educational work that encourages healthy, responsible and spiritually meaningful eating among Muslims.

DECLARATIONS

Ethics Statement

This article is a conceptual study based on the interpretive analysis of Islamic primary sources and published literature. It did not involve human participants, personal data, or animals, and ethical approval was therefore not required.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Data Availability

No new datasets were generated or analysed in this study. All sources analysed are cited in the reference list.

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