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The contribution of natural foods to the sustainability of halalan toyyiban lifestyle based on *Maqasid Shari'ah* in Brunei Darussalam

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Abstract

Natural foods are free from additives and modifications. It is considered a nutritious and wholesome food that provides benefits for well-being. However, despite its role in contributing to excellent health, the environment, and the economy, and considering factors such as modernisation, modernised products, and technological advancements, the consumption of natural foods takes a back seat among the population, as the demand for modern and processed foods has increased. Hence, this study examines the significance of natural foods in achieving a sustainable halalan toyyiban lifestyle, aligning it with the objectives of *Maqasid Shari'ah*. This study employs qualitative research through a library research method to demonstrate how natural foods sustain the five goals of *Maqasid Shari'ah*: safeguarding faith, intellect, wealth, health, and offspring. In addition, this study highlights the importance of prioritising natural foods to promote positive health outcomes and overall well-being.

1. Introduction

Natural foods are free from additives and modifications and contain no colour, artificial flavours, or synthetic substances (Braun, 2022). Despite the availability of natural foods in Brunei Darussalam, adults in the country prefer processed and modern foods. As reported by the Ministry of Health in Brunei Darussalam, the preference and consumption of natural food options such as fruits and vegetables come second among most Bruneian adults. This preference was likely due to the significant influx of modern and processed foods imported into Brunei Darussalam. In addition, the consumption of highly processed foods led to an increase in salt intake. This, in turn, resulted in the development of unhealthy behaviours in childhood and adolescence. This trend is concerning and has heightened the risk of developing adverse health outcomes such as communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) (Ministry of Health, 2021).

This has resulted in a rise in treatment costs, which could threaten economic stability. Hence, cost-effective and sustainable measures are essential to address these issues. A simple way to start addressing this is by implementing preventative measures, such as a balanced diet, consuming nutritious foods like natural and healthier options, and engaging in physical activities. Consequently, natural and nutritious foods possess the potential to be the key drivers for achieving a sustainable lifestyle, especially concerning health, environment, and economics. Adopting diets that are consistent with Islamic principles positively impacts overall

well-being. A halal toyyib lifestyle represents a way of living that follows Islamic principles and values, focusing on promoting personal significance and the well-being of oneself and others.

This study examines the contribution of natural foods, particularly nutritious ones, in achieving a sustainable lifestyle and their aligning with *Maqasid Shari'ah*, by linking them to the paradigm of halal and toyyib. This study also links the relationship between natural foods, halal toyyiban, and *Maqasid Shari'ah* to achieve a sustainable lifestyle.

2. Literature review

2.1 The concepts of sustainability

Sustainability is the ability to maintain or support a process over time continuously. The term sustainability is primarily associated with business and policy. However, it seeks to prevent the reduction of natural or physical resources and ensure their availability for an extended period. The concepts of sustainability suggest that without significant changes in the world, the future will be affected by issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution (Mollenkap, 2023). Mollenkap further discussed that the idea of sustainability is often broken down into three pillars: economic, environmental, and social. The author explained that economic sustainability focuses on conserving natural resources used in economic production. Secondly, environmental sustainability emphasises maintaining life support systems, such as the atmosphere and soil, necessary for economic production and

human life. Thirdly, social sustainability focuses on addressing the human impacts of economic systems, including efforts to prevent poverty, hunger, and inequality. Hence, these three dimensions form the foundation of sustainability. It serves as a guide to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

2.2 The concepts of natural foods

Braun (2022) described natural foods as wholesome foods that undergo minimal processing. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (2022), natural foods are products that do not contain artificial flavours, colours, or preservatives. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) defines natural foods as those composed of natural ingredients, produced by nature, and untouched by human intervention.

Jorge *et al.* (2020) identified that various researchers have examined the concepts of natural foods to determine their characteristics. Parks and Ross (2014) and Steptoe, Pollard, and Wardle (1995) indicate that natural foods lack additives and harmful ingredients while containing natural ingredients. Natural foods are either unprocessed (Roininen *et al.*, 1999) or made with organically grown products (Backstrom *et al.*, 2004). There are several characteristics enumerated by Roman, Sanchez-Siles and Siegrist (2017) concerning the production of natural foods, including the absence of potentially harmful substances such as artificial ingredients, preservatives, additives, artificial colours and flavours, residues from pesticides, hormones, pesticides, and genetically modified organisms (GMO).

Galler (2022) has listed the category of foods considered natural, including fresh fruits, vegetables, fresh meat and fish, nuts and seeds, beans, legumes, lentils, quinoa, and whole grain products. Natural foods contain no added compounds, substances, or chemicals. According to Fatmawati (2020), all foods that come from natural substances are halal to be consumed except those that are hazardous such as poisonous, unclean, or intoxicating plants. She asserts that natural foods are considered halal unless there is a verse from the Qur'an or hadith prohibiting it. Supporting this notion, Imam Al-Ghazali stated that halal is generally everything good, and what is on earth is lawful (halal) and must (*mubah*), except for a few prohibited items mentioned in Islamic texts, in cases where there is no explicit prohibition (haram) stated in a religious context, then it returns to the original law, which is a must (*mubah*).

Furthermore, it is not prohibited (haram) to consume natural resources like plants, herbs, or shrubs. However, the ruling changes to unlawful when there is a presence of causing damage to a person's well-being, negatively impacting their intellect, health, or life. For instance, the use of drugs such as marijuana, alcohol (*khamr*), and other intoxicating substances can affect one's intellect. In terms of preserving life, consuming harmful plants can pose a threat. Additionally, one's health can be compromised by consuming medicine in a manner that deviates from the prescribed timing and conditions. The same applies to plants that are contaminated with impurities (*najis*).

2.3 The concept of halal and toyyib

Al-Qardawi (2001) defined halal as permitted, with no restriction imposed, and allowed by the lawgiver, *Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala*. Halal encompasses anything legal, licit, legitimate, permissible, allowable, permitted, admissible, and

non-prohibited. (Ambali & Bakr, 2013). Halal refers to anything permissible for human consumption and unquestionably beneficial to them. Toyyib means excellent and wholesome. Therefore, the term *halalan toyyiban* signifies that it is both permitted and wholesome. According to Hasan and Othman (2018), the concepts of halal and toyyib encompass both the physical and spiritual aspects of food for human consumption. It donates permissible food (Halal) and is beneficial for the body and mind. For requirements: firstly, it must be halal in terms of its origin and production, and secondly, it must be of high quality and beneficial to humanity. If these conditions are not met, the food cannot be considered halal, and Muslims are advised to abstain from it.

Furthermore, before consuming food, it is essential to ensure that it is halal, of high quality, hygienic, and safe. These requirements apply throughout the entire supply chain, from procurement and management to preparation, production, storage, and distribution. Additionally, the concept of toyyib, which goes beyond halal, emphasizes the importance of food being good, delicious, tasty, pure, healthy, and non-detrimental to the body. Toyyib ensures that food is not only permissible but also beneficial for overall well-being. Imam Al-Ghazali believed that what is beneficial to the physical body is also beneficial to the mind and spirit, underscoring the importance of consuming nourishing and wholesome food.

Moreover, in the study by Hasan and Othman (2018), it extends to refer to the findings of Sazelin and Ridzwan, (2011), who assert that the entire supply chain, from the farm to the table, must be taken into consideration when evaluating *halalan toyyiban* food. Additionally, findings from Omar *et al.* (2013), have highlighted the importance of ensuring that food remains uncontaminated throughout the entire production process to safeguard human health. The concept of halal toyyiban relates to the proper procurement of consumables by *Shari'ah* law. Hence, the writings by Hasan and Othman (2018) summarise four characteristics of foods considered halal toyyiban: quality, health, cleanliness, and environmental friendliness.

According to Alzeer *et al.* (2017), the concept of halal encompasses all aspects of human actions and deeds, including eating, wearing, seeing, and talking. The researchers further emphasize that when discussing halal food, it is essential to associate it with another concept, which is toyyib explicitly. Therefore, to classify food as halal, it must also meet the criteria of being toyyib. Arif and Ahmad (2011) define toyyib as something good, pure, clean, wholesome, and of superior quality. Kamali (2021) explains that the term toyyib adds a dimension of quality and natural appeal to products. Hence, when it comes to natural foods, it is not enough for them to be halal; they must also be toyyib. Additionally, Alzeer *et al.* (2018) state that toyyib implies a process that upholds maximum hygiene (cleanliness), minimal contamination (purity), and the absence of potentially toxic, unclean (*najis*), and impure (habit) ingredients. Therefore, all halal food products should adhere to the concepts of toyyibat as they are interconnected. While a food item may be halal, it does not automatically make it toyyib.

2.4 The concept of Maqasid Shari'ah

Maqasid Shari'ah encompasses all aspects of life, including socio-economic and human development. Its purpose is to promote goodness, benefit human beings, and protect them from evil. In defining *Maqasid Syari'ah*, *Maqasid* is the plural form of *maqad* and *maqsid*, derived from the word *qasada*,

which means heading towards a direction (in Arabic). *Shari'ah* refers to the comprehensive guidance provided by *Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala*, encompassing faith, rulings, religious practices, and the opinions of Islamic jurisprudence.

Some scholars have presented various definitions. Allamah Muhammad Tahir ibn 'Asyur defined *Maqasid Shari'ah* as "meanings and wisdom focused by *Sara* comprehensively or in most situations of the revelation of the commandments without the specify in specific Shariah rulings. (*Maqasid Syari'ah al-Islamiyyah*, p.55 in Tarmizi, 2019). According to Dr. Ahmad ar-Raysonuni, *Maqasid Shari'ah* is the purpose set by *Shari'ah* for the welfare of the people (*Nazhariyyatul Maqasid 'indah* Imam as-Syathibi, pg.7 in Tarmizi, 2019).

According to Imam Al-Ghazali, the objectives of *Maqasid Shari'ah* are aimed at promoting the well-being of all humanity, which includes safeguarding their faith (*al-din*), self (*nafs*), intellect (*al-aql*), posterity (*al-nasal*), and wealth (*al-mal*). Those who ensure the preservation of these five objectives serve the public interest and act in a desirable manner. The *Maqasid Shari'ah* encompass the fundamental aims and objectives of Islamic law, typically categorized into five key areas:

- a) Sustaining the Faith (*al-Din*);
- b) Sustaining the Intellect (*al-aql*);
- c) Sustaining the Wealth (*al-mal*);
- d) Sustaining the Health (*al-nafs*); and
- e) Sustaining the Offspring (*al-nasl*).

2.5 The relationship between natural foods, halal and toyyib and *Maqasid Shari'ah*

In Islam, halal and toyyib are two crucial aspects when it comes to choosing foods. Halal pertains to foods that are permissible according to Islamic law, while toyyib emphasizes the quality and wholesomeness of the food. Toyyib must be aligned with the concept of halal. Failing to meet the requirements of both halal and toyyib can result in severe repercussions, including harm to humanity, degradation of societal values and moral integrity, and other unforeseen adverse outcomes. To achieve a halal toyyiban lifestyle regarding food and drink consumption, it is necessary to consume natural foods that are both halal and toyyib.



Figure 1. The relationship of natural foods and halalan toyyiban lifestyle.

Natural foods are an example of a cuisine category that adheres to the halal principle (Dalal & Ahmad, 2019; Mohamad Khairuldin (2018) found the criteria of natural foods that satisfy the four requirements established by the halalan toyyiban, which are they are beneficial to people, produced from allowed sources, free of ingredients that are forbidden by Islamic law, and does not harm the body or mind. Hence, by choosing natural foods, it indicates the person is practicing and implementing a halal lifestyle. Furthermore, Elgharbawy and Azmi (2022), emphasise that food serves a purpose beyond merely satisfying cravings. The consumption of natural foods not only adheres to the principles of halal, but also aligns with

and preserves the five objectives of *Maqasid Shari'ah*, which encompass the preservation of faith, self, intellect, lineage, and wealth. Hence, safeguarding these five objectives of *Maqasid Shari'ah* also becomes a form of worship to *Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala*.



Figure 2. The link between natural foods, halalan toyyiban, and *Maqasid Shari'ah*.

According to *Maqasid Shari'ah*, the consumption of natural foods contributes to the attainment of a sustainable lifestyle. *Maqasid Shari'ah* plays a crucial role in establishing fundamental principles and values related to human welfare. These principles aim to meet people's basic requirements while safeguarding the sanctity of life, which includes protecting individuals from harm and evil. Therefore, the concepts of *Maqasid Shari'ah*, halal, and toyyiban lifestyles and natural foods are interconnected and collectively fulfil the prerequisites for achieving a sustainable lifestyle.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2019) defined sustainable healthy diets as dietary patterns that promote all dimensions of individual health and well-being, have low environmental pressure and impacts and are accessible, affordable, safe, equitable, and culturally acceptable. In Othman *et al.*, (2018), the term sustainable halal lifestyle indicates that halal and toyyib are inherent components of a diet that adheres to *Maqasid Shari'ah* principles (pp. 75-86). *Maqasid Shari'ah* ensures the enhancement of human well-being and the prevention of harm. Therefore, consuming foods in their natural state is essential for building a sustainable halal lifestyle that aligns with the *Maqasid Shari'ah* principle. By making natural foods the foundation of their diet, individuals can embrace healthy eating practices, ethical consumption, environmental preservation, and mindful eating. In doing so, they can align their dietary choices with Islamic law principles and contribute to a more sustainable and peaceful way of life.

3. Materials and methods

This study employs a qualitative method to explore the topic. Given the exploratory nature of the research, a library research approach was adopted, relying on secondary data collection. Thematic content analysis, a qualitative analysis technique, including books, journals, online articles, conference papers, and government documents (e.g., newspapers and official reports) spanning the years 2013 to 2023, was selected for the study. The data selection process focused on sources from countries beyond Brunei Darussalam to provide a broader perspective on the topic. Online journal articles were accessed from accessible databases like ResearchGate and Google Scholar. Additionally, government documents from Brunei Darussalam covering the years 2020 to 2022 were utilized to provide a local context for the study.

The materials were collected and presented using a descriptive method, in which they were thoroughly examined and studied. The selection of materials was based on relevant keywords related to the study, such as sustainability, natural foods, halal and toyyib food, a halal lifestyle, and the contributions of natural foods to *Maqasid Shari'ah*.

Thematic analysis was employed to identify these potential themes, aligning with the primary objective of examining the contributions of natural foods to achieving a sustainable halalan toyyiban lifestyle by linking it with the five objectives of *Maqasid Shari'ah*. The collected materials were presented descriptively, allowing for a comprehensive study. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method utilised to identify patterns or themes within the data, which in this case refers to the text of research papers. Through text analysis, researchers can identify themes related to the contributions of natural foods to the sustainability of the halalan toyyiban lifestyle based on *Maqasid Shari'ah* in Brunei Darussalam. These themes serve as a basis for drawing conclusions and making recommendations based on the research findings.

In conducting the thematic analysis, the researcher used Braun & Clarke's (2006) 6 framework, which is widely acknowledged as the most influential approach, especially in social sciences, as it offers a clear and usable framework for doing thematic analysis. Hence, the thematic analysis process is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. 6-step Framework in thematic analysis

Step 1	Familiar with the data
Step 2	Generate initial Codes
Step 3	Search for themes
Step 4	Review themes
Step 5	Define themes
Step 6	Write-up

The first step involves thoroughly reading and re-reading the transcripts or data articles spanning from 2013 to 2023. Once researchers are familiar with the data, the second step is to create initial codes, which may include sub-codes and focused codes. This process aims to organize the data systematically and meaningfully by condensing large amounts of information into smaller, meaningful units. To ensure the validity of the analysis and minimize any bias, supervisors review the generated codes and themes. Subsequently, themes are developed, representing patterns that capture significant or exciting aspects of the data or research questions. This study identified four themes: Sustainability, halal and tayyib Foods, Challenges and Issues of Natural Foods, and The Contributions of Natural Foods to *Maqasid Shari'ah*. Following the formation of themes, the researcher reviews and refines them, engaging in a process of modification, development, and definition with a brief analysis.

4. Results and discussion

Four key themes were identified while exploring the content related to the studies. The final themes were (1) content related to sustainability, (2) content related to halal and toyyib foods, (3) content related to natural foods, and (4) Content related to the contributions of natural foods to *Maqasid Shari'ah*. These themes respond to our main research objectives: to examine the significance of natural foods in achieving a sustainable halalan toyyiban lifestyle and align it with the objectives of *Maqasid Shari'ah*. The focused codes (FC) and sub-codes (SC) of thematic analysis can be used to expand the knowledge about the content reported in the articles from (2013-2023). The focused codes and sub-codes under each theme are presented in Table 2 – Table 5.

4.1 Theme 1: content related to sustainability

There are four focused codes discussed in the first theme 'sustainability': (1) Sustainable practices benefit the environment, (2) Sustainable economic adaption, (3) Sustainable social impacts, and (4) Negative impacts.

FC 1: Sustainable practices benefit the environment

Recent research proposes how circular economy principles can tackle climate change. Yang *et al.* (2022) propose cost-effective pathways across waste management, energy, and mitigation efforts, aiming for a 45% carbon reduction by 2030 and net zero by 2050. Building on this, Ghosh *et al.* (2020) emphasise greener practices throughout entire supply chains, not just within individual companies. Their work highlights the crucial link between sustainable practices and reduced emissions. Both studies converge on the key goals: reducing resource consumption, minimizing waste, and achieving a cleaner environment (Environment, 2021). By implementing their strategies, we can pave the way for a more sustainable future for all.

FC 2: Sustainable economic adaptation

Sustainability's "triple bottom line" - social well-being, economic growth, and ecological health - demands careful navigation, especially in climate change. (Prurvis *et al.*, 2019). Adapting to new realities requires infrastructure and behaviour shifts, often involving costly technologies and resilient systems (US EPA *et al.*, 2016). Minimizing these costs and their community impacts is crucial (Hub, 2020).

However, tackling climate change also opens doors to green-tech and sustainable practices, presenting economic opportunities. Balancing these economic realities with social and environmental well-being demands collaboration and strategic planning to ensure everyone thrives in a sustainable future.

FC 3: Sustainable social impact

While environmental and economic factors are crucial, true sustainability extends beyond them. Businesses committed to this ideal recognize the importance of social impact, actively contributing to the goals of the Social Sustainability and Inclusion Global Practice (SSI). This translates to fostering inclusive societies where everyone feels valued and empowered, alongside building resilient communities prepared to face future challenges. In essence, they understand that a sustainable future requires a holistic approach, addressing the well-being of both people and the planet (World Bank Group, 2020).

FC 4: Negative impact

The ecosystem is imbalanced due to overexploitation of fisheries, livestock, water, and energy, climate changes, and the ability to produce foods in line with competition over land. The increasing demand for halal products and services may increase resource production and consumption (Nordin *et al.*, 2022).

Table 2 : The focused codes and sub-codes under the theme sustainable

Extracts of Data	Sub-Codes Identified	Focused Codes	Themes
1) Circular economy strategies for combating climate change and addressing environmental issues (Yang <i>et al.</i> , 2022) 2) Sustainable practices strive to mitigate resource consumption, minimize waste production and alleviate pollution, thereby fostering a cleaner and healthier environment (Environment, 2021) 3) The management of carbon footprint within sustainable supply chains where it underscores the importance of adopting greener practices both internally and across supply chains to reduce emissions (Ghosh <i>et al.</i> , 2020)	- Sustainable practices - Resource consumption mitigation - Waste production minimization - Pollution alleviation - Greener practices adoption - Carbon footprint management - Sustainable supply chains	(1) Sustainable Practices benefit the environment	
1) The concept of sustainability is often symbolized by three intersecting circles, known as the three pillars: social, economic, and environmental sustainability, which aims to balance economic growth with social well-being and ecological health (Prurvis <i>et al.</i> , 2019) 2) The economic aspects of climate change adaptation and mitigation involve adjusting our behaviour and adapting infrastructure to cope with changing weather patterns and the timing of climate change impacts on the economy and their differential effect on various groups (US EPA, OAR, OAP, CPPD, 2016) 3) Cost-effective adaptation that balances economic considerations with environmental and social impact (Hub, 2020)	- Economic aspects of climate change adaptation and mitigation - Behavior adjustment and infrastructure adaptation - Differential effects on various groups - Cost-effective adaptation - Balancing economic, environmental and social considerations	(2) Sustainable economic adaptation	Sustainability Related Content
1) Beyond economic and environmental concerns, sustainable businesses actively contribute to positive social outcomes, aligning with the SSI's mission of creating inclusive societies, empowering citizens, and building resilient communities (World Bank Group, 2020)	- Positive social outcomes - Inclusive Societies - Empowering citizens - Resilient communities	(3) Sustainable Social Impacts	
1) The ecosystem is imbalanced due to overexploitation of fisheries, livestock, water, and energy, climate changes, and the ability to produce foods in line with competition over land (Nordin <i>et al.</i> , 2022)	Overexploitation	(4) Negative Impact	

Table 3: The focused codes and sub-codes are under the themes of halal and tayyib foods

Extracts of Data	Sub-Codes Identified	Focused Codes	Themes
1) Halal products are produced from farms, forests, factories, and various environmental or ecological sources. (p.121, p. 2, line 3-4) (Nordin <i>et al.</i> , 2022)	Natural resources extracted from environmental or ecological sources	(1) Natural Resources	Halal and Toyib Foods Products Related Content
2) Halal products and services are accepted in the world market due to their practice of the universal concept that includes the process of storage, packaging, transportation, and delivery, which contribute to the benefit of its end products, which are good quality, fresh, clean, and healthy (p. 121, p.1 7-8) (Nordin <i>et al.</i> , 2022)	- Accepted universally - Good quality, fresh, clean, and healthy	(2) Good quality of Food Products	
1) Impurities must not contaminate the materials needed to produce Halal products. Raw materials must be safe from biological, chemical, physical, and haram contaminations. The production process must have clean tools and places to avoid uncleanness. The use of additional materials used in production shall also follow the provisions permitted by it (Nafis, 2019) 2) Hygiene, sanitation, and safety are essential prerequisites, and good manufacturing (GMP) or good hygiene (GHP) is a compulsory requirement when preparing halal foods. Mufizur <i>et al.</i> (2017) in Idha <i>et al.</i> (2018)	- Materials are not contaminated with impurities - Raw Materials are safe from biochemical, chemical, physical, and haram contamination - The production process must have clean tools and places to avoid uncleanness - Hygiene, sanitation and safety	(3) Food Safety	

Table 4: The focused codes and sub-codes under the theme natural foods

Extracts of Data	Sub-Codes Identified	Focused Codes	Themes
1) In some regions, fresh natural or organic foods are sometimes unavailable. Fruits and vegetables are metabolically active, perishable fresh commodities with a shorter shelf life (Sandarani, et. al, 2018) 2) Processed foods are becoming more available and affordable in Brunei Darussalam (Ministry of Health, 2021)	- Foods not readily available in some regions - Processed foods	(1) Lack of Accessibility and Availability of Natural Foods in the Market	
1) Certified natural or organic foods are generally more expensive than conventional foods. This is due to the cost of production, greater labour, and post-harvest handling of relatively small quantities of foods, which resulted in higher costs in processing and transportation. The marketing and distribution chain is inefficient, and costs are higher because of small volumes 2) While the extent of non-certified natural and organic foods is difficult to quantify as they exist outside certifications and formal market systems, they are usually consumed by households or sold locally at the same price as their conventional counterparts (FAO, n.d)	- Expensive - Higher production costs	(2) Affordability Cost of Production	Natural Foods Related Content
1) Concerns about pesticide use, contamination, and proper storage of natural foods require vigilance and education to ensure safety and minimise health risks (Garnett, 2013)	Concerns and educations	(3) Lack of Awareness and Technique Preparation on Natural Foods	
1) Combining halal and toyyib elements can fulfil physical and spiritual health (Salmon <i>et al.</i> , 2021 in Fadzlillah, <i>et al.</i> 2022) 2) Sufficient to fulfil the nutrients needed in the human body (Fadzlillah <i>et al.</i> , 2022)	Nourishment for body and soul	(4) Positive Impacts to Health	

1) Natural foods are frequently derived from sustainable and environmentally favourable sources. Organic and locally produced foods decrease the carbon footprint caused by transportation and promote equitable trade practices. Supporting ethical agricultural practices is consistent with the Maqasid Syari'ah goal of promoting justice and equity (The Importance of Ethical Consumption, 2022) 2) Organic farming is commonly used to cultivate natural foods in an environmentally conscious manner. (aid in maintaining soil fertility, reducing water pollution, and minimising the use of hazardous pesticides and synthetic fertilisers) (Sustainable Agriculture Practices & Their Management, 2022) 3) Sustainable agricultural practices are commonly employed in producing natural foods, demonstrating a commitment to environmental stewardship. Natural foods support a green lifestyle (Noor, 2020)	• Organic Farming • Sustainable Agricultural Practices • Sustainable to Environment (5) Impacts on Environment
1) Natural or organic foods do not contain any artificial additives, tastes, or colours, nor do they use any preservatives 2) Consuming minimally processed foods reduces exposure to potentially hazardous chemicals (Processed Food and Health, 2023)	• No dangerous ingredients, artificial additives, tastes, colours, or preservatives in natural foods • Reduce exposure to hazardous chemicals (6) Food Safety

Table 5: The focused codes and sub-codes under the themes contributions of natural foods to *Maqasid Shari'ah*

Extracts of Data	Sub-Codes Identified	Focused Codes	Themes
(1) <i>Allah Subhanahu Wa' Ta'ala</i> commanded Muslims to eat food that fulfils the qualities of <i>Toyyib</i>; pure, clean, wholesome, nourishing, and pleasing to the taste (Nurdeng, 2006) (2) The consumption of food is connected to worshipping <i>Allah Subhanahu Wa' Ta'ala</i>. Natural foods embody the principles of halal and <i>toyyib</i> while abstaining from haram and <i>syubhah</i>. Natural foods are closely linked to halalan <i>toyyiban</i> lifestyles, leading to <i>taqwa</i> towards <i>Allah Subhanahu Wa' Ta'ala</i> (Elgharbawy & Azmi, 2022)	• Worshipping <i>Allah Subhanahu Wa' Ta'ala</i> • Responsibilities as a Muslim, adherence to <i>Allah Subhanahu Wa' Ta'ala</i> • Principles of halal, <i>toyyib</i>, haram and <i>Syubhah</i> • <i>Taqwa</i> towards <i>Allah Subhanahu Wa' Ta'ala</i>	(1) Natural Foods Sustain the faith	
(1) Natural foods contain good nutrition; these nutrients contribute to souls minds and intellect by providing essential nutrients. They play a crucial role in cognitive development during young children's physical development. Donna Ricketts (2018), The American Psychological Association discussed established that adopting healthy eating habits at an early age can lead to good behavior as individuals progress into adulthood (2) A healthy diet promotes a healthy gut, which later transfers to the brain through what is known as the gut-brain axis. Microbes in the gut produce neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which regulate moods and emotions (Connor, 2021)	• Good nutrients to minds and intellects • good cognitive development in young children development	(2) Natural Foods Sustain the Intellect	Contributions of Natural Foods to <i>Maqasid Shari'ah</i>
(1) Natural foods maintain individual and nation's wealth; they generate income and productivity, it can be grown, produced, and used as a means in business, and profit-gaining practices, and consumed individually and collectively. less expensive and easily accessed (2) Department of Agriculture and Agrifood: Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (2020) report, Brunei Darussalam's food industry is advancing significantly within its economy, particularly in food production for both local consumption and international trade, the growth and production of natural foods contribute to job creation, especially within the agriculture and related sectors	• Generate incomes, business, profit-gaining practices • less expensive and easily accessed, • Job opportunities in agricultural practices • production and cultivation of natural foods	(3) Natural Foods Sustain the Wealth	

(3) Food contains vital elements; such as proteins, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, and vitamins. It offers energy for living and developing, but most importantly, it preserves the health of each individual; it contributes to the mental, and physical well-being of the body, emotional state, and soul (Lim, 2018) (4) High levels of fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants which are essential to the health and body (5) Natural foods are sustainable for health and are used remedies in treating various ailments, diseases, and sicknesses. It reduces the risk of chronic diseases, specifically non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, obesity, cholesterol, and diabetes (jigischoice, 2023)	• Preserve health • contains proteins, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, and vitamins, antioxidants • Functions as remedies in treating various ailments, diseases, sickness, and non-communicable diseases	(4) Natural foods Sustain the health
(6) No presence of chemicals involved in natural foods, as it is grown naturally. Natural foods emit no pollutants and contribute to the protection and conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem, and ecological cycle, and habitat diversity for future development and generations (Ricketts, 2013; Johnson & Holland, 2019) (7) The contribution of natural foods contributes to an essential role in the growth and well-being of future generations (Koletzko, 2015). (8) Sustainable Development Goals Brunei Darussalam Development Goals Annual Report in 2021, the Prime Minister's Office in Brunei Darussalam has addressed the importance of investing in our children's health to prevent chronic diseases and risk factors in the future. It focuses on encouraging and emphasizing that children to eat natural foods to boost their immune systems, mental, and physical development, and future health	• No chemicals, grown naturally • No pollutants • protection and conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem, ecological cycle, and habitat • growth and well-being of future generations • Investing in children's health to prevent chronic diseases and reduce risk factors in the future, boost their immune systems, mental, and development	(5) Natural Foods sustain the offspring

Analysis of the content related to sustainability

Sustainability requires more than just profit and environmentalism. Businesses must actively build inclusive societies and empowered communities. While circular economies and green supply chains offer valuable tools, we need a deeper focus on the social dimension. Balancing climate action with affordability is complex, but innovative solutions prioritising efficiency and equity are critical. Proactive measures like sustainable sourcing and awareness campaigns can address potential downsides like increased resource consumption.

To build a future where environmental health and social well-being thrive together, businesses must weave social impact initiatives into their core strategies, champion circular economies and green supply chains, develop cost-effective climate solutions that prioritise both affordability and social good and mitigate potential negative impacts through ongoing research and implementation of effective strategies. By shifting from analysis to action and embracing these crucial steps, we can forge a path toward a truly sustainable future for all.

4.2 Theme 2: Content related to halal and toyyib food products

Three focused codes were discussed in this theme. (1) Natural resources, (2) Good quality of food products, and (3) Food Safety.

FC 1: Natural resources

Halal products are derived from various natural resources, such as farms, forests, factories, and various environmental or ecological sources (Nordin *et al.*, 2022). Extracting from natural resources that are environmentally friendly, natural, and organic not only aligns with the Islamic principles of halal and toyyib but is also sustainable within the *Maqasid Shari'ah*. Storage, packaging, and transportation processes have shown that they are suitable and efficient in supply chain management. Reasonable procedures and standards can help reduce waste, energy consumption, and environmental impacts for the long-term sustainability of the halalan toyyiban lifestyle.

FC 2: Good quality of food products

One significant thing about food products is their quality. halal products and services are accepted in the world market due to their practice on the universal concept that includes the process of storage, packaging, transportation, and delivery that contribute to the benefit of its end products being of good quality, fresh, clean, and healthy (Nordin *et al.*, 2022). A manufacturer that produces food products should deliver high-quality, nutritious, and wholesome products to consumers worldwide. The commitment to practising this has promoted a healthy eating habit, safety, and a sustainable food system.

FC 3: Food safety

In food production and processing, several procedures and guidelines have been set. Some food safety applications include ensuring that impurities do not contaminate the materials needed to produce halal products. Raw materials must be safe from biological, chemical, physical, and haram contaminations. The production process must utilise clean tools and places while avoiding any form of uncleanness. Additional materials used in production must comply with permitted provisions (Nafis, 2019). Adherence to specific hygiene standards is also essential in halal food preparation, necessitating thorough cleaning and sanitation procedures. Strict sanitation practices in the production facility are necessary to ensure food products' safety, cleanliness, and hygiene during production and processing. Therefore, hygiene, sanitation, and safety are essential prerequisites and compliance with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) or Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) is a compulsory requirement in preparing Halal foods (Idha *et al.* (2018).

Analysis of the content related to halal and toyyib food products

Halal and toyyib foods resonate with sustainability for several reasons. Firstly, their production often adheres to ethical practices, respecting the environment and workers' rights. This alignment with responsible sourcing and social justice makes them a natural choice for environmentally conscious consumers. Secondly, halal and toyyib emphasise cleanliness, quality, and nutrition, fostering physical and spiritual well-being. They avoid harmful substances like alcohol and additives, contributing to healthier lifestyles.

Furthermore, halal and toyyib products prioritise natural and organic resources, minimising environmental impact. Sustainable practices extend to storage, packaging, and transportation, reducing waste and energy consumption. Ultimately, embracing halal and toyyib principles empowers individuals to make food choices that benefit their well-being and the planet.

4.3 Theme 3: Content Related to natural foods

The principal focused codes related to the content of natural foods that were clustered in the process are (1) Lack of accessibility and availability of natural foods in the market, (2) Affordability (cost of production), (3) Lack of awareness on nutritional properties of natural foods and preparation techniques, (4) It impacts on the environment, (5) positive impacts to health, and (6) Food Safety.

FC 1: Lack of accessibility and availability of natural foods in the market

One of the common issues in natural foods is their accessibility and unavailability. Fresh natural or organic foods are sometimes not readily available, making it difficult to include them in one's diet, which could be a barrier to adopting a sustainable healthy lifestyle (USDA,

2020). Some of the reasons are geographical barriers, distance to grocery stores, and lack of transportation, which can inhibit access to healthy food options. Lack of storefronts, distribution, demand, and location. These factors prevent consumers from accessing natural foods in the market (Disease *et al.*, n.d.).

The shelf-life of a food product is the time between production and packaging when it reaches unacceptable under environmental conditions. In shelf life, quality must be focused on a few aspects: product design (hazard and risk assessment), manufacturing process, transportation, storage and retail display, and storage at home (Awulachew, 2022). Natural foods such as fruits and vegetables are perishable products that contain living issues; hence, the quality of retention and prevention of post-harvest has the potential to be lost during handling, storage, and retailing. (Ashrey, 2008). According to Sandhya (2010), production of fruits is lost due to spoilage at various post-harvest handling stages. Fruits and vegetables are metabolically active, perishable fresh commodities with a shorter shelf life (Sandarani *et al.*, 2018).

Other factors are the presence and demand for processed foods. In Brunei Darussalam, highly processed foods are becoming more available and affordable, leading to an increase in the consumption of energy-dense foods high in saturated fats, trans fats, sugars, and salt (Ministry of Health, 2021).

Nowadays, through rapid evolution, food processing has also contributed to the increasing variety of foods that are subject to various types of food processing and have different impacts on human health. It is to be noted that processed foods are easier to handle and have longer shelf life (Mole, 2018). Besides the role played by businesses, consumers have also been increasingly interested in purchasing and consuming processed foods because processed foods are practical, arguably delicious, attractive, accessible, and affordable (Monteiro *et al.*, 2010). As they are highly available, easily accessible, and with variations, processed foods in diets of all age groups are difficult to avoid (Albuquerque *et al.*, 2022). There are ways to overcome this challenge, such as supporting local farmers and producers, growing one's food, and exploring alternative sources of natural foods. Working together as a community can promote access to healthy and nutritious foods for all. (Roser *et al.*, 2013).

FC 2: Affordability – cost of production

One significant challenge associated with the role of natural foods is the expense associated with organic or naturally sourced options. These foods can be more costly than conventionally produced alternatives, posing affordability challenges for certain communities (Francis, 2013).

FC 3: Lack of awareness on nutritional properties of natural foods and preparation techniques

Challenges in adopting natural foods in one's diet are multifaceted. Limited awareness of the nutritional properties and preparation techniques of natural foods can hinder their optimal utilization. Misconceptions about the intellectual benefits of specific natural foods may lead to unbalanced diets and require careful dietary planning or supplementation (Lairon, 2010).

Moreover, misinformation about the religious significance of particular natural foods can create confusion and discourage their adoption, posing a barrier to achieving a healthy and balanced diet that aligns with one's religious beliefs. Unfounded claims and conflicting information can also lead to poor decision-making and judgment, impacting cognitive health and brain development (Gardener & Rainey-Smith, 2018). To overcome these challenges, it is crucial to debunk myths and misinformation and promote accurate, evidence-based information (Muhammad *et al.*, 2020; Pinilla, 2008). By providing reliable sources of information and encouraging critical evaluation of claims, individuals can make informed choices and avoid potential harm.

Additionally, while natural foods are generally considered healthy, some may lack certain nutrients essential for optimal health, necessitating careful dietary planning or supplementation (Lairon, 2010). Concerns about pesticide use, contamination, and proper storage of natural foods also require vigilance and education to ensure safety and minimize health risks (Garnett, 2013). Ensuring nutrient intake with natural foods for children can require extra planning and supplements, especially for picky eaters or those with specific dietary needs. Integrating these foods into existing family meals while navigating cultural preferences can be a challenge, demanding sensitivity and a gradual introduction to build acceptance among younger generations. (Reddy & Anitha, 2015).

FN 4: Positive impacts to health

Natural foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole cereals, and lean proteins, provide the body with the essential nutrients it needs to thrive. Following the Maqasid syari'ah objective of preserving and enhancing life, eating minimally processed, wholesome foods support in the maintenance of good physical health (jigischoice, 2023). Hence, the consumption of natural foods contributes to the health and nourishes the mind and body.

FN 5: Impacts on the environment

Incorporating natural foods into one's diet not only supports personal health but also promotes environmental conservation. Natural foods are frequently derived from sustainable and environmentally favorable sources, such as organic farming and permaculture. Choosing organic and locally produced foods reduces the carbon footprint caused by transportation and promotes equitable trade practices. This preference for organic and eco-friendly food options helps minimize environmental impact and

aligns to preserve the world as outlined in *Maqasid Shari'ah* (The Importance of Ethical Consumption, 2022; Sustainable Agriculture Practices & Their Management, 2022). Moreover, supporting organic farming and ethical agricultural practices is consistent with the *Maqasid Shari'ah* goal of promoting justice and equity. Sustainable agricultural practices, including agroforestry, crop rotation, and water conservation, contribute to the preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity. These methods aid in maintaining soil fertility, reducing water pollution, and minimizing the use of hazardous pesticides and synthetic fertilizers (Burchi *et al.*, 2011; Kolkowska, 2023).

FN 6: Food safety

Natural foods keep away from potentially dangerous ingredients. Natural foods do not contain any artificial additives, tastes, or colours, nor do they use any preservatives. Consuming minimally processed foods reduces exposure to potentially hazardous chemicals. This is consistent with the objective of the *Maqasid Shari'ah* to protect human well-being and preserve bodily integrity (Processed Food and Health, 2023).

Analysis of the content related to natural foods:

Several themes are intricately linked when it comes to processed foods: their prevalence and affordability, dietary patterns and health, food awareness and preparation, environmental impact, and food safety and integrity. Affordable processed foods often lead to unhealthy diets, negatively impacting health and straining healthcare systems. This fuels the need for accessible natural foods. However, these are often perceived as expensive due to production costs and factors like environmental protection. Addressing affordability requires raising awareness about the health benefits of natural foods and supporting sustainable farming practices that align with *Maqasid Shari'ah* principles of justice, equity, and environmental stewardship. Additionally, promoting the safety and integrity of natural foods bolsters their appeal as healthier alternatives. By tackling these interconnected issues holistically, individuals and communities can make informed dietary choices that prioritize health, environmental sustainability, and adherence to Islamic principles. Hence, addressing challenges related to awareness, misinformation, nutritional adequacy, safety, and cultural acceptance is essential for promoting the adoption of healthy and sustainable dietary practices centered around natural foods.

4.4 Theme 4: Content related to the contribution of natural foods to the *Maqasid Al-Shari'ah*

FC. 1: Natural foods in sustaining the faith (*al-din*).

Ibn 'Ashur defines *al-din* as the preservation of one's Islamic faith through refraining from actions that could undermine and disrupt the faith, potentially leading to behaviour contrary to its principles (JAKIM, 2015). Each

practicing Muslim is obligated to ensure their well-being by consuming only what has been made lawful and refraining from what is unlawful. *Allah Subhanahu Wa' Ta'ala* has emphasized the need to consume halal and *toyyib* foods. many verses in the al-qur'an have stated the commands of *Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala* about eating. For example, in surah al-Baqarah, verse 168, *Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala* mentioned;

"O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of satan, indeed, he is to you a clear enemy."

Imam al-Ghazali pointed out that *Allah Subhanahu Wa' Ta'ala* has commanded Muslims to eat food that fulfils the qualities of *toyyib*; pure, clean, wholesome, nourishing, and pleasing to the taste. (Nurdeng, 2006). Hence, the consumption of halal and *toyyib* foods is crucial in everyday life. In addition, Elgharbawy & Azmi (2022) highlighted food is not just to satisfy one's desire, but it is a way of maintaining one's health and striving to worship *Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala*. The consumption of food is intrinsically connected to worshiping *Allah Subhanahu Wa' Ta'ala* as it impacts one's spiritual, mental, and physical well-being. When the concepts of halal and *toyyib* are applied in one's life, it nourishes the soul with positivity and rewards. Natural foods embody the principles of halal and *toyyib* while abstaining from haram and *Syubhah*. Therefore, natural foods are closely linked to *halalan toyyiban* lifestyles, leading to *taqwa* towards *Allah Subhanahu Wa' Ta'ala*.

Preparing and consuming natural foods often require more effort, highlighting the blessings of nourishment. People can express gratitude to *Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala* by being mindful of the source and quality of their food. Mindful eating encourages individuals to slow down, savour each bite, and appreciate the flavours and textures of natural foods. This fosters gratitude and strengthens the connection between faith and food. Natural, unprocessed, and nutritious foods promote moderation and self-control in eating habits. Islam advocates for moderation in all aspects of life, including food. Natural foods and moderation help individuals cultivate self-discipline and adhere to their faith. This approach prevents overindulgence and promotes balanced living (Godman, 2022). In addition, the consumption of natural foods is considered as following the practice of the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad *Shallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*. Natural foods such as honey, black seeds, and pumpkins, have not only been mentioned in *Hadith* but were also favoured and consumed by Prophet Muhammad *Shallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam* during his lifetime.

The presence of nutrients, vitamins, and minerals found in natural foods contributes to overall health and vitality. Healthy eating enables individuals to fulfill their religious duties and worship. A healthy body makes it easier to engage in prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and other religious acts. Moreover, natural foods, particularly those rich in nutrients such as omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, and B vitamins, can improve mental and cognitive functions. A

clear and focused mind helps individuals focus on worship, contemplation, and faith. Nourishing the mind enhances spirituality (NHS Health Scotland, 2023).

FC.2: Natural foods in sustaining the intellect (*al-aql*)

Imam al-Ghazali (2015) stresses the connection between food and spirituality. He argues that overindulgence in worldly pleasures, including food, can obscure the intellect and impede spiritual growth. Instead, he advocates for moderation and mindful eating, choosing simple, natural foods that nourish the body without burdening the digestive system.

Renowned Islamic scholars Imam Ghazali and Ibn Sina both championed mindful consumption, emphasizing its impact on both physical well-being and spiritual growth. While Ghazali viewed it as a tool for both bodily health and spiritual development, Ibn Sina, a celebrated physician, explored the intricate connection between diet and cognition in his famous "Canon of Medicine." He believed fruits, vegetables, and whole grains enhanced memory, focus, and overall brain health while cautioning against excessive meat and processed foods, which he linked to sluggishness and impaired mental function. Ultimately, Ibn Sina's perspective underscored the crucial role of food choices in cognitive well-being, offering specific dietary recommendations for optimal brain function (Laleh Bakhtiar *et al.*, 1999).

Modern scholars like Yusuf al-Qaradawi (1999) and Hamza Yusuf (2012) echo the Islamic emphasis on mindful eating, connecting diet to spiritual and mental well-being. They encourage Muslims to choose food that nourishes both body and mind, recognising that what we consume shapes not just physical health but also spiritual and intellectual growth. The human mind deserves special protection from harm like intoxication. Natural foods, rich in nutrients, offer optimal brain health and cognitive function, boosting memory, and focus, and even protecting against age-related cognitive decline.

Pinilla (2008) discussed that natural foods significantly contribute to the sustenance of intellect (*al-aql*) by providing the brain and mind with the essential nutrients they need to function optimally. The vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants present in natural foods promote optimal brain health and enhance cognitive abilities. Individuals can improve their cognition, memory, concentration, and mental acuity by consuming a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. These healthy nutrients protect the brain from age-related cognitive decline and reduce the risk of neurodegenerative diseases.

Therefore, a diet primarily composed of natural foods is essential for maintaining and enhancing cognitive function. Natural foods contain good nutrition; thus, these nutrients contribute to sound minds and intellect by providing essential nutrients. Moreover, they play a crucial role in cognitive development during young children's physical development. According to Donna Ricketts (2018), The American Psychological Association

has established that adopting healthy eating habits at an early age can lead to good behaviour as individuals progress into adulthood.

The effect of food on intellect as stated by Donna Ricketts (n.d) from the Healthy Eating Website claimed in a study from the Prevention Institute that good nutrition not only leads to the physical growth of young children but also influences their cognitive development. In addition, children who eat unhealthy food can have difficulty focusing, become easily exhausted, irritable, and more likely to face learning problems, which can lead to behavioural and social difficulties. As a result, the American Psychological Association has established that healthy eating habits styles at an early age will lead to positive behaviour as people develop into adulthood. Director of the Food and Mood Centre at Deakin University in Australia and President of the International Society for Nutritional Psychiatry Research, Dr Jacka mentioned,

"Eating a salad is not going to cure depression. But there's a lot you can do to lift your mood and improve your mental health, and it can be as simple as increasing your intake of plants and healthy food."

Hence, a healthy diet promotes a healthy gut, which later transfers to the brain through what is known as the gut-brain axis. Microbes in the gut produce neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which regulate moods and emotions (Connor, 2021).

FC 3: Natural foods in sustaining the wealth (*al-mal*)

Imam Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (2010) stresses the importance of moderation in food consumption. He advocates for a simple diet based on natural foods to avoid extravagance and promote financial well-being. In other words, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah is encouraging a balanced and mindful approach to eating that not only benefits one's health but also helps prevent unnecessary extravagance, thereby promoting financial stability. Imam al-Ghazali (2015), emphasises the significance of contentment and avoiding desires that lead to overconsumption. According to Al-Ghazali, choosing a simple lifestyle that includes natural foods plays a role in cultivating financial discipline. Living in such a way not only helps in managing one's finances but also contributes to inner peace, ultimately enhancing overall well-being.

In his book "Building Social Business" (2011), Dr. Muhammad Yunus champions eco-friendly production and mindful consumption as pillars of a just and sustainable society. He urges support for local farmers and consuming local, natural food to empower communities and create economic opportunities. This, he argues, fosters both community well-being and environmental preservation through sustainable and socially responsible business practices, particularly in food consumption.

Tariq Ramadan's "Islam and the Arab Awakening" (2012) stresses the significance of ethical consumption and avoiding exploitation in food production. According to him, making choices such as opting for natural and ethically sourced food aligns with Islamic values of justice. By advocating for these principles, he argues that such choices contribute to a more equitable distribution of wealth.

Natural foods fuel both individual and national prosperity. They generate income and productivity through cultivation, processing, and trade. Not only are they a source of personal sustenance, but they can also form the basis of profitable businesses. For instance, bananas, the world's most exported fruit, support countless rural families in developing countries (Health and Safety of Workers in the Banana Industry, n.d.). Furthermore, natural foods contribute significantly to wealth sustainability (*al-mal*) by providing essential nutrients for health. This leads to a more productive workforce and lowers healthcare costs, ultimately bolstering economic growth. By empowering individuals to earn income and stay healthy, natural foods become a cornerstone of national well-being.

According to the Department of Agriculture and Agrifood: Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (2020) report, Brunei Darussalam's food industry is advancing significantly within its economy, particularly in food production for both local consumption and international trade. In 2020, the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery sectors collectively saw a notable growth of 27.5%. This increase is primarily attributed to the rise in fishery production, livestock, and poultry, as well as the cultivation of vegetables, fruits, and various other agricultural products.

The Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT) reported that Brunei Darussalam achieved a self-sufficiency rate of 100% in chicken eggs and 99% in whole chicken (broiler meat) in the year 2020. Furthermore, the country attained self-sufficiency rates of 62% in beef and buffalo meat, 20% in mutton, 67% in tropical vegetables, 46% in tropical fruits, and 8% in rice. Concerning the productivity of the agriculture and fishery sectors, statistics as of June 2021 indicate positive growth compared to the same period in the preceding year. The agriculture sector witnessed a notable increase of 38%, rising from \$212 million in 2020 to \$292 million in 2021. Similarly, the fishery sector demonstrated a growth of 42%, advancing from \$60 million in 2020 to \$85 million in 2021.

Moreover, the growth and production of natural foods contribute to job creation, especially within the agriculture and related sectors. The Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT) entered into a partnership with Muara Port Company Sdn Bhd (MPC) to boost fisheries production, to increase output from 100 million in 2019 to 175 million in 2022. This expansion is expected to provide over 200 employment opportunities for the local population. Additionally, the Ministry established a protocol regarding the examination, quarantine, and

sanitary requirements for farmed aquatic products such as fish and prawns, enabling their export from Brunei Darussalam to the People's Republic of China. This arrangement is set to benefit 68 aquaculture companies, including three foreign direct investment (FDI) companies from China. These initiatives invigorate economic operations, empower communities, and enhance overall prosperity.

Moreover, as reported by Burchi, Fanzo, and Frison (2011), natural foods often involve the implementation of sustainable agricultural practices, leading to reduced environmental degradation and ensuring the long-term availability of resources. This is crucial for preserving the wealth and prosperity of future generations. In Brunei Darussalam, as reported in the Sustainable Development Goals Brunei Darussalam Development Goals Annual Report 2021, by prime minister offices, the Agricultural Training Programme (PROPAG) was introduced to provide training in vegetable and fruit cultivation, pest control, post-harvest management, and business matching. Hence, the production, cultivation, and initiative have demonstrated that the production of natural foods is sustainable and beneficial to the nation. Natural food production contributes to long-term agricultural sustainability, empowering individuals through the cultivation of plants that can be grown over extended periods and repeated cycles.

FC 4: Natural foods in sustaining the health (*al-nafs*)

From Imam al-Ghazali's (2015) emphasis on pure, natural foods nourishing both body and soul for spiritual well-being, to Ibn Sina's (1999) advocacy for a balanced diet of natural foods based on Islamic principles of moderation and harm avoidance for optimal health, and Ahmad Hussein's (1989) call for mindful eating of natural foods to promote holistic well-being by nourishing body and mind, Islamic scholars consistently highlight the interconnectedness of food choices and well-being across physical and spiritual dimensions.

Muslims are obligated to preserve their lives and well-being, including through wise food choices. As al-Shatibi (2012) explains, this involves avoiding harm to oneself, aligning with the concept of self-preservation. Food, as Lim (2018) highlights, is essential for physical and mental health, encompassing both body and soul. Therefore, choosing safe, healthy food is crucial for overall well-being. Natural foods, rich in fiber, vitamins, and antioxidants, offer numerous benefits. They support health sustainably, reduce chronic disease risk, and can even act as remedies for various ailments (Jigischoie, 2023). By opting for natural foods, Muslims fulfill their responsibility to their well-being while aligning with principles of sustainability and healthy living.

There is extensive research on natural foods' benefits, effects, and significance. The most often discussed in the literature are honey and black seed. Accordingly, it was narrated that Abu Said al-Khudri said:

"A man came to the Prophet and said, 'My brother has some abdominal trouble.' The prophet replied to him 'let him drink honey.' The man came for the second time and the Prophet replied to him, 'let him drink honey' He came for the third time and the Prophet replied, 'let him drink honey' He returned again and said, 'I have done that. The Prophet then said, 'Allah has said the truth, but your brother's abdomen has told a lie. Let him drink honey. So, he made him drink honey and he was cured.'" (al-Jauziyah, 2003, p. 43).

Honey has unique antioxidants and antibacterial properties, and it is a source of carbohydrates. According to Iqbal, Jan, Mufflih & Jaswir (2021), honey can heal wounds, burns, and ulcers, and kill germs in 48 hours. Manisha & Shyampada (2011) added that honey has a complex property that could be used to cure a variety of human diseases. Secondly, black seed is regarded as one of the most powerful herbs for healing. In a religious context, according to Abu Hurairah Radhiallahu Anhu related to the Prophet Muhammad *Shallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam* Narrated that He Said:

"Use the Black Seed, because it contains a cure for every type of ailment, except death." [At-Tirmidhi, Ahmad and Ibn Hibban]. (Al-Jauziyah, 2003, p.86).

Accordingly, black seeds function as an anti-inflammatory as well as analgesic, hepatoprotective, neuroprotective, and gastroprotective properties. (Salah, 2021). In another finding, Musharraf and Arman (2018) stated that black seed could effectively cure 129 ailments, including 17 types of cancer, diabetes, AIDS, and hypertension (non-communicable diseases). In their literature review findings, it was noticed that modern science has begun to acknowledge black seeds as potential natural medications in the world.

Other natural foods such as dates, bananas, and pumpkins have also been studied and proven to contribute to health. For instance, in a report by Farsi & Lee, 2008; Umer *et al.*, n.d) dates are high in energy, moderate in fats and protein, and rich in fructose and glucose carbohydrates. It functions as an antioxidant, anti-ulcer, anti-tumor, anti-cancer, anti-microbial, anti-diabetic, anti-inflammatory, and antifungal properties. Leklem (1999) mentioned Banana is a source of nutrients and rich in pyridoxine vitamin B6 and protects against cancer of the esophagus, (World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research, 2007; Fährasmane, Parfait, & Aurore, 2014) According to Schaffer & Paris, 2016; Ceclu *et al.*, 2020, pumpkin which is known as gourds, melons, and squash has significantly contributed in medicinal features such as anti-diabetic, anti-hypertension, anti-tumor and anti-bacterial.

Although natural foods are generally considered healthy, some may not contain all the nutrients necessary for optimal health. This may require careful dietary planning

or supplementation (Lairon, 2010) Additionally, concerns about pesticide use, contamination, and proper storage of natural foods require vigilance and education to ensure safety and minimize health risks (Garnett, 2013).

FC 5: Natural foods in sustaining the offspring (*al-nasl*)

Imam Ghazali (2015) emphasizes the obligation of parents to offer their children food that is pure and beneficial. He links this responsibility to the idea that providing such nourishment is crucial for the development of robust bodies and minds in children. The implication is that the quality of the food given to children directly has a direct impact on their physical and mental well-being. Imam Ghazali emphasizes the importance of parental responsibility in ensuring the health and strength of future generations through the provision of wholesome and beneficial nutrition.

Natural foods apply to all humankind regardless of their skin, religion, ancestry, or geographical surroundings. In addition to its role in providing benefits and nutrients to human health, these natural foods contribute to the environment for future generations. There is no presence of chemicals involved in natural foods, as it is grown naturally. Natural foods emit no pollutants and contribute to the protection and conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem, ecological cycle, and habitat diversity for future development and generations (Ricketts, 2013; Johnson & Holland, 2019)

The contribution of natural foods to the sustenance of offspring (*al-nasl*) is of the uttermost importance, as they play an essential role in the growth and well-being of future generations. Natural foods, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, whole cereals, and lean proteins, provide children with the essential nutrients required for optimal growth, cognitive function, and overall health. These unprocessed, nutrient-dense foods contain a variety of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants essential for the development of healthy organs, bones, and tissues. By incorporating natural foods into the offspring's diet, we foster their physical and mental development, strengthen their immune system, and set the groundwork for a healthy and prosperous future (Koletzko, 2015).

In the Sustainable Development Goals Brunei Darussalam Development Goals Annual Report in 2021, the Prime Minister's Office in Brunei Darussalam has addressed the importance of investing in our children's health to prevent chronic diseases and risk factors in the future. It focuses on encouraging and emphasizing the children to eat natural foods to boost their immune systems, mental, and physical development, and future health. As part of this effort, various preventive measures have been implemented, particularly focusing on enhancing existing school health services and introducing school-based interventions. For instance, in 2020 – 2021, Nutrition and Physical Activity Guidelines for Childcare Centres were introduced as well as the Code on Responsible Marketing of Food and Beverages to Children in Brunei Darussalam was implemented.

Providing children with all the necessary nutrients through natural foods may require additional planning and supplementation, particularly for picky eaters or those with specific dietary requirements. Additionally, integrating natural foods into traditional family meals while navigating cultural preferences can be challenging. It requires sensitivity and gradual introduction to foster acceptance among younger generations (Reddy & Anitha, 2015).

Analysis of the content related to the contribution of natural foods to the *Maqasid Shari'ah*

Natural foods resonate beautifully with *Maqasid Shari'ah*, the Islamic principles, encompassing life's five pillars: faith, intellect, wealth, health, and offspring. More than mere dietary choices, they embody halal and toyyib principles, nurturing mindful eating and deepening the spiritual connection with food. Their rich nutrients bolster brain health and cognitive function, fostering sharp minds and intellect. Choosing natural foods promotes responsible spending and empowers communities by supporting local farmers and ethical practices, aligning with *Maqasid Shari'ah*'s emphasis on justice and fair trade, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and environmentally conscious society. Increased production and consumption can create jobs, boost local economies, and encourage sustainable agriculture, preserving resources for future generations.

These nutrient-rich natural foods promote both physical and spiritual well-being, echoing *Maqasid Shari'ah*'s focus on safeguarding health and nurturing future generations. They empower parents to fulfill their responsibility to nourish children for optimal development. Individual needs and challenges call for sensitivity and adaptation, but the benefits of natural foods far outweigh the difficulties. Commendable examples of collective action, like school-based programs, offer promising paths toward a healthier future for all.

Embracing natural foods is a commitment to personal well-being, encompassing body, mind, and spirit. It embodies *Maqasid Shari'ah*'s values of faith, justice, and sustainability, leading to a healthy and sustainable future for ourselves and generations to come. Let's advocate for and consume these choices, collectively embodying our faith's values and securing a healthier future for all.

5. Conclusion

In future studies, it is recommended to employ other qualitative methods, such as conducting interviews and observations, as it helps in gathering comprehensive data on the availability of natural foods in Brunei Darussalam. Despite a significant body of literature on the sustainability and contributions of natural foods, challenges persist in maintaining and ensuring the adherence of natural foods to the principles of *Toyyiban*. The principles of halal and toyyib extend far beyond the act of eating—they encapsulate a way of life that encompasses mindful consumption, ethical considerations, and a deep appreciation for the blessings

provided. As Muslims embrace these principles, they harmonize their faith with their actions, striving for a holistic and purposeful existence. As a practicing Muslim, it is the responsibility of each individual to adhere to Islamic principles in food selection. Attention should be given not only to the concepts of halal but also to the toyyib aspects of their food choices.

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