

Forgiveness in Muslim Indonesia: A Cross-Sectional Study of Emotional Intelligence and Social Integration during *Halal Bihalal*

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Abstrack

Forgiveness is a vital component of interpersonal harmony and community resilience, particularly within religious and cultural contexts. In Indonesia, the *halal bihalal* tradition, an Islamic communal ritual of mutual forgiveness following Eid al-Fitr, represents a unique socio-religious practice of reconciliation. This study aims to examine the psychosocial predictors of forgiveness within this ritual context using a quantitative cross-sectional design involving 512 Indonesian Muslim respondents across five provinces. A structured online questionnaire was administered to assess emotional intelligence, social integration, and dispositional forgiveness. Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.412$, $p < 0.001$) and social integration ($\beta = 0.192$, $p < 0.001$) significantly predicted forgiveness, accounting for 39.1% of its variance. The findings affirm that forgiveness is a socially embedded and emotionally regulated process, reinforced by spiritual rituals, particularly during Ramadan and post-Eid gatherings. This study extends forgiveness theories by incorporating collectivist, spiritual, and ritualized dimensions, highlighting the role of *halal bihalal* as a culturally grounded mechanism for emotional repair and social cohesion. Limitations include the regional scope and reliance on self-report measures. Future research is recommended to explore forgiveness as a ritualized practice across diverse religious and ethnic contexts.

Keywords: *halal bihalal* ritual, emotional intelligence, social integration, forgiveness, emotional well-being, religious-based psychoeducation

Abstrak

Pemaafan adalah komponen penting dari harmoni interpersonal dan ketahanan komunitas, terutama dalam konteks agama dan budaya. Di Indonesia, tradisi *halal bihalal*, ritual komunal Islam saling memaafkan setelah Idul Fitri, mewakili praktik rekonsiliasi sosial-agama yang unik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji prediktor psikososial pengampunan dalam konteks ritual ini menggunakan desain cross-sectional kuantitatif yang melibatkan 512 responden Muslim Indonesia di lima provinsi. Kuesioner online terstruktur diberikan untuk menilai kecerdasan emosional, integrasi sosial, dan pengampunan disposisional. Analisis regresi linier berganda mengungkapkan bahwa kecerdasan emosional ($\beta = 0,412$, $p < 0,001$) dan integrasi sosial ($\beta = 0,192$, $p < 0,001$) secara signifikan memprediksi pengampunan, terhitung 39,1% dari variansnya. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pengampunan adalah proses yang tertanam secara sosial dan diatur secara emosional, diperkuat oleh ritual spiritual, terutama selama pertemuan Ramadhan dan pasca-Idul Fitri. Studi ini memperluas teori pengampunan dengan menggabungkan dimensi kolektivistis, spiritual, dan ritual, menyoroti peran *halal bihalal* sebagai mekanisme yang didasarkan secara budaya untuk perbaikan emosional dan kohesi sosial. Batasan termasuk ruang lingkup regional dan ketergantungan pada langkah-langkah laporan mandiri. Penelitian di masa depan direkomendasikan untuk mengeksplorasi pengampunan sebagai praktik ritual di berbagai konteks agama dan etnis.

Kata kunci: *ritual halal bihalal*, kecerdasan emosional, integrasi sosial, memaafkan, kesejahteraan emosional, psikoedukasi berbasis agama

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INTRODUCTION

Ritual *halal bihalal*, a prominent tradition among Indonesian Muslims, plays a central role in renewing social bonds after Eid al-Fitr. (Iriany et al, 2019; Mujtahid et al, 2023; Zahra et al, 2024). While closely associated with *silaturahmi* (social visiting), this practice is not merely a social gathering; it also carries a substantive psychological dimension. The act of seeking and granting forgiveness during *halal bihalal* can ease interpersonal tensions arising from conflict or differences of opinion. In this sense, forgiveness extends beyond social reconciliation to function as an emotional healing mechanism, one that can enhance psychological well-being and repair social relationships within the community (Cook et al., 2022; Cowden et al., 2025; Lahiri, & Padmakumari, 2025; Martínez-Bernal et al., 2024; Mullen et al., 2023; Sengupta et al, 2025; Velez & Idrobo, 2024). Although prior work has frequently examined the social and cultural aspects of *halal bihalal*, few studies have probed the psychological processes of forgiveness embedded in this ritual. Existing research tends to emphasize its role in strengthening communal ties, without analyzing how forgiveness itself may serve as a catalyst for improved emotional well-being. The forgiveness enacted during *halal bihalal* is linked not only to feelings of happiness, peace, and relief, but also to meaningful reductions in stress and anxiety, emotional burdens that often persist when conflicts remain unresolved (Çınaroğlu, 2024; Khan, 2024; Rassool, 2024).

Recent evidence supports these claims show that both emotional and decisional forgiveness exert significant positive effects on individual well-being, highlighting the particular salience of forgiveness in collectivistic contexts like Indonesia, where social harmony is highly valued (Cook et al., 2022; Joo et al., 2019; Kurniati et al., 2020). Similarly, notes that the reciprocal exchange of forgiveness during Eid manifests in *halal bihalal*, which helps individuals release negative affect and improve the quality of interpersonal relationships (Gunawan, 2020; Khan, 2024)

In religious settings, prosocial behaviors such as forgiving have been associated with reduced anxiety and depression and increased happiness, suggesting a pathway of emotional repair (Abu-Raiya & Ayten, 2020; García-Vázquez et al., 2022; Sharma, & Singh, 2019). Collectivistic cultural norms can amplify social integration through forgiveness in *halal bihalal*, thereby reducing interpersonal conflict, deepening solidarity, and supporting mental health (Akilah et al, 2025). Consistent with this, Rogahang & Teol (2024), report that *halal bihalal* not only restores social ties but also enhances emotional well-being by diminishing negative feelings and strengthening positive ones, illustrating how religious rituals can contribute to community mental health.

Within the Indonesian Muslim context, *halal bihalal* is thus understood not only as a social tradition but also as an expression of core religious values (Haryanto, Abdullah, & Purnanto, 2020; Kuswaya & Ali, 2021; Nulhasanah & Hakiman, 2023; Satria & Aryati, 2024; Zahra, Rusmana, & Sakinah, 2024). The practice of forgiving in this ritual reflects Islamic teachings that encourage believers to pardon others as an act of devotion and a route to inner peace (Ameer et al., 2025; Firdous, et al, 2024; Hasanzadeh, & Akbari, 2019; Khan, 2024). Forgiveness in Islam benefits the individual while reinforcing social relationships (Abu-Nimer & Nasser, 2023; Bensaid & Machouche, 2019; Shahzad & Shafi, 2023). Addressing the gap in the literature, this study examines the interplay among emotional intelligence, social integration, and forgiveness within the ritual context of *halal bihalal*. While forgiveness has been linked to emotional well-being, few studies have integrated the roles of emotional intelligence and social integration in religious rituals of this kind. Emotional intelligence, encompassing the ability to



recognize, understand, and regulate emotions, and social integration, which captures closeness and connectedness within the community, is expected to facilitate and potentially accelerate forgiveness. In turn, these processes should contribute to greater psychological well-being and stronger social relationships.

The *halal bihalal* ritual, a traditional practice among Indonesian Muslims, involves mutual forgiveness and social bonding after Eid al-Fitr. This study seeks to address two critical questions: (1) How do emotional intelligence and social integration predict the tendency to forgive during *halal bihalal*? (2) How does the interaction between these variables facilitate or accelerate reconciliation within the Muslim community during this ritual? The research aims to fill gaps in the literature on psychological processes involved in religious rituals and expand forgiveness models to include cultural and spiritual dimensions. This research contributes to the literature by expanding Western forgiveness models to encompass spiritual and cultural practices, particularly in collectivist societies. By examining emotional intelligence and social integration within the *halal bihalal* ritual, this study offers a unique perspective on forgiveness, deeply embedded in social and religious practices.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive design and multiple linear regression analysis. The primary objective was to examine the relationships among emotional intelligence, social integration, and forgiveness within the context of the *halal bihalal* ritual practiced by Indonesian Muslims. The quantitative approach was deemed appropriate as it enables the direct measurement of associations between variables and the extent to which they influence the dependent variable, namely, forgiveness. The descriptive design facilitated data characterization, capturing distributions and demographic patterns across the sample.

The target population consisted of Indonesian Muslims who regularly participate in the *halal bihalal* ritual following the Eid al-Fitr celebration in 2025. To ensure diversity in the sample, a stratified random sampling technique was employed, accounting for key demographic factors such as gender, age, education level, and geographical region. The final sample included 512 respondents who actively engaged in the *halal bihalal* ritual and consented to participate in the study. The sample size was determined using Cochran's Formula, ensuring sufficient statistical power for generalizability to the broader population.

The instruments employed in this study were contextually developed based on theoretical constructs from the Forgiveness Scale, Emotional Intelligence Scale, and Social Integration Scale. These frameworks provided the foundation for developing questionnaire items adapted to the cultural and religious context of Indonesian Muslim society, particularly in the practice of *halal bihalal* after Eid al-Fitr. The final instrument consisted of 22 items grouped into three main sections: (1) Forgiveness (7 items), covering self-forgiveness, forgiveness of others, and forgiveness of situations; (2) Emotional well-being (7 items), comprising positive emotions (happiness, peace, pride) and negative emotions (anger, disappointment, anxiety); and (3) Social integration (8 items), measuring the degree of connectedness with family, friends, and the broader community through post-*halal bihalal* social participation. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = very inappropriate to 5 = very appropriate), with several reverse-scored items to control for response bias. The instrument underwent expert validation for content and construct validity by three specialists in psychology and Islamic counseling.



Reliability testing indicated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.748 for forgiveness, 0.753 for emotional well-being, and 0.922 for social integration, confirming strong reliability across all constructs.

To ensure construct validity, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted on the adapted instrument using AMOS software. The three-factor model (forgiveness, emotional well-being, and social integration) demonstrated acceptable fit indices: CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.056, indicating good model fit. All factor loadings exceeded 0.50. The instruments were also reviewed by three subject-matter experts to assess content relevance and cultural appropriateness. Minor adjustments in item phrasing were made to reflect the local Islamic cultural context, especially in the use of terms related to emotions and social bonds. These steps ensured both the psychometric robustness and contextual validity of the instrument for the Indonesian Muslim population.

Data were collected using both online and face-to-face questionnaires during the post-Eid al-Fitr period when *halal bihalal* is widely practiced in Indonesian society. Respondents were asked to reflect on their personal experiences of participating in *halal bihalal* and to evaluate their emotional changes and social relationships after the act of forgiveness. Prior to the main data collection, a pilot test involving 30 respondents was conducted to ensure linguistic clarity, cultural relevance, and preliminary reliability.

Data analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the study variables using a series of statistical procedures. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the respondents' demographic characteristics and present the distribution of scores for each variable under investigation. Measures such as frequency, percentage, mean, median, and standard deviation were calculated to provide a comprehensive overview of the sample and the patterns within each variable. To assess the strength and direction of the relationships among emotional intelligence, social integration, and forgiveness, Pearson correlation analysis was used because the data met the assumptions of normality. This method allowed for the evaluation of linear associations among the key variables. Furthermore, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the combined effects of emotional intelligence and social integration on forgiveness. This analytical model enabled the assessment of both individual and combined contributions of the independent variables in predicting the dependent variable, providing insights into the extent to which emotional intelligence and social integration influence forgiveness outcomes.

The study received ethical approval from the Department of Islamic Guidance and Counseling, State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Langsa, under the approval number No. 44/In.24/RJ/PP.00.9/01/2025. The research was conducted in full compliance with established ethical standards for human subjects' research. All participants were provided with an informed consent form that outlined the study's objectives, procedures, and participants' rights. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without any penalty. Confidentiality was strictly maintained; all data were anonymized and used exclusively for research purposes. Personal identifiers were removed from the dataset, and findings were reported in aggregate to protect participants' privacy and data.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The description of respondents in this study, categorized by gender, age, education level, and region, is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Respondent Description			
Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Man	156	30.5%
	Woman	356	69.5%
Amount		512	100%
Variable	Category /Year	Frequency	Percentage
Age	15-19	150	29.3%
	20-30	287	56.1%
	31-45	37	7.2%
	46-60	35	6.8%
	61	3	0.6%
Amount		512	100%
Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Education	Elementary School	11	2.1%
	Junior High School	24	4.7%
	Senior High School	178	34.8%
	D3/S1	290	56.6%
	S2/S3	9	1.8%
Amount		512	100%
Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Region	Sumatera	477	93.2%
	Java	19	3.7%
	Kalimantan	3	0.6%
	Sulawesi	2	0.4%
	Papua	2	0.4%
	Overseas	9	1.8%
Amount		512	100%

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents based on gender, age, educational background, and region. Most participants were female (69.5%), while males accounted for only 30.5%. This gender imbalance may influence the results if gender is correlated with other key variables such as emotional well-being or social integration. In terms of age distribution, most respondents were between 20 and 30 years old (56.1%), representing the dominant productive age group typically involved in *halal bihalal* rituals. A significant proportion also fell within the 15–19 age group (29.3%), while older age groups (31–45, 46–60, and 61 and above) were underrepresented, suggesting lower participation from older individuals in this ritual.

Regarding educational background, most respondents held a diploma or bachelor's degree (D3/S1, 56.6%) or had completed high school (SMA, 34.8%), indicating a relatively high level of educational attainment. Only 1.8% of respondents had attained a postgraduate degree (S2/S3), and a small proportion (2.1%) had only completed primary education. In terms of geographic distribution, the vast majority of respondents



(93.2%) lived in Sumatra, indicating strong regional representation from this area. Participants from Java (3.7%), Kalimantan (0.6%), Sulawesi (0.4%), Papua (0.4%), and international locations (1.8%) were notably fewer, suggesting a regional sampling bias that should be considered when interpreting the generalizability of the findings.

The description of forgiveness data from a total of 512 respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
 Frequency Distribution and Percentage of Forgiveness, Emotional Intelligence, and Social Integration

Forgiveness			
Interval Score	Category	Frequency	%
1-17	Low	33	6.4
18-27	Medium	368	71.9
28-35	High	111	21.7
Total		512	100
Emotional Well-Being			
Interval Score	Category	Frequency	%
1-17	Low	42	8.2
18-27	Medium	360	70.3
28-35	High	110	21.5
Total		512	100
Social Integration			
Interval Score	Category	Frequency	%
1-19	Low	30	5.9
20-30	Medium	197	38.5
31-40	High	285	55.6
Total		512	100

Based on Table 2, the analysis indicates that most respondents were classified as moderate in their forgiveness. Specifically, 71.9% of respondents scored between 18 and 27, indicating a reasonably strong tendency to forgive. Approximately 21.7% of respondents fell into the high category (scores of 28–35), indicating that a portion of participants found it very easy to forgive. Meanwhile, only 6.4% were in the low category (scores of 1–17), suggesting difficulties in granting forgiveness. Regarding emotional well-being, the frequency and percentage distributions show that most respondents were in the moderate category, with 70.3% scoring between 18 and 27. A total of 21.5% were categorized as having high emotional well-being (scores of 28–35), reflecting relatively positive emotional states. However, 8.2% of participants fell into the low category (scores of 1–17), indicating a subset of individuals experiencing lower levels of emotional well-being. In terms of social integration, the data reveal that most respondents demonstrated high levels of social connectedness, with 55.6% scoring in the high category (scores of 31–40). A further 38.5% were in the moderate range (scores of 20–30), indicating a fairly strong sense of social connection. Only 5.9% were in the low category (scores of 1–19), suggesting limited social integration within their communities.



Table 3.
 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Forgiveness (Y)	512	7.00	35.00	26.4824	4.56993
Emotional Intelligence (X1)	512	7.00	35.00	25.7969	4.94606
Social Integration (X2)	512	8.00	40.00	30.7754	6.49359

Based on Table 3, the descriptive statistics indicate that the mean scores for all three variables, forgiveness, Emotional Intelligence, and social integration, suggest that most respondents demonstrated relatively positive and moderately high levels in each construct. This implies that most participants perceived themselves as having a strong capacity to forgive, experienced stable emotional well-being, and maintained meaningful social connections within their communities. In terms of variability, the standard deviations for emotional well-being and social integration were notably higher, indicating greater individual differences in these domains. While the overall trend was positive, a subset of respondents reported lower emotional well-being and more limited social integration. The wide range of scores across all three variables also highlights meaningful individual variation in experiences related to forgiveness, affective states, and social connectedness. Collectively, these descriptive findings offer a clear overview of central tendencies and dispersion patterns across the key variables, laying the groundwork for subsequent inferential analyses.

Table 4.
 Simple Regression Results Between Emotional Intelligence, Social Integration, and Forgiveness

Variable Relationships	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Interpretation
Emotional Intelligence ↔ Forgiveness	0.578	Strong positive correlation
Social Integration ↔ Forgiveness	0.489	Moderate-strong positive correlation

Table 4 presents the results of the correlation analysis between emotional intelligence, social integration, and forgiveness. The findings reveal a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and forgiveness, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.578$. This indicates that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to be more inclined to forgive. Such individuals are generally better equipped to manage their emotions, which enhances their capacity to respond empathetically and constructively to interpersonal offenses, ultimately improving their emotional well-being. Furthermore, the relationship between social integration and forgiveness shows a moderate-to-strong positive correlation ($r = 0.489$). This suggests that individuals who are more socially integrated, those who feel connected to and engaged within their communities, are also more likely to forgive. Forgiveness, in this context, extends beyond the individual and plays a crucial role in repairing and reinforcing social bonds, thereby contributing to greater communal harmony.

Taken together, these findings underscore that emotional intelligence and social integration are interrelated and mutually reinforce the process of forgiveness.



Forgiveness, as a fundamentally emotional and social act, not only benefits individual psychological health but also plays a significant role in strengthening interpersonal relationships and social cohesion within the broader community. Figure 1. Visual representation of the regression model showing the influence of emotional intelligence and social integration on forgiveness during halal bihalal rituals in Indonesia. Both variables showed significant positive effects ($p < 0.001$), with emotional intelligence having greater predictive power.

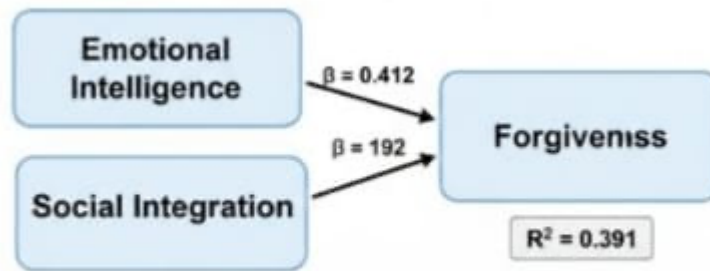


Figure 1. Research Model: Predictors of Forgiveness in the Context of *Halal Bihalal*

To gain deeper insight into the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5.
Multiple Linear Regression Test

Variable	Coefficient (β)	t-count	Sig. (p)	Information
(Constant)	9.952	10.71	0.000	-
Emotional Intelligence (X1)	0.412	11.26	0.000	Significant
Social Integration (X2)	0.192	6.89	0.000	Significant

Table 5 presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis examining the influence of emotional intelligence and social integration on forgiveness. Based on the analysis, the following regression equation was derived.

$$Y = 9.952 + 0.412X_1 + 0.192X_2$$

The regression equation indicates that both independent variables exert a positive and significant influence on forgiveness. The coefficient for emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.412$, $p < 0.01$) indicates that for every one-unit increase in emotional intelligence, forgiveness scores increase by 0.412 units. This finding underscores the dominant role of emotional intelligence in shaping an individual's capacity to forgive, as those with higher emotional awareness and regulation are more likely to exhibit prosocial emotional responses, such as forgiveness. Similarly, social integration ($\beta = 0.192$, $p = 0.000$) shows a significant positive effect, suggesting that individuals with stronger social ties and a greater sense of belonging in their community are more likely to forgive others. The constant term 9.952 represents the baseline level of forgiveness when both independent variables are set to zero. The model yielded an R^2 of 0.391, indicating that 39.1% of the variance in



forgiveness is explained by emotional intelligence and social integration combined. This demonstrates that both independent variables make a substantial contribution to the prediction of forgiveness. Furthermore, the F-statistic ($F = 163.5, p < 0.001$) indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant and can reliably predict forgiveness from the combined influence of emotional intelligence and social integration.

In summary, the results reveal that both emotional intelligence and social integration are significantly associated with forgiveness. Higher levels of emotional intelligence enhance an individual's ability to manage emotions and extend forgiveness, while stronger social integration fosters interpersonal harmony and reconciliation. These findings provide important insights into the psychological (emotional intelligence) and social (social integration) mechanisms that facilitate forgiveness within the community context.

Discussion

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that emotional intelligence and social integration are significant predictors of forgiveness among Indonesian Muslims, particularly within the cultural-religious context of *halal bihalal*, a post-Eid ritual of reconciliation. The multiple linear regression analysis revealed that emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.412, p < 0.001$) and social integration ($\beta = 0.192, p < 0.001$) together accounted for 39.1% of the variance in forgiveness. These results confirm that forgiveness is not merely a personal or moral act, but a psychosocial process shaped by emotional awareness and collective relational norms.

This study is among the first to quantitatively explore forgiveness through the lens of *halal bihalal*, a ritual embedded in Southeast Asian Muslim culture in which reconciliation is ritualized, expected, and communally enacted after the fasting month of Ramadan. The results provide empirical grounding for understanding forgiveness not only as an individual virtue but as a socially performed act that contributes to emotional well-being and community resilience.

One explanation for the strong link between emotional intelligence and forgiveness is the capacity of emotionally intelligent individuals to regulate affective responses and facilitate cognitive reappraisal. This aligns with Goleman's (2005), framework of emotional intelligence, especially in the domains of self-regulation and empathy, which are essential for navigating interpersonal transgressions. Furthermore, the findings validate the Heartland Forgiveness Theory (Miller et al., 2008), which conceptualizes forgiveness as a multidimensional construct involving both affective and decisional components.

In the Indonesian Muslim context, emotional intelligence becomes a spiritual communal competence, nurtured through Islamic teachings during Ramadan. Rituals like fasting and *tarawih* condition individuals toward self-restraint and empathy, forming a psychological basis for forgiveness enacted during *halal bihalal*.

The positive association between social integration and forgiveness ($r = 0.489$) underscores the vital role of relational trust and community networks as social infrastructures that foster prosocial behavior. Within the framework of Social Capital Theory, dense and trustworthy social ties enhance interpersonal cooperation and moral restoration (Putnam, 2000). The act of forgiving during *halal bihalal* thus functions not merely as an interpersonal healing process but as a collective mechanism for maintaining moral order and restoring communal balance. This aligns with the view that forgiveness is a socially embedded moral practice that sustains cohesion and collective well-being



(Freedman & Enright, 1996; Worthington & Scherer, 2004). From a cultural psychology perspective, these findings extend existing models of forgiveness, which have largely emerged from Western individualistic paradigms emphasizing intrapersonal transformation such as cognitive reframing or emotional regulation (Enright, 1996; Kurniati et al., 2020; Worthington & Wade, 2019). In contrast, forgiveness within *halal bihalal* operates as a socially scaffolded and spiritually legitimized ritual, where community members jointly enact humility (*tawadhu'*), empathy, and mutual vulnerability as moral virtues that facilitate reconciliation and collective emotional repair. This social embeddedness distinguishes *halal bihalal* from individualized forgiveness processes, transforming it into a ritualized form of emotional restoration and social reinforcement.

In many Arab-Muslim societies, forgiveness often intertwines with honor-restoration frameworks, in which interpersonal reconciliation preserves both social dignity and communal identity (Abu-Nimer & Nasser, 2013, 2023). The Indonesian *halal bihalal*, however, foregrounds collective humility and shared purification reflecting Islamic principles of *ukhuwah* and *rahmah* (brotherhood and compassion). This shift from honor-based reconciliation to humility-centered restoration marks a culturally distinct pathway of prosocial emotion regulation rooted in spiritual practice. Moreover, while forgiveness in Muslim diaspora contexts tends to manifest as private prayer or intra-family dialogue (Hatch et al., 2017), *halal bihalal* transforms forgiveness into a public emotional performance, reinforcing belonging, shared moral values, and psychological well-being across generations.

Integratively, this study situates *halal bihalal* as a culturally grounded collective emotional healing ritual that bridges the theoretical gap between individual-level forgiveness models and community-based reconciliation mechanisms. It highlights how emotional intelligence (the ability to perceive and regulate emotions) and social integration (a sense of connectedness and mutual care) jointly facilitate adaptive forgiveness, contributing to both emotional resilience and social harmony. These findings offer theoretical and practical implications for designing community-based psychoeducational programs that integrate emotional regulation, cultural rituals, and social support to strengthen psychosocial well-being in collectivist societies.

The theoretical implications of this study are profound. It invites a reconsideration of forgiveness as not only an intrapersonal construct but also a ritualized, relational, and religiously mediated process. By introducing *halal bihalal* into academic discourse, this study contributes to a Southern epistemology of forgiveness, a narrative in which reconciliation is embedded in collective identity and spiritual rhythm.

In practice, the findings suggest that forgiveness-based interventions in Muslim-majority societies may benefit from leveraging ritual and communal practices rather than relying solely on Western therapeutic models. For instance, integrating emotional intelligence education with Islamic spiritual rituals during Ramadan may promote psychological well-being, especially in conflict-affected or intergenerationally traumatized communities. Moreover, in multicultural or pluralistic societies, *halal bihalal* offers a model for inclusive community healing that emphasizes reconnection, collective humility, and public acknowledgment elements often absent in secular approaches to reconciliation.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The reliance on a cross-sectional design restricts causal inference, and the geographic concentration of participants in Sumatra may limit generalizability across Indonesia's diverse



ethnoreligious contexts. Regional differences in how *halal bihalal* is performed, shaped by ethnic customs, theological orientations, or urban-rural divides, remain underexplored. Additionally, self-report measures may be influenced by social desirability, particularly when assessing moral-religious behaviors such as forgiveness.

From a practical standpoint, the findings offer valuable implications for policymakers, educators, and community leaders in Muslim societies. Programs promoting emotional intelligence, especially during Ramadan, can be strategically designed to culminate in meaningful reconciliation events such as *halal bihalal*, reinforcing both spiritual growth and social healing. At a broader level, the *halal bihalal* tradition exemplifies a culturally grounded mechanism for post-conflict restoration that can inspire contextualized peacebuilding efforts in other regions grappling with polarization and intergroup tensions.

Future research should adopt longitudinal and experimental designs to examine changes in emotional states and forgiveness behaviors across Ramadan and Eid. Comparative ethnographic studies between urban and rural regions, or between Sunni and Shia communities, may offer further nuance. Moreover, interfaith or intercultural analyses, e.g., comparing *halal bihalal* with *Yom Kippur*, *Nyepi*, or Christian confession, can deepen global conversations on ritualized emotional repair, highlighting both universal and distinctive pathways to reconciliation.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that forgiveness in the *halal bihalal* ritual is significantly influenced by emotional intelligence and social integration, which together account for 39.1% of its variance. These findings affirm that forgiveness is not merely an individual act but a socially and spiritually embedded process shaped by communal rituals during Ramadan and Eid. Emotional intelligence fosters empathy and self-regulation, while social integration provides relational scaffolding for collective reconciliation. The study advances a Global South perspective by positioning *halal bihalal* as a culturally rooted mechanism of emotional repair and social cohesion distinct from Western individualistic models of forgiveness. It contributes to the cultural psychology of forgiveness by revealing how ritual, spirituality, and community norms interplay to facilitate public acts of healing. Practically, the results highlight the value of integrating emotional education with religious traditions to promote psychosocial well-being. While limited by its regional scope and reliance on self-report data, this research opens new directions for exploring forgiveness as a ritualized psychosocial practice. Future cross-cultural and longitudinal studies are encouraged to deepen global understanding of forgiveness in diverse sociocultural contexts.

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