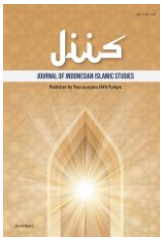
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Living Qur'an The Concept of Halalan Thayyiban in QS. Al-Baqarah Verse 168 in the Provision of Nutritious Food: A Case Study of SPPG Gedung Johor 3

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Abstract

Institutional meal provision raises questions about how the Qur'anic principle of halalan thayyiban relates to everyday food handling and religious practice. This study examines meal provision at SPPG Gedung Johor 3 in relation to Qur'an 2:168 through a Living Qur'an perspective. This descriptive qualitative case study draws on interviews, observation, and documentation concerning operational management, food preparation, distribution, and school or beneficiary representatives. The analysis is organized by service stage and interprets reported practices in relation to halal, thayyib, and Qur'anic reception. The findings describe ingredient inspection, differentiated storage, personal hygiene, separation of raw ingredients from cooked food, menu planning, hygienic packaging, distribution, and evaluation informed by feedback. Collective prayer before work also forms part of the reported routine. These practices indicate alignment with the ethical concern for wholesome food. However, the evidence does not establish that staff explicitly derive operational procedures from Qur'an 2:168. Nor does it independently verify certification coverage, nutritional adequacy, or measurable food safety outcomes. The study contributes a contextual account of meal provision that distinguishes normative alignment from demonstrated Qur'anic reception. It recommends strengthening operational documentation and investigating how staff relate specific decisions to their understanding of the verse. The findings concern one service unit and do not establish the nutritional effectiveness of the wider Free Nutritious Meal Program.

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Introduction

Providing meals for students requires attention to quality throughout the service process, from the receipt of ingredients to the delivery of meals to schools. Food provision must be accompanied by quality control so that nutritional objectives remain inseparable from the protection of beneficiaries. In Indonesia, the Free Nutritious Meal Program (Makan Bergizi Gratis, MBG) is governed by Presidential Regulation No. 115 of 2025 (Republik Indonesia, 2025). Hadinata (2026) identifies food safety, institutional capacity, and accountability as central concerns in the program's implementation. At the service-unit level, the question is how these responsibilities are translated into everyday practice.

From an Islamic perspective, food provision is linked to the principle of halalan thayyiban. Halal denotes permissibility under Islamic law, whereas thayyib directs attention to the wholesomeness and suitability of food. These dimensions are complementary but are not interchangeable. The halal status of ingredients does not, in itself, establish nutritional adequacy or the quality of food handling after preparation. The relationship between religious requirements, food management procedures, and service responsibilities therefore requires closer examination. The normative foundation of this study is is QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 168:

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوْا مِمَّا فِى الْاَرْضِ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًاۖ وَّلَا تَتَّبِعُوْا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِۗ اِنَّهٗ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ

Meaning: *"O mankind, eat of the lawful and good things on earth, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you an open enemy."* (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 168).

Research on halalan thayyiban has extended the discussion of food beyond the identification of permissible ingredients. Drawing on Qur'anic exegesis in the Indonesian archipelago, Mausufi et al. (2023) explain the relationship between wholesome food, cleanliness, safety, nutritional adequacy, and proportionate consumption. Muhamed Ali et al. (2023) examine the relevance of interpretations of halalan thayyiban to food safety, including the importance of food handling. At the systems level, Zainal Arifin et al. (2021) situate the principle across production, distribution, processing, marketing, consumption, and waste recovery. These studies provide a conceptual basis for examining the relationship between religious values and food management.

Related discussions have also developed in education and consumption studies. Daryanto et al. (2025) examine the application of Qur'an 2:168 through food provision and nutrition literacy at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Terpadu Lailatul Qodar. Meanwhile, Zakaria et al. (2024) explore the potential of faith-based approaches to healthy eating education among young people. Md Dahlal's (2021) study of quality management brings together the technical and spiritual dimensions of food management principles. The integration of halal–thayyib values with food services and health education has thus already received scholarly attention. What requires further examination is how these values relate to practice within a particular food production and distribution unit operating under a public service program.

The Living Qur'an approach offers a perspective from which to examine this relationship. Rafiq (2021) emphasizes the relationship between scripture and community, including the transmission and transformation of knowledge and practices that constitute Qur'anic reception. Annas et al. (2024) connect the observation of social phenomena with

an interpretation of the Qur'an's normative values. This framework requires a distinction between the alignment of a practice with a verse's message and evidence that practitioners consciously ground their actions in that verse. Such a distinction is necessary to avoid inferring the internalization of Qur'anic teachings solely from the existence of sound operational procedures.

SPPG Gedung Johor 3 provides a relevant setting for examining these issues. SPPG refers to Satuan Pelayanan Pemenuhan Gizi, a nutrition service unit. Meal provision at this unit encompasses ingredient selection, storage, preparation, packaging, distribution, and evaluation. Service activities are also accompanied by collective prayer before work. The coexistence of technical activities and religious practices provides an opportunity to examine how halalan thayyiban can serve as a framework for interpreting food services. Unlike studies focused on students' consumption or national policy design, this study examines the operational sequence within a single service unit.

This study addresses two questions: how do meal provision practices at SPPG Gedung Johor 3 relate to the dimensions of halal and thayyib, and to what extent can these practices be understood through a Living Qur'an perspective? The study aims to describe food service practices and analyze their relevance to Qur'an 2:168. Its contribution lies in a contextual interpretation of the relationships among food handling, religious routines, and service responsibilities in the SPPG case, while clearly distinguishing normative alignment from demonstrated Qur'anic reception among practitioners.

Method

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study design at SPPG Gedung Johor 3. The unit of analysis was meal provision within the MBG program, including ingredient handling, production, distribution, and supporting service activities. The case study design was used to understand practices within a single service unit, rather than to measure treatment effects or produce statistical generalizations. This focus on processes and meanings is consistent with the characteristics of qualitative research described by Malahati et al. (2023).

Primary data were obtained through interviews, observation, and documentation relating to meal provision. Information sources encompassed management personnel, kitchen and distribution staff, and school representatives or representatives of the beneficiaries. Interviews elicited accounts of operational procedures, training, supervision, menu planning, and responses to the meals provided. Observation concerned food handling and work routines, while documentation supplied supporting information about service delivery. All three techniques addressed the same issue: meal provision practices in the case under investigation.

Secondary sources comprised Qur'an 2:168, academic studies on halalan thayyiban and the Living Qur'an, and regulations governing the MBG program. The conceptual discussion of halal–thayyib drew on the exegetical analyses presented by Mausufi et al. (2023) and Muhamed Ali et al. (2023). These studies served as interpretive references rather than substitutes for field evidence. The Living Qur'an framework was used to examine the relationship between social practices and the values expressed in the verse, while recognizing the need for evidence of practitioners' own interpretations, as emphasized in scholarship on Qur'anic reception (Rafiq, 2021).

The analysis presented in this article is descriptive and interpretive. Information about service activities is organized by operational stage and presented as findings on ingredient handling, hygiene and preparation, menu planning, distribution, and evaluation. These patterns are then interpreted in relation to halal, thayyib, and service responsibilities. Statements about procedures are distinguished from evidence derived from food quality measurements. Likewise, religious routines are distinguished from explicit evidence that Qur'an 2:168 informs decision-making. The analysis does not establish certification status, calculate nutritional adequacy, or test the program's effectiveness in improving beneficiaries' health.

Results

Service Organization and Work Routines

Meal provision at SPPG Gedung Johor 3 was reported to involve a division of responsibilities among operational management, food preparation, and distribution personnel. Accounts of service delivery indicated the use of standard operating procedures (SOPs) to guide ingredient receipt, storage, staff hygiene, preparation, packaging, and supervision. These SOPs provided a basis for carrying out tasks across interconnected operational stages.

Staff received training before taking up their duties, followed by periodic instruction in personal hygiene, sanitation, food safety, contamination prevention, and SOP implementation. Reported training activities included presentations, practical exercises, and assessments of understanding. These accounts indicate efforts to prepare staff to follow procedures, but they do not provide measurements of changes in competence before and after training.

Work routines also included collective prayer before activities began. This practice was reported to have been in place since the unit commenced operations. The finding establishes the presence of religious practice in the workplace. However, the accounts presented do not include individual staff explanations of how this prayer relates to their understanding of Qur'an 2:168.

Receipt and Storage of Ingredients

Ingredient control began upon receipt. Inspections covered freshness, cleanliness, physical condition, expiration dates, and suitability for preparation. Damaged, contaminated, or otherwise unacceptable ingredients were reportedly rejected. These initial checks formed part of the kitchen's operational management responsibilities before ingredients entered the production process.

Storage arrangements distinguished between dry ingredients, fresh ingredients, and ingredients requiring refrigeration. This classification was intended to match handling practices to ingredient characteristics and reduce the likelihood of deterioration or contamination. The findings indicate attention to storage temperature requirements, but do not include temperature logs, storage durations, or microbiological test results.

Halal considerations were also mentioned in accounts of service delivery, including reference to halal certification issued by BPJPH (Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal). However, the certificate's identifying details, holder, and product coverage were not included in the evidence analyzed in this article. The account is therefore treated as

information about the provider's attention to halal assurance, rather than independent verification of the certification status of the entire service.

Staff Hygiene and Food Preparation

Before preparation, staff inspected and washed ingredients, cleaned equipment and work areas, and assembled the necessary supplies. Personal hygiene practices included handwashing and the use of protective workwear, such as aprons, head coverings, masks, and gloves where required. Staff and equipment cleanliness were described as integral to the preparatory activities accompanying food production.

During preparation, raw ingredients were separated from cooked food. Staff attended to equipment cleanliness, kitchen sanitation, and waste management. Cooking time and temperature were also identified as considerations. However, the findings do not include specific temperatures, cooking durations, or the frequency of procedural deviations. The results therefore describe reported practices and operational priorities without establishing compliance levels through a structured audit.

Menu Planning and Meal Distribution

Menu planning took account of beneficiaries' ages and circumstances, ingredient diversity, and the provision of carbohydrates, protein, fats, vitamins, and minerals. The availability of local ingredients was also considered. These accounts indicate an emphasis on menu variety and balance, but are not accompanied by calculations of energy and nutrient content per serving. Attention to nutrition is therefore distinguished from evidence that each menu meets the needs of the intended beneficiary group.

Cooked meals were packaged with attention to hygiene and placed in covered containers before distribution. Handling during packaging and delivery was intended to preserve the condition of meals until they reached beneficiaries. Distribution was treated as part of service control after meals left the kitchen, rather than as an activity separate from production.

Supervision and Service Feedback

Supervision covered production conditions, environmental cleanliness, food quality, and sanitation practices. Evaluation after delivery considered taste, aroma, texture, appearance, cleanliness, and portion suitability. Beneficiary feedback was collected to inform improvements. Providers reported that complaints or quality concerns prompted evaluation intended to improve subsequent service delivery.

Table 1 summarizes the practices reported at each operational stage. Together, these practices indicate that attention to food quality began with ingredient receipt and continued through post-distribution evaluation. The data do not establish menu acceptance rates, complaint frequencies, or the effectiveness of corrective action, as these indicators were not reported quantitatively.

Table 1. Summary of Meal Provision Practices at SPPG Gedung Johor 3

Stage	Reported Practices	Service Focus
Ingredient receipt	Inspection of freshness, physical condition, cleanliness, and expiration dates; rejection of unsuitable ingredients.	Ingredient suitability before preparation.

Storage	Separation of ingredients by type and refrigeration requirements.	Handling appropriate to ingredient characteristics.
Preparation and cooking	Staff hygiene, equipment cleaning, and separation of raw ingredients from cooked food.	Process hygiene and contamination prevention.
Menu planning	Consideration of beneficiaries' ages and circumstances, nutrient variety, and local ingredients.	Suitability of planned menus.
Packaging and distribution	Hygienic packaging and use of covered containers.	Preservation of meal condition during delivery.
Evaluation	Assessment of sensory quality and portions, and collection of beneficiary feedback.	Improvement of subsequent service delivery.

Source: Synthesis of the study findings. The table summarizes reported procedures rather than compliance audit results.

Discussion

Halalan Thayyiban as a Framework for Interpreting Food Services

The findings on ingredient receipt, storage, hygiene, and preparation identify practices relevant to the thayyib dimension. Their relevance lies in efforts to maintain the suitability of food throughout service delivery. This interpretation is consistent with Muhamed Ali et al.'s (2023) discussion of food handling within halalan thayyiban. Ingredient inspection and the separation of raw ingredients from cooked food can be interpreted as evidence of attention to process quality. Nevertheless, this conceptual alignment does not establish that all risks have been effectively controlled.

The relationship between halal and thayyib should be explained without conflating the two. Halal concerns the permissibility of ingredients and processes under Islamic law, while thayyib adds consideration of the wholesomeness of food for its recipients. Research on Qur'anic exegesis in the Indonesian archipelago indicates that food wholesomeness also relates to suitability for individual needs and proportionate consumption (Mausufi et al., 2023). In this case, adapting menus to beneficiary groups is relevant to that dimension. Claims of nutritional adequacy, however, require calculations of menu composition and portion size that cannot be replaced by general statements about balanced meals.

Accounts of halal certification likewise require careful interpretation. A claim of certification may indicate institutional attention to halal assurance, but conclusions about its coverage must be grounded in the relevant document. In this study, certification status has not been verified through the certificate's identifying details and scope. Distinguishing providers' accounts from documentary verification allows the argument to remain proportionate to the evidence. Halal assurance is therefore treated as an area requiring further investigation, whereas descriptions of hygiene and food handling can be analyzed on the basis of reported practices.

Qur'an 2:168 provides normative guidance concerning lawful and wholesome food. The verse is not formulated as a list of technical kitchen procedures. Its relationship to contemporary food services is developed through reasoning that connects its values with providers' responsibilities. From this perspective, maintaining ingredient quality, exercising care during preparation, and attending to beneficiaries' needs are domains of practice that can be examined through halal–thayyib principles. This reading constitutes an analytical interpretation of the findings, rather than a determination that an institution has fulfilled every requirement of the verse.

Distinguishing Normative Alignment from Qur'anic Reception

The Living Qur'an perspective places the relationship among texts, practitioners, and practices at the center of inquiry. Rafiq's (2021) framework allows researchers to trace how Qur'anic knowledge is received and transformed into community routines. At SPPG Gedung Johor 3, collective prayer provides evidence of religious practice within work activities. Prayer alone, however, does not explain how staff understand halal and thayyib, who introduced these understandings, or whether the verse informs particular operational decisions.

Two levels of interpretation should therefore be distinguished. First, food handling procedures may be assessed as consistent with the concern for wholesome food expressed in Qur'an 2:168. Second, concluding that these procedures constitute a conscious reception of the verse requires direct accounts from practitioners and evidence linking interpretation to action. The evidence presented more strongly supports the first level. Explanation at the second level remains limited because the study does not present interview excerpts demonstrating how the verse is interpreted or operational documents that explicitly refer to it.

This distinction clarifies the contribution of Living Qur'an scholarship to the study of public services. Researchers can relate social phenomena to normative values, as discussed by Annas et al. (2024), while avoiding the automatic endorsement of all institutional practices. In this case, religious practices and food handling procedures coexist in the same workplace, but their relationship has not been fully established. A more defensible interpretation is that service practices align with halal–thayyib values and provide a basis for further investigation of Qur'anic reception among staff.

This interpretation also avoids causal conclusions unsupported by the data. Procedural compliance may be associated with training, supervision, the allocation of responsibilities, institutional requirements, or religious beliefs. The study has not differentiated the contribution of each factor. It therefore cannot establish that Qur'anic values directly generated all operational procedures. The value of the case lies in the intersection of professional practice and potential religious meaning, with the limits of that explanation explicitly acknowledged.

Service Quality as a Responsibility Throughout the Process

Mapping the operational stages shows that attention to quality is distributed across several points in service delivery. Ingredient receipt, storage, preparation, and distribution each entail responsibilities that are not fulfilled simply because the preceding stage has been completed. These findings can be interpreted alongside Zainal Arifin et al.'s (2021) food systems approach, which situates halalan thayyiban within a sequence of interconnected activities. The SPPG case contributes an account of these relationships in institutional meal provision, with particular attention to the transfer of responsibility from the kitchen to recipients.

From a management perspective, religious values acquire an operational expression when accompanied by clear responsibilities and traceable inspection mechanisms. Md Dahlal (2021) links halal–thayyib quality principles to technical and spiritual considerations. In this case, collective prayer can be discussed as part of the religious environment, while ingredient inspection and service evaluation concern operational responsibility. These

elements can be brought together through the notion of amanah, or entrusted responsibility, in service delivery. Their successful implementation must nevertheless be assessed through evidence of practice, rather than the presence of religious symbols or routines alone.

The findings on training and SOPs identify institutional means of guiding staff behavior. The availability of training does not, however, demonstrate that all staff consistently apply what they have learned. Similarly, written procedures or accounts of procedures are not equivalent to compliance during every production activity. A stronger assessment requires implementation records, supervisory findings, and follow-up when deviations are identified. This implication concerns an evaluation need arising from the findings; it does not establish that particular deviations occurred at the study site.

Beneficiary feedback extends oversight beyond production to recipients' experience of the service. Assessments of taste, aroma, texture, and portion size help identify meal acceptance. Sensory acceptance, however, serves a different purpose from food safety testing or nutritional calculations. Recipient feedback should therefore be treated as one source of evaluation that complements technical supervision. Distinguishing these evidentiary functions prevents beneficiary satisfaction from becoming the sole basis for claims about overall service quality.

Situating the Findings within Education and Nutrition Service Research

Daryanto et al. (2025) examine halal–thayyib in a madrasah setting through food provision, teachers' and students' understandings, and nutrition literacy activities. The present study extends attention to the service unit responsible for production and distribution. The difference lies in the unit of analysis: consumption habits and learning concern recipients, whereas ingredient handling and continuity across operational stages concern providers. These domains are interrelated because both food service quality and recipients' understanding shape the context of consumption.

Zakaria et al. (2024) discuss the potential of dietary education that integrates religious beliefs. In relation to the present case, staff education could emphasize that concern for halal status must be accompanied by careful food handling. This is a recommendation for training development, rather than a finding from an intervention conducted at SPPG Gedung Johor 3. Evaluation should assess changes in knowledge and practice separately, so that improved understanding is not automatically equated with greater compliance.

At the policy level, Hadinata (2026) emphasizes the relationship between governance and the potential success of the MBG program. The present case illustrates service procedures relevant to this concern but does not evaluate the program nationally. Wang et al.'s (2021) systematic review shows that the effects of school feeding are investigated using health and educational indicators within specific evaluation designs. The present study includes no comparable measurements. Consequently, providers' attention to menus and food handling cannot establish improvements in beneficiaries' nutritional status, academic achievement, or health.

The practical implication is the need to connect education in religious values with service documentation. Managers can strengthen ingredient traceability, verification of relevant halal documentation, process control records, assessment of menu composition,

and follow-up on complaints. To advance Living Qur'an research, interviews should examine concrete decisions that staff relate to the verse, including the sources of their understanding and the processes through which it becomes habitual. This would help clarify when religious values function primarily as a language of legitimation and when they are actively used to guide action.

Conclusion

Meal provision at SPPG Gedung Johor 3 involves ingredient inspection, differentiated storage, staff hygiene, separation of raw ingredients from cooked food, attention to menu variety, packaging, distribution, and service evaluation. These practices are relevant to the thayyib dimension of Qur'an 2:168 because they direct attention to food suitability throughout service delivery. Halal assurance is also a concern for providers, although the scope of certification cannot be verified from the evidence analyzed.

From a Living Qur'an perspective, collective prayer demonstrates the presence of religious practice in the workplace. The available evidence, however, more strongly supports the alignment of service practices with halal–thayyib values than the conclusion that all SOPs originate in a conscious reception of the verse. This study contributes an interpretation of the relationship between Qur'anic values and service procedures by distinguishing normative alignment, reported practices, and practitioners' meanings that require further investigation.

The study is limited to a single case and a qualitative account of service processes. Limited direct evidence of practitioners' interpretations of the verse, certification documentation, food safety measurements, and nutritional calculations constrains conclusions about both the internalization of values and the program's technical performance. Future research should strengthen the evidentiary trail from interviews and observations, investigate the relationship between the verse and operational decisions, and combine the study of practices with documentary verification and relevant quality indicators. For providers, priorities include connecting halal–thayyib education with operational supervision and accountable evaluation.

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