# When offense and mutual forgiveness collide yearly in indonesia: A qualitative study during Eid al-Fitr

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**Abstract**

One custom of Indonesian Muslims during Eid al-Fitr is to celebrate Ramadhan's end by requesting and giving forgiveness amongst Muslims. This celebration is the symbol of the triumph of the Muslims after a month of fasting and going back to being sinless like a newborn child. While mutual forgiveness has become an adhering religious practice, there is still limited analysis of how individuals deal with themselves about the observed offensive event with other people, and the spiritual practice of forgiving each other. Ten participants who participated in this research to address this issue. To evaluate the gathered data, the researcher conducted a content analysis. Results indicate that pardoning criminals during the Eid al-Fitr can be attainable. Not all the participants could forgive, however, simply because it was during a religious practice. Other causal factors to forgive are the degree of damage, anger, and recognition of the traumatic encounter.

**Keywords***: offense, forgiveness, eid al-fitr, resentment, Indonesia*

## Introduction

The topic of forgiveness in the field of psychology has recently been studied its relation to mental and physical health (Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010; Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003) primarily. Various studies on forgiveness have linked forgiveness to other variables such as empathy (McCullough, Worthington, & Nag., 2010; Hill, 2010), gender (Marigoudar & Kamble, 2014), and cultural influence (Sandage, Hill, & Vang, 2003). Forgiveness has become one of the focuses of studies in positive psychology that is striving to understand its association with health and wellbeing (McCullough, 2000). In Indonesia, forgiving becomes a particular tradition that is carried out every year during the celebration of the Eid al-Fitr celebration. People will congratulate each other by saying *"Eid Mubarak"* and expressing apology for their intentional and unintentional wrongdoings. Ideally, every year there will be people who forgive massively and will increase their sense of happiness through the improved quality of social life. However, forgiving is not always as easy as performing a ritual, even though it relies on religious beliefs. Therefore,

although it has passed many Eid-al-Fitr holidays, interpersonal conflict still leaves hurt, hatred, and resentment, which affects one's well-being.

For some people, forgiving the mistakes of others feels so natural that both can continue interpersonal relationships without any conflict in them that has the potential to stress and or depression. By forgiving, someone can have more positive subjective wellbeing qualities because they reconstruct their relationship (McCullough, 2000). A person can live happier because he does not have a burden of mind caused by the inconvenience of interpersonal relationships with others. Moreover, Indonesian society is known as a community with collective, interdependent, and spiritual characteristics as most of the Asian community in general. Thus, collectivity has a high value in a society, which means that the connection with one another as a group is the most critical aspect of life. In addition, interdependent relationships with other people are also characteristic of Indonesian society because most people seeing it as supporting the need to survive in living their daily lives. Meanwhile, spirituality is an intricate part to separate from the culture because the belief in connection with a spiritual power held by most of the Indonesian society both manifests in the form of religious beliefs and the formation of other cultural views. With these characteristics, Indonesian people are fortunate because such features help to make individuals feel they need the presence of others in positive interpersonal relationships.

However, many cases occur due to negative interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal conflicts do not always have a happy ending, while hatred can arise that worsens the situation of conflict, and eventually reduce the quality of wellbeing. Moreover, differences in identity, ethnicity, race, religion, and the presence of social media contribute to the sensitivity of disputes that occur so that it has the potential to trigger the continuation of offense, hatred, and revenge. Various revenge cases that occur show how individuals fail to accept the mistakes of others and reduce tensions between the two parties so that they fail to forgive. However, instead, the threat of violence can occur. Revenge can occur continuously and alternately. If one party does not start to forgive and reconcile and there is awareness from the other party to accept good intentions to end the conflict, then reconciliation cannot occur so that the event of revenge continues for generations.

The act of mutual forgiveness, which offers alternative aspects that aid in repairing the offending relationship, is not merely the responsibility of a wrongdoer to admit his or her faults and to beg for a "sorry." However, a victim plays significant roles as well, particularly in responding to a wrongdoer proportionately to anticipate the potentials of worse interpersonal relationships. When both sides are aware of each contribution to the related state, and the psychological functions support the sincere effort to forgive and apologize, the relationship may recover more positively.

Traditionally, people are accustomed to forgiving and religiously taught that forgiveness has a high value of glory, and even those who do not forgive will result in God's mercy. In various religious teachings and value systems, forgiveness is a source of human strength, resulting in interpersonal, mental, and physical benefits (McCullough, 2000). However, even though the foundation of tradition and religious function is massive, the response to interpersonal offense does not always lead to forgiveness. Of the ten participants who participated in the FGD, their responses were categorized in the form of replies such as forgetting, forgiving, considering forgiving, and not forgiving. This research aimed to explore how individuals could forgive others as offenders in the Eid al-Fitr moment. Forgiving might be effortlessly spoken but dealing with acceptance of past painful experiences with others is not always effortless.

**Method**

Participants were the third year Muslim undergraduate students in a Guidance and Counseling study program in a university in Indonesia. These participants would return to their hometown for the Eid al Fitr celebration to meet family, neighbors, and friends during the holidays. Their participation in this research was voluntary, and they agreed to share their

perspective regarding their forgiveness experience. The author served as the instrument to collect the data from participants. The researcher performed Two Forum Group Discussion (FGD) before and after the holiday to collect the data. The first FGD was discussing the specific experience of being offended by others' behaviors. The second FGD was continuing the previous discussion and follow up on how participants forgive offenders. Of these discussions, the researcher analyzed the content of the data with coding and categorized them based on the content similarity and pattern.

**Findings and Discussion**

**1. Forgetting**

Those who prefer to forget what they negatively experienced in the context of interpersonal relationships argue that to forget may help them to end their perceived negative emotions caused by experienced offenses. They believe that this is the way to cut the hurt feelings by saying, *"I don't want to talk about it*," *"enough is just enough*," or *"I want to sleep tight tonight.*" These expressions indicate psychological avoidance caused by remembering or ruminating about what a wrongdoer has done to them.

For some people, forgetting interpersonal conflict that causes heartache is a solution (Noreen, Bierman, & MacLeod, 2014). By ignoring, a person's mental burden of anguish will fade and disappear from visible behavior. Forgetting is a form of avoidance of negative feelings that arise as a result of conflict experienced so that someone can appear to feel positive but tries to eliminate the impact of negative emotions that arise (Witvliet & McCullough, 2007). Various causes, such as not having the power to experience a heartache that is so strong or wants to camouflage what is a problem is not a problem.

Forgetting interpersonal problems may function effectively in a certain period. However, this choice leaves other issues that have the potential to arise in the future in a worse form, mainly if it accumulates with different similar experiences a person can experience anxiety and depression without rightly handling the stress (Band-Winterstein, Eisikovits, & Koren, 2011). It is essential to distinguish that forgetting does not mean forgiving (Enright, 2001). Forgetting can mean someone just does not want to remember that he/she has experienced something that makes them feel hurt by others. So, emotionally, they are not free from the effects of negative emotions caused by the experience of being hurt by others.

Forgetting heartache due to interpersonal offense can be done when the level of seriousness of the events that occur is relatively heavy so that people easily forgive. Conversely, people will be more challenging to give forgiveness when they often lament the hurts of their hearts. The more people cry the pains of the heart, the harder it will be for them to forgive. Contemplation that interferes with an irritable behavior and attempts to hide the consideration is strongly related to the motivation to avoid and take revenge. The longer people lament and disappear, the longer it will affect the avoidance and revenge motivation. Conversely, people who do not cry and do not hide their feelings become more forgiving (McCullough et al., 2001).

**2. Forgive**

The salient reasons why these subjects forgive the wrongdoers are the sense of subservience of religious tenets, feeling of compassion, and empathy that they sometimes do wrongdoing to other people. Participants consider, *"If I forgive, God will forgive me, too. I am a wrongdoer for others as well".* They believe that by forgiving, life will be more comfortable in terms of social interactions. When they face difficulties, they hope that other people will help them more easily because forgiveness means kindness. Besides, by forgiving one may attain a peaceful life and allow wrongdoers to learn the lessons of the detrimental interpersonal offense.

Forgiveness can be an act that is self-oriented and also altruistic. McCullough and colleagues (1997) explained that forgiveness is a motivational change from revenge and avoidance to goodness or goodwill. This process is triggered primarily by empathy for the perpetrators.

Besides, forgiveness is a concept of a gift that is given altruistically to the offender (Al-Mabuk, Enright, & Cardis, 1995). In contrast to these two views, forgiveness is understood as a tool to fulfill one's needs in pursuing good relations (Ashton, Paunonen, Helmes, & Jackson, 1998), or as a tool to deal with the psychological situation of a betrayal (Canale, 1990). Baumeister et al. (1999) combine these approaches to obtain an understanding that forgiveness is an intrapsychic, carried out in the mind of a person who forgives, and is done in an interpersonal form, or is a social activity that occurs between people. So, forgiveness can be understood as altruistic behavior or used to fulfill a person's needs.

McCullough (2000) argues that relational factors such as closeness, commitment, and satisfaction are essential elements in forgiving. People are most likely to forgive in a relationship characterized by proximity, commitment, and satisfaction. Several studies, such as those conducted by Nelson (1993) and Rackley (1993), show that in general, it is easier to forgive when interpersonal relationships have these characteristics. However, Roloff and Janiszewski (1989) said that people find it difficult to forgive in a close relationship (intimate relationship) if an offensive action is a rejection of generosity that is easy to do.

Forgiveness involves reducing negative cognition, emotions, and motivations to the offender, and this change often leads to positive behavioral change (Exline et al., 2003). Sincere apologies or expressions of deep regret have a profound effect on forgiveness (Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Metts & Cupach, 1998). This variable can be a potential factor that can be controlled by the offender to influence the likelihood that people who are hurt will forgive the perpetrator. McCullough et al. argue that "acceptance" is a tool to tolerate wrongdoers (Welfare Tradeoff Ratio transgressor (WTR; Tooby et al., 2008). Receiving an injustice behavior is called implicit forgiveness (Exline and Baumeister, 2000). While explicit forgiveness is directly related to the debt of forgiveness and acknowledging someone's desire to free wrongdoers from guilt.

Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, and Hannon (2002) said that thinking about forgiveness can produce essential clues about the nature and consequences of indulgence. One can think of the implications of mercy, which are influenced by several reasons, such as external impulses or hidden intentions that lead to false forgiveness (Enright & Zell, 1989; Baumeister, Exline, & Sommer, 1999). With false mercy, a person may not benefit from forgiving because the reason behind it is not enough to give internal changes to the forgiving person.

## 3. Considering forgiving

Consideration to forgive is experienced by those who are still in doubt of deciding their attitude for the wrongdoer. Thus suspicion is mainly caused by how many times a wrongdoer has conducted the same mistakes, such as repetitive romantic betrayal. It is perceived hard to forgive because of the prediction that even though the offended forgive the offender, the offender will do the same thing. Some participants mentioned that *"It depends on the offense before deciding to forgive. I may finally forgive, but I need to deal with myself first"*. Forgiveness means nothing but repetitive psychological damages to the victim. Besides, the seriousness of the offense determines the willingness to forgive the wrongdoer.

To forgive, someone will need a process that requires two attempts. First, there is an effort to decide to forgive (DiBlasio, 2000; Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000). Choosing to forgive involves a commitment to use energy and effort to regulate negative emotions, thoughts, and behaviors until feelings of unforgiveness (such as hurt, resentment, bitterness) decrease.

The second part involves learning strategies to promote forgiveness based on specific theoretical models. As an example in REACH's forgiveness model (Worthington et al., 2006), after deciding to forgive, someone learns to gain the greater forgiveness through a process of emotional replacement from unforgiving emotions to positive emotions such as emotions that go to others: empathy, sympathy, compassion, or love (Exline et al., 2003). After that, one needs to learn to change their stories about being hurt in a way that reduces negative reflection and practices various activities designed to develop emotions for others, such as empathy or gratitude.

Adverse interpersonal events have an overall emotional impact on people. In a study conducted by Gottman (1993), the psychological assessment of couples in conflict with their partners has three types of emotional responses. First is the general positive feeling, which is characterized by familiar behavior, affection, and relationship constructive. Second is hurt-perceived attack. This affective response includes internal whining, innocent victimhood, fear, and concern. The third emotional response comprises righteous indignation, which is characterized by anger, disgust, and the mind to take revenge on the offender. McCullough divides the concept of forgiving into two sides. First, forgiving is a motivational construct, and second is to forgive as prosocial behavior (McCullough, 2000). Two negative affective states in interpersonal interaction relate to two motivational systems that drive responses to hurt from interpersonal relationships. First, feelings of hurt perceived attach is related to motivation to avoid personal and psychological contact with the offender (i.e., avoidance). Second, a sense of balanced anger (righteous indignation) with motivation to take revenge or see misfortune happen to the offender (i.e., revenge) (schadenfreude) (Takashi et al. 2009). This difference in motivation interacts to make the psychological status called forgiveness—the drive to do good things decreases typically when a person experiences offense or other forms of harm.

When someone is unable to forgive for conflicts that occur with other people, it will lead to a destructive relationship that will be followed by an urge to avoid contact and desire to take revenge. Conversely, if forgiveness has occurred, then the perception of the perpetrator is no longer encouraging to prevent or seek revenge. Therefore, if forgiveness has occurred, relationship-constructive transformations will occur. Forgiveness is no longer a motivation, but a complex process of change in interpersonal motivation after an interpersonal offense occurs.

On the prosocial side, forgiveness has in common with other prosocial behavior. Empathy is the primary variable because, with empathy, one can do the good towards others even though they are foreigners. Forgiveness can improve harmonious relationships with other people because naturally, humans are social beings. McCullough stated that the motivation to avoid and retaliate is aligned with motivation to maintain positive relationships with others.

## 4. Unforgiven

Offenses or hurts of feelings are interpersonal pressures that can result in unforgiving emotions (unforgiving emotions such as resentment, bitterness, anger) and motivation through the measurement of injustice (appraisals of injustice, which threatens. Several participants looked hard to forgive when they felt extremely hurt *by saying, "It was so hurt; It is hard to forgive."* Fatfouta et al. (2013) suggested that the executive function of the brain (cognitive control processes are negatively related to revenge aggression, and ow-level revenge motivation (higher forgiveness) mediates this effect (Wilkowski et al., 2010). In addition, research by Pronk and colleagues showed that cognitive control is positively related to forgiveness (Pronk et al., 2010).

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Anger is one emotion caused by injustice, such as discrimination (Nussbaum, 2016; Potegal & Spielberger, 2010). However, fury is not the only emotional reaction over an injustice even though it is the most common emotion emerging when an individual perceives there is a hindrance to access specific resources. There is a preventing party that has the power to make decisions (Potegal & Spielberger, 2010).

Revenge has recently been a background for various cases of violence and injustice in the widely varied contexts of interpersonal to national conflicts (Gerlsma & Lugtmeyer, 2016). An unjust behavior toward individuals may lead to anger and rumination for an extended period up to the time for revenge. From the injustice treatment to the revenge time, there is a period of rumination when an individual experience the dynamics of cognition, emotion, and social

processes. During this rumination, individuals can decide to revenge, to let it go, or to forgive. Although a feeling of retaliation is a subjective experience, still in some cultures, it is seen and taught as unwise behavior (Uniacke, 2000).

Scholars have different perspectives on how revenge behavior could happen. McCullough, Kurzban, and Tabak (2013) suggested that revenge is a cognitive mechanism, and the emotional side is suppressed in the decision-making process. On the other hand, O'Connor, Gabrielle, and Adams (2013) argued that emotions are the primary drivers of individual decisions to seek revenge. Many types of research focus on revenge in the interpersonal context of how it happens between groups. While the study is still limited to retaliation in the context of interpersonal emotion regulation aspects, interpersonal relationships serve as an essential part of individual daily life experiences. In addition, psychological wellbeing is not only determined by personal perspectives but social backgrounds, both of which determine how an individual perceives their existence and finds meaning in life (Keyes, 1998).

Like anger, revenge is a common reaction toward injustice. The elicitation of rage can be long-lasting after a threatening event occurs. This pattern means that passion may endure beyond the time of the game, and the suppressed anger has the potential to arise in the form of emotional expression or certain behaviors such as retaliation. If the violence engenders revenge, then the emotional arousal may be long-lasting until the victim finds the right time to take revenge. In between the threatening event and hate, there are cognitive and emotional dynamics which, in turn, determine the revenge attitudes toward the offender or wrongdoer. When an individual is overwhelmed with negative emotions, it will not only inflict damage to his or her psychological balance but also potentially put their physical health at risk. Moreover, when the anger felt is unforgiven and anxiety persist all the time, then the possibility of taking revenge may be higher.

## Implication

Interpersonal relationships may bring joy, happiness, peacefulness, and love between individuals and their surrounding community. Conversely, it may be a source of conflict, frustration, pain, stress, and depression (Wohl & McGrath, 2007 in Zhang, Toomey, Oetzel & Zhang, 2015). Furthermore, it can lead to poor quality of social wellbeing (Keyes, 1998), personal strain, and hostility (Agnew, 2015; Agnew, 1995). Emphasizing the community basis of an individual's wellbeing, the World Health Organization (WHO) explained that social aspects are essential determinants for mental health (WHO, 2014).

Since 1985, increasing interest in the topic of forgiveness has questioned the potential relationship between forgiveness of health and well-being. Even in the 2000s, empirical data related to these questions were still limited (Aschleman, 1996; Mauger et al., 1992; Subkoviak et al., 1995). In other studies, the results of the study showed that psychotherapy involving forgiveness could increase the psychological wellbeing index (Al-Mabuk, Enright, & Cardis, 1995; Coyle & Enright, 1997). However, McCullough (2000) emphasized that such research must continue, especially on how forgiveness relates to health and wellbeing. McCullough said that two mechanisms mediated forgiveness with health and wellbeing. First, forgiving offenders leads to the formation and preservation of supportive and caring relationships between victims and perpetrators. Second, continuous forgiveness can help control people's hostility.

In most cases, the poor quality of social wellbeing results when social relationships do not work effectively and result in perceived inequality, which is harmful (Ryff & Keyes, 2003; Keyes, 1998). Injustice and wrongdoing treatment of individuals may result in offending feelings, which potentially trigger disappointment, aggressiveness, and revenge (Zdaniuk & Bobocel, 2012). On the other hand, better relationships may provide a sense of security and acceptance, which bring self-esteem and meaningfulness (Baumeister & Lery, 1995). The interpersonal relationship will be worsened when the interaction contains betrayal, mistrust, wrongdoing, and violence (Ally, 2014). The strain can engender anger and fantasy of resentment moreover when the relationship is

intimate (Yoshimura & Boon, 2014). Individual skills to manage the revenge depends on how their coping styles are dealing with negative emotions such as anger and rejection and how their social supports function to influence the mechanism of cognition and emotion on forgiveness.

Forgiveness is influenced by several variables, which include emotional and cognitive processes such as empathy, perspective-taking, rumination, and suppression; quality relationships such as closeness, commitment, and satisfaction; and situational factors such as an apology. Feeling empathic and understanding cognitive perspectives on actors is strongly related to forgiveness (McCullough et al., 1997) and avoidance and revenge motivation (McCullough et al., 1998). Empathy makes the guilty person who apologizes forgiven. People forgive wrongdoers who express regret because it makes people feel more empathic towards the offender (McCullough et al., 1997, 1998).

In the intervention of encouraging forgiveness, increasing one's empathy towards the wrongdoer, and adopting a cognitive perspective from the perpetrator can improve the ability to forgive. McCullough (2000) explained that empathy is the only psychological variable that is proven to help people to forgive what happened to two people in the context of interpersonal relationships. In addition, the more people lament the hurt of the heart, the harder it will be for them to forgive. Rumination that interferes with an irritable behavior and attempts to hide the contemplation is strongly related to the motivation to avoid and seek revenge. The longer people lament and disappear, the longer it will affect the avoidance and revenge motivation. Conversely, people who do not mourn and do not hide their feelings become more forgiving (McCullough et al., 1999).

Relational factors such as closeness, commitment, and satisfaction are essential elements in forgiving. People are most likely to forgive in a relationship characterized by proximity, commitment, and satisfaction. Several studies, such as those conducted by Nelson (1993) and Rackley (1993), show that in general, younger interpersonal relationships forgive if they have these characteristics. However, Roloff and Janiszewski (1989) said that people find it difficult to forgive in a close relationship (intimate relationship) if an offensive action is a rejection of generosity that is easy to do.

The relationship between closeness, commitment, and satisfaction with forgiveness seems stable. McCullough (2000) said that a study of 100 couples who had forgiven their partners of two things that hurt was the worst and the most severe thing their partners had ever done to them. The results show that the level of forgiveness is related to the level of closeness, commitment, and satisfaction. Furthermore, forgiving in a close relationship, collide the desire to apologize from the offender and the level of empathy of the offended person. Empathy becomes a bridge for someone to forgive the person who apologizes in the context of a close relationship. Sincere apologies or expressions of deep regret have a profound effect on forgiveness (Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Metts & Cupach, 1998). This variable can be a potential factor that can be controlled by the offender to influence the likelihood that people who are hurt will forgive the perpetrator. Wortington et al. (2007) convey the results of research that show that emotional forgiveness is more related to mental and physical health than the decision to forgive. Forgiveness decisions are more of relational and spiritual outcomes.

Experiencing anger on account of injustice treatment by others is a common reaction. Moreover, when it accompanies hatred and prejudice between people with different backgrounds, the situation is increasingly deteriorating and deleterious (Miller, 2001; Leach, 2008; Moore, 2016). In terms of experiencing emotions, people perceive them individually, but mostly they need others to regulate feelings by social sharing. This social mechanism is known as interpersonal emotion regulation (Zaki & Williams, 2013; Gross, 2013).

Interpersonal emotion regulation has been one format that is different from other studies using a single emotional regulation process. The process was analyzed with how emotion was shared and the role of others influencing the emotion regulation. The impact of such control could be the needed change of emotional states such as from revenge to forgiveness or reduced

depression by the roles of social support (Hoffman, 2014; Marroquin, 2011). The triangle of emotion regulation between the wrongdoer, victim, and a close person to the victim is the united focus of analysis to comprehend the dynamics of interpersonal emotion regulation.

Talking about the effects of forgiveness was very interesting in the second FGD session. Of the various responses that emerged, the most prominent aspect experienced by the students was that giving forgiveness can bring relief to the heart and mind. They feel that it is a good thing to do good (Post, 2005). Previously they estimated that the possibility of not forgiving would be exceptional, and forgiving would improve the interpersonal situation. In reality, those who can forgive can achieve inner peace and improve interpersonal relationships. At the same time, those who cannot forgive can also have peace by not revealing old wounds and not having an interest in improving the situation.

According to mental health research, emotion is the primary response of injustice events and a drive-in decision making for seeking revenge (Nussbaum, 2016; Potegal & Spielberger, 2010; O'Connor & Adams, 2013). Therefore, anger could be a nuclear threat toward healthy, constructive interpersonal relationships when revenge emerges from the emotion. In several studies, revenge is linked to emotions such as aggression, anger, and hate. According to van Stokkom (2003), retaliation concerning anger can be differentiated with a vengeance concerning hate. Revenge concerning anger aims outside the individual, and the person experiencing revenge is sensitive toward proportionality. Otherwise, revenge caused by hatred is more possessive and aimed inwardly. A hater does not show empathy, and because of the character of being obsessive, they do not have to feel or experience their vulnerability (O'Connor & Adams, 2013).

For some scholars, revenge is considered as a catharsis or emotional expression of anger so that by making an attack, it will lead an individual to satisfaction. In other scholars' perspectives, revenge is considered as an effort to get even. In addition, retaliation may be directed to control the behavior of the wrongdoer so that they cannot repeat the injustice behavior or violence anymore.

McCullough, Kurzban, and Tabak (2013) suggested that revenge is a cognitive process. Individuals seek revenge because of certain specific reasons. It involves cognitive dynamics to decide between revenge. On the other hand, the emotional aspect is considered as a drive directing individuals to seek revenge (Fatfouta, Jacobs, & Merkl, 2013). The rise of emotion and the different reactions toward a situation originated from the process of cognitive evaluation or appraisal. The appraisal theory explains how and why mixed feelings develop toward the same condition (Potegal & Stemmler, 2010). Consequently, individuals have the autonomy to behave when they face offensive interpersonal relationships, whether they will react to avoid, hate, revenge, or to forgive.

Diener, Tay, and Myers (2011) said that 68% of people claim that religion is an integral part of life. Besides, research shows that people involved in religious activities have higher levels of wellbeing (Diener et al., 2011; Oishi & Diener, 2014). Religious individuals report that they have higher life satisfaction and positive feelings in America. Also, they have low levels of depression in America and Europe (Smith, McCullough, & Poll, 2013). Religion is considered to be able to fulfill the need to have an affiliate to social life, which both can increase happiness. Religious practices can improve voluntary and altruistic behavior.

The situation of Eid al-Fitr in Indonesia with the tradition of mutual forgiveness may be a source of wellbeing refresh every year. When individuals use the moment as a tool to fulfill their need to live well, then they may exert it to free from the psychological burden caused by offenses of others. On the other hand, for those who have difficulties in dealing with previous offenses may use the Eid al-Fitr moment as a supportive social life toward their existence among others in society. The function of mutual forgiveness may work as a means to gain sincere forgiveness and apologies amidst the traditions and religious tenets that potentially uplift happiness.

**Conclusion**

This work was aimed at exploring how in the Eid al-Fitr time, participants could forgive everyone else as offenders. According to the data collected in two FGD, there are four possibilities about how participants forgive offenders in their previous life experience. Forgive or not to forgive could because of participants' religious belief, personal view of the offense that occurs, the degree of seriousness of the offense, and how participants dealt with acceptance of the painful events.

This research has unfolded relevant data about forgiveness during Eid al-Fitr. However, the researcher believed that there are at least two limitations, such as that this research would have gained more detailed data when the data collection continued with an in-depth interview with each participant. The researcher was uncertain about the influence of others' perspectives toward each participant during the FGD, so that influence the conveyed attitude as well. In addition, the researcher needed to know the level of participants' religiosity so that researcher could understand its impact on the research results.

According to the limitations, further research could utilize in-depth interviews to gain deeper data among participants so that researcher could gain more data in terms of how internal dynamics happen regarding the decision to forgive or not to forgive. Besides, the researcher could utilize a mixed method to measure the level of religiosity before conducting an in-depth interview with participants.

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