



From Hadith to Ecological Action: Translating the Prohibition of Istrāf and Tabzīr to Build a Sustainable Lifestyle

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Abstract

The issue of global environmental crisis demands a more environmentally friendly paradigm of life, including among Muslims. This article discusses the relevance of the prohibition of istrāf (excessiveness) and tabzīr (wastefulness) in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW as a normative basis for building a sustainable lifestyle. Through a qualitative approach based on literature review, this study analyzes the meaning of istrāf and tabzīr within the context of the hadith, then translates them into concrete actions that support modern ecological principles. The findings reveal that the prohibition of these two behaviors not only emphasizes moral-spiritual aspects but also has ecological implications, such as reducing resource consumption, waste management, and fostering energy-efficient lifestyles. Thus, the practice of the hadith regarding istrāf and tabzīr can serve as a theological foundation for cultivating ecological awareness and achieving environmental sustainability. This article recommends integrating the values of the hadith into education and green lifestyle campaigns to address the challenges of the contemporary ecological crisis.

Keywords: *Istrāf and Tabzīr; Ecological Action; Sustainable Lifestyle.*

Introduction

Excessive behavior is a very bad habit, both for individuals and the environment. These days, many people engage in excessive behavior, particularly regarding their economic needs. Sometimes, they consume items that are not truly necessary or needed simply because they are trendy or viral (Anggraini dkk., 2022). However, once the trend and viral phase has passed, the items they purchased simply accumulate as waste, contributing to environmental damage. Waste management has become a global issue faced by society today. Continuous waste



accumulation forms piles that become major problems, causing pollution and a decline in the aesthetic value of the environment (Amaliah, 2020).

One way humans can care for the environment is by limiting human behavior in every activity, thereby establishing a balanced and harmonious relationship between humans and nature. Human ignorance about the environment can lead to environmental damage, including reduced environmental quality, decreased availability of natural resources, and the emergence of various issues. The government now recognizes the need for platforms to enhance public knowledge about the environment to achieve the concept of sustainable development (Ariwidodo, 2014). Additionally, in Islamic teachings, actions that cause damage and are excessive are considered reprehensible and should be avoided as they can lead to harm. These are known as *istrāf* (excessiveness) and *tabzīr* (wastefulness). Both of these behaviors are highly inappropriate for Muslims, especially when it comes to excessive consumption and wastefulness that harm the environment (Asroni, 2022). Therefore, the prohibition of *istrāf* and *tabzīr* is one of the ecological actions that must be undertaken by all sectors of society. Because even a small movement can have a significant impact on the sustainability of human life (Bastari, 2025). Regarding issues related to ecology and environmental ethics, there are several studies that address similar topics with different approaches and concepts, such as:

Agustina discusses environmental cleanliness from the perspective of the Prophet's hadith (Agustina, 2021). Ali focuses on environmental preservation from the perspective of hadith (Ali, 2015), while Amaliah discusses waste bank management as a means of maintaining cleanliness in an environmentally friendly and beneficial manner (Amaliah, 2020). The same is done by Ariwidodo, who highlights community knowledge in maintaining the environment (Ariwidodo, 2014). Environmental protection must be carried out, especially since the Prophet Muhammad taught us to always prioritize good ethics, not only towards fellow humans but also towards nature (Asroni, 2022). The concept of preserving nature is reflected in several sayings of the Prophet Muhammad regarding cleanliness, as seen in Aulia's research on environmental cleanliness and health from the perspective of the Prophet's hadith (Aulia, 2021). Additionally, knowledge about environmental conservation is crucial as a means to preserve nature, ensuring that every action taken does not lead to mistakes in the future (Azhar dkk., 2015).

From previous studies, there appears to be a gap left by researchers, namely examining the aspect of reducing waste and items that have a negative impact on the environment by applying the prohibitions of *istrāf* and *tabzīr* as a discourse on ecological conservation. The concept of the prohibitions of *istrāf* and *tabzīr* will be examined through the perspective of the Prophet's hadith as a benchmark in this study.

Methods

This study uses a literature review method, focusing on collecting and analyzing theories related to the topic discussed (Zed, 2008). The focus of this study is to determine how to avoid



excessive behavior and ground Islamic lifestyle by overcoming *istrāf*, which is excessive spending, and *tabzīr*, which is wastefulness. This study utilizes books, journals, and online articles (Arikuntu, 2010). Data and information are sourced from various literature, which are then organized based on research findings. The study aims to establish a connection between the collected information and the topic under discussion. The data collected are selected and sorted according to the research focus and then systematically organized. The method in this study also uses the hadith approach as a deep analytical tool to understand the meaning of the words *istrāf* and *tabzīr* and their relevance in ecological action (Arlina dkk., 2023). These approaches help the author solve the research problem and provide significant contributions to our understanding of how to apply ecological action in hadith principles within the context of effective resource management.

Understanding the Context of the Prohibition of *Istraf* and *Tabzir* in the Hadith

Istrāf refers to excessive or excessive behavior in all matters, whether in speech or action, while *tabzīr* is characterized by wasteful behavior or the squandering of valuable things without any benefit. According to Imam Syafi'i, *tabzīr* involves acquiring wealth in a proper manner but spending it in an improper way, leading to excessive and futile behavior (Fauzi, 2024). In general, both of these behaviors are considered improper and have negative consequences, as *istrāf* emphasizes excessive use or behavior, while *tabzīr* refers to actions that are futile and lack any benefit (Fitriani, 2022).

The Impact of *Istraf* and *Tabzir* on Consumption

1. **Economic Impact:** Wasteful consumption can worsen the economic situation at both the individual and societal levels, as *istrāf* and *tabzīr* lead to the waste of income that should be used for savings or more important needs. At the societal level, wastefulness can increase social inequality, as some people live in luxury while others live in poverty.
2. **Social Impact:** Wastefulness can also lead to social inequality. Often, those who engage in *istrāf* and *tabzīr* are unaware that they are neglecting those who are less fortunate. Excessive consumption can increase social gaps, poverty, and inequality.
3. **Environmental Impact:** Conversely, *istrāf* and *tabzīr* in consumption can also have a negative impact on the environment. The depletion of energy, water, and other natural resources increases environmental damage. This contradicts Islamic values, which teach us to manage nature wisely and sustainably for future generations (Fauzi, 2024).

The above statements illustrate that *istrāf* and *tabzīr* are very bad behaviors. The Prophet himself explained in his saying:



إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَرِهَ لَكُمْ قِيلَ وَقَالَ، وَإِضَاعَةَ الْمَالِ، وَكَثْرَةَ السُّؤَالِ

"Indeed, Allah hates for you to talk a lot without benefit, waste wealth, and ask too many questions"(Al-Bukhori, 2015)

This hadith indicates that Allah dislikes wasting wealth without benefit. This idea aligns with the concept of sustainable living, which emphasizes the efficient use of resources. Excessive consumption has become a major issue for modern society. Consumption should align with Islamic economic principles such as justice, balance, and blessings. Since it can harm oneself and others, excessive and unnecessary consumption should be avoided. When fulfilling their needs and engaging in worldly activities, Islam teaches that one should not harm oneself either in this world or in the hereafter (Nur dkk., 2024). In terms of human consumption, including food and other goods, there are rules that must be followed. The Prophet advised people not to eat too much, or engage in mukbang, in the modern technological era (Safitri & Nurlizam, 2024). This type of content can have a negative impact on oneself, especially in terms of health issues. Additionally, there is content that involves purchasing more than what is needed, even if it is unnecessary (Fitriani, 2022).

According to this principle, all consumption actions that cause environmental damage and economic imbalance must be reduced or eliminated. Therefore, one way Islam can reduce the negative impact of uncontrolled consumerist lifestyles is by implementing concrete ecological actions in daily life to apply the principles of responsible production and consumption through the wise and moderate use of resources, thereby not disrupting the balance of nature (Nur dkk., 2024). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

إِنَّ مِنَ الْإِسْرَافِ أَنْ تَأْكُلَ كُلَّ مَا اهْتَهَيْتَ

"An example of extravagance is when someone eats whatever they want." (Majjah, 2017).

The result of this hadith shows that the desire to eat something should be based on need, not desire. Sustainable production, which considers efficient energy use, recycling, and waste reduction, is at the core of sustainable ecological practices (Nur dkk., 2024). It has been explained previously that excessive human actions in exploiting nature, including mountains, seas, and other elements, are one of the causes of environmental damage. Therefore, one of the things emphasized in the hadith on environmental ethics is to avoid excessive behavior (isrāf). In fact, humans are prohibited from being excessive in matters related to their own environment and other matters. It is explained that isrāf is an attitude that exceeds conventional and normal limits (Mun'im, 2022). In dealing with nature, we must also avoid wasteful or tabzīr attitudes. Those who are tabzīr tend to exploit nature destructively. The demand for luxurious and excessive daily needs compels one to seek livelihood by any means, including damaging the surrounding environment. This hedonistic and excessive lifestyle is



referred to as “tabzir” in the hadith above. Someone who leads a hedonistic life strives to always fill their life with luxurious things. Such attitudes will destroy nature and humanity. Nature is exploited to fulfill their glamorous lifestyle, even though it should be well-protected (Saputra, 2023)

Transforming Religious Values into Concrete Actions in a Sustainable Lifestyle

Istrāf and tabzīr aim to reduce waste by making the best use of resources and managing waste as effectively as possible. Reduce, reuse, and recycle existing items to minimize their negative impact on the environment. There are several important principles to consider:

1. Refuse: Avoid using unnecessary items to reduce waste.
2. Reduce: Reduce the amount of waste by conserving energy, using fewer resources, and using fewer unnecessary items.
3. Reuse: Reuse items that are still usable to avoid unnecessary disposal.
4. Recycle: Transform waste into new, useful items.

The hadith related to istrāf and tabzīr teaches us to preserve the universe and the environment, which is very much in line with the concept of preserving the ecological environment (Pian & Nadhiran, 2025). By applying these principles, humans are expected to manage resources wisely, reduce environmental damage, and live more harmoniously with nature. Additionally, the prohibition of istrāf and tabzīr is also connected to broader ethical and social responsibilities, where everyone is expected to maintain ecological balance. Overall, this concept is a holistic approach to managing waste or unused items. As explained above, several hadiths related to the prohibition of israf and tabzir are relevant to the concept of ecological action, namely optimizing waste reduction at the source. These ideas focus on efforts to reduce the amount of waste produced by individuals who lack the ability to perform simple tasks. The four principles above show the relationship between the understanding of hadiths on ecological action and hygiene practices (Fuadi dkk., 2024). The four principles can be described as follows:

First, the principle of refuse means avoiding or rejecting items that are not really necessary. Reducing overall consumption is the implied meaning of this principle. By making the rejection of unnecessary items the primary step in minimizing waste, this principle encourages people to be more intelligent and responsible in managing waste. Reducing consumption is an important part of waste reduction. Therefore, it is crucial for people to dispose of unnecessary items, as they can cause disruption and add to the waste burden (Heriani dkk., 2020). It seems that the principle of refuse, which relates to things that cause disruption on the road, is connected to the hadith about removing obstacles from the road. By refusing, Muslims will become more mindful in managing waste. They will return to their



original purpose, which is to reduce the amount of waste. The principle of refuse, which relates to cleanliness ethics, as explained in the hadith above, shows that everything in nature has the right to be respected because everything is an important part of human existence. As a result, humans should not destroy nature because nature is an important part of the ecological community and humans have a high position within it (Fauzi, 2024).

Second, there is the principle of reduce, which means to decrease or avoid excess. Reducing excessive material consumption can minimize negative impacts on the environment, including avoiding the unnecessary use of resources such as materials, energy, and water. Ultimately, this principle will reduce the amount of waste that needs to be managed (Amaliah, 2020). The concept of reduction is also in line with Islamic teachings, which emphasize the prohibition of excess, as shown in the hadith that teaches the use of materials only as needed. This method conserves resources and preserves the environment (Ariwidodo, 2014). Human actions greatly affect the quality of a clean environment, and the cleaner the environment, the better. There should be no behavior that pollutes the environment. Conversely, actions that demonstrate responsibility, such as caring for and protecting the environment, must be carried out and improved. The principle of reduction aligns with teachings on environmental action. The hadith on israf and tabzir provides moral and spiritual guidance for humans to continue protecting and preserving their surroundings. The amount of waste generated increases with rising human consumption. Since such actions contradict the Prophet's teachings, the concept of reduction aligns with ecological action principles, as emphasized in the Prophet's hadith that excessive actions are undesirable (Aulia, 2021).

Third, reusing or repurposing items that have been used, including those considered waste, is referred to as reuse. The aim of this concept is to reduce the amount of waste disposed of at landfills while optimizing transportation and improving the effectiveness of the equipment used. This aligns with the hadith on cleanliness discussed earlier, which states that maintaining and utilizing the environment properly is the responsibility of humans as a trust from Allah SWT. Such waste management provides a better solution by reducing the amount of waste generated and minimizing its negative impact on the environment (Bastari, 2025). The hadith on israf and tabzir has provided guidance on prohibited actions. Alternative efforts to manage excess items, particularly in managing household consumption, remind us of the bad habits often practiced by some people who disregard environmental ethics, which serve as an important guideline for human actions aimed at avoiding harmful behavior toward the environment, ensuring the functionality and sustainability of the environment, and creating positive impacts on environmental improvement. To maintain environmental balance, these ethics are crucial to consider.

Fourth, recycling is the process of transforming used items or waste into new materials or products that are still useful. From an ecological perspective, the stages of refuse, reduce, and reuse are followed by the recycling stage; in other words, recycling is applied to items that cannot be refused, reduced, or reused. One of the final ideas in waste management is this



concept. Recycling waste into useful items not only enhances human well-being but also legally becomes a collective responsibility—a shared duty for the common good. The concepts of *israf* and *tabzīr* are highly relevant to cosmic solidarity because they aim to reduce the amount of waste generated by managing the environment from potential issues, particularly those related to waste. This beneficial waste management concept cannot function alone but provides guidance for society to actively participate in waste management for a better sustainable environment (Bastari, 2025).

From the four principles outlined above, it appears that if this conceptual framework is applied within a societal system, it would have a significantly positive impact, as issues related to waste and household consumption items that are often left to accumulate can be creatively processed and further exploited. Furthermore, these four ecological actions illustrate that excessive behavior actually creates opportunities to damage the environment due to the outcomes it produces. Therefore, the best solution to address such excesses is to apply these four principles (Munji, 2016).

The Hadith of Prophet Muhammad SAW provides rich and relevant environmental ethical guidelines that can be applied in modern times. With principles such as the preservation of natural resources and maintaining ecological balance, Islam has a strong foundation to support environmental sustainability (Saputra dkk., 2025). Muslims can make significant contributions to global efforts to address environmental challenges by incorporating these teachings into public policies and daily practices. Collaboration between governments, Muslim communities, and religious organizations can accelerate the implementation of these environmental ethics, resulting in a more sustainable and environmentally conscious society (Sari, 2024).

The concepts of *israf* and *tabdzir* in Islam are closely related to the use of wealth and possessions. *Israf*, which means exceeding limits and being wasteful, is a behavior that is detested by Allah SWT. Examples of *israf* include eating too much, talking too much, wearing too much, having too much, and praying too much. To avoid *israf*, it is recommended to avoid its causes, manage expenses well, understand the dangers of *israf*, control one's desires, and get accustomed to performing sunna prayers. Meanwhile, *tabdzir*, which means *mumabazir*, is prohibited in Islam because it involves spending wealth on things that do not support obedience to Allah, such as wasting wealth, health, and time. To avoid *tabdzir*, it is recommended to teach family members about ownership rights, cultivate empathy and sympathy for others, and strive to make good use of time and wealth (Yusgiantara, 2024).

Conclusion

This study emphasizes that the prohibition of *istrāf* (excessiveness) and *tabzīr* (wastefulness) in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW has profound ecological relevance and can serve as an ethical foundation for building a sustainable lifestyle. The values



contained in these hadiths align with the 4R principles (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), which are the primary strategies of modern environmental management. First, Refuse teaches Muslims to avoid unnecessary consumption, reject products that harm the environment, and refrain from a consumerist lifestyle that contradicts the spirit of anti-istrāf. Second, Reduce emphasizes the importance of wisely reducing the use of natural resources, including conserving energy, water, and raw materials, in accordance with the hadith's advice to avoid tabzīr. Third, Reuse encourages the reuse of items that are still usable, thereby reducing waste production and supporting the principle of sustainability. Fourth, Recycle (recycling) is a concrete step in transforming waste into new resources, reflecting humanity's responsibility as stewards to preserve the earth. By integrating the prohibitions against istrāf and tabzīr into concrete actions based on the 4R principles, Muslims can build a lifestyle that is frugal, wise, and environmentally friendly. The application of these values not only creates harmony between humans and nature but also strengthens spiritual awareness that preserving the earth's sustainability is part of divine trust.

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