

Received: December 2023 Accepted: January 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58262/ks.v12i2.263>

Employing Taste Sense in Learning, Teaching and Islamic Education

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to investigate the concept of taste sense and its educational implications in Islamic education. It also examined the importance of the sense of taste as a tool and method of learning, teaching, and upbringing. The study employed a descriptive approach, specifically content analysis. The findings revealed that the references to taste sense and its terminology in the context of the Quran were repeated (63) times, using various verb forms. The term "flavor" was more prevalent in verses related to punishment compared to other verses. It was also frequently found in the Meccan Surahs, which specifically addressed those who denied resurrection. The term "flavor" was used in relation to food and drink in three verses. Certain Islamic factions believe that true understanding can be acquired through taste rather than intellect. The study recommended incorporating the sense of taste in the process of learning.

Keywords: *Sense of Taste, Learning and Teaching, Islamic Education*

Introduction

The senses are one of the means of perception in living beings that help recognize things in the surrounding environment through sensory organs in the body, including the eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and skin. These senses transmit information to the brain, allowing for their categorization and perception of their importance. The senses include vision, smell, hearing, touch, and taste, with taste being the most important. It enables living beings to differentiate between safe and harmful food for survival.

Measuring the nutritional value of food begins with the digestive enzymes in saliva, which dissolve the food into basic chemical substances that pass-through taste buds in the mouth to detect their taste. The ability to taste substances and identify their characteristics relies on taste buds, which are widely distributed on the surface and sides of the tongue. Each taste bud consists of a group of specialized sensory cells that gather together in a spindle shape, with nerve endings extending from their tips to transmit sensation to the brain.

The role of the sense of taste involves discerning the variety and taste of food. Humans have four primary taste perceptions: sweetness, saltiness, bitterness, and sourness. Specialized cells responsible for detecting sweet taste are distributed along the sides of the tongue, while cells

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specialized in detecting bitter taste are located on the posterior surface of the tongue. The perception of taste can only occur if the substance being tasted is able to dissolve in water. Substances that are insoluble, such as chalk, for instance, lack taste. Therefore, substances ingested orally are not perceived until they have dissolved in saliva. This is because the nerve endings linked to taste buds are influenced by chemical changes. As gustation serves as a mechanism for humans to perceive their environment, it is appropriate to comprehend its role in education and exploit it in both teaching and learning processes.

Research Questions

Bearing in mind the significance of senses like hearing and vision in the acquisition of knowledge and education, teaching methodologies have focused on their utilization in the educational and learning contexts. On the other hand, the sense of taste has not received adequate attention from researchers in demonstrating its active involvement in education and learning, despite indications and evidence of its importance within Islamic knowledge sources and its applicability in the educational process. Consequently, the study aims to the two following questions:

1. What are the implications of the concept of taste in Islamic education?
2. What are the indicators for utilizing the sense of taste in Islamic education, learning, and upbringing?

Study Objectives

This study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- Investigating the implications of the concept of taste in Islamic education.
- Recognizing the importance of the sense of taste and its role as a means and method of education, learning, and upbringing.

Significance of the Study

There are two significances:

❖ Theoretical Significance

- This study is unique in addressing the concept of taste and its educational implications in Islamic cognitive knowledge.
- Obtaining results that reveal the depth of the concept of taste in learning, education, and upbringing.
- Providing educational researchers, a theoretical framework that includes some fundamental concepts and theoretical foundations for future studies on the importance of cognitive taste.

❖ Practical Importance

- Discovering the arts of science and literature through teaching and learning.
- This study contributes to drawing the attention of teachers and educators to the potential utilization of the sense of taste in educational activities.
- Application of gustatory experiences in nurturing learners and enhancing their learning stages.

Research Methodology

A descriptive method was used in analyzing the content of various Islamic knowledge sources such as the Quran, Hadith, and Arab-Islamic heritage, as they are relevant to the current study's purposes and to reach conclusions that contribute to understanding and analyzing the concept of taste and its educational implications. The study adopted the analysis as the (verse/idea).

Definitions of the Study

- ◆ **Islamic Educational Sources:** It includes Quranic verses, Prophetic traditions, and some books of Islamic educational thoughts.

Study Results

- ❖ **The First Question was " what are the Implications of the Concept of Taste in Islamic Education?" and its Answer was as Following**

Linguistically: "Tasting something for its flavor, and it is derived metaphorically to say 'I tasted the food' meaning I tried it, and 'I tasted what someone has' meaning I experienced it" (Ibn Faris, 2020, 190). "Tasting food and experiencing its flavor, gradually, and it is referred to as the taste. And what is tasted today is a taste" (Al-Zamakhshari, 2018, 1/320). "Taste is derived from the verb 'to taste,' and it means to taste something with thoroughness and flavor. So, both 'taster' and 'flavor' are derived from taste" (Ibn Munthir, 10, 2019/111).

Tasting, in essence, refers to the sensation of the tongue detecting different flavors. It can be experienced within the mouth or beyond it. Figuratively, it is used to depict moments of challenge and examination. In numerous instances within the Quran, tasting is associated with the feeling of punishment and regret, as illustrated in the verse: {And truly, when We give man a taste of a Mercy from ourselves, he doth exult thereat} (Shurah:48). Al-Abbas bin Abd al-Muttalib reported God's messenger as saying [He who is well-pleased with God as Lord, with Islam as religion, and with Muhammad as messenger will experience the savour of faith] (Muslim, 2019, 1/62). It is noted that faith possesses a flavor that can be perceived by the heart, comparable to how the mouth perceives the taste of food and drink (Al-Firozbadi,2,2010/453). Similarly, a person can taste the sweetness of a woman when they engage in intimate relations, and she can also taste the same sweetness when she is in his presence (Ibn Manthur, 112, 2019). Taste is also employed metaphorically to convey the sense of sensation, as witnessed in Antarah ibn Shaddad's poetry.

"But when wronged, I inflict severe punishment on my oppressor,
Unimaginably bitter and harsh

This metaphor is used to emphasize the severity of the injustice inflicted upon him (Al-Jawhri, 2012). In this context, taste refers to the sensation or feeling (Al-Jawhari, 2019), and both taste and touch require practice and experience to fully comprehend (Al-Ghazali, 2017,1/47).

The Concept of Taste is Mentioned Extensively in the Quran, symbolizing the boundless secrets and inexhaustible oceans of knowledge. No matter how much one seeks, the end cannot be reached, yet there remains hope to catch a glimpse of the Quran's miraculous nature. The term "taste" is used in various contexts, primarily representing the taste of mercy and the taste of punishment. It appears a total of sixty-four times in the Quran, across sixty-one instances. Thirty-three instances are found in the chapters revealed during the Meccan period. This is because the Meccan era focused on correcting immoralities and establishing correct beliefs through gentle and constructive means, akin to the way taste is experienced.

The verses revealed during the Meccan period primarily emphasize warnings and threats related to the punishment in the afterlife. This serves the purpose of allowing individuals to taste the bitterness and regret of their actions before the actual consequence occurs. Additionally, the term "taste" is used in thirteen verses of the Quran to describe the infliction of punishment in worldly life. It is important to note that the frequent use of "taste" in relation to punishment in the afterlife lessens the severity of punishment associated with this world. This ensures that those undergoing punishment do not perceive it as a natural consequence of their actions in this life.

The expressions of taste and its wording in the context of the Noble Quran came in multiple tenses. Their repetition in the verses reached (64) times, including those that came in the form of the present tense, as mentioned in the verse: {And whoever among you does wrong, him shall We cause to taste of a grievous Penalty} (Al-Furqan: 19). And among them in the past tense, as mentioned in the verse: {If We give man a taste of Mercy from Ourselves, and then withdraw it from him, behold! He is in despair and (falls into) blasphemy} (Hud: 9). And among them in the imperative form, which is the most repeated form, with a total of twenty-two times with the plural pronoun, as mentioned in the verse: {"Taste ye then – for ye forgot the Meeting of this Day of yours, and We too will Forget you – taste ye the Penalty of Eternity for your (evil) deeds!"} (As-Sajdah: 14). And Allah said: {Taste ye your trial! This is what ye used to ask to be hastened!} (Adh-Dhariyat: 14). And He said: {So taste ye My Warth and My Warning}" (Al-Qamar: 9). And He said: {So taste ye (the fruits of your deeds); for no increase shall We grant you, except in Punishment} (An-Naba: 30). It is noteworthy that the command to taste is justified by the previous wicked actions they committed (ar-Razi, 1, 2019/20). And Abdullah bin Amr said: "There has not been revealed to the people of Hellfire anything harsher than this verse: {So taste ye (the fruits of your deeds); for no increase shall We grant you, except in Punishment}." He said: "They are in increasing torment forever, unless Allah wills otherwise" (Ibn Kathir, 2017, 8/307).

The occurrence of the term "taste" along with the punishment of eternity serves as evidence of the severity and pain of the punishment, with its constant and perpetual presence in the form of attachment and permanence, contrasted with insignificance and humiliation, to intensify their sorrow and increase their torment. It is evident that the eternal bitterness of the punishment has a strong effect and effectiveness at the first touch and sensation upon its occurrence in the retribution, or the sweetness of the taste in the reward. The use of the command form in the verse {"So taste"} implies a future time, which has a greater impact and effectiveness in education and teaching. As waiting involves anticipation, caution, and anxiety, the actions of "tasting" in the past tense were used to indicate that the punishment followed the occurrence of its cause. Thus, there is no way except for the one who committed the action to be punished in order to discipline and modify their behavior. Allah said: {Until they taste Our Wrath} (An'am:148)," and it came in the present form to indicate renewal and continuity as Allah said: {And indeed We will make them taste of the Penalty of this (life) prior the supreme Penalty, in order that they may (repent and) return} (Al-Sajdah: 26).

The term "taste" is used in the context of something minimal. Ibn Ashur mentioned, "When the gourmet is affected in the tip of the tongue, it is the weakest form of contact for the gourmet, less than chewing and swallowing." Therefore, it implies that they were made to taste the slightest bit of mercy or punishment, as everything that befalls a person is minimal. It also appears in the context of the story of Adam (PBUH), as mentioned by Allah: {When they tasted of the tree, their shame became manifest to them, and they began to sew together the leaves of the Garden over their bodies} (Al-A'raf: 22). This indicates that they consumed a

small amount to become familiar with the taste, and a person can taste without eating (Al-Razi, 2019, 14/217, 1869).

The term (taste) is more prevalent in verses related to punishment than in other verses. Most occurrences of the term "taste" in the Quran carries the meanings of punishment, torment, and destruction in thirteen instances. For example, Allah says: {And indeed We will make them taste of the Penalty of this (life) prior the supreme Penalty, in order that they may (repent and) return} (Surah Al-Sajdah: 26) and He says: {So God gave them a taste of humiliation in present life, but greater is the Punishment of the Hereafter, if they only knew!} (Az-Zumar: 26). The eloquence of the Quran has used the term as the initial stages of learning to correct behavior that deviates from the inherent nature, while maintaining the continuity of its taste for upbringing and refinement. The taste is one of the stages that precede the stages of experiencing the pain of punishment.

The mention of the term "taste" is abundant in the Meccan surahs, which are characterized by addressing the disbelievers who deny resurrection. This aligns perfectly with the purposes of the Qur'an during the Meccan period, which involved threatening and warning the disbelievers. It was a phase filled with ideological confrontations, and it is known that the Meccan period was marked by stubbornness, arrogance, and denial from the polytheists of the Quraysh, who were known for their eloquence and rhetoric. This confrontation necessitated verses that would have a profound impact on the minds of the polytheists, with their eloquence and rhetoric evident in the various meanings and timing of the term "taste". These verses would make them ponder over the miraculous nature of the Qur'an.

The term "taste" and its meanings differ depending on its occurrence in the Qur'anic context. It sometimes comes with the meaning of richness, other times with health, rain, well-being, and prosperity. All of these meanings in these verses have not deviated from being beneficial to humanity. The term "tasting" came to indicate that they were given the least amount of mercy, and those who contemplate the structures of the verses will notice that Allah, the Exalted, has attributed mercy to Himself. The word "taste" is coupled with mercy in worldly life in eight verses, among them the following: {If We give man a taste of Mercy from Ourselves, and then withdraw it from him, behold! He is in despair and (falls into) blasphemy} (Hud: 9), and Allah, the Exalted, has said: {When We give men a taste of Mercy, they exult thereat, and when some evil afflicts them because of what their (own) hands have sent forth, behold, they are in despair!} (Ar-Rum 36). This can be aimed to correct deviations in behavior stemming from corrupt beliefs requires the use of verses that evoke consciousness, warning, and threat. Thus, there are few verses that speak of taste as a means of mercy.

The term "taste" is also mentioned in relation to jinn, as in Allah's words: {And to Solomon (We made) the Wind (obedient); its early morning (stride) was a month's (journey), and its evening (stride) was a month's (journey);and We made a Font of molten brass to flow for him; and there were jinns that worked in front of him, by the leave of his Lord, and if any of them turned aside from our command, We made him taste of the Penalty of the Blazing Fire} (Saba: 12). Allah has indeed subjugated a group from among jinn to the Prophet Solomon (PBUH), and whoever disobeys among them is to suffer the punishment of Allah (Hawwa, 2011, 8/4517). Thus, the effect of the term "taste" can be observed in education and upbringing for both humans and jinn. However, its use in the education and upbringing of the jinn is associated with places of punishment and retribution.

The term "taste" is used in conjunction with experiencing death and the soul's departure

from the body, as well as the difficulties and hardships that the soul encounters. The term "taste" is used in four places in the Quran, including the verse: {Every soul shall have a taste of death, in the end to Us shall ye be brought back} (Al-Ankabut: 57). In these verses, the term "taste" is used to indicate the signs and indications, as well as the pains and bitterness that the soul experiences when parting from the body (Al-Maraghi, 2016, 4/152). The term "taste" is also used at the moment of the soul's death and its struggle with the painful stages of dying, as it experiences the agony and punishment. Allah says: {And the stupor of death will bring truth (before his eyes), "This was the thing which thou wastest trying to escape!} (Qaf: 19). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: [Surely, death has agonies] (Al-Bukhari, 2018, Hadith No. 6510). Death has a taste, and its taste depends on whether one is given glad tidings of Allah's mercy and forgiveness, making them love meeting Allah, or whether one is given tidings of Allah's punishment, making them hate meeting Allah and Allah hate meeting them. The word "taste" is used in the verse: {Nor will they there taste Death, except the first Death} (Ad-Dukhan: 56), indicating the negation of death in the afterlife. The intended meaning is to highlight the impossibility of experiencing death in the Hereafter at all.

The Quran mentioned the term "taste" in relation to food and drink in three verses. Allah says: {When they tasted of the tree} (Al-A'raf: 22), and {Nothing cool shall they taste therein, nor any drinks. Save a boiling fluid and a fluid, dark, murky intensely cold.} (Nabaa: 24-25). The apparent usage of "taste" in relation to food and drink is minimal and fading. This is done to connect its sensory meaning with the tongue to its spiritual meaning of mercy and punishment. Thus, its use in education and upbringing is more accurate and profound, and that is what gives importance to it.

Taste in Islamic Educational Thought

Some Islamic educational movements, such as Sufism, have shown interest in taste. According to the Sufis, knowledge of Allah and His attributes can be attained in taste, one attains knowledge not through the divine law or reason, but through subjective experience and spiritual revelation (Al-Wakeel, 33, 2011). The highest levels of knowledge and cognition are not achieved through intellect or faith, but through taste and unveiling, which is like a divine light that Allah casts into the heart. Taste is what the knowledgeable person discovers through intuition and revelation, not through logical proofs or acquisition, and not by blindly accepting faith (Al-Qaisari, 13, 2013). The taste-oriented sciences of the people of Allah vary depending on the different spiritual capacities, but they all originate from a single source (Ibn Arabi, 2015, 107). Differences in education, learning, and understanding are differences in taste. They perceive the value of things according to their taste. Therefore, it is said, "Whoever tastes, knows." These are truths that the servant discovers after purifying their heart, as taste is the means and source of knowledge. Taste is an illuminating divine knowledge that Allah casts into the hearts of His close servants, enabling them to distinguish between truth and falsehood (Al-Jurjani, 2017, 28/268). Taste-oriented knowledge is the knowledge of outcomes and secrets. It is a divine light that Allah casts into the heart with the expansion of the chest (Ibn Arabi, 2015, 47), as mentioned in the Quran: {Have We not expanded thee thy breast?} (Ash-Sharh: 1). This means He illuminated it, just as Allah says: {Those whom God (in His Plan) willeth to guide, - He openeth their breast to Islam; those whom He willeth to leave straying, - He maketh their breast close and constricted as if they had to climb up to the skies, thus doeth God (heap) the penalty on those who refuse to believe}. (Al-An'am: 125).

The taste is the reception of the souls to the pure secrets of miracles and extraordinary customs.

Extraordinary customs include manifestations, miracles, and blessings, and manifestations are the introductions and beginnings (Al-Tusi, 2018). The first step is tasting, then drinking, and then irrigation. In drinking, there is a taste. If it increases and reaches its midpoint, it is called drinking, and if it reaches the end, it is called irrigation. This is based on the purity of the secret from the moment of the other. In mercy, there is a taste, and in remembrance, there is a taste. The taste opens the eyes of the heart by tasting the lights, which are a light in the soul. The clarity of their interactions necessitates the taste of meanings, and their fidelity to their stations necessitates drinking, and their continual communication necessitates irrigation (Al-Qasha'i, 2017).

Taste is the first degree of the witnesses of truth with truth during the consecutive shining flashes at the lowest point of the lightning revelation. That is, taste appears like lightning and disappears behind the veils, whether they are the veils of images or meanings, and revelation is what reveals the secrets of the unseen to the hearts. Taste is the consciousness of what comes to you, and its cause is the transformation of existence and souls. This transformation includes the transformation of the senses, and it is a spiritual light that the truth throws in its revelation in the hearts of its friends, who differentiate between truth and falsehood without quoting from a book or others. Taste depends on purifying the soul, and whoever tastes it knows, and whoever knows understands, and whoever understands adheres. The sciences of taste can only be perceived by those who have truly tasted it. Others are only around it (Al-Nabhani 2015).

❖ **The Second Question: "What are the Rules of Taste in Islamic Learning, Education, and Upbringing?", and its Answer is as Follows**

The learner in the process of Islamic learning and education can utilize all their senses to acquire knowledge, or they may focus on a specific sense that helps them develop their learning skills. The senses are important means of perception that enable us to recognize and categorize things based on their importance and learn from them. Thus, teaching and learning concepts through the senses are closely related to the fields of neuroscience and cognitive psychology. There is no fixed number of senses due to variations in the terminology of sensory perception, including touch, taste, smell, hearing, sight, pain, balance, hunger, thirst, love, hate, perception of movement, and sensory feelings such as the perception of time and direction, and the acceleration of objects (Al-Atiyat, 2017).

Understanding of taste is subjected to the individual's own taste and uniqueness. It is a manifestation of the individual's personal taste. A child's curiosity to explore the world around them begins with their mouth. Everything they come across, they put in their mouth to discover its taste naturally. Taste is a faculty that varies in strength from person to person, resulting in differences in learning and utilizing it in acquiring knowledge and sciences.

Prophet Moses (PBUH) used his first instinctive taste as an Evidence to recognize his mother after being separated from her at birth. He maintained the taste in his mind, which made him resist the milk of the wet nurses that Pharaoh had brought for him. He rejected their breasts after tasting their milk for the first time. When his sister guided them to their mother, he immediately clung to her breast after tasting a drop of her milk. This became an Evidence for him that she is his mother. Allah says: {So We sent this inspiration to the mother Moses, 'Suckle (thy child); but when thou hast fears about him, cast him into the river, but fear not nor grieve; for We shall restore him to thee, and We shall We will make him one of Our apostles}. (Qasas 28:7). This demonstrates the significance of the sense of taste in learning.

Al-Abbas bin Abd al-Muttalib reported God's messenger as saying [He who is well-pleased with God as Lord, with Islam as religion, and with Muhammad as messenger will experience the savour of faith] (Muslim, 2011, 1/62). This means that faith has a taste, and the heart is able to taste it just as the mouth can taste the fragrance. Similarly, the mind can taste the concept of faith by understanding its hidden aspects. Just as the mouth tastes the flavor of food and drink, manners and morals can taste the sweetness of righteousness. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Say: I believed in Allah and then be steadfast." (Sahih Muslim, 2011, 1/222). This means that tasting the flavor of faith is the key to steadfastness. Taste is the approach to learning, teaching, and upbringing.

Therefore, learning sciences is done by tasting them. When reciting the verses of the Quran, the listener tastes their melodies when they are recited beautifully. Allah says: {And recite the Quran in slow, measured rhythmic tones}. (Al-Muzamil:4). Listening and attentiveness are prerequisites for tasting sounds. Listening is the perception of what the speaker is saying with the sense of hearing, while attentiveness is remaining silent and fully focusing on the speaker, leaving aside all distractions. It involves a complete state of emptiness to be fully present in listening. Attentiveness is on a higher level than mere listening. Allah says: {When the Quran is read, listen with attention, and hold your peace, that ye may receive Mercy} (Al-A'raf:204). Thus, the miraculous meanings of the Quranic verses are discovered through tasting them. Allah says: {Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Quran, or are their hearts locked up by them} (Muhammad: 24). Therefore, reflection is the key to unlock closed hearts, and the way of reflection is through tasting while listening attentively.

The taste of literary arts has a clear effect on the feelings of the soul, and its impact on the heart is deep. The taste of taste is in the heart according to the meanings of the words, tasting the feelings of the speaker with his mastery and the movement of the rhythm of his bell, and the harmony of the quality of its meanings. If the meanings come to the heart in strong and well-crafted molds, it creates a taste of flowing sweetness in the heart. Good speech has an attractive taste, from which hearts understand the meanings. And whoever reads the reading of the taster who is immersed in the meanings of the speaker, he explores its depths and understands what is not available to others from the general public. Tasting is achieved when the recipient of literary arts is coexisting with what it contains of meanings. The reader, with the spirit of the writer or poet, tastes the art of the writer's literature, or the rhymes of the poet's poems. The reader's choice of literature or poetry is consistent with what his taste tends to. Thus, making his taste for meanings a force in its effect.

More than one sense may be involved in learning, such as the sense of hearing and sight in learning the written and spoken text. The beauty of the poet's voice and his eloquence in pronunciation while reciting his poetry add an aesthetic taste to his written poems. The taste of food is also the result of the senses of sight and smell. Looking at food and smelling its smell has a strong effect on the taste of its taste before eating it. The nature of its cooking and the arrangement of its dining table can also change the feeling of its taste. The appearance of food has a great impact on how it is tasted. It is also possible to link colors, flavors, and the taste of their taste. When there is a yellow liquid juice, it is expected to taste like lemon, so the sour juice appears in his saliva. Seeing a musical instrument before hearing the sound of its strings also affects the taste of hearing Its strings. Desiring opinion makes us want to taste its melodies, and we prepare ourselves to hear it. Just as seeing and hearing the sound of raindrops falling on glass windows makes the feeling of cold creep into the bodies of those who see it, and the tastes of the sadness of winter and its diseases loom in the souls. Patience also has a bitter taste that only those who have tasted its bitterness know.

Recommendations

According to the results of the study, the researchers recommend the following:

- Developing the skill of taste at all stages of development in learners through learning, teaching, and training and practice.
- Employing the faculty of taste in learning and teaching knowledge and sciences.
- Tasting the meaning and wondering of Holy Qur'an verses.

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