



FOOD WASTE AND RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS An Examination of Ethics And Sustainable Practices from An Interfaith Perspective

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Abstract

Food waste, particularly during major religious celebrations like Ramadan and Christmas, often results from excessive consumption, lack of planning, and social traditions that elevate the potential for waste. This phenomenon has a detrimental impact on the environment due to the increased volume of food waste. This study aims to explore food waste during religious holidays through a qualitative approach and literature review. The analysis reveals that religious teachings from Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism offer ethical solutions to reduce food waste. Islam emphasizes balance and the prohibition of extravagance (israf), Christianity highlights humanity's role as stewards of God's creation, and Buddhism promotes mindfulness in consumption. By integrating religious values with sustainable practices, religious communities can transform their celebrations into opportunities for social and environmental harmony. The study underscores the significance of an interfaith approach to mitigating food waste and promoting sustainability.

Keywords: *Environmental Ethics, Food Waste, Religious Holiday, Sustainability*

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, the global climate system has undergone alarming acceleration, making it an urgent challenge for the sustainability of the earth. According to BMKG (2024) “The year 2024 was recorded as the hottest year on record, with the global average temperature reaching 1.55 °C above the pre-industrial era (1850–1900). For the first time, the annual global temperature increase exceeded the 1.5 °C threshold set in the Paris Agreement in 2015. The last ten years (2015–2024) have been the hottest period in recorded history, showing a consistent trend of global warming”. This situation confirms that global environmental challenges, both in terms of climate crisis and pollution, demand serious attention and concrete action across sectors. Along with increasing global awareness of environmental issues, the discourse on sustainability is no longer just an academic or policy discourse, but has also begun to influence people's consumption patterns (Tiwari, 2025). Climate change, pollution, ecosystem damage, and declining quality of life are pressing global issues that need to be addressed immediately.

One consequence of uncontrolled consumption behavior is food waste, which not only affects the economy but also has a negative impact on the environment. Excessive consumption is not limited to one sector but extends to various aspects of life, including food, energy, technology, fashion, and cosmetics (Ganglmair-wooliscroft, 2025). When consumption exceeds reasonable limits, negative impacts on social, ecological, and spiritual balance are inevitable. This contributes to the environmental crisis and moral degradation in today's society (Thero, 2019). One tangible form of excessive consumption is food waste. A deeper understanding of what food waste means is very important because of its enormous impact on the environment and economy. To comprehend the concept denoted by the term 'food waste', it is essential to recognize that this designation refers to food items that are suitable for human consumption yet remain uneaten, unused, or disposed of, either because they have surpassed their expiration date

or because they have been allowed to decompose (Towler, 2022). Food waste is a critical global concern, with considerable repercussions for the economy, ecological systems, and societal structures (Manzoor et al., 2024).

According to data from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), “approximately 1.3 billion tons of food are wasted globally each year, with the largest amount of waste occurring at the consumption stage” (Blakeney, 2019). The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) states that in 2022, the world is estimated to waste around 1.05 billion tons of food in the retail, food service, and household sectors as a whole (UNFCCC, 2024). This amount is equivalent to 132 kilograms per capita per year, of which 79 kilograms per capita is wasted in household (UNEP, 2024).

The causes of food loss and waste in middle/high-income countries are mainly related to consumer behavior and a lack of coordination between various parties in the supply chain. Sales agreements between farmers and buyers can lead to large amounts of agricultural waste. Food is often discarded due to quality standards that reject products that are not perfect in shape or appearance. At the consumer level, a lack of purchase planning and expired "best before" dates also cause large amounts of food waste, compounded by the careless attitude of consumers who are able to throw away food (Blakeney, 2019).

As a result of uncontrolled consumption, the global climate crisis is becoming increasingly alarming. To address this challenge, it is important to introduce a more ethical and sustainable approach to consumption in order to reduce the negative impact on the earth and society. According to De et al., three important concepts of sustainable consumption, responsible consumption, and conscious consumption emerge as a framework for addressing the urgency of balanced and ethical consumption practices. Although seemingly different and possessing individualistic philosophies, these three terms are deeply intertwined in terms of practice and concept. Conscious consumption is rooted in awareness, a state in which a person is present and conscious of their actions and their impact.

This encourages reflective and purposeful consumption choices that are aligned with personal values and minimize negative impacts on society and the environment.

Meanwhile, responsible consumption involves moral, environmentally friendly, and socially oriented consumption choices. It assesses the social and environmental impacts of consumption behavior. Sustainable consumption, on the other hand, encompasses consumption that meets current consumption needs without compromising the ability of future generations to consume. It includes consumption behaviors that preserve, reduce, and create a healthy environment. These three frameworks collectively form the basis for addressing overconsumption and creating harmony between humanity and the planet (De et al., 2025) .

One phenomenon that increases the demand for food is during special celebrations or religious holidays, such as Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Christmas. On these special days, households celebrate by providing a variety of foods, sending gifts, traveling home, and visiting relatives (Setiarto & Herlina, 2024; Shipman & Durmus, 2017; Toorabally & Toorabally, 2017). If not planned carefully, religious celebrations can lead to an increase in waste, especially food waste (Baran et al., 2024). Indonesia, as one of the countries with the largest Muslim population in the world, cannot escape the phenomenon of increased food waste during Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr (Irmayanti, 2025). According to the Tegal City Environment Agency, “the volume of waste in the Pantura region from day one to day five of Eid al-Fitr 2019 increased by 50 percent compared to normal days, from 250 tons to 500 tons per day” (Lukmansyah, 2019).

Meanwhile, based on data from the Environmental Agency (DLH) of Aceh Besar Regency, Aceh Province, there was an increase in waste volume during the month of Ramadan 1445 H (Safrina, 2023). The waste mainly came from household waste sources, as well as sugar cane pulp and young coconut shells. This trend is not unique to Indonesia; it is also observed in various other countries.

For example, annually, an estimated 4.5 million Christmas feasts are squandered within the United Kingdom, encompassing substantial quantities of turkey, various vegetables, and confections (wastedirect, 2024). The tradition of gathering and eating together often creates social pressure to serve abundant food, even if it leads to waste.

Tabel 1. Food Waste Data in Indonesia

Year	Total Waste Generation (tons)	Food Waste (%)	Food Waste (tons)
2021	28,591,323.10	38.95 %	11,136,320.80
2022	38,570,232.62	39.90 %	15,389,520.30
2023	43,260,356.89	39.66 %	17,157,060.00

Source: SIPSN, 2024.

Meanwhile, the increasing amount of food waste data shows the urgency of better waste management, both individually and at the government policy level. Data from the National Waste Management Information System (SIPSN) shows that food waste consistently accounts for the largest component of national waste, with an average of around 39% of total waste. In 2021, total national waste generation was recorded at 28.59 million tons, of which 11.13 million tons was food waste. This amount increased significantly in 2022 as waste generation rose to 38.57 million tons, with food waste contributing 15.39 million tons. The upward trend continued in 2023, when total waste generation reached 43.26 million tons, with food waste accounting for 17.15 million tons. This means that in a period of three years, the volume of food waste increased by more than 6 million tons (2021 to 2023). This surge illustrates that food waste is becoming increasingly serious, in line with the increase in community consumption activities. The fact that the percentage of food waste is relatively stable (38.95% in 2021, 39.90% in 2022, and 39.66% in 2023) shows that even though the proportion has not changed much, the large amount of total national waste has caused the absolute volume of food waste to increase sharply. Thus, efforts to manage food waste are crucial, as nearly 4 out of every 10 tons of waste in Indonesia is food waste.

Food waste is not only a problem faced by Indonesia but also a global problem faced by other countries. Meanwhile, the increasing food waste data shows the urgency of better waste management, both individually and at the government policy level. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 12, target 12.3, includes a commitment to halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses across the supply chain by 2030 (UNEP, 2024). Food waste not only has an economic impact but also puts significant pressure on ecosystems. Every piece of food that is thrown away contains a carbon, water, and energy footprint. The production, distribution, and consumption of food require large inputs of resources, so food waste means waste throughout the entire supply chain. Plastic packaging, fuel, and irrigation water are wasted when food is not eaten.

This is where religious values become significant. The teachings of the world's religions basically teach the principles of balance, simplicity, and responsibility for God's creation. Consumption is not positioned as a means of satisfying lust alone, but as a form of respect for God's blessings and trust. Religion places humans as beings who must be responsible in utilizing natural resources.

Religion is a guideline for human life in carrying out daily activities, including consumption behavior. Being simple and responsible for our consumption are values in religious teachings. Simplicity in consumption means striking a balance between two extreme ways of life, namely materialism, which leads humans to a life of luxury (*israf*), ostentation, and indulgence, and asceticism, which rejects worldly pleasure (Syaparuddin, 2016).

Islam prohibits its followers from spending their wealth or consuming excessively and wastefully, but Islam teaches them to spend their wealth wisely and in accordance with their needs and income. Food consumption should not exceed what is necessary and must take into account environmental and social benefits. In Christianity, the concept of stewardship teaches that humans are

stewards of God's creation, not absolute owners. Therefore, consumption behavior must reflect responsibility and love for others and the earth. Buddhist teachings also emphasize simplicity and mindfulness in eating. Mindful eating is seen as a spiritual means of appreciating life and reducing the suffering of other living beings. With this awareness, the practice of throwing away food is contrary to Buddhist moral values. Religious values do not actually disregard environmental sustainability. No religion teaches extravagance or wastefulness. However, it is human materialism that causes consumptive behavior that impacts the environment.

Given the significant impact of food waste on the environment, economy, and society, as well as the relevance of religious values in guiding more responsible consumption behavior, this research is very important. The urgency of this research lies in the effort to explore how the teachings of major religions, such as Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism, can play a role in reducing food waste during religious holidays. This study aims to examine the relationship between religious teachings, sustainability practices, and community consumption behavior, as well as to provide ethical solutions that can be applied to reduce food waste. Thus, the results of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to encouraging more sustainable consumption patterns, both in individual and social contexts, as well as to provide recommendations for public policy in addressing the issue of food waste.

METHOD

This investigation employs a descriptive qualitative methodology, which is particularly well-suited to understanding contextual social and religious phenomena, especially those related to consumption behaviors and food wastage during religious observances. This methodological approach facilitates the interpretation of religious ethical principles and their implementation in sustainability initiatives. It prioritizes understanding significance and processes

over an exclusive focus on quantitative metrics (Creswell, 2009). Data acquisition was conducted through a meticulous literature review, drawing on sacred texts from major world religions (Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism), scholarly articles, literature, and pertinent digital resources. The literature review fosters the development of a robust conceptual framework and highlights deficiencies in extant research regarding food wastage and interfaith consumption ethics. This methodology amalgamates various perspectives, offering a comprehensive analysis that transcends a singular viewpoint (Snyder, 2019).

The data examination adheres to a thematic analysis framework, which entails identifying and scrutinizing the principal themes arising from the literature (Heriyanto, 2018). This process was conducted in three distinct phases. Initially, data were compiled from a multitude of sources about religious doctrines and sustainability research. In the subsequent phase, data reduction was conducted by selecting only the information that was directly relevant to the research focus: the ethics of consumption and food wastage during religious festivities. Finally, the organized data was articulated in an analytical narrative that interlinks the themes recognized across diverse religions with the notion of environmental sustainability. The thematic analysis categorized and examined the predominant themes that emerged, including moderation in consumption, social justice (e.g., the act of sharing food with those in need), and ecological stewardship. Using thematic analysis, this study investigates the ethical frameworks in religious teachings and their potential to mitigate food waste during religious observances. The approach not only provides a descriptive understanding of religious perspectives on consumption but also illustrates how these ethical doctrines can be used to confront contemporary issues, such as the environmental repercussions of excessive consumption. This thematic methodology is expected to contribute to both scholarly discourse and practical guidance on sustainable consumption practices during religious celebrations.

DISCUSSION

Food Waste during Religious Holidays

Food waste during religious holidays often occurs due to excessive food consumption, as well as ignorance or lack of attention to food waste management. Typically, a person can easily throw away up to 40% of the food they buy. However, during the festive season, the amount of food wasted increases by 25% more (Smit, 2021). This amount becomes enormous when done by many people and occurs over many years.

A lack of planning leads people to prepare large amounts of food for their families and guests without considering their ability to consume it. In addition, leftover food during the holidays often ends up in the trash, when it could actually be stored and reused. In many countries with Muslim majorities, Ramadan bazaars or street food markets are a dynamic feature, operating from afternoon until dusk throughout the fasting month, although with various characteristics influenced by local customs, culture, and tastes (Hassan & Low, 2024).

According to research by Hassan and Low, the festive atmosphere positively influences excessive food purchasing behavior. Consumers influenced by the joyful and festive atmosphere during celebrations, and the desire to enjoy them, are more likely to make excessive food purchases during Ramadan. Additionally, providing large portions of food, diverse buffets, and entertainment increases the potential for food waste (Gretzel et al., 2020; Hassan & Low, 2024). During this one-month period, all adult Muslims are required to refrain from sensory pleasures from dawn to sunset. This includes not consuming food and water, not smoking, not engaging in sexual relations, and avoiding recreational activities (Hirschman et al., 2010).

The month of Ramadan is often used by Muslims as a time to share and strengthen bonds with one another. Turkey is a country with a predominantly Muslim population, and traditionally, their food consumption is influenced by culture, especially during Ramadan, which involves days of religious fasting.

Ramadan is a time to cleanse the soul, focus on God, and practice self-discipline and sacrifice. "Şeker Bayramı," which marks the end of fasting, falls on the first day of Shawwal, the 10th month of the Islamic calendar, when people entertain guests with sweets and traditional dishes (Shipman & Durmus, 2017). In Indonesia, there is a tradition of breaking the fast together in order to strengthen ties with friends and relatives. Excessive consumption and food waste are also associated with breaking the fast and lavish buffets. At bazaars or *takjil* markets, most people spend a lot of their time buying excessive amounts of food (Hassan & Low, 2024).

The lack of consumption planning should be anticipated by calculating consumption needs during the month of Ramadan. After calculating the needs, the amount of food to be purchased can be adjusted according to the calculations made. In addition, households that feel obliged to adhere to tradition will buy large quantities of food for special occasions (such as Eid, weddings, and other celebrations) when lavish dishes are served with fresh food (Hassan & Low, 2024).

A Bank of England report found that households in the UK spend 20% more on food and 38% more on alcohol in December than in other months. According to Business Waste UK, "the volume of waste during the Christmas celebrations in the UK increases by up to 30% compared to the average amount of waste at other times of the year. This waste primarily consists of packaging, food wrappers, gift wrap, Christmas decorations, and food waste".

This increase in food waste often occurs due to Christmas traditions that are synonymous with family gatherings and enjoying various dishes (Waste4Change, 2022). Carrier (1993), for example, comments on the sacredness of family food preparation for Christmas (p. 62): *'One transforms a collection of raw materials purchased as commodities into a dish that expresses and embodies the bonds that unite family members'*(Hirschman et al., 2010)

Religious Teachings on Consumption and the Prohibition of Wastefulness

Religions around the world always teach kindness and caring. One of these is kindness and caring for the environment around us. The practice of wastefulness and overconsumption of food is not taught in religion. This sub-chapter will explain religious teachings on consumption and prohibitions on wastefulness in three religions, namely Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism. In Islam itself, the teachings of the Qur'an on consumption can be taken from the words *kulu* and *isyrahu*, which appear 21 times. Meanwhile, eat and drink (*kulu wasyrahu*) appears six times. The number of verses on the teachings of consumption, not including derivatives of the root words *akala* and *syaraba* other than the above *fi'il amar*, is 27 times (Syaputra, 2017). Humans are commanded to eat and drink according to their daily needs but are prohibited from being wasteful, even if we are able to do so. One of the verses in the Qur'an is interpreted as follows: "*Eat and drink, but do not be excessive. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are excessive*" (QS Al-A'raf: 31).

The teachings of Sufism (mysticism in Islam) introduce a level of *mujahadah* (struggle) called *zuhd*. This teaching is often misunderstood as "hating the world or worldly life." However, according to Ibn Qudamah, *zuhd* is a formulation of "*the attitude of turning one's desires or difficulties toward something else that is better*" (Yafie, 2006). Islamic teachings prohibit wasteful behavior and teach individuals to avoid extravagance and stinginess. Consumers are encouraged to exercise self-control, contentment (*qana'ah*), generosity, and uphold noble character. This principle is based on the belief that everyone has the right to enjoy a decent life, even more than just fulfilling their needs, as long as it is not excessive and remains within reasonable limits (Syaparuddin, 2016). "*And give the right to close relatives, as well as to the poor and those on a journey; and do not squander (your wealth) extravagantly. Verily, those who squander are brothers of Satan, and Satan is very ungrateful to his Lord*" (Al-Isra: 26-27).

The prohibition against wasting food is also narrated in the following hadith. From Ibn Abbas: The Prophet Muhammad SAW said, which means: *“If any of you eats, then do not wipe (wash) your hands until you lick them.”* (HR. Bukhari and Muslim). Abu Az-zubair said: *“I heard from Jabir ibn Abdullah, who said; I heard that from the Prophet. And do not wash your hands until you lick your fingers or have them licked, and do not take paper (to clean them) before licking your hands or having them licked, for indeed there is blessing at the end of the food.”* (Reported by Ahmad). Islam is so concerned with optimizing consumption that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) forbade us from washing our hands before the food in our hands is completely finished.

As for Islamic microeconomics itself, according to Syaparuddin, in Islam, the behavior of a Muslim, both as a consumer and a producer, is guided by religious principles. Muslim consumers are encouraged to manage their consumption wisely and not excessively, while Muslim producers are required to ensure that their production is in line with ethical and sustainability values. The main goal of both is to maximize *maslahah* (benefits), which include material and immaterial gains, such as obtaining rewards and blessings. All of this is done as part of an effort to achieve holistic well-being that includes happiness in this world and the hereafter (Syaparuddin, 2016). In eco-theology, the structural relationship between humans and the environment is placed in a position of balance. Although humans are recognized as an integral part of the environment, they are not considered to belong to or originate from the environment. This approach reflects balance and harmony in the relationship between humans and nature based on the Islamic principles (Abdillah, 2001). In worldly life, even though the afterlife cannot be observed directly, every human action will be accounted for and contribute to one's fate in the afterlife. Often, human efforts to achieve worldly happiness can have negative impacts, both on other people and on the long-term sustainability of the environment. An imbalance in prioritizing worldly and

spiritual activities risks resulting in failure to achieve true happiness, both in this world and in the hereafter (Syaparuddin, 2016).

In Christianity, food is often considered a blessing from God that must be respected and appreciated. Food waste is contrary to values such as generosity and social justice. In the Bible, Jesus teaches the importance of sharing with those in need (Matthew 25:35). Celebrations such as Christmas also reflect the value of sharing through the traditions of eating together and giving food to those in need. The Christian view of nature is often explained through the concepts of dominion and stewardship. The Bible gives humans "glory, honor, and power to subdue the earth and all other creatures" as stated in Genesis 1:26-28, 5:1, and 9:6 (Purba & Simarmata, 2024). . As beings created in the image of God (*Imago Dei*), humans are called to reflect God's loving nature and protect His creation, not destroy it. Therefore, the concept of stewardship is more in line with a deep Christian perspective, in which humans are not considered the absolute owners of the world, but as stewards who are tasked with caring for and nurturing the earth so that it remains in accordance with God's will (Kurniawaty et al., 2024).

Christ as King teaches that humanity's relationship with nature should not be based on exploitation, but on responsibility and love. Just as a just king rules with wisdom and care, Christ leads His creation with love and care. Therefore, His followers are called to emulate Christ's character in the way they care for and treat the environment. The care and maintenance of the environment that can be emulated from Christ is by adjusting consumption to our needs. Christmas celebrations can be a place to share with others but without impacting the environment. Uneaten food can be stored for later consumption or processed and can also be given to others so that it can be used to its full potential.

As for Buddhism, it is seen as a religion that cares deeply about the environment, with moral values that encompass humans, animals, and nature. Compared to Christianity, which usually emphasizes the role of humans as stewards of creation who are given authority by God over the natural order,

Buddhist teachings are considered to have a more integrated approach to nature and emphasize harmony between humans and the environment. The Buddha himself chose to live in the forest in pursuit of his spiritual ideals. The fact that the major events in his life, such as his birth, enlightenment, first sermon, and death, all took place under trees or in gardens, demonstrates his close relationship with the natural environment (Keown, 2005).

The four *Brahma-viharas* (noble attitudes) have a major influence in shaping ethical attitudes towards the natural world. These attitudes include universal love (*metta*), compassion (*karuna*), sympathetic joy (*mudita*), and equanimity (*upekkha*). These four attitudes encourage a sense of responsibility to protect the natural world and maintain its well-being. A person who is truly loving and compassionate will find it difficult to reconcile these feelings with actions that cruelly destroy the environment (Keown, 2005). These four noble attitudes teach us that protecting the environment is not only about preventing environmental damage but is also a responsibility and awareness that is embedded within ourselves. In Buddhism, food consumption is closely linked to the practice of mindfulness. Buddhists are taught to eat moderately, not excessively, and to only take food according to their needs. This teaching is in line with the principle of simplicity, which is one of the pillars of Buddhist ethics. Within the framework of the Noble Eightfold Path, particularly in the aspect of right livelihood (Ismail, 2017), Buddhists are taught to live in a way that does not harm other beings or damage the environment. Thus, food waste is seen as a form of unmindfulness and contrary to the values of self-control and compassion (*karuṇā*) towards fellow living beings. Consumption is considered 'wise' when it directly contributes to the authentic well-being of the individual. This means consuming only what is necessary for ethical and spiritual growth, such as food, clothing, shelter, education, and medicine, in minimal quantities (Zsolnai, 2024). Proper consumption or sustainable consumption can be defined as: the use of natural services and related products that meet basic needs and improve quality of life,

while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials, as well as waste and pollutant emissions throughout the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations (Kamble, 2019).

The practice of mindful eating is not limited to regulating consumption but also includes a reflective process on the origin of food. Food is understood as the result of the hard work of many farmers, fishermen, traders, and the sacrifice of other creatures. From this perspective, every morsel of food has moral and spiritual value, so leaving it uneaten without a clear reason is considered a disregard for the efforts of others and a disrespect for life. This is why in the Buddhist monastic tradition, monks practice receiving food with gratitude and consuming it proportionally, neither more nor less.

In addition, the principle of *ahimsa* (non-violence), which is the moral foundation of Buddhism, further reinforces the ethics of consumption. Ahimsa is not only understood as a prohibition against harming living beings but also includes efforts to reduce the suffering that arises from human actions against nature. Food waste results in the waste of energy, water, and land used in food production. This indirectly creates new suffering for other living beings affected by environmental damage. Thus, wise food management is a manifestation of the practice of ahimsa in everyday life.

A famous meditation teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh, emphasizes that human suffering often stems from eating patterns that lack awareness. Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings are practically applied to promote a sustainable lifestyle and mindful consumption. This involves awareness of the impact of one's choices on the environment and society, in line with the principles of environmental conservation (Nguyen, 2023). According to him, humans need to reflect on the process of how food is obtained, produced, and consumed in order to appreciate it as part of an interconnected life. Eating mindfully means slowing down the process of eating, savoring each bite, and being aware of its impact on the body, mind, and environment. In this way, consumption no longer serves only to fulfill biological

needs, but also becomes a spiritual practice that strengthens gratitude, compassion, and ecological responsibility.

Buddhist teachings view greed (*lobha*) as one of the roots of human suffering. *Lobha* (greed) influences human behavior in consuming natural resources excessively and unsustainably (Pratiwi et al., 2024). Excessive consumption, including in the form of food waste, is a manifestation of this greed. Therefore, the practice of self-control in eating has a double meaning, namely as an effort to maintain physical health and as a step towards spiritual liberation from the cycle of suffering (*dukkha*). Thus, simple and mindful food management not only has an impact on environmental sustainability, but also on the achievement of spiritual happiness in Buddhism. From a sustainability perspective, these principles are highly relevant in addressing the challenge of food waste on religious holidays. When people are encouraged to view food as a manifestation of the reciprocal relationship between humans, other beings, and the universe, consumption practices will be more controlled. Celebrations that originally had the potential to create waste can be transformed into a momentum to revive the values of mindfulness, compassion, and simplicity. This shows that Buddhist teachings can be a source of practical inspiration for creating socio-ecological harmony through more sustainable consumption patterns.

The practice of mindful consumption taught in Buddhism is one solution to global challenges not only at the personal level, but also in the areas of conflict, poverty, and climate crisis. Mindful eating opens up a space for reflection on the origins of food, so that every bite is seen as a gift from the earth, the sky, and the hard work of all beings. This principle is in line with the concept of ahimsa, where controlling upper-class consumption not only prevents us from wasting, but also from the ecological suffering caused by the exploitation of nature and animals. In addition, academic studies show that Buddhist practices in consumption, including anti-consumption and mindful eating, are clearly in line with the framework of sustainable consumption. Furthermore, the call of Buddhist leaders

to take ecological action—such as reducing meat consumption and preserving ecosystems—reinforces the compatibility of traditional teachings with the challenges of modern times.

Comparative Analysis of Ethical Principles of Consumption in Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism

The three major religions discussed, namely Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism, have a common ground in viewing consumption as a moral and spiritual act, not merely a biological activity. Although there are differences in their basic teachings and theological frameworks, all three reject excessive consumptive behavior and encourage responsible food management.

In Islam, the concept of *ofisraf* (wastefulness) is clearly prohibited in the Qur'an (QS. Al-A'raf: 31; QS. Al-Isra: 26–27). Islam views food as a blessing and a trust from Allah that must be used proportionally. The principle of *qana'ah* (contentment) serves as a moral safeguard against consumption driven by desire. On the other hand, Islamic teachings also emphasize the social dimension of consumption: surplus food should be distributed to the poor, thereby reducing social inequality.

Meanwhile, in Christianity, the main principle is stewardship or preservation of God's creation. Humans are not seen as absolute owners of the earth, but as managers who are given the responsibility of preserving the integrity of creation (Genesis 1:28; Matthew 25:35). In the context of consumption, food waste is considered contrary to gratitude and love for others. Major celebrations such as Christmas should be a moment for sharing, not causing ecological damage due to excessive consumption. Thus, the ethics of consumption in Christianity are oriented towards ecological and social responsibility, namely caring for the earth while also caring for the needs of others.

In Buddhism, the emphasis is on mindfulness and simplicity. Food waste is seen as a result of unmindfulness and greed (*lobha*), which are the roots of suffering (*dukkha*). The practice of mindful eating teaches Buddhists to appreciate

every food as the result of the interdependence of many beings and resources. Furthermore, the principle of ahimsa (non-violence) extends the ethics of consumption by emphasizing that wastefulness means creating new suffering for nature and other living beings.

Table 2. Comparison of Religious Principles on Consumption and Food Waste

Religion	Main Principle	Foundation of Teachings	Ethical Solutions to Food Waste
Islam	<i>Israf</i> (prohibition of excess), <i>Qana'ah</i> (contentment), balance	The Qur'an (QS Al-A'raf: 31; QS Al-Isra: 26–27), Hadith of the Prophet	Consume according to need, avoid wastefulness, share with the poor, manage food scraps wisely.
Christian	Stewardship (care for God's creation), <i>Imago Dei</i> (image of God)	Bible (Genesis 1:28; Matthew 25:35)	Manage resources responsibly, share food with others, prevent excessive exploitation.
Buddha	Mindfulness, simplicity, Right Livelihood	Tripitaka, the teachings of the Buddha, Thich Nhat Hanh	Eat in moderation, full awareness in consumption, respect all living beings, reduce suffering through a simple diet.

Source: Author's compilation, 2024.

When compared, Islam and Christianity both emphasize the theocentric dimension, in which consumption is positioned as a form of obedience and responsibility to God. Islam emphasizes the prohibition of wastefulness as a form of obedience to Allah, while Christianity emphasizes the role of humans as stewards of God's loving creation. In contrast, Buddhism places greater emphasis on the anthropocentric-ecological dimension based on self-awareness, compassion, and harmony with nature. In other words, Islam and Christianity are rooted in the vertical relationship between humans and God, which is then reflected in horizontal relationships with others and the environment, while Buddhism is rooted in inner awareness and the interdependence of all beings.

Although their theological frameworks differ, these three religions share practical similarities, namely rejecting wastefulness, promoting simplicity, and

emphasizing social and environmental awareness. It is these similarities that can form the basis of an interfaith ethic to address the phenomenon of food waste on religious holidays. Through the integration of Islamic, Christian, and Buddhist values, religious celebrations are no longer merely occasions for excessive consumption, but also opportunities to foster social solidarity while maintaining ecological sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This research elucidates the pivotal role that religious doctrines assume in alleviating food waste during significant religious observances such as Ramadan and Christmas. Using a qualitative methodology, it demonstrates that Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism provide substantial ethical frameworks for addressing food waste. Islam advocates for moderation and the avoidance of excess, whereas Christianity underscores the responsibility of stewardship over God's creation, and Buddhism promotes mindfulness and simplicity in consumption practices. The integration of these religious tenets with sustainable practices has the potential to transform holiday observances into avenues for fostering social and environmental equilibrium. By cultivating greater awareness of responsible consumption, religious communities can play a crucial role in minimizing food waste and achieving sustainability objectives. The outcomes of this study emphasize the necessity of an interfaith approach in influencing sustainable consumption behaviors, presenting practical strategies that harmonize ethical principles with environmental conservation during religious festivities.

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