



## Identifying the determinants of healthy eating in Islamic teachings: a qualitative study

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### Abstract

**Background & Aims:** Islam, as one of the world's major religions, places great importance on human health and well-being and provides rich concepts related to nutrition and health. The main objective of this article was to examine the relationship between health and well-being and nutrition in Islamic teachings and to elucidate the role of Islam in promoting healthy eating.

**Materials & Methods:** This study was applied in terms of its purpose, descriptive in terms of data collection method, and qualitative in terms of data nature. Based on this, first, religious teachings related to health, well-being, and their relationship with nutrition were identified and extracted through qualitative content analysis. Then, the extracted religious teachings were analyzed through grounded theory until a contextual pattern was found and theoretical saturation was reached. This analysis was carried out through three coding processes: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

**Results:** A total of 456 open codes were extracted, excluding overlaps. In the next step, 117 common codes were obtained based on overlaps and similarities, and ultimately, 26 themes were identified.

**Conclusion:** In general, it can be said that nutrition in Islam is a comprehensive and multidimensional concept that, in accordance with the teachings of the Quran and traditions, can contribute to the promotion of human health and well-being. This study can be a useful and credible source for researchers, officials, educators, and the general public.

**Keywords:** Islamic teachings, Health, Nutrition, Qualitative study

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### Introduction

Nutrition, as one of the fundamental pillars in maintaining human health and well-being, has been a subject of attention and debate throughout human

history. Nutrition not only plays a crucial role in preventing diseases and strengthening the immune system, but also contributes in improving the quality of life and increasing the energy levels and morale of

individuals (1, 2). Islam, as one of the world's major religions, emphasizes the significance of maintaining good health and wellness, and provides a wealth of ideas concerning dietary and health practices (3).

Recent research has shown that healthy and proper nutrition can help prevent cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and other chronic illnesses. For example, a 2017 study showed that the Quran's nutritional recommendations can be effective in treating many diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, infectious diseases, diabetes, infertility, stomach ulcers, cancer, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's (4). Another study in 2010 examined some foods from the Quranic perspective, which modern science demonstrates the nutritional and therapeutic importance of (5). Healthy nutrition can also help improve mental health indicators such as tranquility, morality, and righteous action (6). Another study from the Quranic perspective showed positive therapeutic results of some substances on cancer cell lines and laboratory animals in treating various diseases including cancer (7). Based on the results of a study conducted in 2013, from the perspective of the Holy Quran, food and nutrition are influential factors in shaping and evolving the educational and spiritual dimension of human beings. It also considers food as a tool for examination, a factor for reflection, reasoning, appreciation, worship and piety, a basis for oaths and warnings, a factor for healing, a factor for good tidings and warnings, a factor for human dignity in pure sustenance, a basis for subjugating the seas in order to benefit from livelihoods, a factor for performing righteous and unrighteous deeds, a factor for downfall and descent, a factor for issuance of divine decrees, and a factor for otherworldly misery (8). However, interpreting this concept from an Islamic perspective and its relationship with Islamic teachings is challenging and requires further research in this area.

Furthermore, how the interaction between physical and mental health is explained from an Islamic standpoint and how healthy nutrition can contribute to research in psychological and psychiatric fields related

to mental health are among the most important questions.

Therefore, the main objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between health and well-being and nutrition in Islamic teachings and to elucidate the role of Islam in promoting healthy nutrition. This article employs a qualitative content analysis method to extract and analyze Islamic concepts and directives related to nutrition and health. Additionally, the impact of proper nutrition on the physical and mental health of individuals will be examined from an Islamic perspective. Ultimately, this article underscores the importance of Islamic insights into nutrition and health for the scientific and medical community and introduces itself as a credible and conceptual source for nutritionists, physicians, and researchers interested in aligning health with Islamic religious principles.

## Materials & Methods

This study pursued a practical objective and employed a descriptive methodology for both data collection and the nature of the data itself, emphasizing qualitative aspects. The research encompassed verses from the Holy Quran, authentic hadiths, and narratives extracted from sources such as Bihar al-Anwar, Wasal al-Shia, Usul Kafi, and Nahj al-Balaghah. The text content was meticulously selected based on the presence of words and concepts pertaining to health, wellness, and their correlation with nutrition, identified and extracted through qualitative content analysis.

Subsequently, the discerned religious teachings underwent analysis using contextual theory, culminating in the identification of a comprehensive contextual pattern and achieving theoretical saturation. This analytical process involved three coding stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. To validate the results, confirmation and reliability indices were employed, ensuring the credibility and robustness of the findings. Continuous comparison of data and information was maintained to instill confidence and trust throughout the study.

## Results

This study employed qualitative content analysis to identify and extract the religious teachings related to health, well-being, and nutrition. Then, the extracted religious teachings were analyzed using grounded theory. The analysis consisted of three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the open coding stage, the religious teachings were reread several times and basic concepts were extracted by referring to the authentic interpretations of the Qur'an and other authentic books of religious teachings. A

total of 456 codes were generated without considering overlaps. The aim of this stage was to capture and reflect all aspects and dimensions of the data. Next, in the axial coding stage, the initial codes were examined for similarities and overlaps, and 117 common codes were derived. Similar and related codes were grouped under a more general topic or category in this stage. Finally, in the selective coding stage, the codes were aggregated and classified, and 26 main axes were identified and extracted as the most important topics and concepts.

**Table 1.** Part of the coded concepts in the open coding stage

Concepts	Text	Sources for Open Codes
Emphasizing consumption of permitted and pure foods	0 mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth, and follow not the footsteps of <i>Shaitan</i> (Satan). Verily, he is to you an open enemy.	Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 168
Prohibition of consuming prohibited and impure foods	He allows them as lawful <i>At-Tayyibdt</i> (i.e. all good and lawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods), and prohibits them as unlawful <i>Al-Khabd 'ith</i> (i.e. all evil and unlawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons and foods), he releases them from their heavy burdens (of Allah's Covenant with the children of Israel), and from the fetters (bindings) that were upon them.	Surah Al-A'raf, verse 157
Hunger as criterion for eating, principles for amount of food consumption	0 Children of Adam! Take your adornment (bt wearing your clean clothes), while praying 11 and going round (the <i>Tawdf</i> of ) the <i>Ka 'bah</i> , and eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He (Allah) likes not <i>Al-Musrifun</i> (those who waste by extravagance)	Surah Al-A'raf, verse 31
Gratitude	And He it is Who has subjected the sea (to you), that you eat thereof fresh tender meat (i.e. fish), and that you bring forth out of it ornaments to wear. And you see the ships ploughing through it, that you may seek (thus) of His Bounty (by transporting the goods from place to place) and that you may be grateful.	Surah An-Nahl, verse 114
Laws pertaining to food consumption	He has forbidden you only the <i>Maitah</i> (dead animals), and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah (or has been slaughtered for idols, on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering). But if one is forced by necessity without wilful disobedience nor transgressing due limits, then there is no sin on him. Truly, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.	Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 173

Concepts	Text	Sources for Open Codes
Balanced diet	Imam Musa al-Kazim says: If people are moderate in their food, their bodies will remain healthy.	Bihar al-Anwar, volume 66, page 334
Nutrition in different geographical situations	Prophet Muhammad says: Whenever you enter a city, eat some of its onions; for by eating the onions of that city you will be safe from the general diseases of that place.	Wasa'il al-Shi'a, volume 17, hadith 1
Etiquette of eating	Imam Reza says: Whoever wishes his stomach not to bother him, then do not drink water in between meals.	Bihar al-Anwar, volume 62, page 323
Meal times	Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq says: The root of the corruption of the body is the abandonment of the evening meal.	Al-Kafi, volume 6, page 288

In the axial coding stage, the focus was on the nature of the categories, the relationship between them was discovered, and the foundation of the core categories was formed.

**Table 2.** Revised categories by open, axial, and selective codes

Selective Coding	Axial Coding	Open Coding
Causal Conditions	Divine wisdom	Emphasis on consuming halal and pure foods, prohibition of consuming haram and impure foods, advice to avoid excess and deficiency in nutrition, attention to the consequences of improper food consumption, direct impact of nutrition on health, recommendation to consume halal and good food, prohibition of haram and evil foods, emphasis on consuming plant-based foods, attention to the consequences of inappropriate nutrition, wise words about moderation in eating, Imams' advice to moderation in eating, Quran's recommendation to moderation, wise words about moderation in eating, emphasis on halal and good food, prohibition of haram and evil foods, impact of food on soul and behavior, relationship between halal food and righteous deeds, impact of ethical nutrition on health
	Human nature	Following the nature and reason, suitable time for meals, the hunger criterion for eating food, principles for the amount of food consumption
	System of creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasis on consuming halal and pure foods, because halal and pure foods are in harmony with the system of creation and the religious determinations.</li> <li>Prohibition of consuming haram and impure foods, because these substances are in conflict with the system of creation and are religiously</li> </ul>

Selective Coding	Axial Coding	Open Coding
		<p>forbidden.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advice to avoid excess and deficiency in nutrition, because the system of creation promotes balance and moderation.</li> <li>Attention to the consequences of improper food consumption, because improper nutrition can lead to the violation of the system of creation and human health.</li> </ul>
	The life of the Prophet and the Imams	The emphasis of the Prophet of Islam and the pure Imams (Peace Be Upon Them) on consuming halal and pure food and abstaining from haram and impure foods, advice to balance and moderation in nutrition and avoiding excess and deficiency in food consumption, the life of the Prophet and the Imams based on food diversity and appropriate amount of food use.
	Dietary teachings in the Quran and hadiths	Advice to be grateful for the divine blessings, advice to consume seasonal foods, advice to eat food in peace, complete digestion of food
	Recommendation for consuming halal and pure food	Halal food revives the soul, purifies the mind and strengthens the body, whoever eats halal food, his body becomes healthy and his heart becomes bright. Halal food causes good manners and good smell, halal food causes longevity.
Conditions of the phenomenon	Prohibition of haram and impure foods	Whoever eats pork, the Almighty God will not look at him on the Day of Resurrection, eating haram foods causes physical and mental illnesses, eating haram foods causes the destruction of God's blessings.
	Emphasis on dietary diversity and balance	Balance among different food groups, diversity among types of foods, importance of consuming various kinds of foodstuffs, impact of diversity and balance in nutrition on health.
	The role of nutrition in health	The role of nutrition in preventing diseases, nutrition during pregnancy and lactation, healthy nutrition
	Human history and experience	The sanctity of nutrition, the amount and balance of nutrition, the role of nutrition in piety and good manners, gratitude and attention to food sources
	Islamic society	Sharia, religious leadership, attention to social justice, attention to family and specific values
Contextual conditions	Cultural and dietary habits	Cultural diversity, history and traditions, religion and sanctities, natural environment
	Food resources and availability	Soil and agriculture, animal husbandry, hunting and fishing
Intervening conditions	Laws and traditions	Religious laws, governmental laws, family traditions
	Global influences	The role of ethical and social principles in sustainable global nutrition and

Selective Coding	Axial Coding	Open Coding
		social justice, the concept of sustainable nutrition and its role in preserving global environmental resources
	Media and advertising	Food advertising, the impact of social media, branding and motivational effects
	Psychological and social pressures	Stress and anxiety, social pressures, living environment
Strategies_	Acceptance and implementation of teachings	Acceptance of awareness, goal setting, planning, nutrition education
	Efforts to distinguish between halal and haram	Consuming halal food, avoiding haram consumption, asking references
	Observing cleanliness and hygiene	The factors affecting the hygienic and cleanliness behaviors in nutrition, the impact of hygienic and cleanliness behaviors on reducing the incidence of nutrition-related diseases.
	Avoiding haram and impure substances	The problems and issues related to the definition and distinction of halal and haram substances in nutrition, the concept of halal and haram substances in Islam and their impact on the nutrition of Muslims, the role of religious and believes in people's decision-making about the consumption of haram and impure substances.
	Consideration of the benefits and harms of food	People's understanding of the benefits of healthy nutrition and its impact on health, consumption of healthy foods and its impact on improving the physical and mental status of people, people's knowledge of the harms of unhealthy foods and their effect on health.
	Physical and mental health	The impact of proper nutrition on physical health and reducing the risk of chronic diseases, the impact of nutrition on cardiovascular health and reducing the risk of heart diseases, the relationship between nutrition and mental health and its impact on reducing anxiety and increasing life satisfaction, nutrition and its impact on reducing the risk of diabetes.
Outcomes	Worship and righteous deeds	The relationship between nutrition and worship in Islam and its role in the life of Muslims, choosing foodstuffs in religious months and its impact on promoting worship acts, unhealthy nutrition and its impact on inability to perform worship and righteous deeds, nutrition and its effect on body composition and cleanliness in righteous deeds and performing religious duties.
	Prevention and treatment of illnesses	The impact of proper nutrition on preventing chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart diseases, the relationship between nutrition and improving the

Selective Coding	Axial Coding	Open Coding
		immune system function to cope with infections and diseases, nutrition and its effects on the quality of life of people with diseases.
	Divine satisfaction	The relationship between healthy nutrition and divine satisfaction and promotion of spirituality and religiosity, the role of prayer and religion in nutrition and its relationship with divine satisfaction, the meaning of divine satisfaction in nutrition and diet of people.

### Causal Conditions:

This category refers to factors external to the individual that influence their nutrition and health. In this study, three themes of divine wisdom, human nature, and the system of creation have been identified as causal conditions.

Islamic teachings emphasize consuming halal and pure foods, prohibiting consumption of haram and impure foods, advising moderation in nutrition, paying attention to the consequences of improper nutrition, the direct impact of nutrition on health, advising consumption of halal and wholesome foods, forbidding haram and deleterious foods, emphasizing consumption of vegetarian foods, paying attention to the consequences of inappropriate nutrition, words of the wise about moderation in eating, advice of Imams about moderation in eating, Quran's advice for moderation, words of the wise about moderation in eating, emphasis on halal and wholesome foods, prohibition of haram and deleterious foods, impact of food on spirit and behavior, relation between halal food and righteous deed, impact of ethical nutrition on health as part of divine wisdom. For example, some Quranic verses and narrations in this study are as follows:

\_"O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth, and follow not the footsteps of Shaitan (Satan). Verily, he is to you an open enemy." (Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 168)

"He has forbidden you only the Maitah (dead animals), and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah (or has been slaughtered for idols, on which Allah's

*Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering). But if one is forced by necessity without wilful disobedience nor transgressing due limits, then there is no sin on him. Truly, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."* (Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 173)

"O you who believe! Fulfil (your) obligations. Lawful to you (for food) are all the beasts of cattle except that which will be announced to you (herein), game (also) being unlawful when you assume Jhram for Hajj or 'Umrah (pilgrimage). Verily, Allah commands that which He wills." (Quran, Surah Al-Mi'idah, Verse 1)

"Forbidden to you (for food) are: Al-Maitah (the dead animals - cattle - beast not slaughtered), blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering, (that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah, or has been slaughtered for idols) and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns - and that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal - unless you are able to slaughter it (before its death) - and that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on An-Nusub<sup>111</sup> (stone-altars). (Forbidden) also is to use arrows seeking luck or decision; (all) that is Fisqun (disobedience of Allah and sin). This day, those who disbelieved have given up all hope of your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me. This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But as for him who is forced by severe hunger, with no inclination to sin (such can eat these above mentioned

meats), then surely, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (Quran, Surah Al-Mi'idah, Verse 3)

*"And of the cattle (are some) for burden (like camels) and (some are) small (unable to carry burden like sheep and goats - for food, meat, milk and wool ). Eat of what Allah has provided for you, and follow not the footsteps of Shaitan (Satan). Surely he is to you an open enemy."* (Quran, Surah Al-An'am, Verse 142)

*"Prophet Muhammad says: Whenever you enter a city, eat some of its onions; for by eating the onions of that city you will be safe from the general diseases of that place. (Persian)"* (Wasa'il al-Shi'a, volume 17, hadith 1)

*"Imam Reza says: Whoever wishes his stomach not to bother him, then do not drink water in between meals. (Persian)"* (Bihar al-Anwar, volume 62, page 323)

#### **Phenomenon Circumstances:**

The phenomena and circumstances related to nutrition in Islam include several themes. First, the Quranic and Islamic narrations focus on advising gratitude for divine blessings, advising consumption of seasonal foods, advising eating food calmly, and the complete digestion of food. Then, emphasis is placed on consuming halal and pure food as the most fundamental nutritional principle in Islam, since this consumption can help with human physical and spiritual health and have positive effects on good morals and longevity. Also, from an Islamic viewpoint, forbidding consumption of haram and impure foods stresses that consumption of pork is forbidden, and consuming haram foods can lead to physical and mental illnesses. Additionally, diversity and balance in nutrition with an emphasis on balance between different food groups and variety in food selection helps with human health. Finally, the role of nutrition in human health is considered, with an emphasis on disease prevention, nutrition during pregnancy and breastfeeding, and the importance of healthy nutrition. Human experience and history are also deemed essential elements in the topic of nutrition in Islam, including the sanctity of nutrition, the amount and

balance of nutrition, the role of nutrition in piety and vigor, and gratitude and attention to food sources.

Example:

*"And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed: 'If you give thanks (by accepting Faith and worshipping none but Allah), I will give you more (of My Blessings); but if you are thankless (i.e. disbelievers), verily My punishment is indeed severe.'" (Quran, Surah Ibrahim, verse 7)*

*"And indeed We bestowed upon Luqman Al-Hikmah (wisdom and religious understanding) saying: 'Give thanks to Allah.' And whoever gives thanks, he gives thanks for (the good of) his ownself. And whoever is unthankful, then verily, Allah is All-Rich (Free of all needs), Worthy of all praise. " (Quran, Surah Luqman, verse 12)*

According to Quranic texts, one of the scientific miracles of Quran is prohibiting unhealthy and hazardous foods that are harmful to the human body and psyche. This was stated at a time when advanced medical sciences did not exist and modern tools for pathological diagnosis were absent. One of the prohibited cases in Quran is consumption of carrion, as stated in verse 3 of Surah Ma'idah:

*"Forbidden to you (for food) are: Al-Maitah (the dead animals - cattle - beast not slaughtered), blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which Allih's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering, (that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allih, or has been slaughtered for idols) and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns - and that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal - unless you are able to slaughter it (before its death) - and that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on An-Nusub (stone-altars). (Forbidden) also is to use arrows seeking luck or decision; (all) that is Fisqun (disobedience of Allah and sin). This day, those who disbelieved have given up all hope of your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me. This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But as for him who is forced by severe hunger, with no*



*inclination to sin (such can eat these above mentioned meats), then surely, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. "*

#### **Contextual Conditions:**

The contextual conditions in Islamic nutrition are diverse and expansive. These conditions include factors such as the influence of Sharia and religious leadership, attention to social justice, attention to family, and special values in Islamic society. Also, food culture and traditions including cultural diversity, history and traditions, religion and sanctities, and the natural environment have an impact on nutrition. Additionally, food resources and facilities including soil and agriculture, livestock, hunting, and fishing directly affect nutrition and food production in Islamic society. These historical, cultural, and economic factors collectively create an environment where nutrition is seen as an important part of human life and is connected to spirituality and religious values.

#### **Examples:**

In verse 28 of Surat Al-Hajj, *"That they may witness things that are of benefit to them (i.e. reward of Hajj in the Hereafter, and also some worldly gain from trade), and mention the Name of Allah on appointed days (i.e. 10th, 11 th, 12th, and 13th day of Dhul-Hijjah), over the beast of cattle that He has provided for them (for sacrifice), [at the time of their slaughtering by saying:(Bismi/lah, Wa/ldhu-Akbar, Alldhumma Minka wa Jlaik).] Then eat thereof and feed therewith the poor having a hard time. "*

The necessity of feeding and hosting the needy and deprived with the meat of sacrifice is also emphasized in verse 36 of Surat Al-Hajj, which demonstrates its importance and value in Islam.

*"And the Budn (cows, oxen, or camels driven to be offered as sacrifices by the pilgrims at the sanctuary of Makkah) We have made them for you as among the Symbols of Allah, wherein you have much good. So mention the Name of Allah over them when they are drawn up in lines (for sacrifice). Then, when they are down on their sides (after slaughter), eat thereof, and*

*feed the poor who does not ask (men), and the beggar who asks (men). Thus have We made them subject to you that you may be grateful. "*

*"Climate change is real and so are its unequal impacts on different geographies and societies. Food systems are estimated to produce a third of global greenhouse gas emissions, of which meat is a major contributor. An emerging challenge is feeding a growing population and fulfilling its protein needs, while limiting the climate footprint. Though more environment friendly alternative sources of proteins are becoming available, their acceptance will depend upon attitudes, beliefs, and behavioural choices. For Muslims, who comprise about a quarter of the world's population, religious guidance plays an important role in consumption patterns and food choices " (13).*

#### **Intervening Conditions:**

The intervening conditions in Islamic nutrition are diverse and meaningful. These conditions include religious and governmental laws and traditions, which have a significant influence on nutrition, as well as family traditions which are regarded as a valuable source for nutrition. Global influences also play an important role in Islamic nutrition. For example, ethical and social principles in sustainable global nutrition and social justice are considered, and the concept of sustainable nutrition and preserving global environmental resources are deemed important values in nutrition. Also, psychological and social pressures including stress and anxiety and living environment are considered in nutrition and require managerial and social interventions. These factors are seen as challenges and opportunities in the topic of nutrition in Islam and require appropriate and informed interventions.

#### **Examples:**

*"Imam Ali (AS) stated in his command to Malik al-Ashtar: Be just to God and the people, yourself and your relatives, and special people of your family, and to those subjects who have attachment to you. For if you do not do so, you have been unjust. And whoever is*

*unjust to the servants of God, God is his enemy before the servants, and whoever's enemy is God, He will invalidate his argument and wage war against him until he desists from injustice or repents. He knew that nothing hastens change of God's blessings and vengeance like insistence on oppression, for God hears the prayer of the oppressed and is waiting in ambush against the oppressors."* (14)

*"Imam Ali (AS) states: God has made the livelihood of the poor incumbent upon the wealthy, and no poor person goes hungry except that a rich person has seized his right, for which God Most High will take them to task."* (Nahjol\_Balaagha, Hekmat 8)

### Strategies:

The strategies include accepting and implementing nutritional teachings, which encompass awareness, setting goals, planning, and nutritional education. Also, making efforts to discern halal and haram foods, which includes consuming halal foods, avoiding haram consumption, and consulting authoritative references. Observing hygiene and cleanliness is also an important part of these strategies, and includes factors that affect hygienic and clean behaviors in nutrition, as well as the impact of hygienic and clean behaviors in reducing nutrition-related diseases. Avoiding haram and impure substances is also among the fundamental principles of Islamic nutrition, and includes issues related to defining and discerning halal and haram substances in nutrition, the concept of halal and haram in Islam and its impact on Muslim nutrition, and the role of religion and beliefs in individuals' decisions regarding consuming haram and impure substances. Finally, paying attention to the benefits and harms of food is also important for Islamic nutrition, and includes individuals' understanding of the benefits of healthy nutrition and its impact on health, consuming healthy foods and their effect on improving physical and mental condition, and individuals' knowledge of the harms of unhealthy foods and their health impacts. These strategies emphasize important guidelines for nutrition in Islam for individuals and the general public.

### Examples:

*"Paying attention to health, hygiene, and disease prevention has always accompanied humans throughout history. As the most complete religion, Islam has taken a comprehensive approach to all human dimensions, to the extent that the Prophet of Islam placed sciences related to the body alongside religious science, stating: "Knowledge is of two kinds: knowledge of religions and knowledge of bodies."* (15)

Imam Musa Kazem says: *"If people observe moderation in eating, their bodies will remain healthy."* (Behar Al-Anwar)

*"The mothers shall give suck to their children for two whole years, (that is) for those (parents) who desire to complete the term of suckling, but the father of the child shall bear the cost of the mother's food and clothing on a reasonable basis. No person shall have a burden laid on him greater than he can bear. No mother shall be treated unfairly on account of her child, nor father on account of his child. And on the (father's) heir is incumbent the like of that (which was incumbent on the father). If they both decide on weaning, by mutual consent, and after due consultation, there is no sin on them. And if you decide on a foster suckling-mother for your children, there is no sin on you, provided you pay (the mother) what you agreed (to give her) on reasonable basis. And fear Allah and know that Allah is All-Seer of what you do."* (Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 233)

### Outcomes:

Nutrition in Islam has significant impacts on different aspects of human life. Firstly, it affects human physical and mental health. Proper nutrition can help reduce the risk of chronic diseases, especially heart disease, and improve physical health. Also, nutrition is important in relation to mental health and can help reduce anxiety and increase life satisfaction. The religion of Islam also emphasizes the relation between nutrition and worship and righteous deeds, and considers the choice of foods in religious months and its effect on enhancing worship and righteous deeds in Muslims' lives. Likewise, unhealthy nutrition can

adversely affect the ability to properly worship and be righteous.

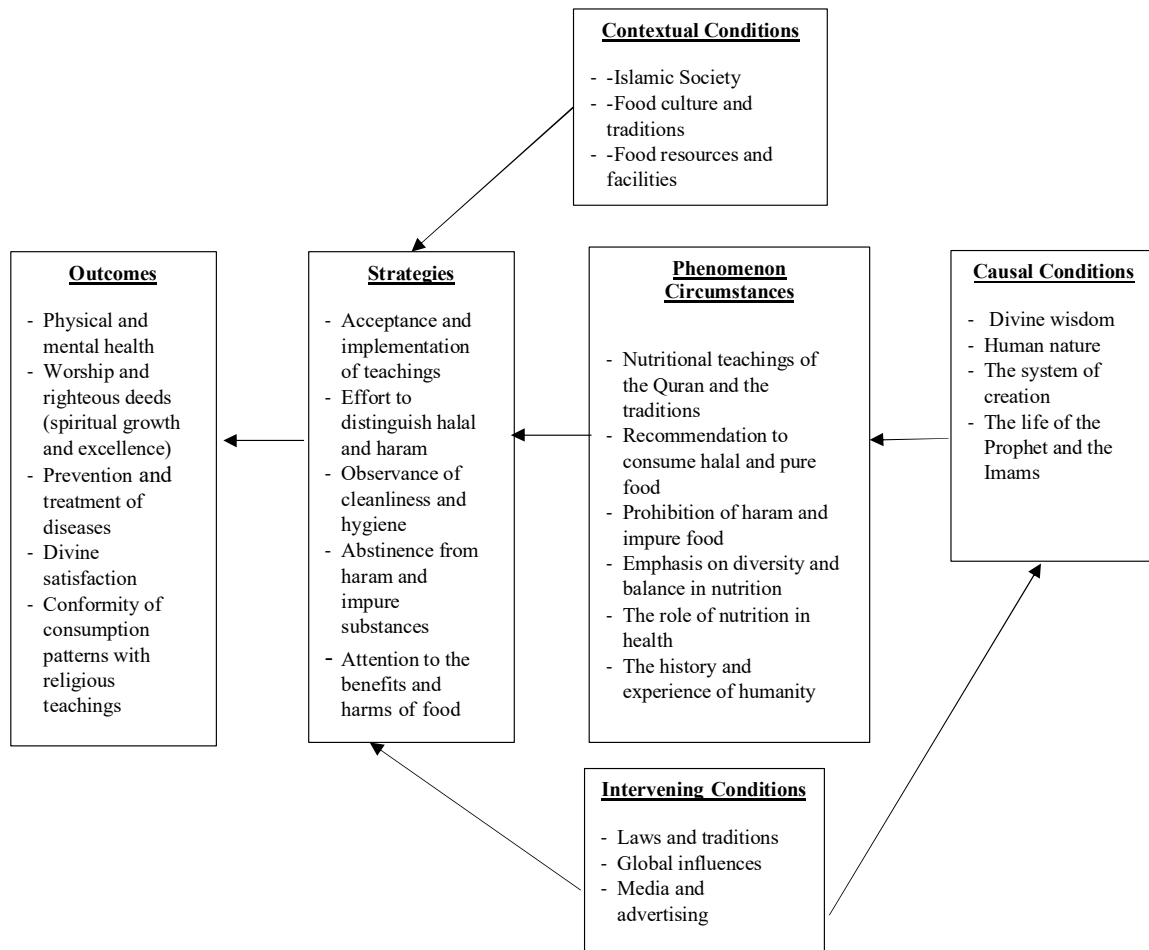
Examples:

*“Eat not (O believers) of that (meat) on which Allah's Name has not been pronounced (at the time of the slaughtering of the animal), for sure it is Fisq (a sin and disobedience of Allah). And certainly, the Shayatin (devils) do inspire their friends (from mankind) to dispute with you, and if you obey them<sup>111</sup> [by making Al-Maitah (a dead animal) legal by eating it], then you would indeed be Mushrikun (polytheists); [because they (devils and their friends) made lawful to you to eat that which Allah has made unlawful to eat and you obeyed them by considering it lawful to eat, and by doing so you worshipped them; and to worship others*

*besides Allah is polytheism].” (Quran, Surah Al-Anam, Verse 121)*

*“O Children of Adam! Take your adornment (by wearing your clean clothes), while praying <sup>11</sup> and going round (the Tawdf of ) the Ka 'bah, and eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He (Allah) likes not Al-Musrifun (those who waste by extravagance).” (Quran, Surah Al-Araf, Verse 31)*

*“O (you) Messengers! Eat of the Tayyibdt [all kinds of Halal foods which Allah has made lawful (meat of slaughtered eatable animals, milk products, fats, vegetables, fruits, etc.) and do righteous deeds. Verily! I am Well-Acquainted with what you do.” (Quran, Surah Al-Muminun, Verse 51)*



**Fig. 1.** Theoretical model of the relationship between health and nutrition in Islamic teachings

## Discussion

Islamic teachings on food and health are based on solid principles that God Almighty has stated in the Quran and Sunnah. Islam considers healthy and beneficial foods for the body and soul as lawful and permissible, and warns people from consuming unhealthy and harmful foods that lead to disease and weakness. Among the foods that Islam considers impure and forbidden are blood, carrion and pork, which have been proven to contain various toxins and dangerous microbes and transmit diseases such as hepatitis, anemia, cancer, and AIDS (9-12). As the world today faces serious challenges in the field of food hygiene and health, Islamic teachings in this area can be a solution. Because Islam, as a complete religion, has always emphasized the health of the body and soul and has provided guidance based on divine revelation to achieve it. On the other hand, in addition to the recommendations on nutrition, Islam also stresses the importance of exercise and mental health; therefore, it can be concluded that Islamic teachings on health are in line with modern scientific knowledge and guide people to a healthy and balanced lifestyle so that they can benefit from the divine blessings in the best way.

The findings of this study showed that consuming halal and pure food while abstaining from sin and satanic temptations has a close relationship with the health of the soul and body. These results are consistent with the studies of Sharifi et al. (2021) and Isa-Zadeh et al. (2020). Also, the interpretations of the commentators on the destructive effects of consuming forbidden and impure food on the heart and mind of human beings are in harmony with the findings of these studies (18, 12). According to these commentators, such foods cause contamination of the soul and body and prevent the understanding of the truth. Therefore, it can be said that religious teachings guide people to consume halal and pure food and avoid sin. These behaviors are not only beneficial for the health of the body and soul, but also prepare people to receive the divine light and recognize the truth

Islam is a universal religion that places special emphasis on social and ethical issues. The ethical and social principles of Islam can play an important role in achieving sustainable global nutrition and social justice.

The Islamic viewpoint based on Quran and Hadith is consistent worldwide, but Muslim viewpoints vary with geography including a cultural component. Food itself is highly cultural with practices acceptable in one region but not in another. However, for the vast majority of Muslims worldwide, the halal nature of food is a common thread. And that is precisely why we need to understand both the Islamic viewpoint and Muslim attitudes (19).

According to the results of this study, nutrition is a divine blessing and worship. Nutrition is not merely a physiological necessity. It is a divine gift that has been bestowed on humanity. Muslims are encouraged to approach food with gratitude and acceptance and recognize its role as a means of communication with the divine. On the other hand, Islamic dietary guidelines emphasize harmony with human innate nature and the divine order of creation. This means consuming halal and pure foods and avoiding forbidden or impure foods. The results of other studies on the impact of food molecules on the genetic structure of individuals have shown that consuming healthy and halal foods can lead to the best genetic response. Eating halal food not only has positive effects on the health, soul, and behavior of human beings but also contributes to the preservation of social security and the promotion of public health (20). Also, the results of another study showed that the guidelines of the Holy Quran and traditions can be of great help to human society in solving the physical and mental problems caused by malnutrition (religious definition) faced by human beings today (21).

The findings of this study show that the Prophet of Islam and the Imams of the Pure (peace be upon them) are models for healthy nutrition. Their emphasis on moderation, balance, and mindful eating, is a valuable guidance for Muslims who seek to optimize their nutrition levels. These findings are also consistent with

the findings of other studies in this field. Studies have shown that following a healthy diet that emphasizes moderation, balance, and mindful eating can help improve the physical and mental health of human beings (22-24).

Islamic dietary teachings encourage an appropriate approach in choosing food items and emphasize the consumption of foods that enhance physical and mental health and at the same time avoid the ones that can lead to undesirable health consequences.

## Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that nutrition in Islam is a holistic and multidimensional concept that encompasses both physical and spiritual aspects. By integrating Islamic teachings with contemporary nutritional science, we can create a framework for promoting health and well-being that aligns with both religious values and scientific evidence.

The theoretical framework developed in this study, encompassing five core categories, offers a valuable tool for further research into Islamic nutrition. By exploring causal conditions, contextual factors, and intervening mechanisms, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between food choices and health outcomes.

Future research could focus on specific aspects of Islamic nutrition, such as the role of fasting and traditional food practices in promoting health. Additionally, comparative studies with other faith-based nutritional traditions could provide valuable insights into the unique contributions of Islam to the field of nutrition.

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## Conflict of interest

The authors have no conflict of interest.

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## Data availability

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article are available from the authors upon reasonable request.

## Ethical statement

Based on the type of research, there is no need for a code of ethics.

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