



Grounding the Prophet Muhammad's eating manners: Prophetic food as a local food literacy movement in elementary schools

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Article info	Abstract
Keywords: prophetic food, local food literacy, elementary education, prophetic values, Prophet Muhammad's eating manners	The low level of local food literacy among elementary school students, influenced by globalization and the dominance of instant food consumption, requires a more holistic educational approach. This article aims to formulate a conceptual framework for Prophetic Food as a literacy model grounded in the eating practices of the Prophet Muhammad. A systematic literature review was conducted, screening 173 articles and selecting 15 relevant studies using explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria. The analysis revealed three major themes: (1) the importance of school-based nutrition interventions in shaping healthy eating behaviors; (2) the increasing emphasis on <i>halalan thoyyiban</i> principles in food consumption; and (3) the relevance of local food systems for sustainability and cultural identity. Integrating the Prophet's eating etiquette—simplicity, cleanliness, moderation, and communal sharing—this study proposes <i>Prophetic Food</i> as a framework built on five prophetic values: <i>al-'adl</i> (justice), <i>al-thohārah</i> (cleanliness), <i>qona'ah</i> (moderation), <i>al-karīm</i> (generosity), and <i>al-akhlaq al-karīmah</i> (noble character). The findings conclude that <i>Prophetic Food</i> expands food literacy beyond nutrition toward ethical, spiritual, and sustainability-oriented education. Practical implications include project-based school activities, such as communal meals following prophetic traditions, and policy recommendations for integrating prophetic food literacy into the national curriculum.

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1. Introduction

Globalization has precipitated a marked shift in dietary patterns across society, including among elementary-school children. Increasing consumption of fast foods and imported processed products has progressively displaced nutrient-dense, culturally significant local

foods, leaving many students with limited appreciation for the role of healthy local diets in daily life and cultural identity, a trend that reflects low levels of sustainable food literacy (Kelly & Nash, 2021). This dietary shift not only affects physical health but also influences the mindset, lifestyle, and cultural identity of younger generations.

In Indonesia, these changes are manifest in the triple burden of malnutrition (stunting), overweight/obesity, and micronutrient deficiencies (UNICEF, 2023). National surveillance data underscore the magnitude of the problem: the 2018 National Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) reported stunting rates of 25.7–26.9% and obesity prevalences of 13.5–16% among adolescents (Riskesdas, 2018). while the 2023 Indonesia Health Survey (SKI) found that, among children aged 5–12 years, 4.6% were severely stunted, 14.1% stunted, 7.8% obese, and 16.3% anemic (SKI, 2023). Anemia remains a particular concern for adolescent girls (Yulianto, 2023). These indicators are exacerbated by dietary patterns characterized by high intake of sugar, salt, and fat and inadequate consumption of fruits and vegetables (Dwijayanti et al., 2021). These trends are illustrated in Figure 1 (Survei Kesehatan Indonesia, 2023).

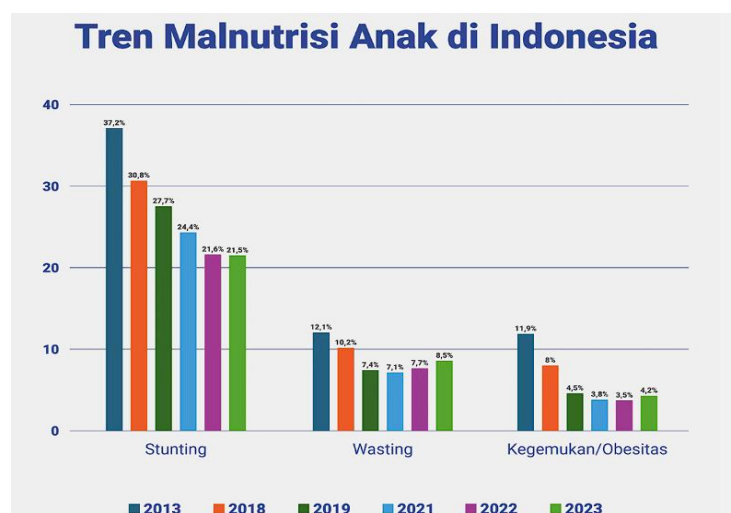


Figure 1. Trends in child malnutrition in Indonesia

Source: Survei Kesehatan Indonesia (2023)

At the elementary level, food literacy encompasses not only nutritional knowledge but also practical competencies, such as accessing, selecting, preparing, and consuming healthy foods in culturally appropriate and sustainable ways. Balanced nutrition is essential for physical growth, brain development, and students' capacity to concentrate in school; accordingly, healthy eating has been positively associated with academic achievement (Clayton, 2018; Rose, 2022). Conversely, poor nutrition—whether from deficiencies or excess, contributes to health problems (e.g., obesity, diabetes, anemia) that undermine children's learning and school performance (Dyna et al., 2018; Bradley et al., 2023). Given the documented dietary shifts and the persistent triple burden of malnutrition in Indonesia, strengthening elementary-level food literacy through culturally grounded, sustainable interventions represents an urgent research and policy priority. Addressing this challenge requires not only individual knowledge and skills but also supportive environments.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory explains that children's development is influenced by interactions between individuals and their social environment, such as family and school. Therefore, collaboration among various parties is essential to create a culture of healthy eating

from an early age (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This aligns with government initiatives, such as Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 22 of 2020, which targets the development of model schools in nutrition and food as part of the 2020–2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (Kemendikbudristek, 2020).

However, global nutritional challenges remain considerable. The WHO (2024) notes that children face a double burden of malnutrition: stunting and obesity. In Indonesia, the prevalence of overweight and obesity among children aged 5–12 years has reached 18.8% (Nugraheni, 2022), while cases of stunting and micronutrient deficiencies remain high (Unicef, 2019; Kemendikbudristek & UNICEF, 2023). These data indicate that Indonesia is experiencing a double burden of malnutrition—a combination of undernutrition and overnutrition among children.

One factor exacerbating this situation is students' high consumption of unhealthy snacks. Children tend to prefer instant foods that are high in calories and low in nutrients, such as nuggets, sausages, sugary drinks, and fried snacks (Kurniawati et al., 2020; Nisak & Mahmudiono, 2017). Such dietary patterns increase the risk of obesity and deficiencies in key micronutrients such as iron, vitamin A, and iodine (Bradley et al., 2023).

The low level of food literacy among elementary school-aged children is a serious issue that impacts health, environmental sustainability, and cultural resilience. National data shows that the prevalence of stunting and childhood obesity remains quite high, partly due to unbalanced consumption patterns and increased reliance on instant, processed foods. This phenomenon is exacerbated by globalization, which has driven the homogenization of dietary patterns, shifting consumption toward healthier, more diverse local foods.

In response to growing concerns over child malnutrition and health, the Indonesian government has implemented several strategic policies. Among them is Presidential Instruction No. 1 Tahun 2017 (Inpres, 2017) on the Healthy Living Community Movement (Gerakan Masyarakat Hidup Sehat, or Germas), which encourages daily physical activity of at least 30 minutes and promotes the consumption of fruits and vegetables. It also includes regulations limiting sugar, salt, and fat in processed and ready-to-eat foods, alongside stricter monitoring of food products from the food industry to support a comprehensive healthy lifestyle.

To specifically address childhood obesity, the National Agency of Drug and Food Control (BPOM) launched Germas SAPA (Sadar Pangan Aman), aiming to educate children on healthy snack choices such as fresh fruits by empowering health workers, school teachers, principals, and canteen staff to become food safety advocates (BPOM, 2020).

In this regard, the Ministry of Health of Indonesia issued Regulation No. 2 of 2020 (Kemenkes, 2020), which established the Child Anthropometric Standards. These standards serve as a guideline for assessing nutritional status and growth based on weight, height, and Body Mass Index (BMI) for children aged 0–18 years. The aim is to facilitate early detection of nutritional issues such as stunting, wasting, underweight, overweight, and obesity through accurate and systematic monitoring, thereby enabling timely interventions and supporting national efforts to reduce malnutrition rates.

One of the most ambitious recent initiatives is the Free Nutritious Meal Program (Makan Bergizi Gratis, MBG), introduced by President Prabowo Subianto and Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka, and formalized under Presidential Regulation No. 83 of 2024 (Perpes RI, 2024). This program aims to provide nutritious meals to four key groups: (1) students from early childhood to secondary education, including special and religious schools as well as pesantren; (2) children under five; (3) pregnant women; and (4) breastfeeding mothers. Beyond improving nutrition, MBG also supports local economic empowerment by sourcing food ingredients from local farmers, fishers, and small businesses (Harsono, 2025).

In this context, local food literacy is seen as a strategic approach. Food literacy encompasses not only the ability to select and consume healthy foods, but also the skills to understand food origins, safe processing practices, and respect for local wisdom and environmental sustainability. Thus, local food literacy has the potential to connect nutritional, ecological, cultural, and social aspects within a cohesive educational framework.

Local food consumption literacy has been identified as an essential educational strategy to enhance students' ecological intelligence. According to Yonanda et al. (2022), when students understand the value of consuming local food, they not only reduce the health risks associated with processed and instant foods, such as obesity and chemical exposure, but also position themselves as agents of change in environmental preservation and cultural heritage protection. Supporting this, Nafisah & Supriatna (2022) highlight that local food education at the elementary level plays a pivotal role in strengthening cultural identity and promoting environmentally conscious consumption habits. In this sense, students are encouraged to become *green consumers* who prioritize local products over global alternatives, guided by environmental and health considerations (Supriatna, 2016).

On the other hand, despite Indonesia's abundant local food diversity, such as maize, cassava, sweet potatoes, and sago. The actual level of local food consumption remains alarmingly low. Participation rates are recorded at only 4.4–11.2% for maize, 28.2% for cassava, and a stagnant 1–1.6% for sago (BPS, 2021). These data underscore the underutilization of nutrient-dense local food sources that could otherwise serve as healthier, more sustainable dietary options than refined carbohydrate-based diets.



Figure 2. Trends in local food consumption participation
Source: Statistics Indonesia (BPS), 2022

Addressing this gap requires not only emphasizing ecological and economic benefits but also recognizing the deeper cultural and spiritual significance of food. Maximizing the potential of local food systems goes beyond ecological and economic benefits it also encompasses spiritual dimensions, particularly in the Islamic context. Here, food is not only evaluated based on its nutritional or hygienic value, but also on its *barokah* (divine blessing), which includes how food is sourced, prepared, and consumed with awareness, ethical conduct, and a sense of responsibility. This spiritual perspective brings depth to food literacy by integrating inner well-being and ethical consciousness into daily eating practices.

In educational settings, this holistic view aligns with the integration of *prophetic values*, as conceptualized (Kuntowijoyo, 2004). These values, humanization, liberation, and transcendence, form a triadic framework rooted in the teachings and exemplary conduct of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. They emphasize the importance of balancing physical needs, social responsibility, and spiritual devotion in all aspects of life, including food choices.

Therefore, food literacy should not only address physical health and academic performance, but also aim to cultivate long-term, value-driven behaviors. The Prophet Muhammad promoted consuming halal, thoyyib (wholesome) food in moderation (*qona'ah*), illustrating an ideal dietary model that harmonizes physical nourishment with ethical and spiritual integrity. By adopting this prophetic framework, local food education can be transformed into a character-building platform that supports sustainable well-being in both worldly and spiritual dimensions.

Given the significance of these intertwined issues, ranging from malnutrition and ecological degradation to the erosion of local food culture, the author finds it essential to present this topic in a scholarly article entitled "*Grounding the Prophet Muhammad Eating Manners: Prophetic Food as a Local Food Literacy Movement in Elementary Schools*." This article seeks to fill this gap by developing the conceptual framework of Prophetic Food, namely the integration of Prophet Muhammad's eating manners into local food literacy movements in elementary schools. The aim is to provide a strong theoretical foundation, offer practical recommendations for teachers and policymakers, and open avenues for further empirical research on food literacy grounded in prophetic values.

2. Method

This study employed a *systematic literature review* approach focusing on the integration of Prophet Muhammad's eating manners into local food literacy movements in elementary schools. The review process followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure rigor and transparency. As Fen (2013) explains, a literature review enables researchers to explore existing theoretical and empirical insights by examining various academic sources to build a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

Data for this study were gathered using documentation techniques, as described by Creswell (2014), which involve collecting and analyzing written sources such as books, peer-reviewed journal articles, research reports, conference proceedings, and other academic publications. In qualitative research, document analysis requires a careful reading and interpretation of texts to extract meaning, identify patterns, and develop conceptual frameworks that contribute to knowledge advancement.

Literature searches were conducted across Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, Google Scholar, and Garuda databases up to 28 May 2024. The search terms applied (Boolean combinations) included: ("food literacy" OR "food education" OR "local food" OR "local food systems") AND ("elementary" OR "primary school" OR "school") AND ("Islamic" OR "prophetic" OR "Prophetic Food" OR "adab makan").

Inclusion criteria were: (1) peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2015 and 2024; (2) written in English or Indonesian; (3) explicitly addressed food literacy, elementary education, or integration of religious/ethical values in education; and (4) provided empirical data or relevant conceptual frameworks. Exclusion criteria were opinion/editorial pieces without data, conference abstracts without full text, and studies unrelated to elementary education.

The selection process comprised three stages: (1) initial identification of 173 records; (2) title/abstract screening, yielding 36 full-text articles; and (3) final inclusion of 15 studies that met the criteria. The process is summarized in the PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 3).

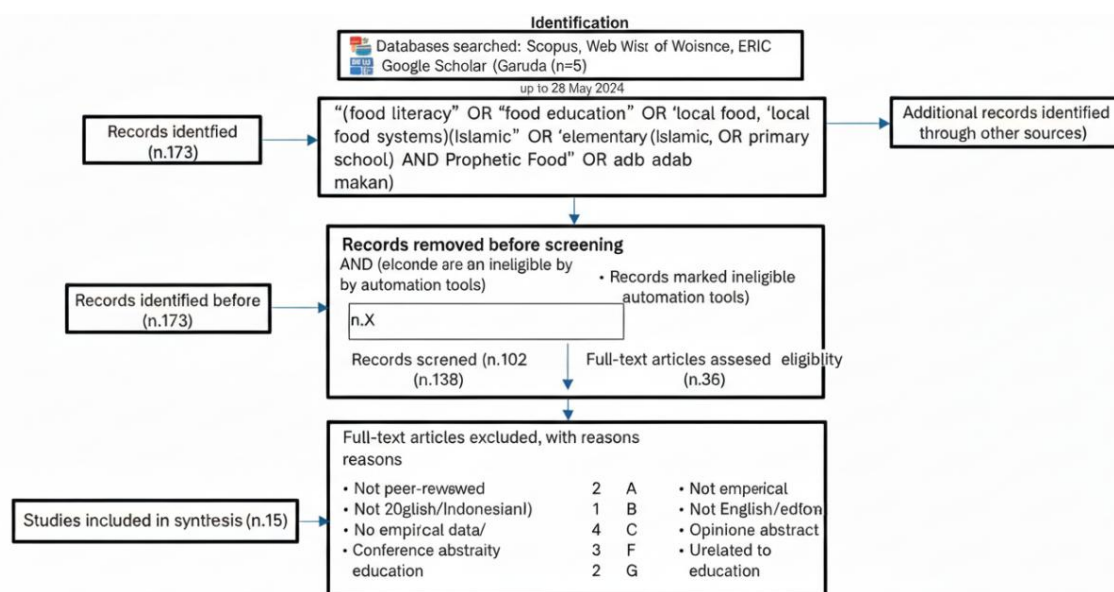


Figure 3. PRISMA flow diagram of the literature search and selection process

References were organized using Mendeley to avoid duplication. Analysis was conducted through thematic coding with ATLAS.ti, consisting of *open coding* (initial category identification), *axial coding* (linking categories into themes), and *selective coding* (formulating core themes). Two researchers independently coded 20% of the articles to ensure reliability; discrepancies were resolved through discussion until consensus was achieved.

The final output was a thematic synthesis that summarized major trends, research gaps, and opportunities for integrating prophetic values into local food literacy frameworks.

The analysis particularly focused on how prior studies have explored the ethical, spiritual, and ecological dimensions of food in light of Islamic teachings, including values such as *al-‘adl* (justice), *al-thahārah* (cleanliness), *al-qanā‘ah* (contentment), *al-karīm* (generosity), and *al-akhlaq al-karīmah* (good character). The findings were synthesized to formulate a conceptual framework for *Prophetic Food* as a local food literacy movement, one that not only promotes health and ecological awareness but also fosters character formation grounded in the noble practices of the Prophet Muhammad.

3. Results

Out of 173 initially identified records, 36 articles were screened in full, and 15 met the inclusion criteria for further analysis. These studies represented diverse contexts, ranging from school-based nutrition programs and value-oriented food education to local food system initiatives. A detailed summary of all reviewed articles is provided in Table 1. Rather than describing each study individually, this section presents a thematic synthesis to capture patterns, trends, and research gaps across the body of literature. The relevant previous research and articles reviewed in this study are as follows:

Table 1. List of reviewed articles

No	Relevant Research	Differences	Similarities
1	Sekiyama, M. et al. (2018). School Feeding Programs in Indonesia. <i>Japanese Society Of Nutrition And Dietetics</i> , 76(1), 86–97. https://doi.org/10.5264/eiyogakuzashi.76.S86	Does not explicitly discuss religious or cultural aspects. Focuses more on evaluating nutrition programs.	Focuses on school-based programs or models for elementary students, both in food provision (school feeding) and local food literacy.
2	Acharya, M. & Acharya, K. P. (2020). Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions on Eating Behaviour of Primary School Students: A Qualitative. <i>Journal of Health Promotion</i> , 8(6), 119–128. https://doi.org/10.3126/jhp.v8i0.32991	Focuses on exploring teacher and parent perceptions of elementary students' eating behavior using qualitative methods to understand influencing factors.	Highlights the importance of education and socialization in shaping children's healthy eating behaviors.
3	Herlina, Nugroho, & Rahman. (2020). Implementation of Food Literacy in the Indonesian School Curriculum. <i>Jurnal Pendidikan dan Gizi</i> , 12(2), 75–88.	Evaluates how food literacy has been implemented in the curriculum and its success.	Discusses food literacy as part of educational efforts to develop students' awareness and healthy food consumption habits.
4	Rohin, Sagar, & Ridzwan. (2020). Knowledge, attitude, and practice of prophetic food consumption among students of Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Terengganu. <i>International Food Research Journal</i> , 27(6), 1010–1018.	Evaluates the knowledge, attitude, and practices of prophetic food consumption among university students to understand how prophetic values are adopted in their eating habits.	Discusses prophetic food based on the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), though focusing on a different population and development aspect.
5	Sumarto & Tajrifani, A. (2020). Development of Food Products from Local Ingredients for Emergency Disaster Buffer Stock in Tasikmalaya, West Java. <i>Jurnal Dialog Penanggulangan Bencana</i> , 11(2), 179–185.	Focuses on practical food product development for emergency use, not literacy or understanding.	Based in the Indonesian context with specific attention to the potential of local food development.
6	Ahmad, A. N. et al. (2021). Positioning Halalan Toyyiban in the Halal Food System: Production, Processing, Consumption, Marketing, Logistics, and Waste Management. <i>Journal Halalsphere</i> , 1(2), 17–40.	Discusses the food system comprehensively from production to waste management.	Focuses on halalan toyyiban principles, whereas this study uses prophetic values, including concepts of halal and wholesome food.
7	Dewi, N. Y. & Agustina, A. (2021). Halalan Thoyyiban: Theory and Implementation of Food Product Consumers. <i>IJSE</i> , 4(1), 179–189.	Does not specifically address local food; instead, it focuses on consumer understanding of halalan toyyiban.	Aims to enhance consumer awareness of halalan toyyiban; this research similarly aims to raise student awareness through local food literacy based on prophetic values.
8	Enthoven, L. & Van Den Broeck, G. (2021). Local food systems: Reviewing two decades of research. <i>Agricultural Systems</i> , 193(10), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agsy.2021.103226	Uses a literature review approach to summarize two decades of research on local food systems.	Highlights the importance of local food for sustainability. This article discusses Local Food Systems (LFS), while this study connects them to local food literacy grounded in prophetic values.

9	Hernandez, K. et al. (2021). Toward a common understanding of food literacy: A pedagogical framework. <i>Canadian Food Studies</i> , 8(4), 7–25. https://doi.org/10.15353/cfs-rcea.v8i4.467	Presents a general pedagogical framework for food literacy without specific cultural or religious values.	Uses an educational approach to enhance understanding and awareness of healthy, quality food.
10	Ibrahim & Sartika. (2021). Factors Related to the Incidence of Diarrhea in Elementary Students in Lebak District, Banten, Indonesia. <i>IJPHN</i> , 15(1), 6–9. https://doi.org/10.7454/ijphn.v2i1.5338	Primarily focuses on factors related to diarrhea among students, emphasizing hygiene and diet-related health issues.	For elementary school students, it focuses on health and food literacy, influencing student well-being.
11	Kelly, R. & Nash, R. (2021). Food Literacy Interventions in Elementary Schools: A Systematic Scoping Review. <i>Journal of School Health</i> , 6(21), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.13053	Conducts a systematic review of existing interventions without focusing on religious concepts.	Reviews various interventions aimed at improving children's understanding of food, nutrition, and healthy eating patterns, aligning with the mission of the "Prophetic Food" model.
12	Laitinen, A. L. et al. (2021). Food education in Finnish primary education – defining themes and learning objectives using the Delphi technique. <i>British Food Journal</i> , 123(13), 404–427. https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-02-2021-0174	Universal in nature without religious elements, while your dissertation highlights spiritual and religious moral values in food education. The "Prophetic Food" model emphasizes Islamic values such as moderation, blessing, and sustainability.	Defines themes and learning objectives in food education in primary schools using the Delphi approach, relevant to how food literacy is designed to deliver effective messages, in line with this study's aim to enhance food literacy, especially locally based.
13	Satria, A. D. (2021). Halal Food in the Perspective of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) in Palangka Raya City. <i>Profetika: Jurnal Studi Islam</i> , 22(2), 308–313.	Focuses on MUI's policy and perspective on halal food in Palangka Raya, with a more normative and descriptive approach.	Aims to provide a deeper public (or student) understanding of halal food, though with different target audiences.
14	Xu, Y. Y. et al. (2021). Integrating nutrition into the education sector in low- and middle-income countries: A framework for a win-win collaboration. <i>Maternal & Child Nutrition</i> , 17(3), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.13156	Proposes a framework for integrating nutrition into education in low- and middle-income countries without emphasizing cultural or religious aspects.	Develops an approach or framework to align education and nutrition literacy, though with a different focus.
15	Yahya, Y. K. et al. (2021). Education of Healthy and Balanced Food in the Modern Boarding School, Darussalam Gontor Canteen Campus 2. <i>Journal of Health Community Service</i> , 1(1), 17–24.	Does not explicitly link healthy food education with local food literacy or prophetic values.	Aims to encourage healthy consumption behavior and enhance understanding of the importance.

3.1 School-based interventions for behavior change

Several studies confirmed schools as strategic settings for shaping children's dietary practices. School feeding programs demonstrated effectiveness in improving access to nutritious food and students' nutritional status (Sekiyama et al., 2018). Interventions incorporating teachers' and parents' perspectives highlighted the crucial role of education and socialization in cultivating healthy eating habits among children (Acharya & Acharya, 2020).

The integration of food literacy into national curricula has also been explored, revealing its potential to foster awareness, though implementation challenges persist (Herlina et al., 2020). Systematic reviews concluded that school-based interventions significantly improve knowledge, attitudes, and practices, though program sustainability remains a challenge (Kelly & Nash, 2021;

Xu et al., 2021). Studies in LMICs emphasized the importance of aligning nutrition with education for greater impact (Xu et al., 2021).

Nonetheless, limitations such as limited parental involvement, scarce school resources, and inconsistent canteen policies hinder effectiveness (Ibrahim & Sartika, 2021). These findings underscore the need for more comprehensive and sustainable frameworks to optimize schools' role in children's food literacy development.

3.2 Integration of religious and ethical values

Several studies emphasized that incorporating religious or ethical dimensions strengthened program acceptance and impact. Research in Malaysia found that students' knowledge and practice of prophetic food correlated with positive health and spiritual outcomes, although the study focused on university students (Rohin et al., 2020). The concept of *halalan thoyyiban* has been positioned as central in the food system, encompassing production, processing, and consumption (Ahmad et al., 2021; Dewi & Agustina, 2021).

At the institutional level, the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) has contributed to shaping public awareness on halal food standards, further reinforcing the importance of ethical food consumption (Satria, 2021). However, existing studies primarily adopt normative or consumer-centered perspectives, with limited attention to school curricula. Thus, the integration of prophetic values into elementary school food education remains partial and underdeveloped.

3.3 Local food systems as contexts for sustainability education

The third theme underscored the role of local food systems in food education and sustainability. A review of two decades of research highlighted local food as a key element of sustainable systems and cultural identity (Enthoven & Broeck, 2021). In the Indonesian context, the development of local food products has also been linked to disaster preparedness and resilience (Sumarto & Tajrifani, 2020).

Other studies connected local food systems with sustainability education, emphasizing students' understanding of ecological, cultural, and economic dimensions of food (Hernandez et al., 2021). In Finland, a curriculum development study using the Delphi method identified themes and objectives that included integrating local food into primary food education (Laitinen et al., 2021). These findings suggest that local food-based approaches enrich experiential learning while fostering ecological awareness and cultural pride from an early age.

3.4 Research gap

The synthesis demonstrates that while school-based interventions, religious/ethical integration, and local food system approaches yield promising outcomes, no study has systematically conceptualized and tested *Prophetic Food* as a curriculum framework for elementary food literacy. This article addresses that gap by proposing a conceptual framework that embeds prophetic values into local food literacy domains.

4. Discussion

The review identified three pathways for food literacy in elementary schools: school-based interventions, integration of religious/ethical values, and local food systems as sustainability contexts. This section discusses these findings through the lens of Prophetic Food, an integrative framework that unites nutritional, ethical, spiritual, and cultural dimensions.

4.1 School-Based interventions and prophetic eating manners

Research on school feeding, canteen programs, and parental involvement confirmed schools as strategic spaces for dietary behavior change (Sekiyama et al., 2018; Kelly & Nash, 2021). Prophet Muhammad's eating manners highlight three essential dimensions: simplicity, cleanliness, and communal sharing. These values not only guide individual behavior but also provide a strong foundation for food literacy education in schools. First, the principle of simplicity is reflected in the Prophet's moderation and avoidance of excessive consumption. He emphasized that the son of Adam should eat just enough to straighten his back, with a division of one-third food, one-third drink, and one-third breath. This teaching illustrates *al-qona'ah* (contentment and moderation), encouraging children to eat in balanced portions and avoid wasteful habits (Zahra et al., 2024).

Second, the emphasis on cleanliness (*al-thohārah*) is evident in practices such as eating with the right hand, rinsing the mouth after meals, and ensuring food is pure and wholesome. These habits foster both physical hygiene and spiritual purity, aligning with Islamic dietary guidelines that stress the importance of consuming *halalan thoyyiban* food (Kartika et al., 2023). By embedding such practices into school routines, students not only learn about healthy eating but also internalize the value of cleanliness as part of faith and daily conduct. Third, the value of communal sharing (*al-karīm*) is embodied in the Prophet's encouragement to eat together, which fosters solidarity, gratitude, and blessings in meals. The saying, "Food for one suffices two, food for two suffices four," underscores the social dimension of eating and the importance of generosity and togetherness (Rohin et al., 2020). This communal aspect of eating directly supports school-based programs that use food as a medium for character education, nurturing students' empathy and social responsibility.

According to El-mufidati (2018), there are 15 eating etiquettes and manners exemplified by Prophet Muhammad *Shollallohu 'Alaihi Wasallam*, some of which are outlined in the table below.

Table 2. Eating etiquette and manners of Prophet Muhammad *Shollallohu 'Alaihi Wasallam*

No.	Adab / Etiquette	Explanation and Relevant Hadiths (in English)
1	Performing <i>Wudhu</i> Before Eating	It is narrated that Prophet Muhammad performed wudu before eating. He said: "Whoever wants his goodness to be increased by Allah, let him perform wudu when food is served and when it is lifted." (Narrated by Ibn Majah and Al-Baihaqi). The Prophet said: " <i>The blessing of food is in performing wudu before and after it.</i> " (Narrated by Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi).
2	Saying Bismillah Before Eating	The Prophet said: " <i>When one of you eats, let him say: 'In the name of Allah (Bismillah)'. If he forgets to say it at the beginning, let him say: 'Bismillahi fii awwalihi wa akhirihi' (In the name of Allah at its beginning and its end).</i> " (Narrated by Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi).
3	Saying Alhamdulillah After Eating	After eating or drinking, the Prophet said: " <i>Praise be to Allah who has fed us and given us drink and made us Muslims.</i> " (Narrated by Abu Dawud).
4	Rinsing the Mouth After Eating	It is narrated that after finishing eating, the Prophet rinsed his mouth. " <i>We chewed and ate with him, then he asked for water and rinsed his mouth, so we did the same.</i> " (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).
5	Eating and Drinking with the Right Hand	The Prophet said: " <i>Say Bismillah and eat with your right hand.</i> " (Narrated by Al-Bukhari from Umar bin Abi Salamah).
6	Eating with Three Fingers (Indicating Not Being Greedy)	Ka'ab bin Malik narrated: " <i>The Prophet used to eat with three fingers and lick his hand before wiping it.</i> " (Narrated by Muslim).
7	Taking Food Closest to You	The Prophet once advised young Umar bin Salamah: " <i>Say Bismillah, eat with your right hand, and eat what is near you.</i> " (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

No.	Adab / Etiquette	Explanation and Relevant Hadiths (in English)
8	Not Eating While Reclining	Abu Juhaifah narrated that the Prophet said: <i>"I do not eat while reclining."</i> (Narrated by Al-Bukhari).
9	Not Complaining About Food	Abu Hurairah said: <i>"The Prophet never complained about food. If he liked it, he ate it; if he disliked it, he left it."</i> (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).
10	Not Leaving Fallen Food	The Prophet said: <i>"If a morsel falls, pick it up, remove dirt, then eat it. Do not leave it for Satan. Do not wipe your hand with a cloth before licking your fingers, for no one knows where the blessing lies."</i> (Narrated by Muslim).
11	Avoiding Excessiveness in Eating	The Prophet said: <i>"No container is worse to fill than the stomach. It is sufficient for the son of Adam to eat a few morsels to keep his back straight. If necessary, one third for food, one third for drink, and one third for breathing."</i> (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi and Ahmad).
12	Drinking in Sips and Saying Bismillah	The Prophet said: <i>"Do not drink like the camel, but drink in two or three sips. Say Bismillah when you begin and praise Him when you finish."</i> (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi).
13	Not Breathing Into the Drinking Vessel	Abu Qatadah reported: <i>"The Prophet forbade breathing or blowing into the vessel."</i> (Narrated by Muslim).
14	Not Eating or Drinking While Standing	Qotadah narrated from Anas that the Prophet forbade drinking while standing. When asked about eating, Anas replied: <i>"It is worse and more improper."</i> (Narrated by Muslim, At-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, and Ahmad).
15	Eating in Congregation (Together)	Eating together is a Sunnah of the Prophet that encourages brotherhood and gratitude and prevents individualism. The Prophet said: <i>"Food for one suffices two, food for two suffices four, and food for four suffices eight."</i> (Narrated by Muslim). He also said: <i>"Eat together and do not separate, for indeed blessings are with the group."</i> (Narrated by Ibn Majah).

Finally, modern perspectives reaffirm that these prophetic practices are not merely ritualistic but also beneficial for health and well-being. Scientific studies highlight how moderation, hygiene, and mindful eating, values deeply embedded in Prophetic Food, contribute to improved nutrition, emotional balance, and sustainable food habits (Irfan et al., 2023). Integrating these values into local food literacy programs thus enriches education beyond nutritional knowledge, shaping students' moral and character development in line with Islamic prophetic values.

4.2 Religious and ethical values as reinforcements

Several studies highlight *halalan thoyyiban* as the foundation of food systems, ensuring that food is lawful in its source and wholesome in its quality (Ahmad et al., 2021). His perspective is reinforced by Dewi & Agustina (2021), who argue that the concept goes beyond legality (*halal*) to encompass *thoyyib*, meaning clean, beneficial, and ethically produced. In prophetic terms, this principle directly connects with *al-thohārah* (cleanliness) and *al-'adl* (justice), emphasizing both the purity of food and fairness in how it is obtained and consumed.

Building on this, Harahap & Azmi (2019) articulate five prophetic values, justice (*al-'adl*), cleanliness (*al-thohārah*), moderation (*al-qona'ah*), generosity (*al-karīm*), and morality (*al-akhlaq al-karimah*), as a moral compass for Muslim consumption patterns. Each of these values offers a concrete framework for food literacy education. For instance, moderation (*al-qona'ah*) directly addresses food waste by teaching students to consume only what is necessary (Rahayu, 2019). Meanwhile, generosity (*al-karīm*) manifests in the prophetic encouragement to share meals with others, nurturing empathy and social cohesion (Solehah et al., 2021). Finally, morality (*al-akhlaq al-karimah*) is expressed in etiquettes such as saying *bismillah* before eating and *alhamdulillah* after meals, embedding gratitude and worship into daily consumption (El-mufidati, 2018).

Integrating these prophetic values into school-based food literacy programs expands the scope of education beyond nutrition knowledge alone. As Irfan et al. (2023) underline, prophetic

dietary practices are not only spiritually meaningful but also scientifically linked to health benefits. This integration ensures that food literacy encompasses ethical and spiritual dimensions often overlooked in nutrition-based programs, thereby cultivating learners who are not only nutritionally literate but also morally grounded and socially responsible.

4.3 Local food systems and prophetic wisdom on sustainability

Recent research underscores the vital role of local food systems in advancing sustainability, strengthening cultural identity, and promoting resilient communities (Enthoven & Broeck, 2021). In educational settings, local food also provides opportunities for students to engage with food traditions as part of learning objectives, linking dietary practices to cultural heritage and identity formation (Purnomo et al., 2023).

This contemporary discourse resonates strongly with prophetic wisdom. Historical accounts and studies reveal that Prophet Muhammad *shallallohu' Alaihi Wasallam* consistently consumed simple, locally available, and seasonal foods, such as dates, goat's milk, whole-wheat bread, and fresh produce (Fitriani, 2022). His eating practices reflected not only health-conscious choices but also a deep awareness of living in harmony with the local environment.

From a value-based perspective, these habits embody *al-qona'ah* (contentment and moderation), as the Prophet avoided extravagance and emphasized sufficiency in consumption (Niri, 2021). At the same time, they illustrate *al-akhlaq al-karimah* (noble character), since appreciating and utilizing local food resources fosters gratitude, humility, and respect for God's provisions (Usman et al., 2024). Embedding these values in school-based food literacy programs encourages students to respect and preserve local food sources while cultivating sustainable habits. As Akar & Amri (2023) affirm, prophetic dietary practices also align with modern nutritional science, offering both spiritual depth and physical well-being. Thus, integrating local food literacy with prophetic exemplars not only supports environmental sustainability but also nurtures moral and cultural identity among elementary school students.

4.4 Conceptual synthesis: prophetic food as an integrative framework

Taken together, existing food literacy approaches often appear fragmented. Many school-based interventions have prioritized nutritional outcomes, such as improving children's dietary knowledge and eating habits, but they tend to overlook the deeper cultural and ethical dimensions of. Similarly, religious integration in education has been attempted, but in practice it is often partial, limited to discussions of halal status rather than embedding broader prophetic values in daily habits. On the other hand, local food approaches emphasize sustainability and cultural preservation, yet they frequently neglect the spiritual dimension that connects food with moral formation and worship.

The concept of Prophetic Food offers a novel framework that unites these disparate strands into a cohesive educational model. By grounding food literacy in the five prophetic values, *al-'adl* (justice), *al-thoharah* (cleanliness), *qona'ah* (moderation/contentment), *al-karim* (generosity), and *al-akhlaq al-karimah* (noble character)—this model positions food not merely as a nutritional concern but as a holistic vehicle for intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth (Harahap & Azmi, 2019).

This reconceptualization advances food literacy as an integral educational process, one that nurtures the body through health and nutrition, the soul through gratitude and ethical conduct, culture through valuing local food traditions, and the environment through sustainable practices. In doing so, Prophetic Food bridges gaps in current approaches and provides a comprehensive paradigm for character-based food education in elementary schools.

4.5 Practical implications

Pedagogically, teachers may implement project-based learning, such as a “Sunnah Eating Day,” where students practice prophetic manners, from handwashing (*al-thohārah*) and reciting the basmalah to eating moderately (*qona’ah*) and sharing meals (*al-karīm*). At the policy level, national programs such as *Makan Bergizi Gratis* (MBG) and the *Kurikulum Merdeka* could incorporate modules on local food literacy grounded in prophetic values into character education: such integration bridges national health goals, local food preservation, and moral development in elementary education.

4.6 Limitations and future direction

The limitations of this study are the limited availability of primary empirical sources that specifically test the Prophetic Food framework, as well as language and database limitations (2015–2024). Therefore, we recommend further studies in the form of: (1) a pilot intervention in several elementary schools (including non-Muslim contexts) with a quasi-experimental design; (2) an in-depth qualitative case study to understand implementation factors; and (3) the development of a valid instrument to measure food literacy based on prophetic values.

5. Conclusion and implications

This study concludes that integrating Prophet Muhammad’s *Shollallohu ‘Alaihi Wasallam* eating manners into food literacy education provides a novel and holistic framework that addresses the limitations of existing approaches. Whereas previous models have remained fragmented, focusing narrowly on nutrition, partially incorporating religious elements, or overlooking spirituality in local food initiatives, the concept of Prophetic Food unites these strands into a cohesive paradigm. Grounded in the prophetic values of *al-‘adl* (justice), *al-thohārah* (cleanliness), *qona’ah* (moderation), *al-karīm* (generosity), and *al-akhlaq al-karimah* (noble character), this framework reconceptualizes food literacy as an educational process encompassing physical health, spiritual development, cultural identity, and environmental sustainability.

The contribution of this study lies in advancing the discourse on food literacy by introducing a prophetic-based perspective that enriches theoretical understanding with moral and spiritual dimensions. It positions food not only as a nutritional concern but also as a medium for shaping character, instilling ethical conduct, and preserving cultural traditions. This adds value to the broader scholarship on food education by bridging Islamic ethical teachings with contemporary issues of sustainability and well-being.

The practical implications are equally significant. For schools, Prophetic Food can serve as a pedagogical model that aligns with character education goals, encouraging students to practice cleanliness, moderation, gratitude, and sharing in their daily food habits. For policymakers, integrating prophetic values offers a culturally grounded framework to strengthen national nutrition and local food system initiatives. At the community level, it provides a cultural and religious foundation for promoting healthier, more ethical, and environmentally conscious food practices.

Ultimately, this study underscores that food literacy in elementary schools must extend beyond the cognitive understanding of nutrition to include the ethical, spiritual, and cultural aspects of eating. Prophetic Food thus provides not only a comprehensive educational approach

but also a practical roadmap for fostering resilient, healthy, and morally grounded future generations.

Credit authorship contribution statement

First author: content of local food literacy, data, and prophetic value. **Second Author:** local food literacy, theory of food literacy in elementary education. **Third Author:** prophetic education and data analysis. **Last Author:** Data curation and methodology.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

Ethical Declaration

All participants provided informed consent prior to their involvement in the study. They were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence.

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